

Marble Jar-Stands from Egypt

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF KURT ERDMANN
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EXHIBITED IN THE ISLAMIC galleries of the Metropolitan Museum is a marble stand of peculiar shape and unknown provenance (Figures 1–3), acquired in 1920.¹ Carved from a single block of yellowish-white marble with gray veins, it consists of a hollow trunk, chamfered octagonally on the outside, which rests on four hoof-shaped feet. These descend from a calyx of fleshy, rimmed tongues and the spans between them are bridged by tricusped arches. A drawerlike basin that juts from the front of the stand communicates with the hollow of the trunk through an opening which is also bridged by a tricusped arch.

The carved decoration of the stand is rather worn and two roundels in the panel above the basin seem to have been deliberately damaged. Below the front edge of the basin is a flat feline mask. Two bosses at the side of the basin are paralleled by two at the upper edge of the side panels of the trunk. The basin's rather massive rim is carried over to the trunk, where it is continued in a double band framing the side and back panels. The former are carved with two superimposed hexagons emerging from the canals of a

twin volute and formed by double striped interlacing bands. An upright three-lobed tree or leaf motif on a rectangular base occupies the center of the back panel (Figure 2). The four remaining chamfers of the trunk, narrower than the others and placed diagonally, form shallow niches. Those on the front show crudely carved cross-legged figures on low stools, apparently clad in turbans, caftans, and trousers, who seem to hold beakers in their right hands. In the rear niches are striding figures, symmetrically posed, with odd animal-shaped packs on their shoulders (Figures 2, 3).

Its decorative features leave no doubt that the object is a product of Islamic art. Few stands of this kind are on view in European and American museums, which may account for the fact that no comprehensive investigation of them as a group has ever been undertaken. Their actual use is frequently misunderstood, although it was clearly described as far back as 1947 by Nikita Elisséeff in a short article dealing with a stand (Figure 4) and jar on loan from the Boston Athenaeum to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.²

A list of frequently cited sources appears at the end of this article.

1. It was bought from D. G. Kelekian. In the files of the Islamic Department the object is described as 14th-century Egypto-Arabic and the measurements are given as 12 × 19 in. The stand has never been illustrated but is mentioned in: *A Handbook of Mohammedan Decorative Arts* (MMA, New York, 1930) p. 85; Dimand, p. 103; Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, cat., Feb. 3, 1977, note to lot 44 (see below, note 2; this reference supplied by Catherine Struse Springer).

I am indebted to the late Richard Ettinghausen for having generously given me permission to publish the stand, and for many valuable suggestions. He was also kind enough to help me in establishing contact with the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.

2. Elisséeff, figs. 1 and 2, illustrates the stand with the jar and gives the dimensions of the former as 34.9 × 36.8 × 52.1 cm. The Boston Athenaeum has since sold both stand and jar, Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, cat., Feb. 3, 1977, lots 44 (stand) and 45 (jar); the stand alone reappeared in the same salerooms, June 15, 1979, lot 316 (reference supplied by Joan R. Mertens). I am obliged to Donald Castell Kelly, Art Department of the



FIGURES 1–3
Islamic marble stand, or *kilga*.
30.8 × 30.9 × 47.7 cm. The
Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Rogers Fund, 20.176

FIGURE 1
Front view, showing cross-
legged figure

FIGURE 2
Back view, showing tree or
leaf motif flanked by load-
bearers

FIGURE 3
Man carrying a load, detail of
Figure 2



The stands were intended as supports for large unglazed terracotta water jars. The porous clay allowed water to seep from the more or less pointed bottom of the jar resting in the hollow trunk of the stand. The water, filtered in the process and cooled by evaporation, was collected in the projecting basin, from which it could then be ladled as needed. Any visitor to southern countries where modern conveniences such as refrigerators are as yet rare will have observed the use of unglazed clay vessels as containers for drinking water. Awkward as it may seem to a Westerner, the thoroughly soaked and slippery condition of such vessels when full is in fact a desirable feature that enhances evaporation and thus the cooling of the liquid.

When describing the Boston stand Elisséeff rightly pointed out that it did not belong with the alabaster jar perched on it at the time. On stylistic grounds the jar would have to be dated in the seventeenth century whereas the stand was clearly older. The nonporous stone vessel would not, of course, allow water to pass through, thus nullifying the stand's original function.

In order to fix a date for the manufacture of the stand Elisséeff cited three other examples known to him, one in the National Museum in Damascus, and two in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, one of which bears a mutilated date that places it in the nineties of the sixth century of the Hegira, i.e., in the decade between A.D. 1193 and 1203 (this stand remains the only dated example known to be extant). The disposition of the Kufic inscription on the Boston stand, as well as the stepped leaf or tree motif in the diagonal niches of the trunk, a shape echoed in the arches between the legs, led him to date supports of this kind in the Fatimid period (fifth to sixth century of the Hegira or eleventh to twelfth century A.D.). When discussing the faulty inscription,³ where the formula *bar-*

Boston Athenaeum, for the information that the stand, listed by the Museum of Fine Arts as no. 331, was purchased from the Castellani "collection of antiquities at rooms in Memorial Hall, Philadelphia, 1876. The card describing the two pieces says 'Water-Jar with marble support (alabaster lustral vase and stand [antique]) Fountain for ablution, from Cairo'" (letter, May 28, 1978). For the activities of the Castellani family see Arthur E. Gordon, *The Inscribed Fibula Praenestina: Problems of Authenticity*, University of California Publications: Classical Studies (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1975) app. I, esp. pp. 68ff.

3. See Elisséeff, pp. 35f., for a transcription of the text, which has a total length of 117 cm.

4. E.g., the Boston jar, *ibid.*, p. 37.



FIGURE 4

Kilga, formerly in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, on loan from the Boston Athenaeum (photo: courtesy Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc.)

aka kāmila wa-ni ʿma shāmila ("everlasting blessing and enfolding favor") is repeated eight times, Elisséeff cites a *waqf* text of Caliph al-Hakim of A.D. 1010. This records the pious donation of jars for the mosque al-Azhar in Cairo—still today the center of Koranic studies for the Moslem world—to be set up beside the cistern and filled with water for the ritual ablution since running water was lacking. The two Cairene stands he mentions are known to have come from two mosques in that city; Elisséeff assumed that the stands were produced in Cairo and regarded them, together with their original earthenware jars—not one of which has survived—as connected with ablution rather than drinking water.

There exist, in fact, many more of such jar-stands. Some of them, like the one formerly in Boston, are equipped with stone vessels which may bear inscriptions recording their donation. These stone vases are at times provided with open or sealed holes in the lower wall or on the bottom,⁴ occasionally also with faucets, and it may well be that they served as containers of water for ablution. That this was not the original purpose of the stands is proved not only by stylistic divergences that render a contemporary

manufacture of stand and stone jar impossible, but also by a special feature found in the Boston stand and several others (Figures 4, 9, 25, 31, 37). It is a slope descending from the bottom of the hollow trunk to the level of the basin, which passes under the arched opening of the trunk, and is frequently shaped like a miniature flight of stairs with a wider stepped center flanked by strips of narrower steps; at times the center steps are replaced by a chevron pattern (Figures 25, 37). The feature would be pointless were it not meant to lead the water dripping from the bottom of the jar into the hollow trunk from there to the basin. The sight and the sound of the precious liquid trickling down the “stairs” (*salsabil*)⁵ would please both eye and ear.

5. For further discussion of this feature see below and note 89.

6. The word, which Elisséeff quotes as *kelga*, does not appear in the standard Arabic dictionaries. Gerhard Böwering, University of Pennsylvania, points out that the Arabic language includes the word كَيْلَجَة (*kailaġatun*), a measure of capacity for dry substances, which occurs in classical Arab literature. See, e.g., E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1855) I, p. 2628; R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, 3rd ed. (Leiden/Paris, 1967) II, p. 506; J. Krämer et al., *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache* (Wiesbaden, 1970) I, pp. 508f. For the measure of capacity Böwering refers to W. Hinz, “Islamische Masse und Gewichte,” *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, supp. I:1 (Leiden, 1955) pp. 40f., and S. Fraenkel, *Die aramäischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen* (Leiden, 1886) p. 204. It does not seem impossible that the hollow trunk of the *kilga* may have caused it to be called after a measure of capacity. We do not, however, know what such measures looked like or when the word was first used for a jar-stand. Dr. Böwering, to whom I am indebted for advice on this and other questions of Arabic, further suggests that it may be asked whether the word *kilga* can be related to the particular usage of خَلِيقَة (*khaliqa*): “a well in which is no water: or a hollow, cavity, pit or hole, formed by nature in the ground: or a small hollow or cavity, in which water remains and stagnates” (Lane, *Lexicon*, I, p. 802). According to Mrs. Serageldin (Laila ‘Ali Ibrahim), “كَيْلَجَة or كَلْجَة is a colloquial word particular to Egypt of Turko-Persian origin—*Kil-gāh* (mud-place)” (letter, Jan. 1979); the details will be discussed in Mrs. Serageldin’s forthcoming catalogue (see below, note 7).

I would like to thank Robert Kraft, University of Pennsylvania, for investigating the possibility of a Coptic origin of the word.

7. With few exceptions, the *kilgas* in the museum have never been published, although a comprehensive catalogue, including those in the Coptic Museum in Cairo, by Laila ‘Ali Ibrahim (Mrs. Serageldin) is due to appear in the first issue of a new bulletin of the Museum of Islamic Art in the near future. I am obliged to the former director, the late Mrs. Waffiyya ‘Izzi, and vice-director (now director) Mr. Abd al-Ra‘uf A. Yusuf for the

That water once filled the basins is clearly indicated by their smooth and worn interiors and the streaks left on the outside by its overflow (unglazed terracotta is not so porous that any overflow of water would ever have been excessive). Occasionally there are scrape marks at the bottom of the basins—at times even holes (Figure 8)—which were obviously caused by the action of metal cups used to scoop up the water.

The bulk of such stands, locally called *kilgas*,⁶ is preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art⁷ and the Coptic Museum⁸ in Cairo. Seventeen have come to my attention in the Museum of Islamic Art, twenty-three in the Coptic Museum. Extensive walks through Old Cairo and the medieval city center added another dozen; two were found in the northern Fayum;

information that there are eighteen stands in the museum, of which three were photographed, described, and measured for me in 1977. On a visit to Cairo in June 1978 I was given permission to study the stands and to take photographs; these unfortunately suffered from radiation during airport security checks. I have not inspected the museum’s files or accession book. In some cases the inventory numbers on the stands have faded.

Ten of the museum’s *kilgas* are listed in Max Herz Bey, *Arab Museum, Catalogue of the National Museum of Arab Art*, ed. Stanley Lane-Pool (London, n.d. [preface 1896]) pp. 11, 15–17; nos. 32, 33, 98, 107, 108 (see illus. p. 11) 109, 130–133. The descriptions given are too brief to be related with certainty to the pieces I have seen and photographed. Nos. 32, 33, 107, and 108 are said to come from mosques. See also idem, “Jarres et supports,” *Catalogue raisonné des monuments exposés dans le Musée national de l’art arabe . . .*, 2d ed. (Cairo, 1906) p. 49, nos. 132–155 and fig. 12; several stands are illustrated in the photograph of “Salle II” facing p. 40. Here the author is a little more detailed: “Ces jarres se trouvaient toujours dans une niche des couloirs qui conduisent à l’intérieur des mosquées. Elles servaient, d’après Prisse d’Avennes, à contenir l’eau nécessaire aux ablutions des grands personnages. Cependant la place qui leur est réservée dans l’enceinte *tâher*, ‘pure,’ de la mosquée, et de plus leur nom de *zir ‘jarre’* nous portent à croire qu’elles étaient plutôt destinées à contenir l’eau potable.” See also idem, “Le Musée national du Caire,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 3rd ser. 28 (1902) pp. 50f. Herz seems to have taken the stylized lion heads frequently found on the stands for turtle heads and their legs as reminiscent of that animal’s feet. This erroneous notion must have caught on and is often repeated, e.g., Gaston Wiet, *Musée national de l’art arabe; Guide sommaire* (Cairo, 1939) p. 32; *Album*, text to no. 11.

I would like to thank Sarah Pomeroy for kindly checking some details for me in the Museum of Islamic Art in 1977.

8. The short official guidebook, P. Labib and V. Girgis, *The Coptic Museum and the Fortress of Babylon at Old Cairo* (Cairo, 1975), makes no mention of the stands. I examined them and acquired some photographs from the museum’s photographer in June 1978.

I know of several stands in private houses in Cairo. Three are on show in the Benaki Museum in Athens, four are in the reserve collection of the Islamic Department of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.⁹ One exists as a complete stray in the Museo Etrusco Guarnacci among the Roman marbles from the theatre of the ancient hilltop city of Volterra in Tuscany. Already mentioned is the stand in the museum in Damascus, which comes from the great Umayyad mosque. Yet another is preserved in the Ikonenmuseum of the city of Recklinghausen in West Germany. Thus, well over sixty *kilgas* have been located at this time. Many more must be hidden in Cairene houses or private collections.¹⁰

There can be no real doubt about the purpose of these objects, which have no parallels anywhere else and seem to be a uniquely Egyptian creation. Over the millennia Egypt has turned to the Nile for drinking water. Even today the womenfolk of the fellaheen fetch water from the river, and owe their regal carriage to the balancing of coarse clay jars (the so-called *qullas*)—oblique when empty, upright when full—on cloth chaplets on their heads. Until recently, the city of Cairo, which had no springs, only brackish wells or fountains fed by aqueducts, shared this dependence on the Nile, a fact to which the Arab historian and topographer al-Maqrizi (1364–1442) is a witness.¹¹ In his *Geography and History of Egypt* al-Maqrizi speaks of the unhealthy quality of the Nile water south of Cairo, especially that of the canal al-Khalig (filled in between 1897 and 1900) contaminated by the refuse dumped in the vicinity.¹² Describing various methods

of treating the water to make it potable, he quotes extensively from the medical topography of Cairo written in the early eleventh century by Ibn Ridwan.¹³

If the water appears contaminated by some noxious substance, have it boiled and let it cool in the open air, in the cool of the night. Then purify it with the ingredients we have already mentioned [bitter almonds, apricot pits, alum, etc.]. The best thing is not to use this water until it has been purified several times [by boiling and filtering]. . . . the purified part is placed in a jar; only what seeps through the porosities of the jar will be used. In summer, the jar which is to contain this water will be of clay or of terracotta prepared in the [winter] month of Tobé; filters of rock or hide or any other material that cools can also be employed. In winter, glass or porcelain receptacles will be used. . . . The best Nile water is that of the month of Tobé, when the weather is at its coldest; the Egyptians know [that] well from experience . . . many of them store it in receptacles of glass or porcelain and use it all year round; they claim that it does not spoil and do not even take the trouble to purify it, convinced as they are that it is altogether pure. But do not rely on that and purify it all the same, because water that is stored certainly spoils.

Apparently various types of clay were used for making water jars, some allowing for speedy passage through the porous walls.¹⁴ Ibn Ridwan unfortunately omits to mention the stands for such jars, which were no doubt a commonplace feature and one that in any case lay outside his concerns as a physician. His graphic report on the storage and filtering of Nile water is, however, contemporary with most of

9. Information kindly supplied by Michael Rogers, London. According to Volkmar Enderlein of the Islamisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, one of these is badly damaged (letter, Oct. 13, 1978). Thanks to his description of the other three, I am able to include them in the typology below.

10. Mrs. Wanda Assem, Cairo-Zamalek, kindly tells me of a collection of about ten *kilgas* in a private home in Cairo. Eight seem to be of the simplest kind. Two apparently bear floral decoration and have stalactite side panels; one of the two shows an eagle in a shield on the back panel.

11. For al-Maqrizi see *Encyc.*, s.v. (C. Brockelmann).

12. See al-Maqrizi [Makrizi], *Livre des admonitions et de l'observation sur l'histoire des quartiers et des monuments ou description historique et topographique de l'Egypte*, trans. Paul Casanova, Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, IV: 4 (Cairo, 1920) p. 53.

13. For Ibn Ridwan (998–ca. 1061) see *Encyc. n.e.*, s.v. (J. Schacht). A native of Giza, he spent all his life in the city and,

though self-taught in medical matters, was made chief physician of Egypt by one of the earlier Fatimid caliphs. The passage quoted is translated from Maqrizi, *Description topographique et historique de l'Egypte*, trans. U. Bouriant, Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission Archéologique Française du Caire, XVII:1 (Paris, 1895) pp. 181–183.

14. The two words used consistently in this passage are *khazaf* and *fakhhār*, which Bouriant (see note 13) translates indiscriminately as *terre glaise* and *terre cuite*. The standard dictionaries also fail to make any distinction between them, giving: *pottery, earthenware, clay; terre glaise, terre argileuse, brique, terre cuite*. Since Ibn Ridwan obviously wanted to distinguish between the two types of clay, their properties must have been different. I suspect that various degrees of porosity were implied. Jars for storing water required another, “denser” clay than those meant for filtering and cooling it by seepage through the walls. For a description of the properties of clays see J. V. Noble, *The Techniques of Painted Attic Pottery* (New York, 1965) pp. 1–5.



FIGURE 5
Water transported in animal skins in modern Cairo. The Gothic doorway, a trophy from Acre, leads to the mausoleum of Sultan Muhammad an-Nasir, ca. 1300 (photo: Knauer)

the *kilgas* under discussion and is all the more valuable.¹⁵

Accounts of Cairo in the early nineteenth century mention its water carriers, who supplied clay jars standing in the customer's courtyard with water from the Nile,¹⁶ which was transported in animal skins.¹⁷ It comes as a surprise to the traveler that water carriers are still to be seen in the city and elsewhere in Egypt,

15. For more literature on the Nile as a source of drinking water see A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, Kulturgeschichtliche Bibliothek, II (Heidelberg, 1920) pp. 295f. and *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1936) s.v. *Nil* (Honigmann).

16. See Edward William Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, Written in Egypt during the Years*

FIGURE 6
Water being carried in an animal skin in Esna, Upper Egypt (photo: Knauer)



as they ferry their black goatskins—no longer filled, of course, with water from the river but from safer sources—around on two-wheeled carts or carry them on their backs (Figures 5, 6). The water still goes into huge earthenware jars, frequently resting on makeshift stands (Figure 7), sometimes on more solid ones made of brick, and occasionally even on marble *kilgas* of exactly the type we are considering. Many of these stands must have been in use for centuries. A lid on top of the jar often carries a metal cup as a scoop for the water (Figure 8). Jar-stands of all varieties, from simple to sophisticated, are indeed still so common in rural Egypt that this may account for the limited at-

1833–34, and '35 . . . (London, 1856) I, p. 12 (cf. fig. p. 15, two jars on supports in a niche of the courtyard) and pp. 203ff.

17. John Lloyd Stevens (*Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land* [New York, 1837; Norman, 1970] p. 150), on his way from Cairo to the Sinai in 1836, reported that his "store of provisions consisted of . . . two of the largest skins containing the filtered water of the Nile."

FIGURE 7

A modern makeshift jar-stand on the bank of the Nile at Esna, Upper Egypt (photo: Knauer)



tention which has been paid to them by art historians.¹⁸

Although the design of the *kilgas*, quite a few of which bear auspicious inscriptions, remains basically the same, they show a great variety of ornament. A clear division according to decorative patterns is difficult because of the overlapping of motifs. Even so, a study of the patterns and their parallels elsewhere, particularly in architecture, will provide some clues for the approximate dating of the pieces.

Often the *kilgas'* feet and basins are damaged, as a natural result of being the more fragile projections of an otherwise bulky object. The carved decoration, on

18. The water jar and makeshift stand in Figure 7 were photographed in 1978. The clay jar does not allow for water to seep through, but its general porosity enhances the evaporation and cooling of its contents. The supports of such jars leave as much of the surface exposed as possible to aid evaporation.

19. See below, note 65.



FIGURE 8

Kilga and water jar in the courtyard of the mosque of Sultan al-Mansur Qala'un, Cairo (photo: Knauer)

the other hand, frequently betrays willful mutilation, especially of human heads and figures, and also of animals. This too can help to establish a date for the manufacture of the stands, during a period when Islamic art was less apt to take offense at the representation of animate beings than in more orthodox times.

With only one dated example at hand,¹⁹ there is no sure way of reconstructing a convincing typology. For convenience in the classification that follows, the sparsely decorated examples are described before the more complex ones.

1. Of the simplest kind is a big battered stand still in use in the courtyard of the mosque of Sultan al-Mansur Qala'un built at the end of the thirteenth century

(Figure 8). The decoration consists of nothing but tri-cusped arches above the basin and between the feet. This simple motif occurs already in a blind arcade below the crenellation of the two semicircular towers protecting one of the city gates, the Bab Zuwayla, constructed between 1087 and 1092.²⁰ It becomes more complex in time, with multiple steps and curves in the arch.

There are a number of equally simple stands to be found in the Coptic Museum and in the mid-seventeenth-century house of Sheikh es-Sihaimi (Figure 9). (As in many other stately houses in Cairo, the courtyard of this mansion is overhung by fine examples of *moucharabies*, graceful, elaborate, wooden latticework windows. Their sills are frequently provided with inlets sawn out to receive small clay jars of drinking water in order to expose them to the faintest breeze. The cooling effects of evaporation are thus exploited in yet another way.)

20. Creswell I, pls. 72c,d, 73. Through the kindness of Mrs. Serageldin and Michael Rogers I have the manuscript of an article by the former due to appear in *Kunst des Orients*: Laila 'Ali Ibrahim and 'Adil Yasin, "A Tūlūnid Ḥammām in Old Cairo." The steam room of that bath, built in the late ninth century, had three arched niches in a recess in one of its walls; "The central niche is flat and taller than the side ones, which are concave and

2. Closely related to the plain *kilgas* are stands with one or two feline heads carved in the round on the front panel above the basin and a bosslike projection at the center of the upper edge of the side panels (Figure 10). These bosses can also assume the shape of stylized feline heads. There may be one or two carved fillets turning at right angles to enclose the upper part of the side and back panels (Figure 10, right-hand *kilga*). Such continuous moldings are found in the pre-Islamic architecture of North Syria and in Egypt at the late eleventh-century Fatimid fortifications of Cairo already mentioned, apparently built by Syrian masons. The moldings are then often met as frames of *mihrāb* niches.²¹

3. Slightly more elaborate is a type of *kilga* with either one or two engaged half-columns projecting from the side panels. The stray piece in Volterra may serve as an example (Figures 11–13).²² Typically, the

have broken arched hoods." This is a very early instance of such an arch.

21. Creswell I, p. 211 and pls. 72c,d. For a *mihrāb* niche framed with a continuous double molding see that of the mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo, PKG 4, pl. 131.

22. The stand bears no number. Approximate dimensions: 32.5 × 29.7 × 44 cm. Attempts in May 1976 to consult the files



FIGURE 9

Kilgas in the courtyard of the house of Sheik es-Sihaimi, Cairo (photo: Knauer)

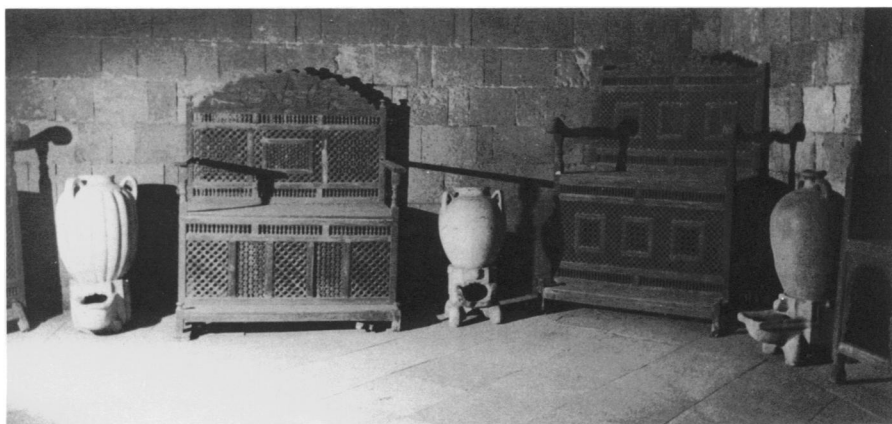


FIGURE 10

Kilgas with marble vases in the house of Sheik es-Sihaimi, Cairo (photo: Knauer)

FIGURES 11–13

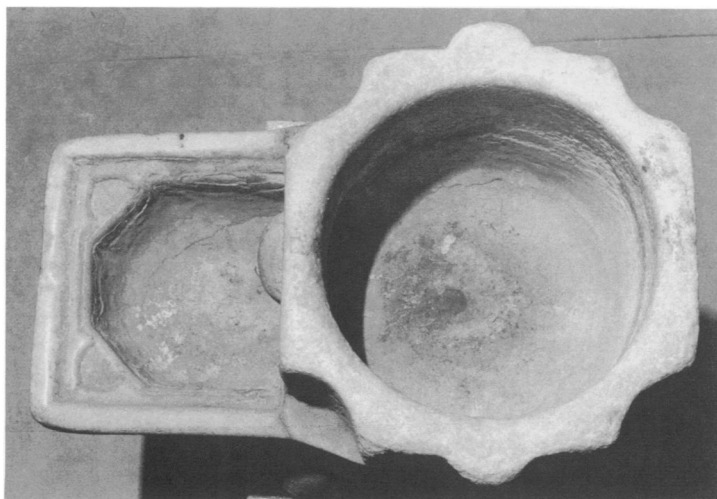
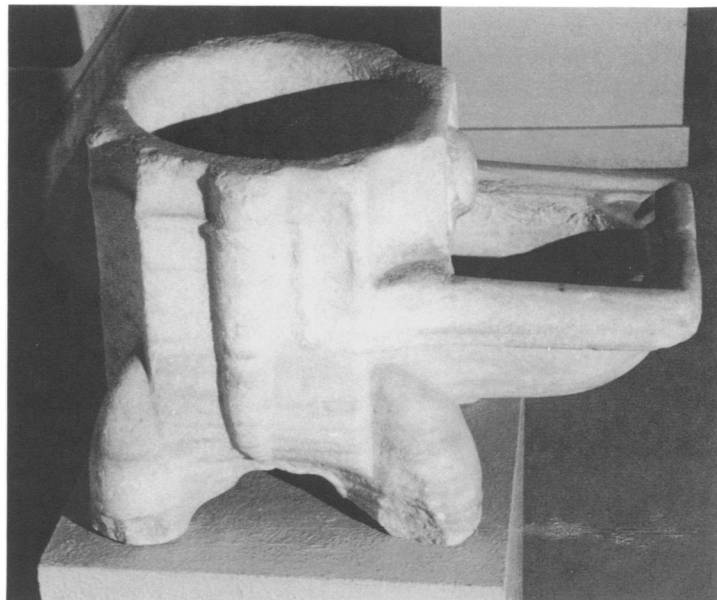
Kilga, seen from the side, above, and front. Volterra, Museo Etrusco Guarnacci (photos: Knauer)

wide rim of the basin is continued in the carved fillets framing the side panels. When seen from above, the stand displays the standard ornament filling in the front corners of the basin: arched recesses sunk in the width of the rim, a feature invariably encountered in all the groups to be discussed.²³ The Volterra *kilga* and its kin have close parallels in the courtyard and house of Sheik es-Sihaimi (Figures 9, 10), in no. 9414 of the Museum of Islamic Art, and in the first room of the Coptic Museum.²⁴ The columned type may be further enriched by bulbous bases in addition to capitals and may have auspicious inscriptions running along the rim of the basin and in a crenellated pattern along the side and back panels (Figure 14). These inscriptions thus take the place of the continuous moldings mentioned in group 2. Early instances in

for its provenance and history led to nothing since the then director of the Museo Guarnacci, Professor Enrico Fiumi, was ill. In a letter from the museum (Oct. 14, 1976) after his death, I was told: “noi possiamo dirle solamente che il reperto in questione fa parte dell’antico fondo del Museo, quindi supponiamo che non provenga dagli ultimi scavi del Teatro Romano iniziati 1950. In caso di nuovi accertamenti, sapremo farlielo noto.” I have not heard since. The guidebook by Enrico Fiumi, *Volterra, Il Museo Etrusco e i monumenti antichi* (Pisa, n.d. [1976]), makes no mention of the stand when discussing the holdings of Sala X where it is exhibited (pp. 84f.); for the history of the collection see pp. 27f. As most of the objects given by citizens to the community of Volterra since 1732 come from local excavations, the *kilga* may have been donated by someone with Egyptian connections—no rare occurrence in Italy.

23. This feature may be explained as a shorthand version of the often complex polylobate shapes of contemporary fountain basins, see below, note 30. Garden ponds could be similarly shaped; see, e.g., J. Dickie, “The Islamic Garden in Spain,” pl. xxii, fig. 17, in *The Islamic Garden*, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture IV, ed. Elisabeth B. MacDougall and Richard Ettinghausen (Washington, D.C., 1976), a lobulated pool in the Patio de Machuzo of the Alhambra. Compare also their reflections on Persian garden carpets; see, e.g., the carpet fragment in Berlin, of ca. A.D. 1700, and its discussion in Eva Börsch-Supan, *Garten-, Landschafts- und Paradiesmotive im Innenraum: Eine ikonographische Untersuchung* (Berlin, 1967) pl. 102 and pp. 127f.

24. Another example stands at the right edge of the flight of stairs leading up to the modern Greek Orthodox church of St. George in Old Cairo.



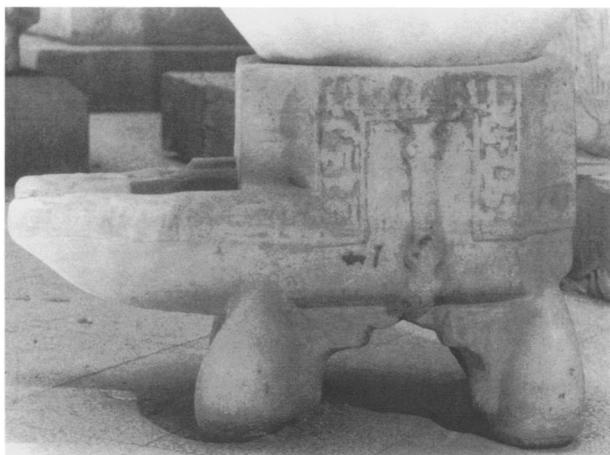


FIGURE 14
Kilga, no. 106. Cairo, Museum of Islamic art (photo: Knauer)

architecture of twin columns with clock- or lotus-shaped bases occur in the mosque of al-Hakim (990–1013).²⁵

FIGURE 15
Kilga and marble vase, no. 465 (inv. nos. 10834, 10835). Athens, Benaki Museum (photo: Knauer)



4. This group is characterized by the appearance of small half-columns in the diagonal niches of the trunk, which have invariably been left plain in previous categories, and by the fluting of the hooved feet of the stand (e.g., Benaki Museum, no. 465, Figure 15).²⁶ The feline mask above the inlet of the basin may be replaced by one or two plain disks, at times perforated in the center. The most important innovation, however, is the smooth or stepped cascade (*salsabil*) leading from the hollow trunk down into the basin.²⁷ The crucial role of the *salsabil* in determining the stand's use has already been discussed. The miniature cascades have their models in indoor fountain niches with ridged sloping marble slabs "down which the water from a tap . . . would run in a thin film and cool the air by a slight evaporation."²⁸ Such installations have been excavated in houses in Fustat and are still extant in old Cairene houses: a fine seventeenth-century example can be seen in the Benaki Museum in Athens. The monumental type (*shādhawān*)²⁹ has survived, and still functions, in the Norman-Arabic palace of the Zisa in Palermo (Figure

25. Creswell I, p. 78, pl. 21a. Such bases occur already in the painted arcades in Samarra (Ernst Herzfeld, *Die Ausgrabungen von Samarra*: III. *Die Malereien von Samarra*, [Berlin, 1927] pls. VII, VIII).

26. The stand and the marble vase, though bearing the number 465, are filed with inv. nos. 10834/10835; the provenance is unknown. This and two other stands (nos. 463 and 464) were published in the *Benaki Museum Guide* (Athens, 1936) now out of print (information kindly supplied by the museum). The *Guide* was not accessible to me. The fluting of the feet may occasionally look like a curved tongue pattern (e.g., Figure 1), which can be compared with the pattern on the foot and lid of a 14th-century brass vase in Cairo (Museum of Islamic Art, no. 130); see *Album*, no. 53.

27. The *salsabil* occurs already in the less ornate stand in the Sheikh es-Sihaimi courtyard (Figure 9, foreground). It must be emphasized that a chronological sequence is not implicit in the present classification of *kilgas*.

28. Creswell I, p. 124, when describing House III in Fustat; cf. fig. 59 (opp. p. 202), see also pp. 69f., fig. 60. The Tulunid *hammām* in Old Cairo investigated by Mrs. Serageldin already contained a *salsabil* in the central niche of the steam room, see note 20.

29. For *shādhawān* see Eilhard Wiedemann, *Aufsätze zur arabischen Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, preface and indexes by Wolfriedrich Fischer, Collectanea, VI (Hildesheim/New York, 1970) I, pp. 291f. (I owe this reference to Michael Rogers). For a 15th-century example in the Museum of Islamic Art see *Album*, no. 10. See also Ettinghausen, introduction to *The Islamic Garden*, p. 9.

16), built by William I and his son in the second half of the twelfth century.³⁰ When the Normans wrested Sicily from the Arabs in the later part of the eleventh century, they took over a prosperous island deeply impregnated by Islamic civilization. Cherished by the Norman kings, much of this tradition lived on and barely anywhere in the Islamic realm have such splendid examples of secular architecture survived intact. The twelfth-century court art of the Norman kings was under strong Fatimid influence.³¹ As we shall see, however, the origin of those cascades must be sought in an even remoter past.

5. Yet another variety of stands features arched empty niches in the side and back panels. These panels, which offer the most space for ornamentation, are the place for the more striking decorative innovations (e.g., Museum of Islamic Art, nos. 685 and 14097). The latter is a boxlike *kilga* notable for the treatment of its feet and the spans between them, which resemble woodwork (Figure 17).³²

Occasionally, the diagonal niches of these stands show the outline of an upright three- or multi-lobed tree or leaf pattern on an oblong support (the pattern

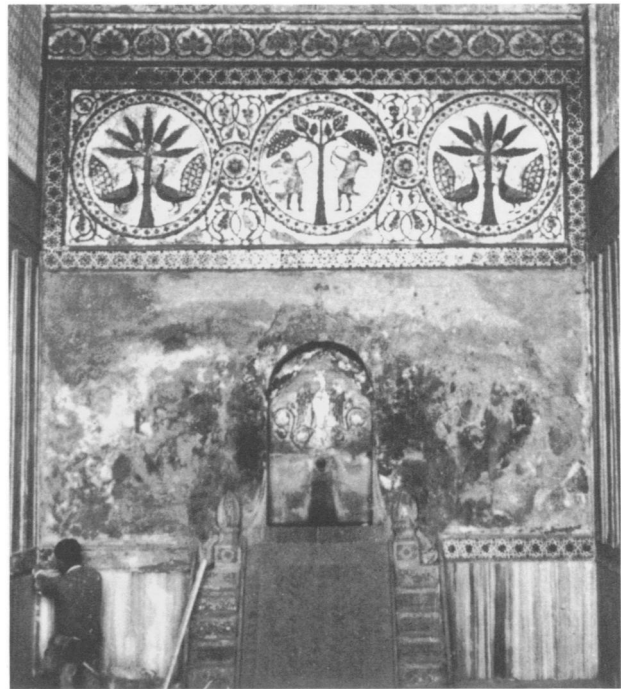


FIGURE 16

Wall fountain (*shādhawān*) in the Norman palace, the Zisa, at Palermo, A.D. 1154–60 (photo: Knauer)

30. Creswell I, p. 124, lists another intact example of the second half of the 12th century in Damascus. There is a *salsabil* with a lion-head spout and a quatrefoil basin depicted in the ceiling of the 12th-century Cappella Palatina in Palermo (Ettinghausen, fig. p. 48, text p. 47). The shape of such basins may have influenced the morphology of the sunk recesses of the rims of *kilga* basins; see above, note 23 and Figure 12. A similar but surely more sophisticated painting of a *salsabil* existed in the vault decoration of the cemetery mosque Qarafa of A.D. 978 in Cairo, according to Maqrizi, who describes the intentional optical illusion created by that painting; see Monneret de Villard, pp. 15f, who cites *Hiṭaṭ* II, p. 318 of the Bulaq edition of 1853. See also G. Marçais, "Salsabil and Šādirwān," *Etudes d'orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi-Provençal* (Paris, 1962) II, pp. 639–648.

There is no doubt in my mind that the shape of the *kilga* basins is closely related to monumental stone basins of the kind found in the Qal'a, the palace of the Banu Hammad, the Islamic Berber dynasty reigning in eastern Algeria from the 10th to the 12th century. See R. Bourouiba, "Note sur une vasque de pierre trouvée au palais du Manar de la Qal'a des Bani Hammad," *Bulletin d'Archéologie Algérienne* 5, 1971–75 (1976) pp. 235–245; dimensions: H. 55 cm.; 130 × 130 cm. (without projections); 152 × 152 cm. (with projecting semicircular niches). Not only do we have the complex quatrefoil shape, with plastic lions seant spouting up water in the four niches that jut out from the axes of the rectangular basin; the side view of this fountain reveals the basic formal similarity of those projections with the projecting knobs (often fashioned into lions' heads) at

the axes of the *kilga* basins. Bourouiba has himself unearthed an apparently similar "vasque quadrilobé" of the 12th century in Kirghizia, at the tomb of Shah Fadil in Safid Balan (*ibid.*, p. 240). He assumes that the Berber rulers in Algeria, "les émirs sanhadjiens du Maghrib Central," derived their model for such fountain basins from Fatimid Egypt. The top of the wall of the basin found in the Manar palace is hollowed out like a channel to allow water to flow in it. We meet this peculiar feature again in the channellike handrailing of a flight of stairs in the Generalife in Granada.

31. See PKG 4, pp. 99f., 254. For a discussion of the close contacts between the crusaders in Syria and the Normans in southern Italy and Sicily in the early 12th century, see Monneret de Villard, p. 48. Marçais, "Salsabil and Šādirwān," pp. 646f., sees the art of Norman Sicily as rather more deeply influenced by that of eastern Barbary than of Fatimid Egypt.

32. For a similar design, see the feet of two 14th-century hexagonal brass tables in the Museum of Islamic Art (*Album*, nos. 46, 47). The round object below the keel arch of the carved empty niche of no. 14097 could be a central hanging lamp in a *mihrāb* niche. Cf. Grube, no. 123, a 12th/13th-century Iranian *mihrāb* tile with molded relief decoration; see also Grube's reference, p. 176, n. 1, to the definitive study on the *mihrāb* motif being prepared by Professor Fehérvári. One is also reminded of the stucco niche (M2) on the pillar next to the *dikka* in the mosque of Ibn Tulun (Figure 18), see K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* (Oxford, 1940) II, p. 349, pl. 123b; for the position see fig. 257.



FIGURE 17
Kilga, no. 14097. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art
(photo: Knauer)

FIGURE 18
Stucco niche in the mosque of Ibn Tulun, Cairo
(photo: Knauer)

that occupies the back panel of the *kilga* in the Metropolitan Museum). The stand formerly in Boston (Figure 4) is an example. Comparable *kilgas* are no. 24402 in the Museum of Islamic Art and no. 463 in the Benaki Museum (Figure 19),³³ though the latter lacks an inscription. In another *kilga* in the Museum of Islamic Art (no. 32), the oblong support of the leaf motif has been replaced by a double volute. That leaf, the *Leitfossil* of the group, occurs early in architecture as a purely decorative device, again in the Bab Zuwayla (1087–92), where it fills a blind arcade at the flanks of the projecting towers of the gate.³⁴

6. An interesting variation occurs in a group of

33. Inv. nos. 10831, 10832; provenance, Ispenian; date, 13th–14th century (Benaki Museum, letter, Sept. 7, 1978).

34. See Creswell I, p. 273 and pls. 72c,d; for further instances see p. 256 and pl. 89b, *ṣaḥn*-portico in the mosque al-Azhar, about A.D. 1150, and dome, pl. 91a; Bab al-Akhdar, A.D. 1153, pl. 96d. See also Creswell II, pl. 19b. For a related motif in Islamic pottery see Grube, p. 282, no. 229.

35. I owe the photograph to the kindness of the Director General of Antiquities and Museums, Dr. Afif Bahnassi, who also supplied the dimensions of the stand (H. 36 cm., L. 61 cm.) and the information that it came to the museum from the



stands which features the leaf pattern in the diagonal niches and a very characteristic upright geometric pattern in the framed side panels: this consists of either one or two superimposed loop-shaped hexagons formed by intersecting bands which may terminate in half-leaves or volutes. The group includes the elegant stand in Damascus (Figure 20),³⁵ two examples in the Coptic Museum (nos. 3890 and 4111), one at the left of the staircase leading up to the modern Greek Orthodox church of St. George in Old Cairo, and nos. 3110 and 3111 in the Museum of Islamic Art.³⁶ The panels of this last example are framed with a plaited band, and show the leaf motif above the formula *baraka kāmila* on the sides and the

Umayyad mosque in 1928 (letter, May 28, 1977). I am much obliged to James B. Pritchard for his efforts to trace the stand in Damascus in 1977. It is cited by Elisséeff, p. 35, col. 2, n. 2, as no. 66 in *L'Inventaire du Musée Syrien de Damas*; and referred to in M. Ab-l-Faraj Al-'Ush, A. Joudi, B. Zoundhi, *Catalogue du Musée national de Damas* (Damascus, 1976) p. 257, 23, no. A2: "Jarre en marbre de forme sphérique posée sur une base. 13e siècle. Trouvée dans la mosquée des Umayyads à Damas."

36. For no. 3110, a more sober type, see *Album*, no. 12. No. 3111 was exhibited in Zurich in 1961 (*5000 Jahre Aegyptische Kunst*, exh. cat. [Zurich, 1961] nos. 491/2, pl. 98).



FIGURE 19
Kilga supporting marble vase, no. 463 (inv. nos. 10831, 10832). Athens, Benaki Museum (photo: Knauer)

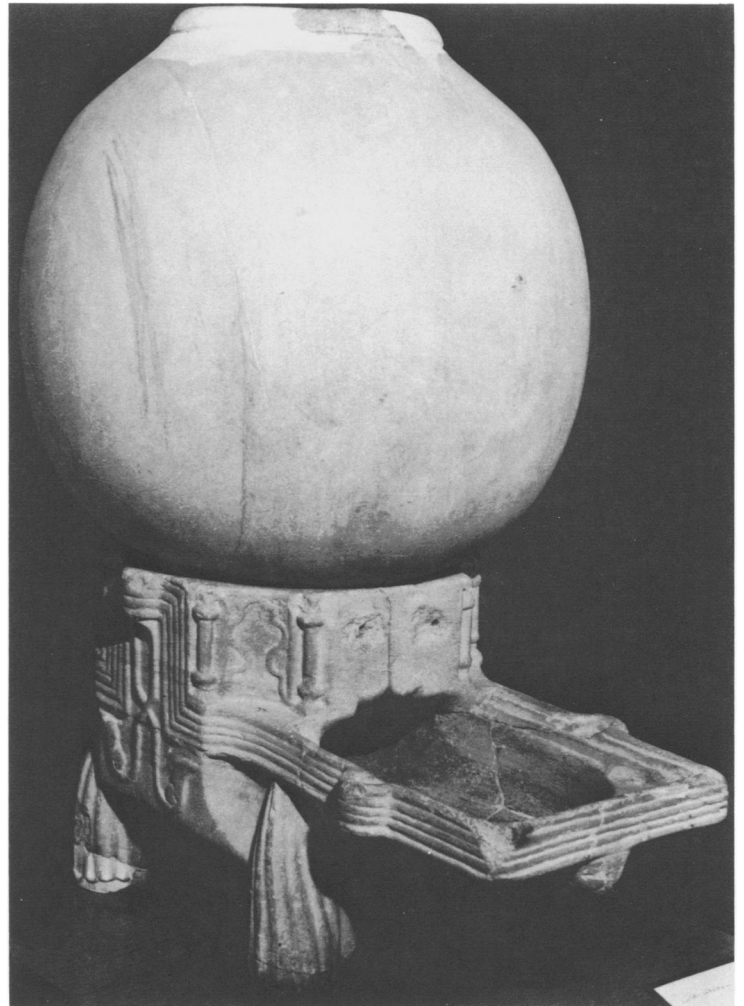


FIGURE 20
Kilga and marble vase from the Umayyad mosque. Damascus, National Museum (photo: courtesy National Museum)

FIGURE 21
Kilga, no. 3111. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art (photo: Knauer)

loop at the back (Figure 21). In this group an additional boss emerges from both sides of the basin's rim.

The hexagonal loop made of double striped interlacing bands ending in vegetal shapes is an ornament developed from decorative friezes, for instance on the monumental entrance and minaret of the mosque of al-Hakim (990–1013).³⁷ Isolated and placed vertically it becomes a much favored motif of Islamic art in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as on the facade of the mid-thirteenth-century Seljuq Ince Minare Madrasa in Konya (Figure 22).³⁸

A new element is introduced by the stand in the



37. See Creswell I, p. 70, figs. 24, 25, pl. 17.

38. The motif terminates in half-leaves above and a leaf shape below; cf. the New York stand (volutes), the one in Damascus, and no. 3111 of the Museum of Islamic Art (Figures 1, 20, 21).



FIGURE 22
Facade of the Seljuq Ince Minare Madrasa, mid-13th century. Konya (photo: Knauer)

Metropolitan Museum, which features carved figures—the cross-legged drinkers and the striding porters—along with the loop motif characteristic of the group (Figures 1–3).

It is one of the striking aspects of Seljuq and Fatimid art that human and animal figures suddenly intrude into and merge with the purely abstract decorative designs of earlier Islamic artifacts. The Iranian heritage, which had already deeply influenced Abbasid art, was revitalized by the political supremacy of the Turkish tribes.³⁹ Since Abbasid times Turks had formed the—often unruly—élite of the caliph's armies.⁴⁰ In Egypt their role was to be all-important. It culminated in the mid-thirteenth century in the accession of the dynasty of the Mamluks, the enfranchised slaves of Turkish, Circassian, and Kurdish origin who had constituted the sultan's court and headed his armies. Egypt had, moreover, at various times harbored refugees from the Middle East, many

of them craftsmen raised in the Iranian tradition. The immigrants came first when the Seljuqs established themselves in Persia and Anatolia in the eleventh century, and again in the thirteenth century when the Mongol invasion swept away the caliphate in Baghdad and brought death and destruction to most of the highly civilized Islamic realm. The Mamluks alone succeeded in checking the Mongols and holding the borders of Egypt against them.

The old Central Asian heritage with its rich iconography had thrived particularly under the dynasty of the heterodox Fatimids who ruled Egypt for two hundred years (972–1171).⁴¹ Although the representation of humans and animals is not explicitly forbidden in the Koran, it was discouraged by other traditional sayings of the prophet and shunned accordingly. The Fatimid sultans of Egypt adhered to the less rigorous Shiite denomination, which allowed the occasional inclusion of human and animal figures—though never within the sacred or pure (*tāhir*) precinct of the mosque. Even under the Ayyubids, after Saladin had restored Egypt to the orthodox Sunna in 1171, the production of objects featuring animate beings does not seem to have been curbed at once, as is shown by the dated stand already mentioned, from the decade 1193–1203.⁴² Rather it con-

39. Dimand, pp. 94–96, 100–101; PKG 4, pp. 102ff., Grube, pp. 127–131.

40. See David Ayalon, *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt (1250–1517)* (London, 1977).

41. Oleg Grabar, "Imperial and Urban Art in Islam: The Subject Matter of Fatimid Art," *Colloque international sur l'histoire du Caire*, 27 March–5 April 1969 (Gräfenhainichen, 1972) pp. 173–189, has tried to explain the sudden appearance of the figure style in 12th-century Egypt by the dispersal of Fatimid treasures and their impact on a wealthy urban society, following the Fatimid decline in the mid-11th century. Richard Ettinghausen kindly drew my attention to Marilyn Jenkins, "Western Islamic Influences on Fatimid Egyptian Iconography," *Kunst des Orients* 10 (1975) pp. 91–107 (esp. p. 104), who disputes that thesis and points to the earlier figure style tradition of the North African predecessors of the Fatimids.

42. For a discussion of the problem see Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven, 1973), "Islamic Attitudes towards the Arts," chap. 4 (pp. 75–103); and for the most likely date of the incipient prohibition of figural representations (between A.D. 680 and 720), Rudi Paret, "Die Entstehungszeit des islamischen Bildverbots," *Kunst des Orients* 11 (1976/77) pp. 158–181. The provenance of a *kilga* "ornamented with mythical animals with human faces" is given as from the mosque of Zayn-al-din in the Darb-al-Gemamiz by Herz, *Arab Museum*, p. 15; since the provenance of so few *kilgas* is known, this information is particularly valuable.

tinued through the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and only under the later Mamluks did Egyptian arts and crafts revert to the abstract designs favored by orthodoxy.

The New York *kilga* with its human representations must belong in the Fatimid or Ayyubid period. It has recently been suggested that in the graphic and ceramic arts such figures were shorthand ciphers of a symbolic iconography and were meant to evoke and glorify the life style of the Islamic prince. The banqueter may stand for the pleasures of life at court; the porter carrying a load for “men in the service of the court,” and for the abundance of provisions; the variety of diversions—the hunt foremost—for the whole wide range of entertainment of the palace.⁴³ But perhaps, less ambitious, the drinker simply stands for the pleasures offered by fresh water and the porter with his crudely shaped load is the purveyor of the precious liquid carried in an animal skin. The notion may gain some support when we look at the possible ancestors of the stands a little later.

7. Among the figured *kilgas* are two curiously bare ones with crudely carved side and back panels, otherwise devoid of ornament. Both are in the Coptic Museum: no. 3776 shows a mounted knight hawking;⁴⁴ another displays a lion-headed eagle with wings spread, on its chest a minute naked human with raised hands (Figure 23).⁴⁵ The lion head, in high relief, occupies the place of bosses on other *kilgas*, namely the top center of the side panels. These bosses are often given the shape of stylized lion’s heads.

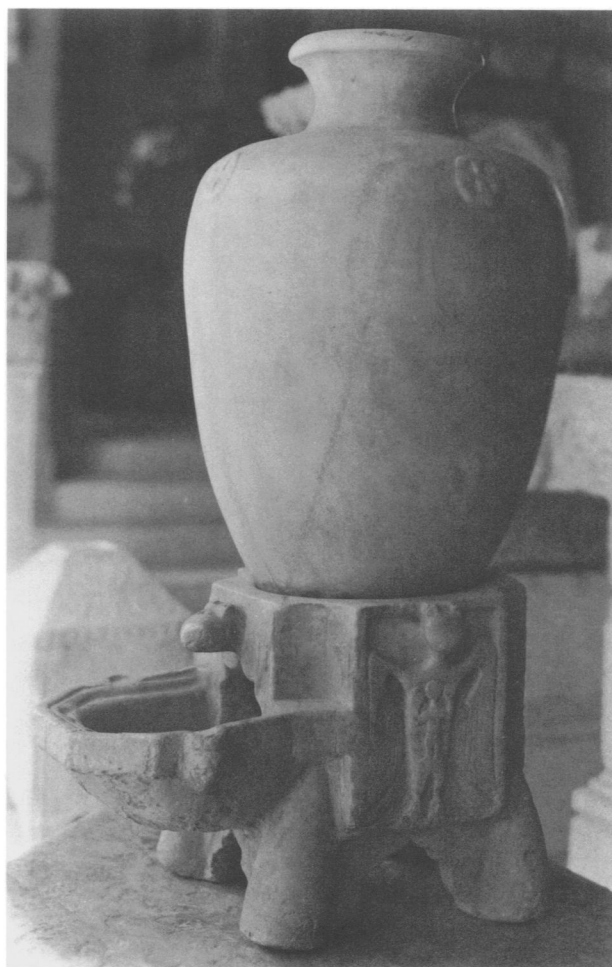


FIGURE 23
Kilga and marble vase. Cairo, Coptic Museum
(photo: courtesy Coptic Museum)

43. Grube, pp. 141f. and passim. For a man carrying a bovine, the spoils of a hunt, appearing already in a wall painting in Samarra, see Herzfeld, *Malereien von Samarra*, fig. 65.

44. The knotted tail of the horse is a typical Iranian or Central Asian feature, which occurs already on the Apadana reliefs in Persepolis. Hawking, much favored by the Islamic princes, was developed as a sport early in the first millennium B.C. in Inner Asia; see Johannes Hoops, *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, 2nd ed. rev. and enl. by H. Jankuhn et al. (Berlin, 1976) s.v. *Beizjagd* (K. Lindner). For a contemporary representation of hawking emirs see the 11th/12th-century ivory panels from Egypt in the Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Islamische Kunst, PKG 4, pl. 191, text p. 261.

45. I have not examined this *kilga*. The lion-headed spread eagle, which occurs on other *kilgas*, is curiously reminiscent of the Sumerian legend of King Etana being carried toward the sun by an eagle in search of a magic herb. Although in the epic the eagle is not described as lion-headed, the art of Mesopo-

tamia has many lion-headed spread eagles, the earliest from the mid-3rd millennium B.C. See Winfried Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 14 (Berlin, 1975) pl. 78a, mace of Mesilim, about 2600 B.C.; pl. 88, relief with dedicatory inscription which not only shows the lion-headed spread eagle “Imdugud” dominating two heraldically addorsed lions (interestingly, the mythical bird has a jewel on its chest), but also a big twisted cable pattern, which occurs on our *kilgas* (Museum of Islamic Art, no. 104, Figure 32; Recklinghausen, no. 509, Figures 41, 42). The relief is dated about 2430 B.C. and comes, like the mace, from Girsu (Tellö). See also *ibid.*, pl. 97, the well-known Imdugud “coat of arms” of copper in London, showing the mythical bird, symbol of some godhead, with two addorsed stags, from Tell el-‘Obēd, about 2475 B.C.; and pl. 120, the same subject on the silver vase of Prince Entemena, from Girsu (Tellö), in the Louvre, dated about 2430 B.C. It is hard to determine how this heraldic iconography was passed on to Islamic



FIGURES 24 AND 25

Kilga, no. 105, from the back and side. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art (photos: Knauer)

8. In this group unusual stress is laid on the diagonal niches with figures carved almost in the round. No. 105 in the Museum of Islamic Art has badly mutilated, long-haired nudes, standing with one hand on the lower belly and the other on the genitals (Figures 24, 25). The side panels show addorsed winged sphinxes with battered human heads, the back panel simply the lobed leaf.⁴⁶ The basin, into which drops an unusually steep, corrugated *salsabil*, is broken away. Even more badly damaged is no. 2671 of the

same museum (Figure 26). Standing figures in the three main panels have been all but obliterated. Spread eagles in very high relief, now headless,⁴⁷ occupy the diagonals with two lobed leaves above them. Instead of the normal cabrioled or straight legs the stand rests on crouching lions carved in the round. The basin with its inscription is broken away.

9. An important characteristic of this group is the niche with stalactite vault. Stalactites or alveoli

art. Once the caliphs had established themselves in Baghdad, there must have been monuments above ground in Iraq on which the artists could draw. See also below, note 58.

Yet the closest parallel to this modest *kilga* is surely the sumptuous and symbolically heavily fraught painting of the apotheosis of a ruler in the ceiling of the 12th-century Cappella Palatina in Palermo (Ettinghausen, fig. p. 46, text p. 50): an ascending eagle, frontal, two gazelles in his claws, is bridled by a human figure on its chest. See also Monneret de Villard, p. 47, who links the apotheosis picture with the Ganymede and the Garuda myths. The iconography of the apotheosis of the Roman emperors should also be taken into account. The arch of Titus, for example, showing the emperor on an eagle, was always above ground. Both *kilgas* of our group 7, the hawking rider and the "ascension," thus have parallels in the iconography of the Cappella Palatina (see Monneret de Villard, figs. 247, 248, 245).

46. For the sphinx motif in Islamic art see Grube, pp. 182–184, and Eva Baer, *Sphinxes and Harpies in Medieval Islamic Art: An Iconographical Study*, The Israel Oriental Society, Oriental Notes and Studies, no. 9 (Jerusalem, 1965). Sirens also occur

on the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina, see Monneret de Villard, figs. 241–244. They have halos. On this *kilga* their tails are vegetal, while the human heads may also have had halos. Halos are a fairly common feature for ordinary mortals in high medieval Islamic art and Byzantine models have been cited as the obvious source. Yet halos occur already in Kushan art in Central Asia, e.g., on the statue of King Kanishka in the museum in Mathura where a metal halo seems to have been attached to the sandstone sculpture; see H. Härtel and J. Auboyer, *Indien und Südostasien*, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 16 (Berlin, 1971) pl. 39, text p. 165, and John M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (Berkeley, 1967). Halos are a standard attribute on Kushan coinage. It is interesting that this feature seems to appear in East and West at about the same time, in the early 4th century A.D.; see Robert Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der iranischen Hunnen in Baktrien und Indien* (Wiesbaden, 1967) II, p. 308–310, who refers to the halos of the late Roman emperors. The halo becomes a standard feature of the iconography of the islamized Turkish tribes.

47. It is impossible to tell whether the heads were those of

(*muqarnas*), created for domed buildings as devices to render the zone between cube and sphere optically richer and the transition less abrupt, are first encountered in Egypt in the later eleventh century.⁴⁸ Originally conceived for curved planes—pendentives or hoods of niches—they lend themselves equally well to the decoration and accentuation of transitional zones in less complex architectural units, for instance in shallow oblong niches or as cornices.⁴⁹

In this group of *kilgas* the flat stalactite niches, fitted into the square panels of the trunk, are often flanked by slender columns and pilasters supporting decorative plaited bands framing the upper part of the panel. They represent minute but complete units which have parallels in contemporary architecture, for example, in the facade of the mosque al-Aqmar of 1125 in Cairo (Figures 27–29).⁵⁰

An outstanding *kilga* in the group is no. 11544 of the Museum of Islamic Art (Figure 30). The edge of its basin bears a series of regularly spaced cushion-shaped knobs—unparalleled in other stands—which make for an even, curtainlike overflow; uniform streaks down the bulge of the basin attest to the prolonged action of water. This seems to copy what otherwise, to my knowledge, occurs only in far bigger hydraulic installations.⁵¹ The decorative effect of the bulging knobs can be compared with the peculiar

eagles or lions. Both types are encountered in medieval Islamic art, e.g., the spread eagles with heraldic animals on the two stone basins of the late 10th century from Madinat az-Zahira, Cordoba, and Marrakesh, Morocco (PKG 4, pl. 92, cf. pl. 93, and p. 199). The first relief is dated A.D. 987/8 and inscribed with the name of the patron, al-Mansur, in whose palace-city near Cordoba the basin served for religious ablutions. The basin in Marrakesh is almost identical; see Gaston Migeon, *Manuel d'art musulman: Arts plastiques et industriels*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1927) fig. 89, p. 255. The heraldic birds occur on contemporary pottery, e.g., the gold lustre bowl by the potter Muslim from Fustat, on loan in the Metropolitan Museum (Dimand, p. 215); fragment of a lustreware bowl dated 11th/12th century (*Musée de l'art arabe du Caire: La Céramique égyptienne de l'époque musulmane* [Basel, 1922] pl. 38). Cf. also the 12th-century Persian sgraffiato ware bowl in Arthur Lane, *Islamic Pottery from the Ninth to the Fourteenth Centuries A.D. (Third to Eighth Centuries A.H.) in the Collection of Sir Eldred Hitchcock* (London, n.d.) no. 10, p. 21.

48. For the development of the stalactite pendentive see Creswell I, pp. 251–253, who considers it a local Egyptian feature occurring independently from Persia about 1100. For its later development see Creswell II, pp. 134, 146f. For the Seljuq origin see PKG 4, p. 284, text to pl. 226. The latest discussion is



FIGURE 26

Kilga, no. 2671. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art (photo: Knauer)

cushion voussoirs in the arches of the fortified Fatimid city gates of the late eleventh century, for instance the Bab al-Futuh of 1087.⁵² Side and back panels feature an architecturally framed alveoled

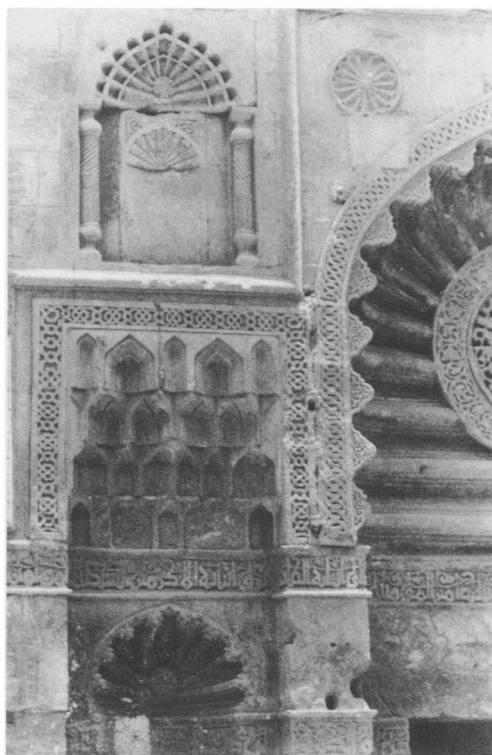
to be found in Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978) pp. 176ff.: "the origins of the *muqarnas* probably lie in the almost simultaneous but apparently unconnected development in north-eastern Iran and central North-Africa."

49. As decoration of oblong niches: the facade of the mosque al-Aqmar of 1125 (Creswell I, pl. 82c, cf. p. 243); a decorative panel on the facade of the madrasa of Sultan Salih Najm al-Din of 1242/3 (Creswell II, pl. 34, cf. p. 95), and similar panels on the mosque of Sultan Baybars of 1266–69, (Creswell II, pls. 49a, b). As a cornice: on the minaret of the Mashhad al-Guyusi of 1085 in Cairo (Creswell I, pp. 155ff., and PKG 4, pl. 171, text pp. 249f.). See also L. 'Ali Ibrahim, "The Transitional Zones of Domes in Cairene Architecture," *Kunst des Orients* 10 (1976) pp. 5–23.

50. See Creswell I, pp. 241ff., and PKG 4, pl. 176, text pp. 252f.

51. There is a modern fountain with such "cushions" at its rim in a square near the station in the provincial capital of Minya, which certainly copies earlier Islamic models. Features not unlike these can be seen on the huge Aghlabid cisterns at Qairawan; see Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, II, pls. 79b–d.

52. See Creswell I, pl. 64 and p. 212. The typically ribbed Fatimid hoods of niches, which display a similar propensity for plastic values, can be seen in Figures 27–29.

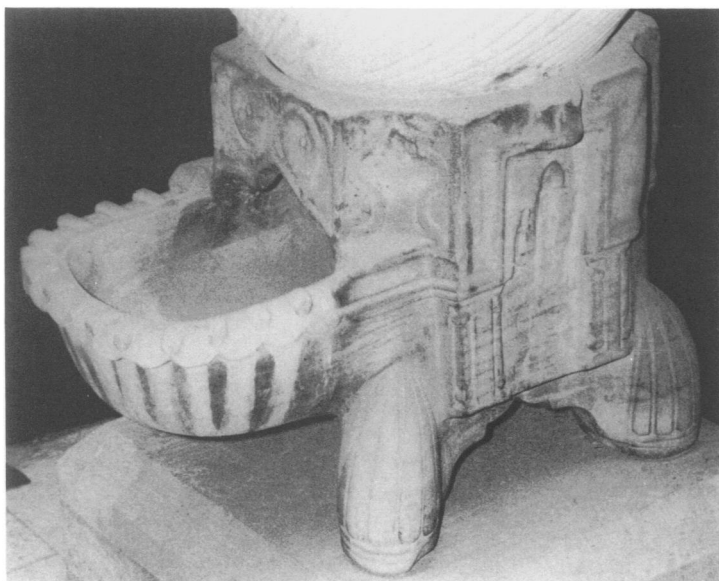


FIGURES 27–29

Details of the facade of the mosque al-Aqmar, Cairo, A.D. 1125 (photos: Knauer)

FIGURE 30

Kilga, no. 11544. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art (photo: courtesy Museum of Islamic Art)



niche—a miniature *mihṛāb*⁵³—containing the customary upright lobed leaf, which also occurs in the diagonal niches.

This stand is related to nos. 14099 and 668 of the Museum of Islamic Art, to an unnumbered stand in the museum's courtyard, and to one in the house of Sheikh es-Sihaimi.⁵⁴ No. 14099 contains a stylized frontal eagle with a mutilated lion's head carved in the round in its back panel, thus forming the transition to a more ornate type with heraldic animals displayed within the stalactite niches in the main panels.

Among the fully developed examples of the group is no. 104 of the Museum of Islamic Art (Figures 31, 32).⁵⁵ In the side panels it has addorsed winged lions

53. For the *mihṛāb* motif see above, note 32.

54. A stand in the Islamisches Museum in Berlin (inv. no. I.7261) is also related. According to V. Enderlein, an inscription runs around the rim of its basin and the side panels; these feature stalactite niches, whereas the niches in the diagonal panels are empty (letter, Oct. 13, 1978).

55. The woodworklike treatment of the span between the feet of the stand is reminiscent of no. 14097 in the Museum of Islamic Art, Figure 17. The stand is published (no illustration) as no. 190 in *Islamic Art in Egypt 969–1517*, exh. cat. (Cairo, 1969) p. 199; dimensions: H. 48 cm., L. 75 cm. The feet are

sejant in a stalactite niche overhung by a mutilated boss. The diagonal niches at the front are occupied by spread eagles with frontal lions' heads, the niches in the rear with a variant of the leaf motif above a twisted cable pattern.⁵⁶ These are time-honored "heraldic" motifs of ancient Oriental ancestry. They enjoy a real renaissance in medieval Islamic iconography, which draws heavily on the vigorous and realistic Iranian iconography revitalized by the ascendancy of the Turkish tribes.⁵⁷ The upsurge of the motifs in Egypt may also have been fed by the survival of the Oriental tradition in the famous local textile industry. Here the continuation of Sasanian "heraldry" in woven goods—lost but for a few fine examples—must have stimulated an interest in that curious world of mythical animals.⁵⁸ Strangely static, they appear enmeshed in the magic woods of often symmetrically designed, fully developed arabesques. Yet the delicate scrolls, leaves, and buds seem as vibrant and real as nature.⁵⁹

described as "resembling legs of tortoise," for which see above, note 7. A related but simpler stand is no. 97 in the Museum of Islamic Art: it has addorsed winged lions in the side panels, with no niche around them, and a leaf pattern in the diagonal niches (see *Album*, no. 11).

56. For the cable pattern cf. the Sumeric relief mentioned in note 45. According to V. Enderlein's description, an otherwise undecorated *kilga* in the Islamisches Museum in Berlin has a chainlike band on the side panels (letter, Oct. 13, 1978). See also the stand in Recklinghausen (Figures 41, 42).

57. See above, notes 39 and 45.

58. How deeply the Abbasid art of Iraq was influenced by the splendor of Sasanian court art became apparent with the excavations of Samarra. The degree to which Egypt has absorbed the Persian heritage was revealed by the cemeteries of, for example, Antinoë in Upper Egypt. They testify to the import of Sasanian textiles and the impact of those models on the famed Coptic workshops, which continued to produce till Fatimid times. Cable patterns and plaited bands occur on Coptic textiles as early as the 3rd to 5th centuries; see M. Dimand, *Die Ornamentik der ägyptischen Wollwirkereien: Stilprobleme der spätantiken und koptischen Kunst* (Leipzig, 1924) esp. chap. V.1, "Das geometrische Ornament." For the role of textiles in the transmission of heraldic animals see Henri Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth, 1958) pp. 232f., and Roman Ghirshman, *Iran: Parthians and Sassanians* (London, 1962) pp. 283–339, "The Diffusion of Sassanian Art," esp. pp. 310f. For the Persian tradition in Coptic textiles see W. F. Volbach, "Koptische Stoffe," in *Kopt. Kunst*, pp. 147–152. See also E. Kitzinger, "The Horse and Lion Tapestry at Dumbarton Oaks: A Study in Coptic and Sasanian Textile Design," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 3 (1946) pp. 1–71.

59. Precursors of the classical arabesque can be found in Coptic manuscripts as early as the middle of the 7th century. For Coptic art in Islamic Egypt see Ernst Kühnel, "Koptische Kunst im islamischen Ägypten," in *Kopt. Kunst*, pp. 153–156.



FIGURE 31

Kilga, no. 104. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art (photo: courtesy Museum of Islamic Art)

FIGURE 32

Kilga, no. 104, detail of right side. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art (photo: Knauer)





FIGURE 33
Seljuq lion sculpture immured in the citadel of Kayseri (photo: Knauer)

There are countless parallels for the spread eagle and the winged lion of the *kilgas*, and for the human- or lion-headed bird, on fragments of contemporary local lustreware from the kilns in Fustat, excavated on that site.⁶⁰ As for lions carved in the round, encountered in the bosses and, more rarely, as the feet of *kilgas*, their ancestry seems very complex. The high degree of stylization clearly shows their derivative character. Live lions must have been a much less frequent sight for the Islamic craftsman than the already stylized host of big cats represented in the art of earlier civilizations that was still visible above ground in Syria, Anatolia, and Egypt itself (Figure 33).⁶¹

60. For the eagles see above, note 47. For winged lions see *Céramique égyptienne*, pls. 36, 42, 44, 81. There are further examples in the Museum of Islamic Art: room 4, vitrine 1, an 11th-century Fatimid lustre plate (the winged lion has a beak); room 13, vitrine 3, several examples, also of sirens whose tails end in half-palmettes. There is a fine fragment of a 12th/13th-century stucco frieze from Iran in the Metropolitan Museum (Dimand, fig. 56 and p. 93), with addorsed lions, sejant and gardant, clawing the air with one paw; their long tails, slung about their hind legs, then rise upward to fill the empty triangle between them with a lyre-shaped scroll ornament, which in turn sends forth fleshy leaves. This relief can profitably be compared with nos. 104 and 4328 in the Museum of Islamic Art (see below, note 66).

61. Some of the Hittite gate lions in Anatolia and North Syria were never totally buried and may have inspired later civilizations to take the lion, king of beasts, as a guardian animal, be it on tombs or in public architecture. For the lion's role in the art of the Ancient Near East see Frankfort, *Ancient Orient*, pp. 181ff. For the latest survey of Greek lions, including previous



FIGURE 34
Kilga, no. 464 (inv. no. 10833). Athens, Benaki Museum (photo: Knauer)

10. Though the stalactite motif connects this with the preceding group, the firmly framed stalactite niche has here given ground to several tiers of shallow, stilted alveoli.⁶² They may take up the whole field of the side panels or occupy only part, either at the top or at the foot of the panel, leaving room for other motifs, for instance the upright angular loop encountered in the New York stand and its kin. In this group the diagonal niches usually contain figures carved in rather high relief, frequently seated female nudes with raised hands. An example is no. 464 in the Benaki Museum (Figure 34).⁶³ On a badly mangled *kilga* in the Coptic Museum (no. 3090, Figure 35), the

literature, see V. M. Strocka, "Neue archaische Löwen in Anatolien," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1977) 4, pp. 481–512. The great sphinx at Giza and some of its smaller kin were, of course, always visible. For felines in Umayyad art see PKG 4, pls. 45a,b and p. 173, and for a Fatimid example in bronze, *ibid.*, pl. 195. For Coptic lions see below in the discussion of the bronze miniature stands and vases in the Benaki Museum, Athens.

62. For an early example of stilted keel arches in Cairene architecture see the mid-12th-century addition of Caliph al-Hafiz li-Din Allah to the al-Azhar mosque (Creswell I, pp. 36ff; PKG 4, pl. 164 and pp. 246f.). For stilted *muqarnas* see the cupola of the mausoleum of Sultana Shagar al-Durr of 1250 (Creswell II, pp. 136ff.; PKG 4, pl. 293, text pp. 325f.).

63. Inv. no. 10833; provenance, Ispenian; date, 13th–14th century (Benaki Museum, letter, Sept. 7, 1978). From V. Enderlein's description, a stand in the Islamisches Museum in Berlin belongs to this group: it has stalactite niches in the side panels, naked seated figures in the diagonal niches, and an inscription (letter, Oct. 13, 1978).



FIGURE 35
Kilga, no. 3090, partial view, on a Coptic jar-stand.
 Cairo, Coptic Museum (photo: courtesy Coptic Museum)

women wear nothing but pointed caps in the front niches and crosses on their heads in the rear ones; a corrugated *salsabil* leads into the basin, the rim of which is adorned with two carved fishes.⁶⁴ This is the first example surveyed to have oddly Christian connotations. Yet another *kilga* in the Coptic Museum is closely related: the diagonal niches house four standing figures in long caftans, their hands resting on the pommel of huge upright swords. Similar sword-bearers appear in the rear niches of the single dated *kilga*, whose mutilated inscription puts its manufacture in the decade between 1193 and 1203 (Museum of Islamic Art, no. 4328, Figure 36).⁶⁵ In the front niches

64. I was unable to obtain a photograph that showed the details of this important stand.

65. The dates cited are those considered by Michael Rogers to be the most likely. The piece is catalogued by Gaston Wiet, *Catalogue général du Musée de l'Art Islamique du Caire: Inscriptions historiques sur pierre* (Cairo, 1971) p. 41, no. 59–4328, pl. VIII; dimensions, 48 × 41 × 75 cm.; bought in 1916. Wiet's brief description deliberately abstains from remarks concerning style or iconography. Of the figures, he notes "ils sont en tous cas très curieux." His translation of the inscription reads: "Bénédictio parfaite. Bénédictio parfaite, faveur étendue, salut durable et gloire à son possesseur. . . . 500 et" from which he concludes: "Cette pièce, dont la date n'offre plus que la fin du chiffre des dizaines et celui de la centaine, est donc du VI^e/XII^e siècle." The inscription had been published earlier in Et. Combe, J. Sauvaget, and G. Wiet, *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (Cairo, 1937) VIII, p. 279, no. 3185. See also *Album*, no. 13. For a somewhat more detailed description (no illustration) of the stand see *Islamic Art in Egypt 969–1517*, no. 191, which gives the date as A.H. 570 or 590 (A.D. 1192 or 1212,

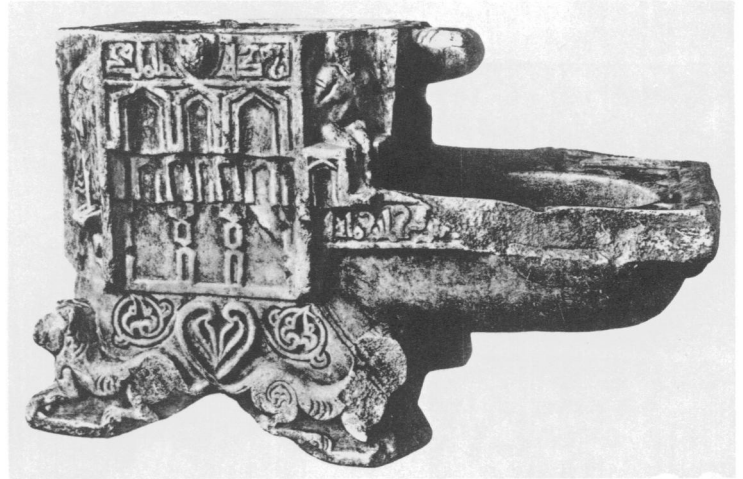


FIGURE 36
Kilga, no. 4328. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art
 (photo: after Wiet, *Inscriptions historiques*)

the seated females, nude but for necklaces and armlets, hold their hands at the height of their breasts, one hand grasping an elongated object. The barefooted sword-bearers in the rear niches show *ṭirāz*-bands on the sleeves of their long gowns. The feet of the stand are formed by crouching addorsed lions, a feature encountered in group 8 (Figure 26). Their curved tails with shaggy ends entwine to form a heart-shaped pattern in the center, from which emerge two scrolls encircling trefoil buds. The same design is found on the joints of the lions' hind legs. Similarly adorned predacious animals occur several times on Egyptian monuments of the period.⁶⁶

i.e., already Ayyubid) and the dimensions as 48 × 48 × 75 cm. The discrepancy in the width from that given by Wiet, *Inscriptions historiques*, is readily explained by the fact that the stands with their bosses and bulges do not lend themselves easily to being measured.

66. For the composition cf. the stucco frieze mentioned in note 60. The vegetal motif on the lions' joints also occurs on two Fatimid lion reliefs found in Cairo and preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art (*Album*, no. 5, and Migeon, *Manuel d'art musulman*, fig. 91, p. 261). It has a parallel in a lion relief decorating the bridge at Ludd. Cf. also that at Abu 'l-Munagga, of 1266/67, by Sultan Baybars al-Bunduqdari; see Creswell II, fig. 81 and pp. 150–154, who argues that the big cats, in this case apparently panthers, were a kind of blazon of the Mamluk sultan Baybars I on buildings presumably erected by him (*bars* signifies a predacious feline). The Seljuq rulers of Anatolia also seem to have felt an affinity to the king of animals, as attested by their names—Alp Arslan, the "Brave Lion," took Anatolia from the Byzantines. Seljuq monuments abound with lions (see Figure 33). Joint ornaments are already to be found on a late



FIGURE 37
Kilga, no. 6410. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art
 (photo: courtesy Museum of Islamic Art)



FIGURE 38
Kilga. Cairo, Coptic Museum, courtyard (photo:
 courtesy Coptic Museum)

Parallels, though not from Egypt, can be adduced for the sword-bearers,⁶⁷ but it is hard to account for the female nudes. Rare in Islamic art, they appear occasionally in the decoration of bathing establishments, for instance in the “desert castles” of Umayyad princes in Syria. Qusayr ‘Amra, built in the second quarter of the eighth century, furnishes the most striking examples.⁶⁸ The iconographic dependence of these baths on Roman *thermae* has long been recognized. Literary sources attest the survival of the Roman tradition into the tenth to twelfth centuries in Seljuq, Tulunid, and Fatimid baths, though we lack actual examples.⁶⁹ There is, however, a fairly close parallel to the *kilga* nudes in a unique glazed sherd with relief decoration from the excavations in Fustat.⁷⁰ It shows a standing female with raised hands, naked but for armlets and straps (of jewelry?) running over her shoulders and crossing in front of her body, not unlike the nudes on the Cairo stand. She

was apparently represented between engaged columns. We will revert to this fragment, which seems to be part of a huge vase, later.

A special feature of the dated stand is the bull’s mask below the front edge of the basin, reminiscent of the unusual corbel decoration at one of Cairo’s northern city gates, the Bab al-Futuh, of 1087.⁷¹

11. The penultimate group in this survey shares several features with the preceding one. A damaged stand in the Museum of Islamic Art (no. 6410, Figure 37) lacks its feet—apparently crouching lions—and basin; only rudiments of a wide, chevroned *salsabil* are preserved. The side and back panels, narrower than in previous examples, rest on three tiers of alveoli and are framed by a band formed of a loosely tied cable pattern.⁷² The side panels contain crowned female nudes in an *orans* attitude. The back panel shows a turbaned guard with a huge sword; similar

Hellenistic sphinx sculpture in the temple precinct of Medinet Madi (Narmouthis) in the southwestern Fayum.

67. Cf. the stucco sculptures of princes from Iran, about 1200, in the Metropolitan Museum, acc. nos. 67.119 (Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lester Wolfe) and 57.51.18, (Cora Timken Burnett Collection of Persian Miniatures and Other Persian Art Objects, Bequest of Cora Timken Burnett, 1956). These have smaller parallels in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; no. A22-1928; cf. A20-1928.

68. See F. Zayadine, “The Umayyad Frescoes of Quseir ‘Amra,” *Archaeology* 31:3 (1978) pp. 19–29, with literature; and PKG 4, pls. 32, x, and pp. 157ff.

69. See PKG 4, text to pls. xxxiva,b on p. 262. Mrs. Serageldin in her forthcoming article (“‘Ali Ibrahim and Yasin, “Ṭulūnid Ḥammām”) believes that the stucco *muqarnas* came not from the steam room of that Tulunid bath, but rather from the oblong room (*maslah*) or from another building.

70. Aly Bahgat and Félix Massoul, *La Céramique musulmane de l’Égypte* (Cairo, 1930) pl. LXI, 9 and p. 91. The piece cannot be dated exactly.

71. See Creswell I, pl. 66b.

72. I cannot find parallels to these loosely cabled bands in the decoration of monumental architecture. There the design of plaited bands is more angular, becoming less closely knit and

long-gowned figures occupy the wide, shallow diagonal niches in the rear, fully dressed *orantes*, complete with hats, those in the front. The front panel, frequently occupied by two roundels, here has four, two of which bear inscriptions.⁷³ Unusual stress is put on the architectural frame of the diagonal niches—engaged twin columns with bulbous capitals and bases; the innermost pair of columns has spiral fluting. A similar feature occurs on the facade of the mosque al-Aqmar of 1125 in Cairo (Figure 29).⁷⁴

There is a close counterpart to this *kilga* in the courtyard of the Coptic Museum (Figure 38). It differs by having spirally fluted feet and, in the decoration of the front panel, bulls' heads instead of the more frequent lions' heads; another bull's head appears at the front of the basin.⁷⁵ Otherwise there are the same crowned nudes on the sides, a male attired and crowned at the back, and four long-gowned guards with swords in the niches. Three tiers of *muqarnas* and the cable-band complete the parallel. A perfect *horror vacui* characterizes these stands.

12. In conclusion, there are two stands which, though retaining the general structure of a *kilga*, depart from the rest in the rough style of their carving and their patent Christian symbolism. In the courtyard of the Coptic Museum is a stand bearing on the side panels a lamb⁷⁶ facing a cross, and on the back a roundel with cross; at the same time it preserves an Islamic leaf motif flanked by spiraled columns in the rear di-

more "airy" in the 13th and 14th centuries. An early example are the bands on the mosque of As-Salih Tala'i of 1160 (Creswell I, pls. 97d, 98b, cf. pls. 106 b4 and 107 c4. For a "drier" and more angular type see Creswell II, pl. 22a, mausoleum of Imam al-Shafi'i, A.D. 1211. It also occurs on pottery (*Céramique égyptienne*, pl. 137). For the closest parallel see Strzykowski, no. 7338.

73. The inscription reads: *al-'izz al-dā'im* ("the eternal glory"). These roundels, for instance on the Damascus stand (Figure 20), seem to have given the zealots the impression of representing eyes and they have been damaged in consequence. On the Damascus stand and certain others the roundels have pierced centers, the purpose of which is unknown to me. Could they have served to fix metal cups on chains for scooping water? Inscribed roundels occur on the facade of the mosque al-Aqmar. In Mamluk art these round "cartouches" are often divided in three sections by horizontal bands (see *Album*, no. 69, and *passim*).

74. See above, note 50. For 11th-century spiral fluting see the wooden "*mihrab*" panel in the Museum of Islamic Art, no. 8464 (*Album*, no. 23).

75. Cf. the dated stand discussed above in group 10 (Mu-

agonal niches (Figures 39, 40). The shape of the marble stand in the Ikonenmuseum, Recklinghausen, is utterly simplified (Figures 41, 42).⁷⁷ It features lions with their prey in the side panels but their style has nothing to do with the heraldic beasts occupying the same place in many Islamic *kilgas*; it seems rather to hark back to classical models. Bands with cables and scrolls and spirally fluted columns occur—but how different from the balance and grace of a Muslim artifact. We are here in the realm of Coptic Christianity.

And yet there can be no doubt that the shape of the two *kilgas* is derived from Islamic models. They must have been fashioned for use by Copts in Egypt in the high Middle Ages. We can actually witness the overlapping of the two iconographic traditions, Islamic and Coptic, in a stand from group 10 (Coptic Museum, no. 3090, Figure 35), which combines *muqarnas* panels and a *salsabil* with fishes on the rim of the basin and nudes with crosses on their heads, and here in the stand which features Christian symbols in the side and back panels while retaining the Islamic leaf motif in the diagonal niches (Figures 39, 40). The "purest" Coptic stand, in Recklinghausen, has—besides its shape—nothing but the cable pattern linking it to Islamic examples.

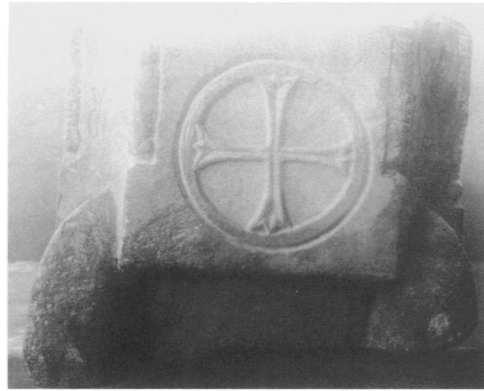
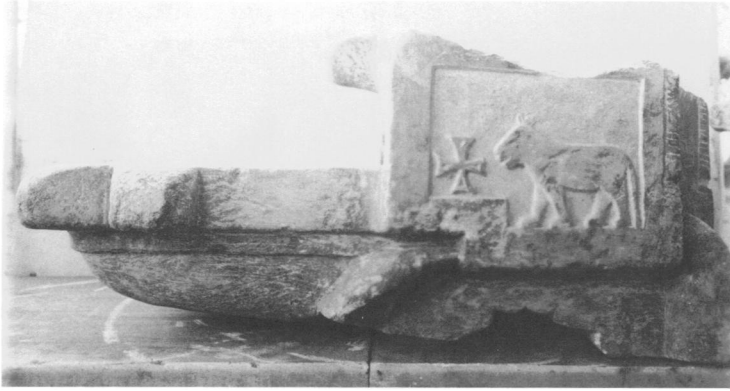
The indigenous Coptic tradition may in its turn help to explain the predilection for animate creatures or, stranger still, the nudes that occur in Egyptian art of the high Middle Ages.⁷⁸ The idiosyncratic character of Coptic art, which developed from the complex

seum of Islamic Art, no. 4328); for the bulls' heads see note 71.

76. The species of animal intended is hard to determine; it could also be a heifer.

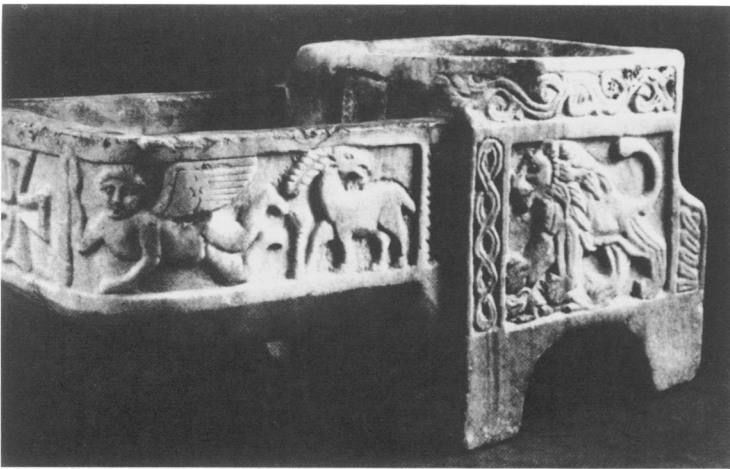
77. Inv. no. 509; dimensions, 21 × 19 × 39.5 cm.; provenance unknown. See K. Wessel, *Kunst der Kopten, Sammlung des Ikonenmuseums Recklinghausen: Kunstsammlungen der Stadt Recklinghausen, Koptische Sammlung des Ikonenmuseums* (Recklinghausen, n.d. [1962]). Wessel dates the stand in the high Middle Ages and compares it to undecorated stands from Islamic Egypt (he cites four examples) whose shape it imitates. As to its purpose: "Das Gerät dürfte kultischen Zwecken gedient haben. Vielleicht enthielt das Gefäß geweihtes Wasser zum Nachfüllen des Beckens (ägyptische Klöster bezogen oft ihr Wasser nicht aus eigenen Brunnen, sondern mussten es vom Nil holen oder in der Regenzeit in Zisternen leiten). Man verwandte daher schon in der Spätantike, vgl. Saqqara, kultische Gefäßständer." I suppose the stand was made for a Coptic church, but most likely to supply the faithful with drinking water and not to serve any cultic purpose. The stand appears as no. 127 in *Kopt. Kunst*, with no illustration.

78. Both types of nudes encountered on *kilgas*, the *orans* with raised hands and the "Ishtar" with hands about the breasts (a



FIGURES 39 AND 40

Kilga with Christian symbols, side and back views. Cairo, Coptic Museum, courtyard (photos: courtesy Coptic Museum)



FIGURES 41 AND 42

Coptic *Kilga*, no. 509, seen from the front and back. Recklinghausen, Koptische Sammlung, Ikonenmuseum (photos: after Wessel, *Kunst der Kopten*)

variation is the *Venus pudica* in the Museum of Islamic Art, no. 105, Figure 24) do, of course, occur already in the Ancient Near East. See, e.g., Orthmann, *Alte Orient*; pl. xiv, clay vase (in Paris) with incised nude *orans* among water animals, from Larsa, Iraq, first half of the 2nd millennium B.C.; pl. 366f, in Konya, lead statuette of the goddess Ishtar, a winged nude in *orans* attitude, from Karahüyük, about 1800/1750 B.C. See Frankfort, *Ancient Orient*; pl. 135a and p. 134, copper figure of a nude holding her breasts, from Tell Judeideh, first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. The "Ishtar" gesture occurs in the stucco decoration of the 8th-century Umayyad "desert castle" Qasr al-Hair al-Gharbi (D. Schlumberger, "Les Fouilles de Qasr el-Heir el-Gharbi, 1936–38," *Syria* 20 [1939] p. 349; PKG 4, pp. 171f.). Yet this seems a fairly tenuous link to the nudes of the *kilgas*. Coptic art instead offers not only female nudes derived from classical mythology in its sculpture, but also many examples among more modest objects of daily use, e.g., the doll-like nudes made from hollow bones

which contained *kohl*, the black eye cosmetic (Strzygowski, pp. 201–204, pl. xviii). Strzygowski dates these between the 8th and the 12th century and does not mention the use of some of them as toilet accessories. Quite a few have been found in Fustat, some are on show in the Museum of Islamic Art, some in the Coptic Museum; cf. also Benaki Museum, no. 10738. There are flat ones which cannot have served as *kohl* containers; many bear delicate black tattoo-like ornaments. Strzygowski (p. 33, "Nuditäten") calls the predilection for the nude typically Coptic. Nudes are also encountered on bronze implements; see *Kopt. Kunst*, no. 604, a lamp; no. 173, a patera. Most important for our context are nudes in conjunction with Christian symbols: in *Kopt. Kunst*, no. 172, a finial (nude dancer below a cross); in Strzygowski, no. 9101, pl. xxxi, handle of a patera (nude dancer lifting a cross). These bronze pieces are dated between the 4th and 6th century.

cultural conditions of the Nile valley during late antiquity, has led to its being taken for mere folk art. Only recently have this tradition and its contributions to the maturing of Islamic art been properly assessed. The Coptic influence is most obvious in the field of decorative ornament,⁷⁹ but it also affects certain iconographic features.

Of monophysite denomination, the large Coptic community was an important social group in Old Cairo where its members were employed especially as artisans by the Muslim conquerors. Their influence made itself felt until the twelfth century.⁸⁰ Our stands are a case in point.

The genesis of the *kilga*'s peculiar shape is as composite as its carved decoration. As we have seen, Egypt had always to rely on the Nile as its foremost source of drinking water. Heavy with silt, the water had to be purified and cooled. Stands were needed for the porous earthenware jars through which it filtered into a collecting vessel underneath. There are numerous Pharaonic representations of elegant jars perched on delicate stands, apparently fashioned of wood.⁸¹ In view of the conservative character of Coptic art, it comes as no surprise that several miniature bronze models in the Benaki Museum in Athens should present us with amphorae on stands, the latter clearly imitating woodwork, which seem to have preserved the design of their Pharaonic ancestors most faithfully.⁸²

Typically Coptic is the abundance of stylized animals: a bird on the lid of the jar, rampant felines—with characteristically scalloped flanks—as handles, and a feline protome jutting from the front of the stand (Figure 43). Whatever their date, these miniatures attest to the continuation of an age-old local shape. As the actual objects of wood and clay have long since perished, we are fortunate to have at least the small-scale versions.

There are two kinds of Coptic objects first assembled by Josef Strzygowski under the heading "Gefässtische," which present us with yet another solution for the storage and purification of drinking water.⁸³ One is a small group of terracotta jar-stands that are imitations of wooden models (Figures 44, 45). The salient features of these fired but unglazed clay supports are two or more circular openings in the top of the boxlike receptacle. Jars would be placed in the openings and the water caught below. Dated in the seventh to eighth centuries, these terracotta stands all have spoutlike outlets. In another, larger group of stone stands (Figures 46–48), which includes a Pharaonic spoil (Figure 48), the relevant features are ingeniously developed. These "jar-tables" are, in my opinion, direct prototypes of the *kilga*.

FIGURE 43

Miniature bronze model of Coptic jar and stand (inv. no. 11604). Athens, Benaki Museum (photo: Knauer)

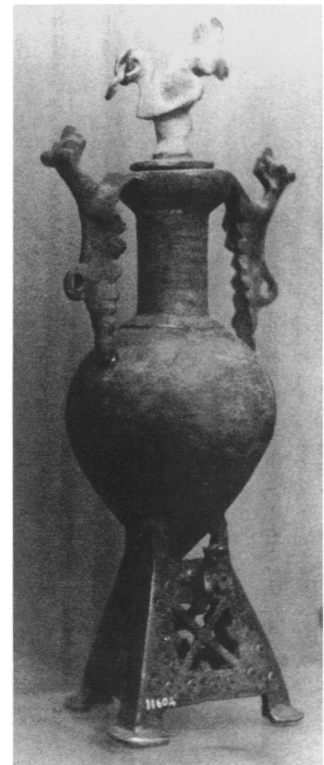
79. For ornament see above, note 58, and S. 158f. in *Kopt. Kunst*. Cf. also the patterns on Coptic woodwork of the 5th–6th century, Strzygowski, e.g., nos. 7369, 8780, 8792.

80. Ernst Kühnel, "Koptische Kunst im islamischen Ägypten," *Kopt. Kunst*, pp. 153–156. For a summary of Coptic art see *Encyclopedia of World Art* (London, 1960) s.v. Coptic Art (W. F. Volbach), and the recent sober assessment of C. C. Walters, *Monastic Archaeology in Egypt* (Warminster, 1974) covering the Coptic churches and monasteries from pre-Islamic to high medieval times.

81. See, for example, K. Lange and M. Hirmer, *Egypt: Architecture, Sculpture, Painting*, 4th ed. (London/New York, 1968) pls. xxv, xxvi (a tomb painting in Thebes), 166, 167, all about 1400 B.C. I noticed a wooden stand for four jars placed on vitrine M, room 34, in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

82. Nos. 11602, 11604; no. 10255 is a simpler model in wood; nos. 11603 and 11653 are bronze stands only. The height of the complete ones is approximately 20–22 cm. Information supplied by the Benaki Museum gives the date as 2nd–6th century, and the provenance as Egypt.

83. Strzygowski, pp. 240–242 (terracotta stands), pp. 88–94 (stone stands). Strzygowski's no. 7393, under the heading "Löwen," is in fact part of a stone jar-stand.



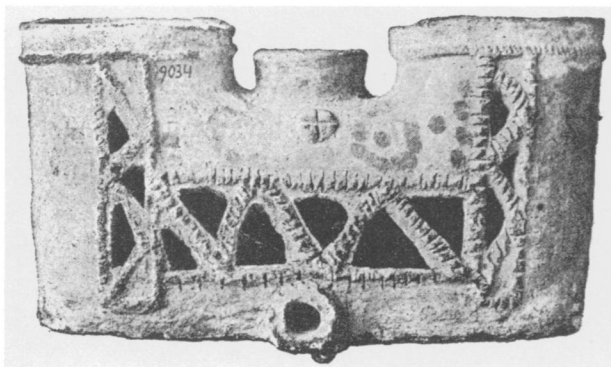


FIGURE 44
Coptic jar-stand of clay, no. 9034. Cairo, Egyptian Museum (photo: after Strzygowski)

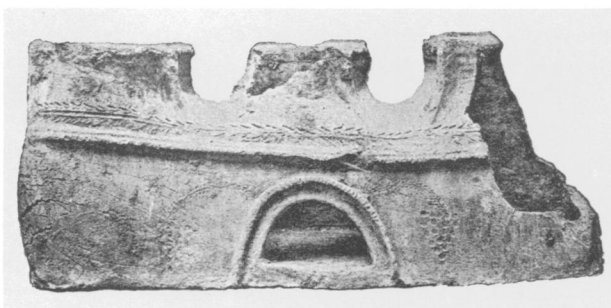


FIGURE 45
Coptic jar-stand of clay, no. 9036. Cairo, Egyptian Museum (photo: after Strzygowski)

Their simple mechanism is clearly illustrated by a stand on display in the current excavations in Fustat (Figures 49, 50). Decorated in front with a cross amid leafy tendrils and on the rim with a Coptic inscription,⁸⁴ it has circular depressions designed to receive one big flat-bottomed jar—presumably similar to a modern *qulla*—and two smaller jars with more pointed bases. These depressions communicate through small openings with a collecting basin in the middle of the stand, which is in turn drained by a hole in the front, just visible in the lower bar of the cross. The short legs of the stand allow for a drinking bowl to be put under this drainage hole. There is another, slightly simpler, example of the jar-table in the courtyard of the temple in Esna in Upper Egypt (Figure 51). A permanent installation in the refectory of the monastery of St. Simeon (Deir Anba Hadra) near Aswan, which may date from the tenth century, allowed the water to descend over different levels, thereby using it to the utmost (Figure 52).⁸⁵

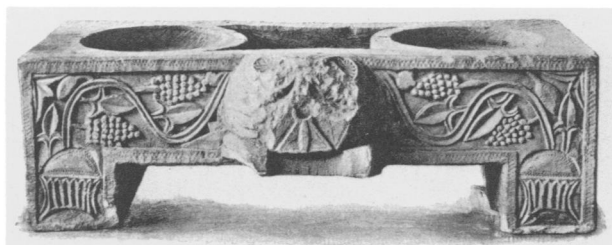


FIGURE 46
Stone jar-stand, no. 7374. Cairo, Egyptian Museum (photo: after Strzygowski)



FIGURE 47
Stone jar-stand, no. 7375. Cairo, Egyptian Museum (photo: after Strzygowski)



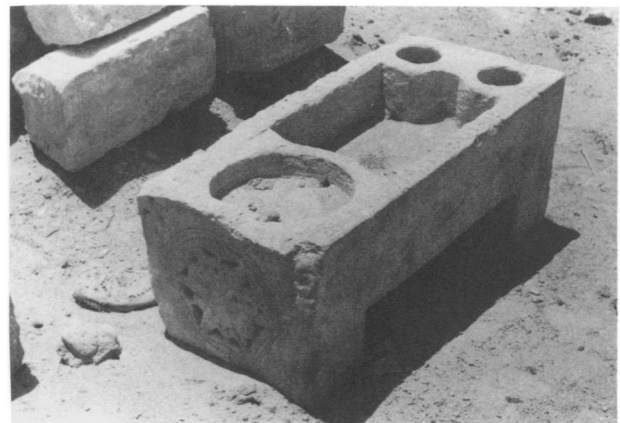
FIGURE 48
Front and back view of stone jar-stand, no. 7376. Cairo, Egyptian Museum (photo: after Strzygowski)

Many of Strzygowski's examples are furnished with lions' protomes or feline heads as spouts. Curiously, not all of these are perforated, which reduces them to mere ornament.⁸⁶ Also ornamental were the simi-

84. I did not copy the inscription.

85. See Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, p. 241. Curiously, Walters (pp. 191f.) lists only two "water-stands" in Saqqara of the type Strzygowski calls "Gefässtische."

86. The stand illustrated in Figure 46 (Egyptian Museum, Cairo, no. 7374) has no spout. A very low example (21.5 × 78.5 × 43.5 cm.) with a single circular depression, the front decorated with a lion head in the round flanked heraldically by a hare and a hound in relief, is pictured in *Art islamique dans les collections privées libanaises*, exh. cat. (Musée Nicolas Sursock, Beirut, 1974) p. 61; provenance and date are given as Egypt, 13th or 14th century.



FIGURES 49 AND 50

Coptic jar-stand of stone, seen from the front and back. Fustat, Cairo (photos: Knauer)

lar protomes and heads on the small bronze models in the Benaki Museum. Is it possible that the feline heads on our *kilgas* hark back to those Coptic prototypes?⁸⁷

The spout side or front of the jar-tables is frequently carved in low relief with rather schematic vines or scrolls sprouting from fluted vases. Strzygowski places them between the fifth and ninth centuries and calls some of them “Coptic from the Arabic period.” They have, according to him, been continuously used through modern times. One wonders



FIGURE 51

Coptic jar-stand of stone in the temple precinct of Esna, Upper Egypt (photo: Knauer)

87. In all fairness it should be said that there is a tradition in Islamic art that associates lions with water installations, e.g., the 11th-century lions incorporated into the 14th-century fountain in the Alhambra (see PKG 4, pl. 275; for the date see Frederic Bargebuhr, *The Alhambra: A Cycle of Studies on the Eleventh Century in Moorish Spain* [Berlin, 1968] pp. 170–172; for a detail photo of one of the lions see Grabar, *Alhambra*, fig. 83). Other examples are the painted fountain in the Cappella Palatina (see above, note 30) and the painted fountains with lion-headed gargoyles on the ceiling of the 14th-century Sala de Justicia at the Court of the Lions in the Alhambra (Basilio Pavon Maldonado, *Arte Toledano islamico y mudejar* [Madrid, 1973] pl. 197f and fig. 157). See also the 12th/13th-century Seljuq hexagonal tile from Iran with applied lion masks, “clearly the central element of a fairly elaborate fountain” (Grube, no. 122, pp. 174, 176). Michael Rogers tells me of a 12th-century Ghurid clay jar in the British Museum with two lion heads at the neck. In his opinion, the zoomorphic decoration of *kilgas* is indebted to unglazed earthenware from Syria and the feline heads are influenced by Mesopotamian (especially Raqqa) unglazed ware, about 1100–1200. Cf. the jar fragments with lion heads in Baghat and Massoul, *Céramique musulmane*, nos. 2, 10, pl. LXI.

In the case of the *kilgas*, however, the Coptic models seem of greater relevance.



FIGURE 52

Built-in jar-stand in the refectory of the monastery of St. Simeon, near Aswan (photo: Knauer)

whether the crudely fluted vases on the legs (Figure 46) might not have inspired the Muslim sculptors of the twelfth century to provide the legs of their *kilgas* with tongue-like flutes.

The shape of one of Strzygowski's jar-tables is clearly determined by that of the reused architectural member it is fashioned from (Figure 48). This appropriation may throw some light on the formation of the *kilga's* peculiar shape. Possibly it too was derived from the spoils of another defunct civilization—defunct but still with the power to fertilize a new genre. If so, it would not be an isolated instance in the development of Islamic art.

The place on the right bank of the Nile to which the Greeks gave the name of "Babylon in Egypt" was fortified by the Romans, and here, in A.D. 641, the Byzantines lost Egypt to 'Amr, general of Caliph Umar, one of the Meccan companions and the second successor of the Prophet. The bulky remains of the late Roman citadel in Old Cairo still convey today an impression of the physical surroundings the Muslim warriors encountered when leaving the desert for that unprecedented conquest. Marble, not native to Egypt, must have abounded on the site—above all, architectural members, columns, and architraves, imported for the adornment of public and private buildings.⁸⁸ Might not the fluted or chamfered drums of marble columns have suggested themselves as handy raw material for an Ur-form of the *kilga*, so far unrecorded?

88. How much the Islamic invaders of Egypt must have been impressed by the splendor of the architecture at the classical sites, e.g., Alexandria, is attested by several passages in Maqrizi, some of legendary character (see Bouriant's translation, *Description topographique*, pp. 424f., 429). The glare of the marble in that city was said to be such that the inhabitants were forced to wear black, curtains of green silk and black scarves were introduced to shield the eyes, and no lighting was needed on a moonlit night; "On raconte que le marbre était un véritable gêne pour les habitants."

89. I do not know when the term is first used to describe such cascades. "Salsabil is the name of a fountain in paradise, mentioned only once in the Kor'an in Sūra LXXVI, 18. 'And there shall they (the just) be given to drink of the cup tempered with ginger, from the fount therein whose name is salsabil.'" *Encyc.*, VII, p. 118 (T. W. Haig). See also Marçais, "Salsabil and Šādirwān"; and Ettinghausen, introduction to *The Islamic Garden*, p. 9 (the review of this book by John D. Hoag, *Artibus Asiae* 41 [1979] pp. 94f., stresses the classical antecedences).

90. For a recent compilation of nymphaea see: Bluma L. Trell, "Epigraphica Numismatica: Monumental Nymphaea on Ancient Coins," *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 15:

That its developed shape should be a contamination of different types, the primitive, indigenous jar-stand and the Coptic "Gefässstisch," gains support when we look for the prototype of an important feature of the fully fledged *kilga*: the *salsabil*.

There is no doubt in my mind that the miniature cascade (*salsabil*),⁸⁹ as well as its monumental counterpart, the wall fountain (*shādhawān*), which both make their appearance in Tulunid/Fatimid times, are inspired by classical models encountered by the Arab invaders in the Roman East. Metropolises like Damascus, Antioch with its suburb of Daphne, and the Roman cities in North Africa were famous for their water supply and the uses made of it.⁹⁰ Though none of these installations has been preserved, we can form a picture of them from fountains of moderate size recovered from private dwellings in Pompeii and Rome. Two Pompeian examples—one of them a "proto-*shādhawān*"—have been fairly accurately reconstructed in the gardens of the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, California (Figures 53, 54).⁹¹ Three examples in the Vatican represent in particular the kind of model that must have furnished visual inspiration to the Muslim craftsmen (Figures 55–57).⁹² Almost square and carved from single blocks of marble, the fountain heads were fed from below through a vertical shaft in the center, which led into a jar-shaped container or reservoir on top. In the simpler models the overflow was drained through perforated scallops placed above miniature flights of steps. In

1–2 (1978) p. 148, n. 3; and *Der Kleine Pauly: Lexikon der Antike* (Munich, 1975) s.v. *Wasserspiele*. See also C. V. Daremberg and E. Saglio, eds., *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines* (Paris, 1896) s.v. *fons* (E. Michon). The ruins of the Canopus in Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, one of the many of the emperor's architectural recollections, in this case of Egypt, are extensive enough to visualize a monumental installation of that kind: a vaulted exedra contains a stepped cascade which feeds a canal-like pond, surrounded by a portico, in front of it.

91. For the original of Figure 53, dated about A.D. 50, see Hans Eschebach, *Pompeji: Erlebte antike Welt* (Leipzig, 1978) fig. 214. For Figure 54 see Norman Neuerburg, *Herculaneum to Malibu: A Companion to the Visit of the J. Paul Getty Museum Building* (Malibu, Calif., 1975) pp. [13, 22]. For other examples of stepped wall fountains and freestanding stepped fountain heads, including the originals of Figures 53 and 54, see Paul Zanker, "Die Villa als Vorbild des späten pompejanischen Wohngeschmacks," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 94 (1979) pp. 460–523.

92. See Walter Amelung, *Die Sculpturen des Vaticanischen Museums* (Berlin, 1903) I, no. 192c, inv. 1110, pl. 29 (Figure 55); no. 58a, inv. 1135 (Figure 56); inv. 649 (Figure 57) lacks a num-

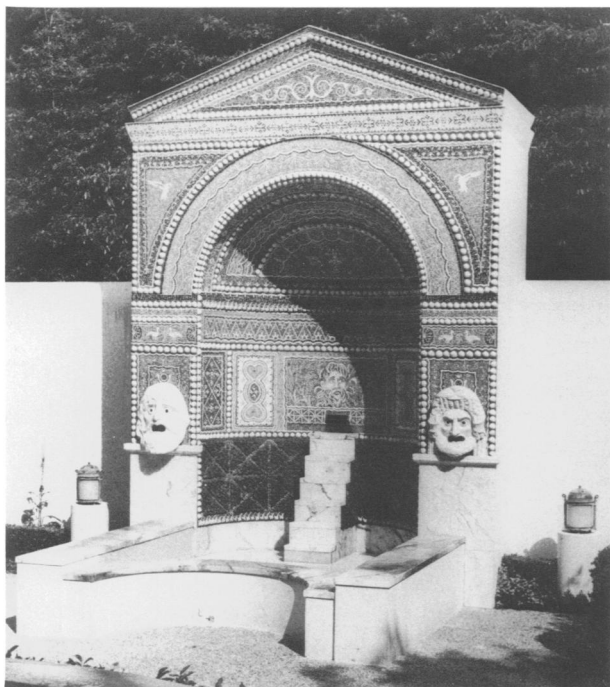


FIGURE 53
Replica of fountain in the House of the Large Fountain, Pompeii. Malibu, California, J. Paul Getty Museum (photo: Knauer)

more elaborate versions it sallied from tilted urns held by scantily clad nymphs asleep on rocky beds above the cascades, or from jugs and skins carried by heroic bearded nudes standing on small supports in the diagonal niches of the fountain head. Lions' and rams' heads at the corners and in the axes of the side and back panels complete the set of iconographic models that Cairene workshops must have drawn upon. That these Roman fountains were in turn de-

ber in Amelung. I owe this information to Georg Daltrop, who generously helped to locate the fountain heads—until the new wing of the museum was built, they were in the area in front of the Pinacoteca Vaticana—and gave permission to photograph them. (Anita Rieche, Rome, is apparently working on this subject; see A. Rieche, "Römische Zierbrunnen," *XI International Congress of Classical Archaeology, London, 3–9 September 1978: Final Programme* [London, 1978] p. 140; the paper was not read.) For further examples see Amelung, *Sculpturen*, no. 24, inv. 1134 (which appears in a drawing in Daremberg and Saglio, *Dictionnaire*, fig. 3155), and no. 170, inv. 1103, pl. 29. There is also a fine terracotta cascade in the Villa Albani in Rome, made for connection to a fountain; lion heads flank the stairs and a figure of Oceanus rests on top (S. Settis, "Esedra e 'ninfeo' nella terminologia architettonica del mondo romano," *Aufstieg und Nie-*

FIGURE 54
Replica of fountain in the House of Loreius Tiburtinus, Pompeii. Malibu, California, J. Paul Getty Museum (photo: Knauer)



rived from Hellenistic prototypes can only be hinted at here. In the Kanellopoulos Collection in Athens is a small, boxlike, limestone fountain head (Figure 58).⁹³ Fed through a hole at one end, it let the water rush out over the stepped opening at the other, flanked by crudely carved dolphin heads terminating the two long sides.

It remains for us to consider the appearance of the jars that originally adorned the Cairene *kilgas*. They were surely not left plain like modern Egyptian water

dergang der römischen Welt [Berlin, 1973] I, fig. 19). An interesting unpublished piece in the Byzantine Museum in Athens, no. 94 (2998), about 30 × 30 × 40 cm., shows four stairways descending a hill crowded with carved animals and vegetation—the garden of Eden? It may have served as a baptismal font with the Good Shepherd as the—now missing—central figure, standing above the four rivers of paradise. Such an arrangement could be a Christian adaptation of a Roman fountain with Orpheus charming the animals. For references (excluding the Athenian piece) see Börsch-Supan, *Garten-, Landschafts- und Paradiesmotive*, p. 98.

93. Kanellopoulos Collection, no. 74; provenance apparently not known; dimensions approximately 15 × 18 × 32 cm. Georgios Dontas kindly allowed it to be photographed.



FIGURE 55
Roman fountain head, inv. 1110. Rome, Vatican Museum (photo: Knauer)



FIGURE 57
Roman fountain head, inv. 649. Rome, Vatican Museum (photo: Knauer)

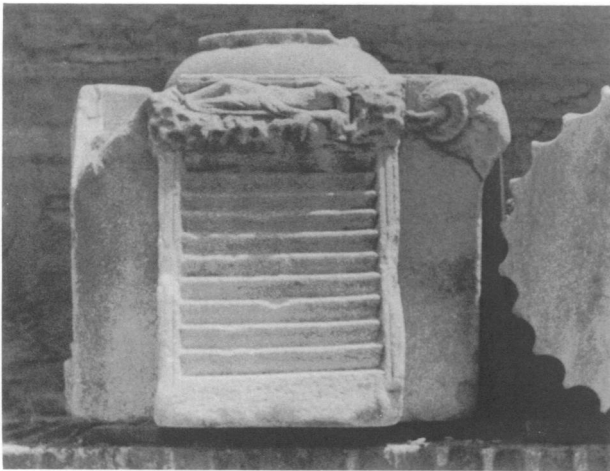


FIGURE 56
Roman fountain head, inv. 1135. Rome, Vatican Museum (photo: Knauer)



FIGURE 58
Hellenistic fountain head, no. 74. Athens, Kanellopoulos Collection (photo: Knauer)

jars. This is suggested by the elaborate carved decoration of the fully developed *kilga* which the jars would certainly have tried to match.⁹⁴

In contrast to the Greeks and Romans, the Islamic peoples did not place pottery in the tombs of their deceased.⁹⁵ Very few of the extant pieces of high quality have been found intact. The majority have had to be put together from fragments recovered in excavations, mostly from vessels broken while in use and then discarded on refuse heaps. Yet among the more ambitious pieces of Fatimid pottery salvaged at Fustat we lack fragments of vases of the size required for our stands, with one exception already cited: the

glazed and stamp-molded piece with the nude *orans* flanked by columns.⁹⁶ The vase it belonged to may have perished in the conflagration of Fustat at the end of the Fatimid period (1168) or later, when partisans of reinstalled orthodoxy would have taken offense at the sight. The sturdier *kilgas* have weathered

94. Even modest unglazed Fatimid clay jars for drinking water had delicate filters, worked *à jour* with animals on a background of arabesques, inserted in the necks. For the most part, only the filters have survived. There is a variety in the Museum of Islamic Art (*Album*, no. 77); see also Grube, nos. 78–81.

95. See Lane, *Account . . . of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 11.

96. See above, note 70.



FIGURE 59

Inscribed 15th-century marble vase on *kilga*, no. 125. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art (photo: after Wiet, *Inscriptions historiques*)

zealotic attacks slightly better, although, as we have seen, most of those displaying “heretic” iconography show signs of willful mutilation. At a later date the surviving stands were fitted out with marble or alabaster jars; an example is the inscribed fifteenth-century vase in Cairo, coupled with a medieval *kilga* of simple design (Figure 59).⁹⁷

What would the complete jar to which the Fustat sherds belonged have looked like? As Egypt provides

97. See Wiet, *Inscriptions historiques*, no. 125, pl. xxxii, and Herz, *Catalogue raisonné*, p. 50. Both authors provide a translation; I quote Wiet’s: “Cette jarre a été constituée *wakf*, en faveur de la fontaine bénie, par notre maître le sultan el-Malik el-Ashraf Abul-Nasr Kaitbay, que sa victoire soit glorieuse, par Mahomet et sa famille.” Another example of a stand coupled with a marble jar of later date is the one formerly in Boston; see above and note 2. See also Figure 10.

98. Gerald Reitlinger, “Unglazed Pottery from Northern Mesopotamia,” *Ars Islamica* 15/16 (1951) pp. 11–22, lists more



FIGURE 60

Unglazed pottery jar (*habb*) from northern Mesopotamia. H. 81.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 32.150.51

no examples, these must be sought further afield. Interestingly enough, they are to be found in another area dominated by a great river—Mesopotamia, which furnishes a sequence of very large, unglazed clay jars (*habb*) with pear-shaped bodies and even more ornate molded openwork in the neck and handle zones. A fine example is on display at the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 60).⁹⁸ The jars seem to have been produced from the ninth through the late thirteenth

than forty examples; the Metropolitan piece is fig. 1. For more recent literature see Géza Fehérvári, *Islamic Pottery: A Comprehensive Study Based on the Barlow Collection* (London, 1973) p. 114, n. 2. There is a splendid example in Damascus with men and beasts, about 1300 (PKG 4, pl. 217 and p. 276). Among the ancestors of the group surely belongs the fragment of the neck of an unglazed Parthian clay jar from Niniveh in the British Museum, Near Eastern Dept., no. 98 862; it shows molded standing nudes with necklaces in front of a wave-pattern background.

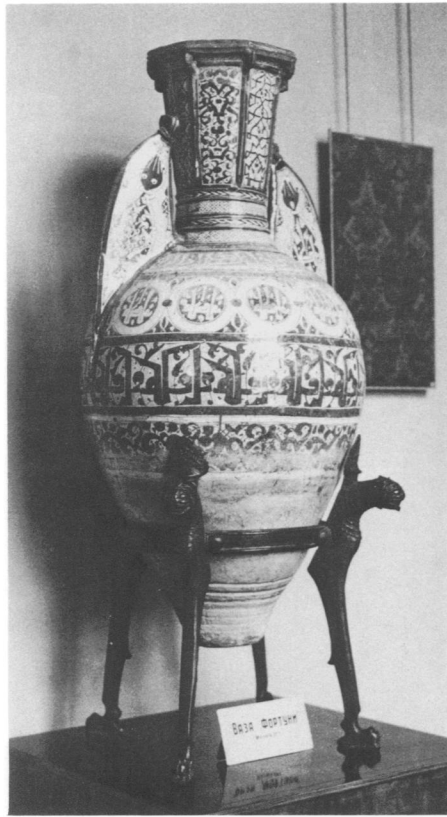


FIGURE 61
Lustreware amphora (the "Fortuny vase"), Malaga,
early 14th century. Leningrad, Hermitage (photo:
Knauer)



FIGURE 62
Detail of Figure 61 (photo: Knauer)

century. The relief decoration of the later examples consists of elaborate scrolls and vegetal bands, fabulous beasts and human beings, among them nude females, and formulaic inscriptions with auspicious wishes. The early examples, more restrained, display symbols related to the lifegiving sphere of water: women flanked by zigzag patterns, stylized plants, and animals. That they served as water jars whose porosity kept the liquid cool is attested by an inscription on one of them.⁹⁹ Because of their roundish bases these vessels are in need of a support, but no stands to go with them have been recovered. In the alluvial

99. On the very late, early 14th-century example, the Neskhî inscription reads: "I am a *habb* (jar) of water wherein there is healing. I quench the thirst of mankind. This I achieve by virtue of my suffering on the day I was cast among the fiery flames." See Reitlinger, "Unglazed Pottery," fig. 23, pp. 20f. The iconography of the high medieval examples is related to that of the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina and has parallels in the mythical

plain of Mesopotamia, stone was not readily available, and jar-stands may well have been of perishable material such as wood or mud. Their shape must in any case have been different from that of the Egyptian *kilgas*, which were made for jars with a more pointed base.

Large amphorae of the required shape are represented in an illuminated manuscript produced in Iraq in 1224, now in the Metropolitan Museum.¹⁰⁰ In a view of the interior of a pharmacy, a number of jars, lacking stands, seem precariously balanced on their tips. This is surely in order to depict them more

animals of the Cairene *kilgas*. For the transmission of these motifs and the artistic *koinē* in the Islamic realm see Monneret de Villard, pp. 47f. and Ettinghausen, pp. 42–56.

100. Cora Timken Burnett Collection of Persian Miniatures and Other Persian Art Objects, Bequest of Cora Timken Burnett, 1956, no. 57.51.21; from a manuscript of Dioscurides' *Materia Medica* (Ettinghausen, pp. 87f.; PKG 4, pl. 158 and p. 242).

clearly and not an attempt to portray reality. Even more appropriate in shape would be an unglazed jar from Spain, with stamped decoration at the shoulder, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, which is dated between the eighth and the fourteenth century.¹⁰¹

The nearest possible examples in size and shape—though somewhat too late in date—seem to be the Alhambra vases.¹⁰² Produced by workshops in Malaga in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, presumably for the Nasrid sultans of Granada, these large lustreware amphorae were apparently destined as reservoirs for drinking water to be placed on stands—which have not survived—in niches on both sides of doors and passages in the Alhambra. Extant inscriptions framing those niches refer to such precious vessels.¹⁰³ In one of the earlier examples of this series, the so-called Fortuny vase in the Hermitage in Leningrad (Figures 61, 62),¹⁰⁴ the whole lower third of the body is left free of slip. This more unsightly porous portion was surely let into a stand that covered it, while allowing the water to seep into a receptacle below.¹⁰⁵

Many of the Alhambra vases have an octagonal collar and lip, curiously reminiscent of the glazed Fustat fragment (a rim?).¹⁰⁶ This may have been part of a similar octagonal collar with stamp molding instead of lustreware decoration. One might ask what caused the potters of Malaga to adopt that unusually chamfered collar for which no real parallels are to be found. Was it perhaps to answer the shape of chamfered jar-stands, related to the Cairene *kilgas*?

Though we lack examples of jar-stands from Spain, they must have existed, not only in the splendid

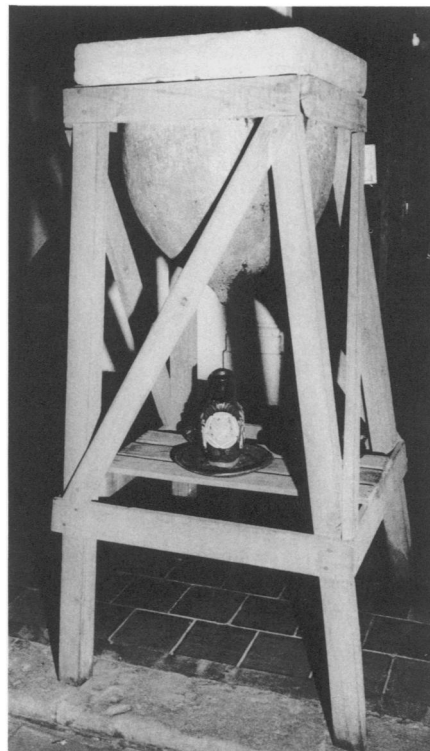


FIGURE 63

Porous sandstone water jar in wooden stand, with clay jar underneath to receive the filtered water. Pátzcuaro (Michoacán), Mexico, Posada de Don Vasco (photo: Knauer)

Moorish and Mudejar palaces but also as normal commodities in households which had to rely on purified water. This seems to be borne out by the examples still found today in rural Mexico. Quite a few

101. See *Encyc. n.e.*, IV, pl. XLIX, illustrating the very useful survey of Islamic pottery by Y. Crowe, s.v. *Khazaf*.

102. Leopoldo Torres Balbas, *Ars Hispaniae: Historia universal del arte hispanico* (Madrid, 1949) IV, pp. 216–219, figs. 232–237; Alice Wilson Frothingham, *Lustreware of Spain* (New York, 1951) pp. 15–63, with good photos of the extant pieces. For the dating see Richard Ettinghausen, “Notes on the Lustreware of Spain,” *Ars Orientalis* 1 (1954) pp. 133–156.

103. PKG 4, pl. LI and p. 333. See Grabar, *Alhambra*, p. 141, who gives a translation of the poems in the two small niches in which the jars stood at the entrance of the Sala de la Barca. Grabar does not comment on what the jars or their stands may have looked like. Cf. his fig. 92, which shows a niche for a water jar at the entrance to the Hall of the Two Sisters.

104. The height of the vase is 117 cm. Its bronze stand is not contemporary but is one of three that Mariano Fortuny, who recovered several of the vases, made for them (see Froth-

ingham, *Lustreware*, pp. 283 n. 24, 285 n. 40, figs. 8, 15, 31). For Fortuny as a collector see C. Gonzales Lopez, “Mariano Fortuny: Coleccionista de ceramica hispano-musulmana,” *Goya: Revista de Arte* 143 (1978) pp. 272–277 (reference supplied by James David Draper).

105. The slip-free part is higher than in any other of the Alhambra vases. As none of the publications makes mention of the following feature, I am ignorant of its consistency in the series: the Leningrad vase has a carefully turned, slightly stepped opening in its underside; whether this was used for occasional cleaning only or held a taplike fixture I do not know. See also PKG 4, pl. 300. That glazing, which reduces the porosity of jars, did not prevent them from being used as storage vessels for drinking water is clear from Maqrizi’s quotation of Ibn Ridwan (see above, and note 13).

106. See Frothingham, *Lustreware*, figs. 12, 14, 16, 20, 24, 25, 30, 33–35.

Islamic features have survived in Central and South America which can help to reconstruct the realities of life on the Iberic peninsula in medieval times. A water jar and stand, for instance, are to be found in the family house of the painter Diego Rivera in the city of Guanajuato, and there is another example (Figure 63) in the courtyard of a hacienda in Pátzcuaro (Michoacán), now a hotel (Posada de Don Vasco). The stands, which are of wood, support porous sandstone jars through which the water drips with remarkable speed into unglazed clay pitchers placed underneath.¹⁰⁷

In conclusion, although we lack as yet sufficient dated artifacts to chart the development of high medieval Islamic art with greater precision, the attempt to isolate the various decorative features of *kilgas* has led time and again to the eleventh and twelfth centuries for early occurrences of those motifs. As arts and crafts tend to follow trends rather than to lead them, especially where decorative concepts in monumental

architecture are concerned, it seems natural that motifs first encountered in architecture should recur with some delay on objects of the minor arts. This is borne out by the dated stand of about 1200.¹⁰⁸

A combination of several independent traditions for the storage, purification, cooling, and drawing of water seems to account for the development of the *kilga*. The concept of the Arab *salsabil*, derived from classical antecedents, was adapted to the indigenous jar-stand in its pre-Islamic Coptic shape to produce an object of perfect functionality. As these Cairene jar-stands form a fairly strictly circumscribed group, one may well wonder whether they were the "invention" of a single Fatimid workshop which continued producing at least into Ayyubid times, if not longer, and which may also have catered to Coptic clients or provided models for Coptic imitations. At their finest, these *kilgas*, designed for a practical purpose, attest to the well-founded reputation of Muslim craftsmen in the Fatimid to Mamluk periods for ornament superbly conceived and applied.

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107. Dr. Marlene Rall, Mexico City, has kindly written to inform me that the Spanish term for this filtering device is *destiladera* and that, although almost forgotten today, the device was formerly found in every Mexican household.

108. Though I was unable to obtain exact measurements for the majority of the stands (for the difficulties involved see above, note 65), there is a general tendency for the less ornate

or plain ones to be bigger than those more elaborately carved. It may be that the plainer stands were produced during the ideologically stricter Ayyubid and Mamluk periods and that they made up in size for the loss of ornament. It should be stressed again that the typology presented here was introduced to break down the mass of material into recognizable groups, and that it does not reflect a genetic development.

ADDENDA

The following observations, the result of recent travels in Italy and Tunisia, were gathered after this article had gone to press; they seem worth including as they bear on classical antecedents for certain features of the *kilga*.

In the discussion of the apotheosis iconography at the end of note 45, the second-century capitolium at Douggha in Tunisia, which displays an apotheosis in the pediment, can be cited as a Roman monument that must have been directly accessible to Islamic craftsmen.

Further evidence of the Roman origins of the *salsabīl* and *shādhawān* (note 90) can be seen in the *salsabīl*-like wall fountain in the nymphaeum adjacent to the spectacular octagonal room of the Domus Aurea of Nero in Rome. In Tunisia, moreover, I located, among many less well preserved examples, a fine stepped wall fountain feeding a basin in the Roman baths at Djebel Oust or Bab Khaled. Since the baths were in use until Byzantine times, the Arab invaders must have encountered this type of fountain almost intact. For a ground plan of the baths see M. Fendri, "Evolution chronologique et stylistique d'un ensemble de mosaïques dans une station thermale à Djebel Oust (Tunisie)," *La Mosaïque gréco-romaine* (Paris, 1965) I, pp. 157–173, pl. 1.

In addition to the Roman fountain heads in the Vatican Museum (note 92), there are two examples exhibited in the Chiostro of the Museo Nazionale delle Terme (nos. 674 and 860) and another on the staircase landing of the Palazzo Farnese in Rome.

Finally, as a matter of more general interest, I should

like to mention an article by A. A. Barb and A. R. Neumann, "Eine angeblich römerzeitliche Marmorlampe aus der Wiener Hofbibliothek," *Antike Welt* 10/4 (1979), pp. 44–45, figs. 1–6, which has been brought to my attention by Joan R. Mertens. The authors discuss a marble object (21 × 16–18 × 30 cm.) acquired in 1962 by the Ur- und Frühgeschichtliche Abteilung of the Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien. Two noteworthy features of the piece emerge from the article. First, it was drawn and recorded in the eighteenth century by visitors who saw it in the imperial Hofbibliothek in Vienna. Second, it is inscribed on the outside with thirty-two signs and carved with two reliefs of a seated woman holding a *patera*, a figure that the authors derive from a type of Roman *pietas* adopted about 1550 on Milanese coins of the emperor Charles V. Owing to considerable traces of burning on the inside, the authors interpret the object as a lamp, which the signs and reliefs lead them to suppose was made in the sixteenth century for a secret society or brotherhood like the Rosicrucians. The most noteworthy feature of all, however, is one of which the authors are evidently unaware. In fact, the object is unmistakably a small *kilga*, whose present decoration must be far removed from the time and place of its original construction. The authors' comparison of this *kilga* with two marble lamps illustrated by Fortunius Licetus in his work of 1652 (*De lucernis antiquorum reconditis . . .*, see their n. 21) appears to me, from an examination of the original publication, to be untenable.