متحف الفن الإسلامي

MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART

DOHA · QATAR

UNSEEN TREASURES

UNSEEN TREASURES

FROM THE MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART
IN QATAR

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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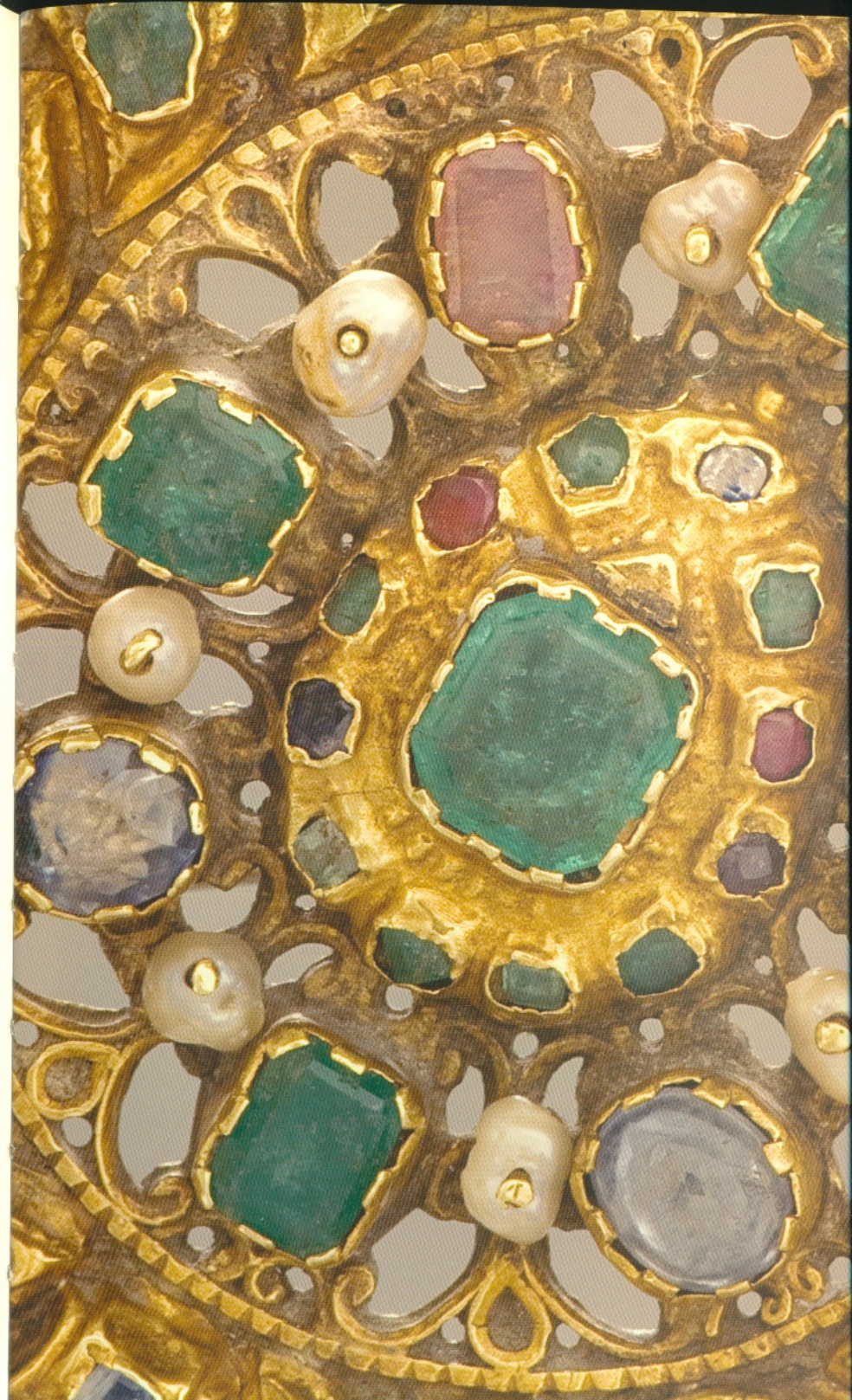


CONTENTS

FOREWORD

THE MUSEUM OF Islamic Art in Qatar, designed by renowned architect I.M. Pei, opened to the public in December 2008. Its 18 galleries showcase a permanent exhibition of approximately 750 objects that reflect the enormous vitality, complexity and diversity of the arts of the Islamic world.

The second floor galleries of the Museum illustrate major themes such as calligraphy, which is considered the most important form of artistic expression in the Islamic world, geometric and floral patterns, and figures in art, as well as the achievements of Islamic science as reflected in artistic scientific instruments. On the third floor visitors are invited to make a journey from the early Islamic era in the 7th century to the beginning of the 20th century, and from Spain in the west to China in the east.

The Museum's mission is to promote an understanding of the high achievements of Islamic culture through works of art of the highest quality. Visual learning is supported through creative art programmes, lectures and publications which mainly target children, young adults and teachers. The Education Centre encourages different learning styles suited to different audiences to enrich and promote a culture of knowledge. The Museum's library focuses on Islamic art and architecture.

While the Museum's ever-growing collection, which currently includes over 4,500 objects, does not constitute the largest collection of Islamic art in the world, it is of exceptionally high quality. Many superb objects have not been exhibited before in the galleries, and new acquisitions regularly add to this extraordinary collection of masterpieces. This book, published as a contribution to Doha's celebrations as 2010 Arab Capital of Culture, turns the spotlight on just over 50 priceless objects, not before exhibited or published, and illustrates the commitment of the Museum of Islamic Art to make these treasures accessible to the world.

Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani
Chairperson of the Qatar Museums Authority


CENTRAL ASIA
CAUCASUS
ANATOLIA
AL-ANDALUS
MAGHREB
ARABIA

INTRODUCTION

THE ANCIENT ADAGE that one sees only what one knows is particularly appropriate in a museum that seeks to sensitise visitors to the beauty, vibrancy and complexity of its collection in order to elicit a sense of the deeper, historical picture.

Time and again, we at the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar are confronted with the question of whether we have included all the important objects of our collection in the permanent exhibition or whether "curiosities" that can add to that sense of wonder remain behind the scenes. Indeed, given the wealth of the material we have gathered, with a collection that has been growing since 2008, it has been impossible to feature all the interesting objects that we have compiled in the permanent exhibition.

For that reason, *Unseen Treasures* aims to bring to light the remarkable if lesser known objects of our collection. Encompassing several themes, this book – and the exhibition it accompanies – focuses on just over 50 artworks that are categorised according to chronological and thematic contexts.

By reconstructing – at least partially – the histories of these works of art, and by providing glimpses of how they were made as well as their uses and, where possible, by translating their inscriptions, we are able to bring these objects to life for a modern audience.

At the same time, links between these featured objects and those in the Museum's permanent exhibition have been highlighted to provide a broader picture. For example, three pieces of Iznik ceramic, which are featured in this book, complement other such objects in the permanent exhibition. They illustrate the vast scale of this group of ceramics, of which, for reasons of space, only a small selection can be displayed. The large portrait of the Qajar ruler, Fath Ali Shah (r. 1797-1834), is another example of the links between the objects featured here and those on permanent display, where two of his many sons can be seen in the Museum's Safavid and Qajar Gallery.

Similarly, wood is often underrepresented in exhibitions. This book highlights five large timber beams of almost six metres in length that were once part of the roof structure of the Great Mosque in Cordoba, *La Mezquita*, dating back to the 10th century. The remains of their colourful frames challenge the notion that woodwork is predominantly monochrome. This is even more valid for another, comparatively more recent beam from Islamic Spain, or

al-Andalus, with a rich, figurative décor that depicts, among other scenes, a person blowing a huge hunting horn or oliphant.

Ud ent adionumsan ullum quat praesse quiscing el dui blam, vullaore miniam, consed

Adding to the rich narrative of wood as a venerable material, this collection also presents a lavishly carved and once coloured wooden arch in the form of a portal from North Africa. In many respects, this region pursued *al-Andalus'* excellence in art after the *Reconquista* and the displacement of the last Nasrid ruler from Granada in 1492. While this arch most likely originated from Morocco in the 16th-17th century, it clearly shows parallels with woodwork of the earlier Marinid epoch (1196-1465).

Another item featured in this book is a small yet exquisite cloth fragment from Umayyad Spain, dated 1007, which is contemporaneous with the beams from Córdoba. It portrays a fight between a raptor and a hare – a motif packed with imperial symbolism that was widely used during the caliphate period. This piece is part of a silk-embroidered garment, from which another and larger fragment has long since been exhibited at the Musée des Tissus et des Arts Décoratifs in Lyon, France.

Textiles are an important part of the collection of the Museum of Islamic Art. However, owing to their fragmented condition and conservational restrictions, many of these fragile objects cannot leave the store rooms to go on public display, or else can do so only for limited periods of time. This is particularly the case with regard to the Mongolian textiles featured here, which include a robe, a hat and a pair of shoes.

The role of conservation and restoration of artworks at the museum is an important aspect of the items featured here, particularly in relation to the textiles and wooden objects. For example, the Spanish timber beam demonstrates how the figurative décor and the colourful frame only became visible after elaborate cleaning. A "before and after" impression of these objects is illustrated – in the exhibition – through photographs.

The exhibition addresses the interesting practice of the revival of former art styles in later periods by showcasing neo-Mamluk glass and metal works (the so-called Mamluk revival). Originating from the 19th-century Orient and Europe they replicate medieval mosque hanging lights made of enamelled glass or brass works.

A larger group of Spanish ceramics from Manises impressively exemplifies the relationship between Islamic and European art. If not necessarily in the form of a "revival", these works, which were designed for Christian commissioners after the end of Muslim rule, still bear strong stylistic and technical traits in keeping with the traditions of Islamic art.

The group of religious manuscripts displayed in this exhibition includes two very different Qur'ans: a large Ilkhanid Qur'an dating back to the early 14th century, and a Qur'an from India that is written in one book – a so-called single Qur'an. Also on display are an Ottoman pilgrimage book, Dala'il al-Khayrat, of 1801, and a prominent, almost seven-metre long, Hajj certificate from Timurid times (15th century).

Out of our comprehensive collection of Islamic weapons a sword and a dagger from India are also included here. Their blades feature an emblem that points to a connection with the great Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1657).

Often, objects with artistic or historical significance are not perfectly preserved. This is the case with the group of medieval metalworks dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries, from Syria, Iraq and Iran, of which the lavish silver inlays are largely unhinged. Here, drawings help to understand the iconography or, at least, to identify such scenes as, for example, a polo player.

The objects represented in this book and exhibition are all very different: not only do they encompass various materials, including ceramic, glass, wood, ivory, paper and works with gemstones, they also reflect broad regional variations and time spans. However, they all have one common denominator, and that is that they are exceptional examples of their kind.

Joachim Gierlichs, Curator,
Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar

BOTTLE

IRAN

9TH-10TH CENTURY

ABBASID

BLOWN GLASS WITH CUT AND APPLIED DECORATION

H. 17.2 CM

GL.515.2009

EARLY ISLAMIC GLASS portrays innovations in the evolving glass industry, as demonstrated by this bottle, whose basic shape can be traced back to an ancient Roman form. It is thought to be a toiletry bottle, possibly used to hold rosewater. Similarly, the technique of layering dissimilar coloured glasses to set off the contours of the cut decoration was used to make cameo glass in the Roman Empire from the 1st century B.C.

Unlike traditional cameo glass, where the vessel would be completely encased with a contrasting colour, the layered glass of this bottle was achieved through the application of small pads of molten glass to the body of the vessel. This simplified technique enabled the craftsman to produce a vessel in days rather than months. Nevertheless, similar techniques of carving to reveal the underlying glass colours were used to enhance and define the design's silhouette. Emerald green was a popular contrasting colour during this period, along with cobalt blue and amber brown.

The bottle is covered with incised linear designs and, as is the case with other colourless glassware, much comparison with cut rock crystal vessels has been made. Most of the cut ornament consists of geometric and abstracted motifs with transverse hatching, with a striking fish scale pattern carved into the neck. The coloured pads are carved into the figures of horses.

Hyper-stylised animals are typical figures for applied glass, which mostly features hares, lions and birds. The depiction of horses is a rarity. On the flask, the horses' tails terminate into half-palmettes and the engraved hatching can be compared with similar treatments of animals on bottles now in the British Museum and the David Collection, in New York, both said to be of Western Asian or Iranian origin. Uncommonly, within the spaces between the pads, two more horses are engraved directly on the bottle, but barely visible due to weathering.

Although glass has the ability to survive intact and unchanged for centuries, certain factors, such as burial, can lead to a chemical decomposition of the material. Extended exposure to unfavourable conditions has produced the iridescence now coating the bottle. This rainbow-like effect is caused by the reflection of light through the many layers of weathering on the glass, often dropping off in flakes. Ironically, the very breakdown of the glass creates beautiful hues, resulting in collectors paying higher prices for deteriorated glass. (Bass et al., 2009; Carboni and Whitehouse, 2001; von Folsach, 2001; Whitehouse, 2001). *M.W.*

BOTTLE

IRAN (PROBABLY)

10TH CENTURY

ABBASID

BLOWN GLASS WITH CUT DECORATION

H. 22 CM

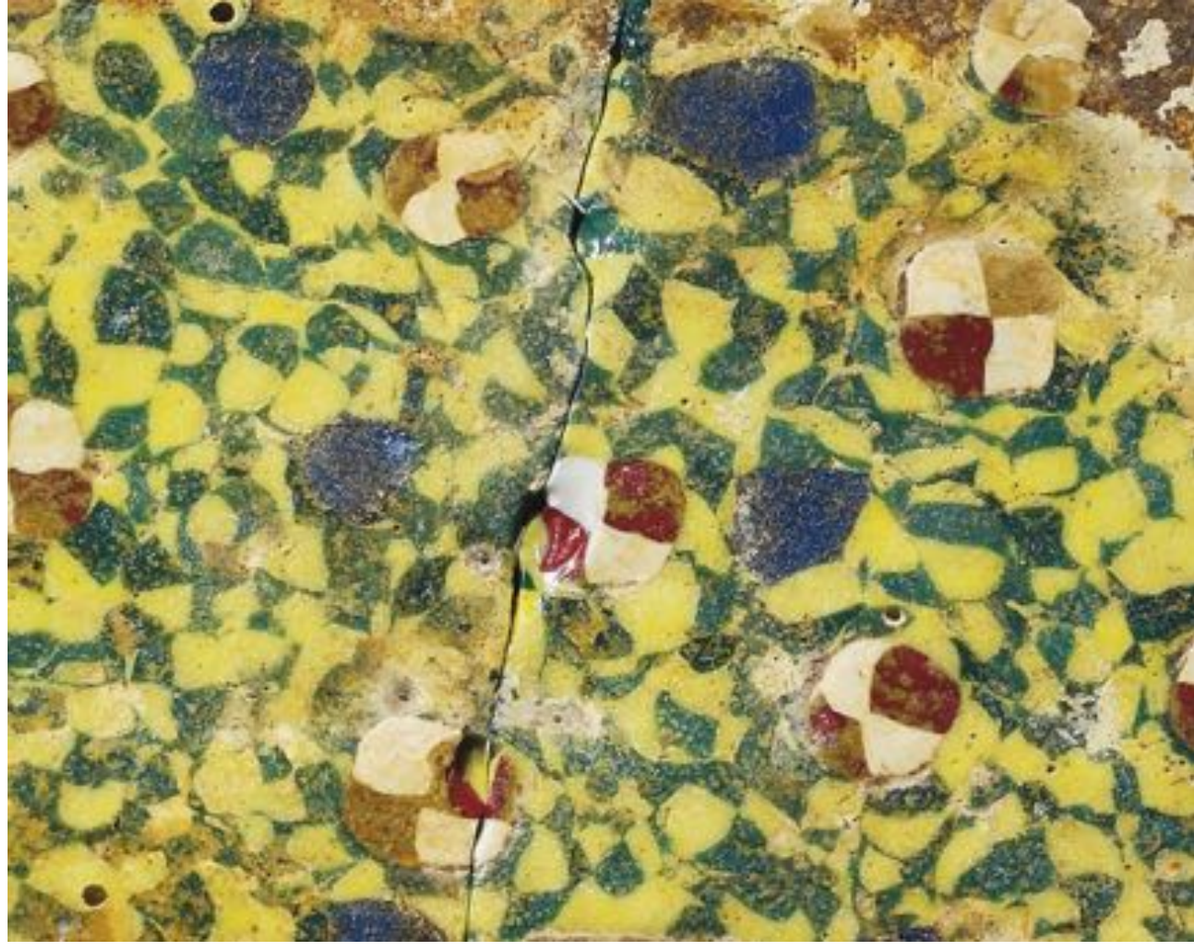
GL.514.2009

THE LACK OF datable burial goods, the recyclable properties of glass and the commonality of form and decoration across the Islamic world can make the exact placement of such vessels a frustrating exercise. The designation of Iran as the probable origin comes from small stylistic details, such as the deep grooves by the base of the bottle and the special treatment of the flattened rim. Vessels with these design elements were found among archaeological finds in the medieval Iranian cities of Nishapur, Sirjan, Rayy, Siraf and Qasr-i Abu Nasr.

The glass is colourless with deeply cut lines in imitation of rock crystal, popular in the 9th and 10th centuries. Decolourised glass reflects long-standing ancient traditions that used glass as a substitute for precious hard stones, such as the glass bowls used by the Achaemenids. These were possibly observed first-hand by Arab tribute bearers and ambassadors, as depicted on the eastern staircase of the Apadana at Persepolis and on royal tomb reliefs at Naqsh-i Rustam.

The slant-cut ornament was made by grinding into the thick glass with rotating wheels of varying sizes and materials (metal or stone) and with the aid of abrasive slurry. Despite these techniques that have existed since antiquity, the design of the bottle is singularly Islamic. The shape is an established form, seen from Egypt to Central Asia, and the stylistic treatment of the camels is loose, almost whimsical in its effect.

Camels, often called “God’s Gift” by the Bedouin people, decorate the body of the vessel. Providing a multitude of practical uses, the camel is most valued for transportation in hostile climates and often took the place of the wheel as the standard mode of transportation until the 20th century. The imagery is especially significant, given the impact of camel caravans on medieval Islamic trade. (Bass et al., 2009; Carboni and Whitehouse, 2001; Curtis and Simpson, 2010; von Folsach, 2001; Kröger, 1995). *M.W.*



MOSAIC FLOOR TILE FRAGMENT

IRAQ
(PROBABLY SAMARRA)

9TH CENTURY

ABBASID

CAST AND MOSAIC GLASS

31.6 X 18 CM

GL.513.2009

MOSAIC GLASS IS the method of heat-fusing slices of glass cane to create a single form, in this case, a flat sheet of glass. The fact that mosaic glass continued to be manufactured in the Islamic Middle Ages is curious: the process is labour-intensive and impractical for any kind of mass production. Before the advent of blown glass in the 1st century B.C. mosaic glass was one of the methods used by glassmakers to produce jewellery, furniture and wall inlays and vessels. However, with the ability to create a multitude of shapes by blowing, the production of mosaic glass dwindled almost immediately and was barely common the late 4th century. Decorative glass using alternative techniques was not abandoned, however, as testified by hundreds of glass mosaics and larger displays of wall panels from the Byzantine period that were discovered in Caesarea.

Resurrected in the 9th century, mosaic glass was once again produced to decorate palaces. When the Jawsaq al-Khaqani palace, built in Samarra in 836-842 by Caliph al-Mu'tasim, was excavated, mosaic glass wall tiles and fragments were discovered. In contrast with other discovered tiles, which are typically thin and have mortar backing for adhesion to walls, this tile is believed to have been made specifically for the floor judging by its thickness and a substantial underlay of plain glass. This glass underlay, rather than a stone base, could have provided greater light reflection from the tile, thereby creating a stunning effect. This tile seems to have been only a section of a much larger design rather than a small decorative accent. Given that glass is recyclable, large pieces of glass would have been dug up from abandoned palaces and re-melted, which therefore makes this floor tile an exceptional example.

A glass floor plays an integral part of a story about the Queen of Sheba, Balkis, paying a visit to King Solomon. Related in detail in *Qisas al-Anbiya'* (*Tales of the Prophets*) of the 11th century, the story is summarised here:

King Solomon desired to have Balkis as a wife, but the djinn were fearful, noting such a match could produce children capable of the continuing enslavement of the djinn. The demons spread rumours she was one of their own, having an ass's foot and thick goat hair covering her legs. Inside the palace, Solomon had a glass floor installed to create the illusion of water. Commanded to approach, seeing the glass floor and mistaking it for a pond, the queen naturally raised her skirts to wade across. Although Solomon's trick confirmed Balkis did not possess a hoofed foot, it was said her legs were hairy, although thankfully not those of a goat. Folklore says a depilatory solved the issue and the king and queen were married. (Carboni and Whitehouse, 2001; Al-Kisa'i, 1978); Pritchard, 1974; Wightman, February-May 1990). *M.W.*

TEXTILE FRAGMENT FROM THE SHROUD OF ST. LAZARE

SPAIN

C. 1007

UMAYYAD

SILK TAFFETA AND LEATHER SUBSTRATE

7 X 7.5 CM

TE.150.2007

THIS FRAGMENT COMES from an embroidered silk textile that was given as a gift to the Spanish Umayyad caliph, Abd al-Malik, shortly after 1007. It has also become known as the Shroud of St. Lazare.

The overall design motif of the textile from which this fragment originates consists of bands of sphinxes, falconers on horseback and eagles with spread wings set within roundels in the form of pallia rotata, or beaded wheels. These stylised roundels, which evidence suggests originated from 8th century Baghdad, alternate with smaller star-shaped medallions, in which eagles are shown grasping hares with their claws.

The fragment here is one of these small medallions, and this type of design follows a widespread artistic tradition throughout the Middle East of depicting courtly life. Inherited from the pre-Islamic Iranian world, images of princely pursuits such as falconry were disseminated by the spread of Islam and became an international style that was able to cross cultural boundaries in a way that religious iconography could not.

Several fragments of the original textile have been scattered to various collections, with the main piece in the Musée des Tissus et des Arts Décoratifs in Lyon, France. Like many other prestigious objects from the Western Islamic world, Andalusian silks were brought to Northern Europe and used in the storage of holy, Christian relics. The patronage and possession of such luxury goods became a sign of sovereignty throughout Medieval Europe and it is believed that this textile was part of the group of reliquaries associated with the shrine of the Christian saint, Lazare.

While it is likely that this textile was made by skilled embroiderers from Almeria, the towns of Cordoba, Malaga, Seville and Alicante were also known for their workshops.

The textile is dateable owing to an inscription on the belt decoration of a falconer in one of the larger roundels on the textile that reads *al-Muzaffar*, the Victorious, a title associated with Abd al-Malik. This was given to him after a great military victory over the Christian Armies' Coalition under the command of the Castilian Count Sancho Garcia in 1007. (Burns, 2004; L'Institut du Monde Arabe, 2000-2001). *J.M.*

CARVED LARCH BEAM FROM THE GREAT MOSQUE OF CORDOBAOBA

SPAIN (CÓRDOBA)

SECOND HALF OF THE 10TH CENTURY

UMAYYAD

CARVED LARCH WOOD, PAINTED

15 X 21 X 561 CM

WW.135.2009

THIS GROUP OF larch beams originally came from the Great Umayyad Mosque of Córdoba in Spain (see right), which is widely regarded to be the most important monument of the Western Islamic world.

Each beam is carved in high relief on two planes over the entire surface of the three visible sides. Some of the beams are decorated with carved bands of strap-work and some with bands containing natural motifs such as entwined tendrils, pinecones and flower heads. Originally, the beams would have been colourfully painted and minute polychromatic traces of paint can still be seen on their surfaces. It appears that there would have been a beam spanning each aisle at distances of approximately 75 cm from each other.

It is extremely rare to find original, wooden architectural elements preserved from this early period. This is because wood is vulnerable to fire and decay, and was often recycled in later renovations.

Islamic Spain or *al-Andalus* was created when an army of Arabs and Berbers, unified under the protection of the Islamic caliphate, landed in Spain on 19 July 711 (28 Ramadan A.H. 92). Their territories were administered by a provincial government established in the name of the Umayyad caliphate in Damascus.

When the Umayyads were overthrown by the Abbasids in 750 (A.H. 133), the last surviving member of the dynasty fled to the Iberian Peninsula and established himself as Abd al-Rahman I, Amir of *al-Andalus*.

Building work on the Great Mosque of Córdoba occurred in various stages from 785/786

(A.H. 169) until 987/988 (A.H. 337), under the patronage of a succession of amirs and followed by the caliphs who succeeded them.

Sources suggest that the conquerors of Córdoba agreed to share San Vicente, the largest church in the city with the local Christian population, converting half of the building into a mosque. These accounts go on to say that when Abd al-Rahman I made Córdoba his capital, he purchased the remaining half of the building and began construction of his Great Mosque. Some scholars have suggested that this story is apocryphal and bound up with later preoccupations with the early relationships between indigenous populations and their Muslim rulers, but it is entirely plausible that, as well as being a practical solution to the lack of a large space to pray in, an evangelising policy of the syncretism of holy space had been implemented by the Muslim conquerors.

After expansions and alterations to Abd al-Rahman's mosque, already a considerable size with 11 aisles of 12 bays constructed under his successors, particularly Abd al-Rahman II and III, the caliph al-Hakam II came to the throne. It is reported that his very first act on attaining the caliphate in 962 (A.H. 351) was to give orders for additions to be made to the Great Mosque in order to accommodate the growing Muslim population. A columned hall as large as the original structure was added and crowned with an opulent roof supported by beams made of larch wood, which was not native to the area and had to be imported from North Africa at great expense. (Dodds, 1992; Fletcher, 1992; Khoury, 1996) *J.M.*

UNSEEN TREASURES

OLIPHANT

SICILY OR SOUTHERN ITALY

12TH CENTURY

NORMAN

CARVED ELEPHANT IVORY WITH BRASS PINS

L. 51.2 CM

IV.11.1998

THIS OLIPHANT FROM 12th century Sicily or southern Italy has two bands of carving. The smaller bears a legible Arabic inscription in kufic script suggesting the object was made in an area with strong Islamic cultural influence, such as Norman Sicily where Arabic was still used. It is one of the few oliphants to feature an Arabic inscription.

The oliphant, which is an elephant ivory horn used in hunting expeditions, is an object associated with Europe, most notably with the epic French poem, *Chanson de Roland* (*The Song of Roland*), whose hero, Roland, is fatally wounded during the battle of Roncevaux and uses his dying breaths to blow his oliphant. The blast from the horn is so strong that his oliphant cracks, after which Roland dies. The cultural association must have been strong since many European church inventories list oliphants as part of their collections.

By contrast, we do not have specific mention of oliphants from medieval Islamic sources, nor do we have oliphants with a definite provenance from the Islamic world. However, some 80 oliphants exist that either contain decoration with an Islamic aesthetic or that were manufactured in areas strongly influenced by Muslim culture.

In addition, there are a very few instances where oliphants are represented in Islamic art, such as the 11th-century Spanish wooden beam in the Museum's collection, which shows human figures and animals in hunt scenes, including a huntsman blowing an oliphant (see *Carved Wooden Beam*, pp. 34-35).

Given their primary function as an instrument used during hunting excursions, the decoration associated with oliphants is most often the iconography of the hunt, namely, depictions of animals or, in some cases, scenes of hunters or warriors.

The figurative scenes on the carved decorative upper band depict huntsmen or warriors, many on horseback, involved in different types of sport or battle, many of which were common imagery and used widely in Islamic art. These images include a figure with a sword and shield, a figure wearing a crown on his head with a bow and arrow, and a horseman holding a spear. There is also a figure dressed in Islamic attire, seated on horseback with a falcon perched on his left hand. A scene of two lions attacking a bull is another motif used widely in Islamic art. For example, the 11th-century carved Spanish wooden beam has a similar depiction.

At one point, this horn probably had two copper alloy bands, one underneath each band of carving, given the telltale staining. These metal bands presumably acted as points for suspension of a carrying strap and may have been added at a later date. (Shalem, 2004; Rosser-Owen, 2004).
S.R. and F.H.

CARVED WOODEN BEAM

SPAIN

11TH CENTURY

UMAYYAD

CARVED AND PAINTED WOOD, TEMPERA ON GESSO

34.5 X 38.5 X 144 CM

WW.141.2008

THIS BEAM, CARVED from a single piece of wood, originates from Spain in the 11th century, from either the late Umayyad period or that immediately following it, known as the *muluk al-tawa'if*, a period of short-lived Muslim states.

While many wooden beams have survived from this period of Islamic Spain, this one differs from others in terms of its decoration. Rather than abstract vegetal motifs or inscriptions as commonly found on other beams, the images are human figures and animals, which seem to bear more resemblance to other types of objects, such as the carved ivories of the 11th and 12th centuries from the Mediterranean region.

This beam suffered in the past from severe insect attack to its back; the fact that much of it has survived, especially the front carved surface, is therefore particularly fortunate.

The figurative decoration of the beam depicts imagery associated with elements of a hunt, including a huntsman blowing an oliphant, which is a type of ivory horn used in hunting expeditions, as well as a running deer, a huntsman carrying a spear, a hound attacking a boar at its feet, a lion attacking the back of a bull and another huntsman with his hound. Most of the figures are contained within a cusped arch. Foliage plays an important part in the design, weaving through the figures and animals and delineating the areas outside the cusped arches.

The first figure, to the left of the huntsman, is of particular interest. In addition to the black curls of his hair, the black outline of his face and a rosy cheek detailed in red, one of his hands reaches under his other arm and across his midriff, his fingers delineated by black paint. Of particular interest is the horn, or oliphant, in his other hand, which is essentially a European instrument.

The occurrence of the oliphant imagery in the carving of this beam makes this a unique piece. There are very few visual representations of oliphants in Islamic art or within an Islamic context. By contrast, many are found in European art, both secular and religious. The few examples in existence include depictions on a 9th-10th-century gilded silver plate from Central Asia, an 11th-12th-century ivory casket in Fatimid-style iconography, featuring a turbaned man blowing what is probably an oliphant, and a 13th-century bronze candlestick.

Careful cleaning of the beam has brought to life important details of the original appearance of the carving. Remains of paint indicate that the carved decoration was covered in gesso and then painted with tempera. In some cases, detail was modelled in gesso rather than by carving the wood, as is the case with the dark brown round medallions found on the arches.

Remains of blue and red pigments are found in fairly thick layers in the recesses of the carving, forming the background. These two colours seem to be clearly delineated, red being used for the background within each arch and blue being used as the background outside the architectural feature.

Many of the colours have faded over time to a dull brown due to surface coating degradation and weathering. However, microscopic examination reveals other colours: reddish brown for the animal and leaf backgrounds; green, mainly for foliage detail; and black and white detailing foliage and edging for the arches, as well as for figures and animals, including hair and facial features.

Interestingly, minute traces of gold have been found (under high magnification) on the arches. (Shalem, 2004; Rosser-Owen, 2004; Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds, April 2008). *F.H. and S.R*

JUG

PROBABLY IRAQ (MOSUL)

A.H. 637 (1239-1240)

ZENGID OR ILKHANID

BRONZE, ENGRAVED AND INLAID WITH SILVER AND GOLD

H. 30.7 CM

MW.600.2010

INLAID BRASS AND bronze objects in the Islamic world produced during the 13th-15th centuries such as this jug, and the candlestick and bowl on the following pages, were considered among the most luxurious and fashionable wares for rulers and wealthy patrons. The jug was most likely made in Northern Iraq, the candlestick in Syria and the bowl in Iran. While their origins may differ, they all share a high level of craftsmanship in terms of their complexity and attention to fine detail. All three objects contain benedictory inscriptions, while the jug also bears the signature of the maker and date of production.

Designs could be very complex on metalware: silver, gold and copper were therefore used as inlaid metals to enhance and clarify the design, creating a colour contrast with the yellow-coloured bronze or brass base. A black paste was also often used as a background colour for the same purpose. However, the inlay was hammered into shallow recesses, which made it easy for it either to fall out over time or be picked out for recycling. This is particularly evident in these three objects, which were once heavily inlaid but whose engraved designs now display only minute traces of silver, gold and copper inlay, which unfortunately makes the designs more difficult to discern. The line drawings of the jug (top), bowl (middle) and candlestick (bottom), on page 45, give an indication of the details of the original designs.

The main centre from which this inlaid

BOWL

IRAN (FARS)

14TH CENTURY

ILKHANID

BRASS, ENGRAVED AND INLAID WITH SILVER, GOLD AND A BLACK COMPOUND

H. 11.8 CM, D. 17.8 CM

MW.156.2000

metalwork technique spread westwards from the eastern provinces was Mosul in Northern Iraq. It had a major impact on the metalwork of Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ilkhanid patronages in the regions, including Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Iran. The Mosul-style jug featured here, which was signed by Husayn al-Hakim ibn Mas'ud al-Mawsili, was once heavily inlaid and engraved with various intricate designs, including an extraordinary array of figural representations, animals and benedictory knotted *kufic* and *naskhi* inscriptions. The most prominent design feature on the jug is a series of four exceptionally large poly-lobed medallions, each containing a royal scene. However, it is the smaller medallions containing pairs of seated figures that display an exceptional level of fine detail. Much of the inlay bearing detail of the decoration has long since been lost. However, the faces of the figures on the silver inlay located just below the handle have survived, with fine detail of the eyes, nose, mouth and hair inscribed on a piece of silver less than five millimetres wide.

In 1261, Mosul was attacked by the Mongols. It was around this time that the city's craftsmen began making inlaid vessels for Ayyubid patrons. While retaining their distinct Mosul style, there was more patron influence in the use of dedicatory inscriptions during this period. This candlestick was most likely made under late Ayyubid or early Mamluk patronage and contains three dedicatory inscriptions to an unknown

CANDLESTICK

PROBABLY SYRIA

13TH CENTURY

LATE AYYUBID OR EARLY MAMLUK

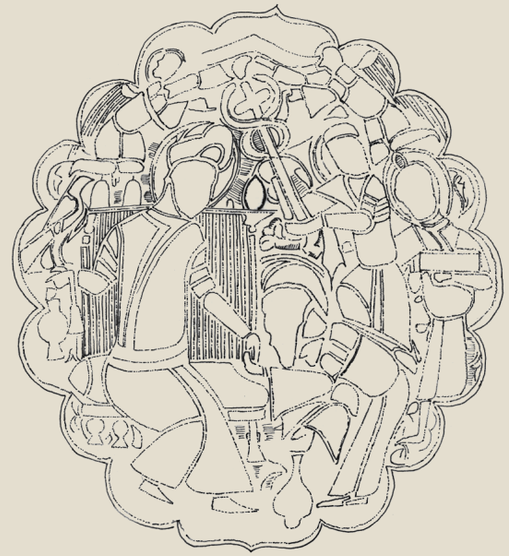
BRASS, ENGRAVED AND INLAID WITH SILVER AND COPPER

H. 38.5 CM, D. 34.5 CM

MW.241.2004

owner; one in *naskh* and the other two in *kufic*. The most striking feature of this object, however, is its highly detailed design and individualised depictions of each figure. The main feature is a frieze of nine horses and riders around the body, each portraying either a Muslim or Christian mounted warrior in battle displayed with a variety of armour, headgear, weapons, intricate saddle cloths and dynamic floating banners.

During the 14th to early 15th century, Fars, in Iran, also had a productive metalwork school. The bowl shows the typical elaborate compositions of Fars-style metalwork that was influenced by the sophisticated Ilkhanid manuscript illustration of the period. It has an abundance of elaborately detailed figurative scenes and motifs, including a central frieze of figures in procession with a female figure on a palanquin, warriors, hunters, polo players, animals and dense arabesque designs. The gold inlay detail, such as in the long spears of the huntsmen, is especially fine and is less than 0.25 millimetres thick. A black compound has also been applied to the background to enhance the colours of the metals, although the only remnants still visible are around the rim area. The unusual feature of this bowl, however, is the fact that it is entirely decorated on its base and interior. This, together with the high level of craftsmanship on the exterior, makes this bowl an exceptional object. (Allan, 2002; David and McBride, 1993; Ward, 1993). *L.M. and S.R.*



BUCKET

EGYPT OR SYRIA

MID-14TH CENTURY

MAMLUK

GILDED AND ENAMELLED GLASS

H. 22 CM, D. 20 CM

GL.516.2009

LATE MEDIEVAL EUROPE appreciated the excellence and beauty of luxury glassware from Islamic lands, such as this highly decorated piece, which is almost in a class of its own for the variety of colours and excellence of execution.

Archaeological finds have proven the popularity of gilded and enamelled wares, with fragments and complete vessels discovered as far afield as Great Britain. Unbroken objects were often preserved in cathedral treasuries or shrines, or passed hands until finding their way eventually into private collections, frequently of aristocratic or royal families. This gilded and enamelled Mamluk glass bucket underwent such a journey, making its way into Europe and the Rothschild household before its purchase by the Museum of Islamic Art.

With only four other glass buckets known to exist, it is a true rarity, though much of the technical and stylistic methods are common in Mamluk glassmaking, thereby helping to verify the piece. While there has been some debate concerning the age of the bucket, the metalwork and distinctive base construction seem to indicate the mid-14th century as a likely date. The bucket would have been used as a finger bowl to rinse hands before and after meals. Its inscription, *"I am a toy for the fingers shaped as [in the form of] a vessel. I contain cool water,"* is the same as that found on round-bottomed brass finger bowls. Interestingly, this kind of vessel was once believed to have been a type of lamp whose

jutting rings were thought to have acted as flanges for metal fittings that would suspend the vessel from ceilings. However, the inscription on the bucket and further research have since dispelled this theory.

Beyond its construction, the ornamentation is an obvious indicator of Mamluk origin. Every design element on the bucket can be found on other pieces of enamelled glass, from the thick treatment of the enamel to the details of the motifs. The thick, red enamel ground, which was made using the impasto technique, is a demonstration of the enameller's great skill and has been observed only on a small number of glass objects. This background and the inscription's border would originally have been gilded; the gold has been worn away by usage and time.

Within the Museum's collection of 13th-14th-century glass objects, many analogous designs exist in terms of monumental calligraphy, knotwork, palmette friezes, scrolls, lions in roundels and gold animals outlined in red. The scrollwork, woven through the calligraphy and terminating with animal heads and two pointing hands, has a comparative piece in a pilgrim flask at the British Museum. While the flask has two terminations of human heads, evoking folkloric references, the bucket has no obvious connection to narrative imagery. The collection of dogs (or dragons, according to some interpretations), bears, leopard, griffin and hands relate possibly to hunting scenes that are widely depicted in Islamic art. (Ribeiro and Hallet, 1999; Schmoranz, 1899; Ward, 1998; Ward, 2003). *M.W.*

ILKHANID QUR'AN

IRAN (AMOL)

DATED MIDDLE OF JUMADA 1 A.H. 687 (JUNE 1288)

ILKHANID

INK, PIGMENT AND GOLD ON PAPER

34.5 X 28.4 CM

MS.710.2010

THIS IS A Qur'an manuscript from the early Ilkhanid period signed by Muhammed bin Ibrahim Mahmud al-Haddadi (?) al-Tabari al-Amuli. It is written in bold, black *muhaqqaq* and contains interlinear Persian translations. The colophon contains indications of the palace where he copied the manuscript, at Amol, and the date, Jumada 1 A.H. 687 (June 1288). There also is a note recording that the Qur'an is a present to the *khanqah*, a spiritual centre, of Sheikh Abu al-Abbas Qassab, one of the great Sufis of Khurasan.

From a historical point of view, the date and place indicate an important period in Ilkhanid history. In the first quarter of the 13th century the Mongols arrived in Eastern Iran and devastated the region. By 1258, most of Iran and Iraq were under their control. Few Qur'ans have survived from the second and third quarters of the 13th century as a result of the disruption caused by invasion and the fact that the Ilkhanid Empire was ruled by non-Muslims. In the last quarter of the 13th century, Muslims began to reoccupy a more prominent place in the Islamic empire, which led to a revival in the production of Islamic manuscripts, including the Qur'an. This Qur'an belongs to that important period.

This manuscript was decorated with various illuminated ornaments. Each verse is highlighted by gold rosettes surrounded by dots. A group of five verses is marked by a pear-shaped illuminated medallion in the margin, while ten verses are marked by a medallion that includes the Arabic word *ashr*, the word for ten. The sura title and verse count are decorated in different designs. Sometimes, the title and verse count appear in an illuminated band with a half medallion or appear with scroll designs. In addition, the band has been cropped in order to save space for the previous verse.

Several aspects were marked in red, such as the reading rules; also, the *juz'*, a section of the Qur'an, is indicated in red in the margin, although it is also marked in gold in marginal *kufic* script. Another detail identified in red is the place of revelation, written above the *bismallah*. There are also some notes referring to one of the variant readings of the Qur'an. (James, 1992). *S.K.*

LATE MUGHAL QUR'AN

INDIA

C.1700-1750

MUGHAL

INK, PIGMENT AND GOLD ON CREAM PAPER

38 X 24.5 CM

MS.372.2007

THIS COMPLETE QUR'AN is widely regarded as one of the finest works of art of its kind. Inscribed on a small number of pages, it contains the entire 30 sections of the Qur'an; each page contains two complete sections, one on the verso, and one on the recto, which makes it exceptional. What also makes it utterly unique is its design, which is highly elegant; and although we lack evidence, it is believed that the painter used a type of mathematical skill to count the Qur'anic words and divide it into 15 pages. Each page is separated by four panels and every panel contains 17 lines of the main Qur'anic text. It was made in India circa 1700-1750, of a thick, smooth, cream and polished laid paper. The binding is made of red velvet with a brown morocco spine. The last page has a concluding prayer inscribed in the form of a rhombus. One of the seals in the manuscript reads, "*Navvab Nazir Sayyid Darab Khan Bahadur*".

This manuscript is also remarkable for both its luxury and simplicity; although it was made from paper, this Qur'an was produced to appear as if it was written on folios of gold. From the opening pages, which contain the first sura in the Qur'an, *al-Fatiha*, it is richly illuminated and covered in gold. In addition, there are three small panels that separate the text and are filled with gold, and the divisional devices in the margin are also filled with gold. With each sura title, and the margin decoration of floral scrolls and leaf patterns painted in gold, it is obvious that gold is the main element of this Qur'an. At the same time, it seems that the artist was also keen on simplicity: in contrast to the three golden panels, two small panels are inscribed in red *muhaqqaq* on a plain background. Moreover, the red colour was used in the text only to mark the reading rules and to highlight some frames by a thin line. It seems that red was used to emphasise the dignity of the Qur'an, stating "*The word of God*".

This manuscript prompts the thought that the most important secret of the Muslim artist is that he creates simply, and this simplicity is absorbed into law and the prevailing system as an example of the greatness of God's creation. This manuscript can therefore be seen as an expression of the extent of the artist's respect, dignity and faith. (Safwat, 2000). *S.K.*

THE DALA'IL AL-KHAYRAT OF ABU ABDULLAH MUHAMMAD IBN SULAYMAN AL-JUZULI

TURKEY (ISTANBUL)

DATED A.H. 1216 (1801)

OTTOMAN

INK, PIGMENT AND GOLD ON CREAM PAPER

23.3 X 16 CM

MS.427.2007

THIS IS AN extraordinary copy of the Dala'il al-Khayrat, featuring both calligraphy and with an illumination viewpoint. It was made in Istanbul and is dated A.H. 1216 (1801).

The Dala'il al-Khayrat is one of the most successful and favoured kinds of prayer book in the Islamic world. It reads as a long litany of blessings over the Prophet Muhammad. Usually, Dala'il al-Khayrat manuscripts have two illustrations showing either elements of the Prophet's Mosque in Madina or views of both the Great Mosque of Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Madina. It comes from the Islamic West, where it was written by the Moroccan mystical activist, Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Sulayman al-Jazuli, who was killed in A.H. 870 (1465). He is said to have stayed in Mecca and Madina for a number of years. Upon his return to Morocco, he studied in the Qarawiyyin Library in Fez, writing the prayer book which made him famous throughout the Islamic world. He eventually became a member of the *shadhiliyya tariqa* Sufi order, and then established himself in Safi where the number of his followers grew rapidly, recognising him as the long-awaited Mahdi. The governor of Safi had him expelled or killed.

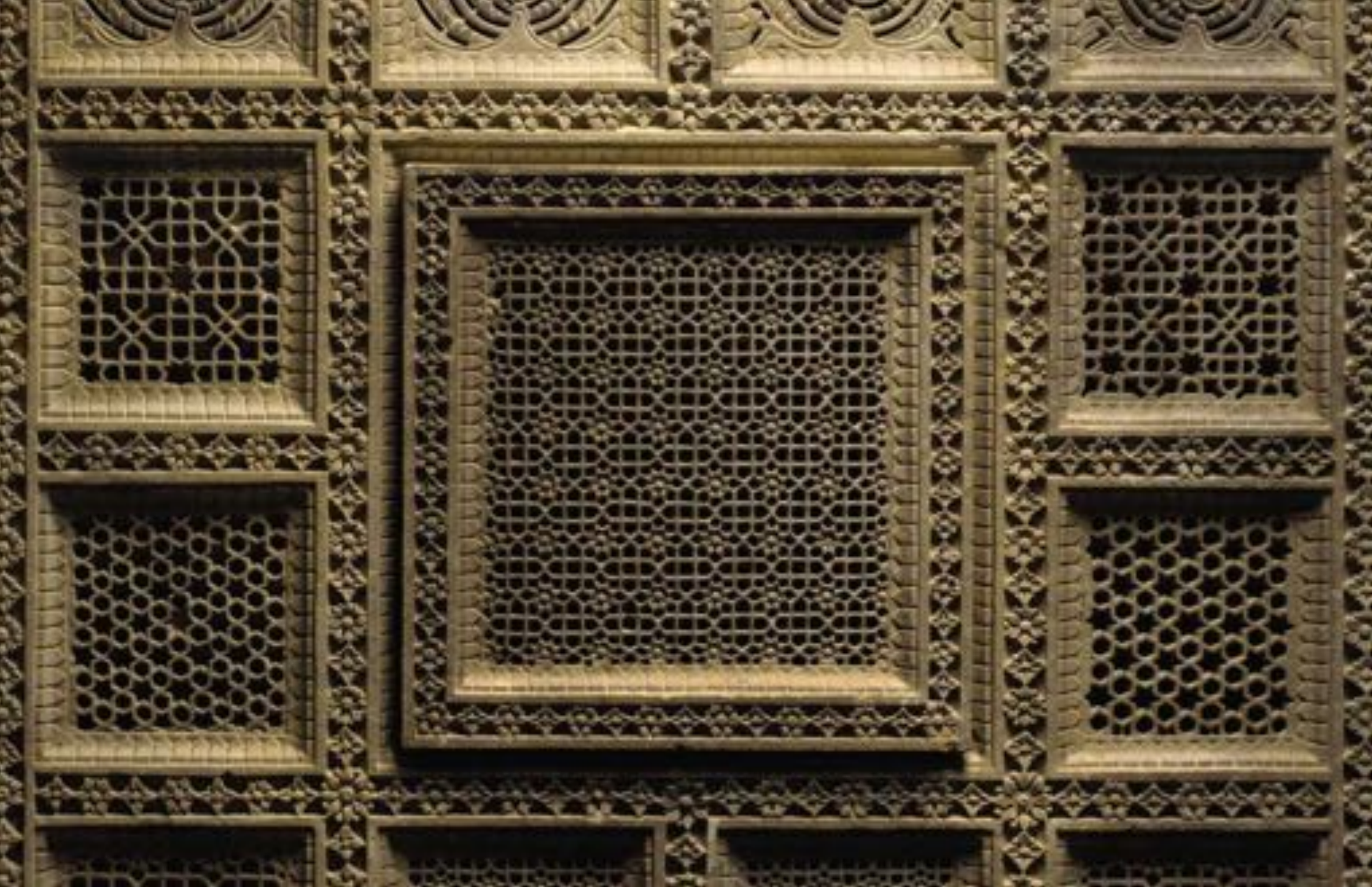
This prayer book was made with 107 folios of cream-coloured, thin, polished paper, and presented in a contemporary binding. It can be noted that it was made in a typical Qur'anic way with illuminated pages, and decorated with ornamental patterns

and golden floral motifs. There are ten such headings, all decorated differently. The colophon was signed by both the calligrapher and the illuminator. The calligrapher was Muhammad Amin, who was a teacher and master-clerk at the *Divan-i Humayun*, the imperial Chancery. The illuminator's name was Mehmed Nuri, who was well known for his work with other calligraphers.

In this manuscript, the double images of Ka'ba and Rawdah (Mecca and Madina) come directly after a passage that reads:

"*This is the depiction of the blessed garden in which the Prophet of God, peace be upon him, was buried with his two companions Abu Bakr and Umar – with whom God was pleased.*"

The text also refers to a fourth tomb, presumed to be that of Jesus Christ. The illustration of Mecca and Madina differs from that in other Ottoman copies of Dala'il al-Khayrat; the painting is not in the three-quarter bird's eye perspective. In fact, it followed an older tradition that shows the sites as if viewed from directly above. (Witkam, 2000; Safwat, 2000). *S.K.*



THE HAJJ CERTIFICATE is a stylised legal or juridical document bearing the names of witnesses inscribed at the foot, and indicating that the person specified executed a minor or major pilgrimage, *Umra* or *Hajj*. The function of such a large, heavy certificate might be as a wall hanging to display symbolic images of the holy places on the walls of mosques. This could have meant that the certificates were to be displayed in public to give praise to the prestige of the *Hajji*.

This certificate is dated 21 Muharram A.H. 837 (6 September 1433). It was created in Iraq, possibly Najaf, for a pilgrim named Sayyid Yusuf bin Sayyid Shihab al-Din Mawara al-Nahri, who undertook an *Umra*. The manuscript is about seven metres long and is characterised by the fact that it contains many details of religious symbols and religious sites for Muslims. The inscriptions vary from benedictions to Qur'anic verses that relate to those in the pilgrimage. As is known, God forgives the sins of the pilgrims, and a verse about this has been given special attention by being inscribed in gold before each of the three main holy places; the last part is scripted in black.

The first illustration (**check all refs?)** is *al-Masjid al-Haram* in Mecca, the Holy Mosque. In the centre is the *Ka'ba*, House of God, surrounded by concentric rings of monuments. The internal ring starts from the *Hatim*, a small wall enclosing the presumed tombs of Isma'il and his mother Hajar. We also find the Black Stone, identified by plain circles in the *Ka'ba*, which pilgrims stop to touch or kiss in veneration. We then find *Maqam Ibrahim*, the Station of Ibrahim, protecting a stone rock on which Ibrahim stood when building the *Ka'ba*. We also find *Maqam Jibril*, the Station of Gabriel, which is identified by a red band near the *Ka'ba*. In addition, details of other monuments in the Holy Mosque can be seen. Below is another small rectangular illustration, which depicts the *Mas'a*, or trotting space, that stretched between the two mountains of Safa and Marwa.

The third illustration shows *al-Masjid al-Nabawi*, the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. The illustration of the mosque is split into three sections: on the right is the *minbar*,

HAJJ CERTIFICATE

IRAQ (POSSIBLY NAJAF)

21 MUHARRAM A.H. 837 (6 SEPTEMBER 1433)

TIMURID

INK, PIGMENT AND GOLD ON PAPER

665 X 34.7 CM

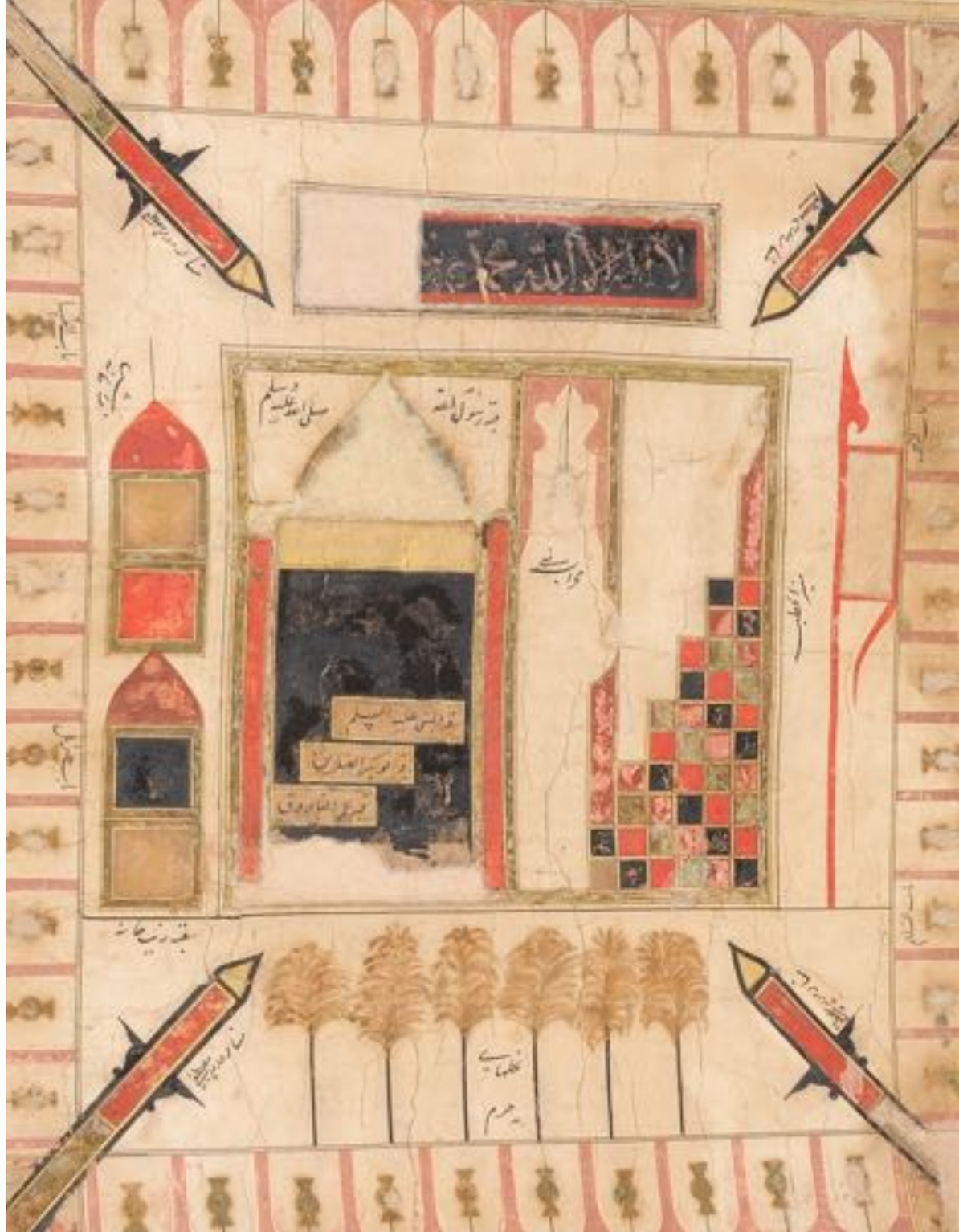
MS.267.1998

the middle shows the *mihrab* and, on the left, the three tombs of the Prophet, Abu Bakr and Umar can be seen. There is also a large illustration of the Prophet's sandal, followed by the main text including a pilgrim's name and the rituals he performed. After the text, the names of witnesses appear.

After the first main text, and the end of the journey to Arabia, the journey to Palestine is presented in two separate illustrations. The first shows Jerusalem, while the main illustration is separated as two buildings. On the right is the Dome of the Rock, where interesting details can be noted, such as the Prophet's footprint, Moses' Stick, and a knife that probably refers to the story when Abraham was to sacrifice Isma'il. On the left is al-Aqsa Mosque, containing two details, *Maqam Ibrahim* and the *minbar*. Underneath is a small illustration entitled Issa's Torah.

Next is the *al-Haram al-Ibrahim*, Cave of the Patriarchs, in Hebron. The illustration contains seven tombs for the prophets and their wives. Below it are Iraq's shrines: the first is Ali's tomb, and the second is Husayn's tomb, followed by a text and six signatures of witnesses.

Careful meditation of the symbols of this piece reveal many details related to its religious history, which covers a trip to the holiest sites in the globe. The Hajj certificate, in fact, can also be described as a manuscript of a journey of faith. (Aksoy and Milstein, 2000). *S.K.*



MONGOLIAN WOMAN'S GOLD ROBE

CENTRAL ASIA

LATE 12TH-EARLY 14TH CENTURY

MONGOLIAN

169 X 229 CM

CLOTH OF GOLD, SILK AND GOLD THREADS

CO.159.2002

THE MONGOLS WERE particularly attracted to gold and silk, as this robe exemplifies. This was a continuation of an earlier tradition of the steppe peoples dating back to the Scythians – Iranian nomads who migrated from Central Asia to Southern Russian in the 7th-8th centuries B.C., who sewed gold plates on their outer garments. This robe, for a high-ranking Mongolian woman possibly of imperial origin, was created between 1166 and 1399, according to carbon-14 dating analysis.

From the 13th to the late 14th centuries, the Mongols ruled most of Eurasia. *Pax Mongolica*, the phrase used to describe the Mongols' policy of freer, pan-Asian communication during 1250-1350, and the Silk Road, both acted as catalysts for cultural exchange. In particular, the Mongols relocated skilled textile workers from occupied areas and placed them together, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, using weaving as a common international language to exchange knowledge, traditions and ideas. The result was an amalgamation of styles, techniques and materials leading to the creation of spectacular textiles known as cloths of gold, *nasij* in Mongolian, or *Pani Tartarici* in medieval inventories. Pure gold, used for its malleable, ductile and non-oxidizing properties, was stuck to paper or leather substrate and wound around silk core thread. Such threads would cover almost the entire surface of complex woven textiles. In this way, the nomadic Mongols would wear their wealth.

The result of cross-cultural communication and the use of weaving as an international language can be seen in this robe. Its main body is lampas-woven cloth of gold with two different types of gold threads on paper substrate. The cuffs, the strip around the collar and the wrap-over panels at the front along with the belt loops are made of a darker silk in twining weave. The same weave is also found in Liao dynasty textiles, indicating a Chinese weaver.

The excessive size of the robe, which is 169 centimetres in height and 229 centimetres in width, can be explained by the preference of Mongols for exceedingly large women.

The wrap-over robe consists of gold cloth that is also unusually wide (120 centimetres) woven with four and a half large tangent roundels with a wide border of 12 circles interlaced with 12 smaller circles. They enclose a galloping antelope, a rampant lion and a seated antelope, repeated four times. The centre of each roundel is decorated with two serrated discs and two sun-like discs enclosing motifs of a pair of eyes and eyebrows. These discs surround a central flower with eight interlinked petals. Leaves fill the background. The area between the roundels is decorated with a stylised floral design balanced by four flying geese whose beaks meet in the centre. The wide sleeves are cut in curve, a rare element in existing Mongolian robes, to meet the three-tiered tight cuff. The three tiers are repeated around the neck and the wrap-over opening. The shoulder area along the width of the silk is woven with an elegant repeat and mirror image in a pseudo-*kufic* inscription, bordered top and bottom by a row of running animals. Compared with other existing Mongol robes, this one is spectacular. *K.C.*

UNSEEN TREASURES

WOMAN'S HEADGEAR, BOKHTA

CENTRAL ASIA

13TH CENTURY

MONGOLIAN

CLOTH OF GOLD, SILK, GOLD THREADS AND PEARLS

61.5 X 38.5 CM

CO.118.2000

BOKHTAS, TOWERING ITEMS of headgear up to almost 90 centimetres in height, were worn by Mongolian women, both official wives and concubines, during the 13th-14th centuries. Also known as *ku-ku* or *gu-gu* in China, they are perhaps the most distinctive items of Mongolian women's wardrobes, and have caught the attention of historians for what they reveal about society during the Imperial Mongolian period. Headgear, especially for women, was an important indicator of social status and wealth in the nomadic world. This piece, possibly of Chinese or Iranian provenance, is one of the most important extant examples and the most complete of the five in the Museum's collection.

Although it is not absolutely clear how these pieces would have been be assembled in different periods and areas, *bokhtas* were made from column-shaped bark cloth extending from the top of the head and topped by a conical piece terminating in a square. This would be attached firmly under the chin with a secondary hat, which would have a hole for the column extension to pass through. The bark cloth was covered with gold cloth cut in the shape of a hat with lappets, its length reaching the shoulders. It was also padded with light silk wadding and plain-woven silk lining inside. A further extension, worn by married women but not concubines, was a sharp gold or other metal spire, decorated with peacock, or possibly bird-of-paradise tail feathers and mallard tails, adding height to the hat. Pearls, gold and other jewellery embellished the headgear creating a striking polychrome and pricey construction.

The main part of this hat is made of silk lampas cloth of gold woven on what is possibly a blue silk background, based on blue thread remains. The textile depicts walking lions entangled at the bottom with hares, depicted on a larger scale than that of the lions. The composition is repeated, possibly alternatively, in the grain direction and widthwise. In between the motif repetitions, the remaining area is decorated with curled clouds originating in China. A wide decorative band, in a darker twined woven monochrome silk, is placed on the lower margins of the hat's lappets following the shape of the hat around the face. The upper part is missing here, along with the metal and feather construction, and is padded with silk wadding and lining. The second part, worn underneath the top hat, is a tabby silk woven piece with small leather discs embroidered with pearls. The extended strips would tie strongly under the chin of the wearer. The creases from the original knot are still visible. *K.C.*

THREE SILK GLOVES

CENTRAL ASIA OR CHINA

14TH CENTURY

MONGOLIAN OR LIAO

SILK

APPROX. 30 CM X 18 CM (EACH GLOVE)

CO.109.2000 AND CO.96.2000

A PAIR OF GLOVES and a single glove are presented here as parts of a more complete Mongolian dress code. A comparison with Liao dynasty (907-1125) textiles at the Museum of Islamic Art shows that textiles with identical weave were used in the Liao dynasty and possibly survived until the Mongolian Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). While it is not clear whether these three pieces are indeed Mongolian, based on miniatures and historical information, such items would be part of the Central Asian clothing tradition. The pair of gloves is made of terracotta-red monochrome silk threads. The single glove is made of monochrome twined silk of an unknown original colour. All three gloves have a silk tabby woven strip attached to their outer side for tying securely around the wrist. (Allsen, 1977; Wardwell, 1989; Thompson, 2004; (Bier, 1987). *K.C.*

CENOTAPH

AFGHANISTAN
(PROBABLY HERAT)

A.H. 859 (1455)

TIMURID

CARVED GREY SCHIST

41 X 31 X 142 CM

SW.152.2009

ISLAMIC FUNERAL RITES do not permit richly decorated graves or impressive mausolea. Only two simple stones should mark the head and feet of the dead, whose faces should be turned towards Mecca. Nevertheless, since the early Islamic period, elaborated mausolea did exist; for example, the *qubbat al-silsila*, or Dome of the Chain, at *al-Haram al-Sharif*, which is datable to the 9th century. Similarly, the decoration of graves also became common after a while as the many richly carved gravestones commemorating the dead demonstrate.

This cenotaph is an example of that practice. Originating from the 15th century, when the dynasty of the Timurids, founded by Timur in 1370, ruled over Iran, Iraq and parts of Central Asia, it consists of a hard, grey stone (grey schist) and would have been a marker standing on top of a grave. It is decorated with floral motifs, moderately carved into the relatively hard stone. The corners are accentuated by small columns with indicated capitals.

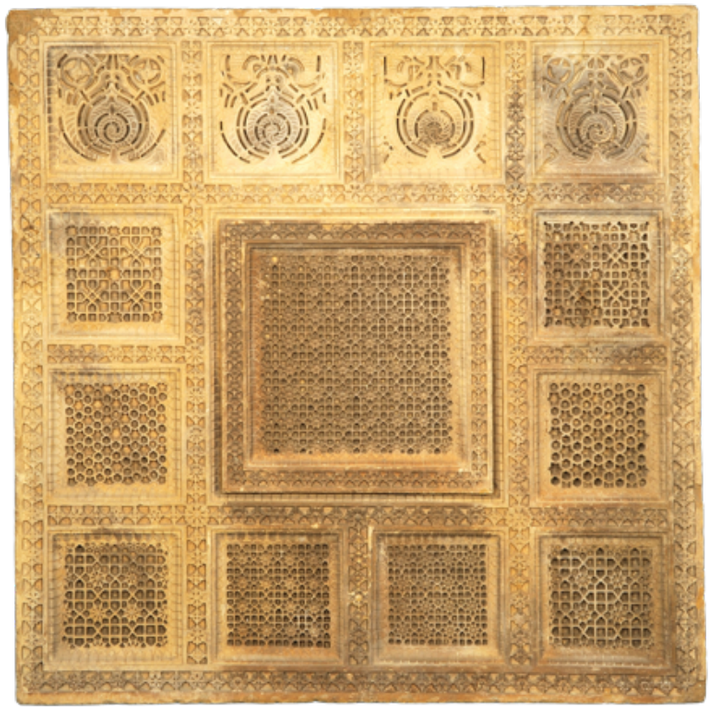
The various inscriptions are surrounded by cartouches and include quotations from the Qur'an (Sura II, Baqara, verse 255, the so-called "throne verse" *ayat al-kursi*); blessings of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad and the 12 Imams; and the name of the dead person with the date A.H. 859 (1455-56). The deceased is Dawlat, daughter of Amir Ali Shir.

Given his title of *khazin* or treasurer, Amir Ali Shir must have been an important person in Timurid society. Mir Ali Shir Nava'i (1441-1501), minister and adviser of the last ruling Timurid, Sultan Husayn Baiqara (1469-1501), who was well known as patron of the arts and responsible for the restoration of many buildings, immediately comes to mind. He also promoted Chagatai Turkish (*turki*) as the language of poetry and literature and commissioned illustrated manuscripts such as the Turkish translation of the famous *Mantiq al-Tayr* (*Conference of the Birds*) by Farid al-Din Attar (d. c.1220), which is now in the Topkapi Saray Museum.

To support an attribution to Mir Ali Shir Nava'i, the date must be read "899" instead of "859". In fact, it is worth mentioning that since the "five" is written in an unusual way, a reading of "nine" seems also possible.

Stone Timurid cenotaphs and tombstones have survived in numbers; we find them in situ mainly in Eastern Iran, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, but also in various museums, often as fragments.

A stylistical near-parallel is the tombstone in the mausoleum of Jahangir ibn Timur (Hazrat Imam) at Shahr-i-Sabz in Uzbekistan, from the first half of the 15th century, where we find the same relatively flat carving with floral decoration. (The Art of the Islamic and Indian World, 2007; Lentz and Lowry, 1989; Hillenbrand, 1994). *J.G.*



ARCHITECTURAL PANEL

INDIA

15TH CENTURY

SULTANATE

CARVED SANDSTONE

121.3 X 118.5 CM

SW.142.2003

THIS SQUARE PANEL appears at first sight as a pierced screen, but is in fact a massive stone slab with a decoration of several fields perfectly imitating screenwork. A large panel in the centre is surrounded by smaller square sections with a geometrical pattern as well as figurative motifs. While the upper four panels are decorated with scrolling elements enriched by peacocks, the other eight panels show geometrical screens of a similar or even the same ornamentation. The relief is deeply carved so that the background lies in the shadow, leading to the illusion of a real screen. The central panel is set in a deeper frame with its front standing out more, which again supports the idea that the decoration was carved to imitate a window screen.

Pierced stone grills, *jali*, are well known in Indo-Islamic architecture of the 16th and 17th centuries, when the Mughals ruled over large parts of the Indian subcontinent. *Jali* were used as a sightscreen allowing the circulation of air and creating privacy, especially for women inside who were able to look out while remaining invisible from the outside (like the wooden mashrabiya well known from houses in Cairo). Such screens were an integral part of Indo-Islamic architecture over a long period of time.

Due to the lack of convincing comparative stone screens, the exact date and provenance of this *jali* is not easy to determine. However, the interesting and rather unusual decoration, as well as the high quality stone carving, point to the fact that it once belonged to a building commissioned by the royal court. The stylistic differences in relation to Mughal pierced screens, which often used red sandstone or white marble, indicate another provenance, probably Northern India in the Sultanate period (15th century; Indian and Southeast Asian Art, 2003). *J.G.*

TURBAN HELMET WITH MARK OF THE OTTOMAN ARSENAL OF ST. IRENE

TURKEY

EARLY 16TH CENTURY

OTTOMAN

STEEL WITH GILT STUDS, ENGRAVED AND OPEN-WORK DESIGN

H. 39 CM, D. 33 CM

AA.100.2003

TURBAN HELMETS ARE so-called because of their distinctive bulbous shape; they also usually have a fluted bowl that tapers to a flat or conical finial. This shape has been compared to the outline of mosque domes, therefore giving these helmets an Islamic "look", even though their prototypes derive from the rounded Sassanid-style helmets of pre-Islamic Iran.

This helmet is decorated with engraved floral scroll designs around the bowl and has a nose-guard, typical of many turban helmets, with an open-work finial that matches the pair of open-worked cheek protectors. There are single rows of gilded studs running along the bottom of the helmet and around the edges of the cheek pieces. Examination under magnification reveals the remains of leather on the underside of these studs, indicating that they would probably have served as fixings for leather padding attached to the underside of the helmet and cheek pieces to protect the wearer from chafing.

Turban helmets were produced in various workshops in Turkey and Iran from around the 14th to 16th centuries. The main patrons of these helmets included the Aq Qoyunlu (a 14th to early 16th century dynasty originating from a Turkic federation in Central Turkey that later extended its rule over Herat and Baghdad), Shirvanshah (rulers of the Aq Qoyunlu vassal state of Shirvan, which is now the area of Azarbaijan), and the Ottomans. It seems as though the Ottoman and Aq Qoyunlu/Shirvani helmets tended to differ slightly in style; the former were more tapered and elongated, as is this case with this helmet, while the latter were more rounded and squat in appearance.

In the 15th century, under the rule of Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, the Byzantine church of Hagia Eirene (St. Irene) in Constantinople was turned into an imperial depot for military equipment, including arms and military regalia taken as booty from both Christian and Muslim armies. In fact, the building was converted into a military museum in the early 18th century, but the mark of the Ottoman arsenal of St. Irene can still be found on many pieces of military equipment in collections around the world. This helmet is one such piece, with the distinctive small circular stamp clearly seen engraved on the frontal right side of the helmet bowl. (Alexander, 1983; Nickel, 1991). *L.M. and S.R.*

DAGGER (KHANJAR) OF SHAH JAHAN

INDIA (AKBARABAD [AGRA])

A.H. 1039 (1629-1630)

MUGHAL

STEEL BLADE WITH FINE TWO-TONE GOLD INLAY, SARDONYX HILT

L. 39 CM

MW.579.2008

IN THE MUGHAL Empire, daggers and swords were considered not just functional objects, but also beautiful precious metal, gem-set works of art. These would have belonged to emperors and would have given to princes, notables and high officials of the Mughal court as symbols of status. This dagger and sword belonged to the fifth Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan – a Persian title meaning "King of the World" – who reigned from 1628 to 1658. Shah Jahan is particularly known for his famous building project, the Taj Mahal. Not only are these two objects historically significant, the fact that very few of the Emperor's personal objects are still in existence makes them even more exceptional.

The quality and beauty of the dagger is particularly notable in the inscription inlaid on both sides of the blade in a very fine *nasta'liq script*, with two shades of high quality gold that were used in productions from the royal workshop in the capital, Akbarabad. The inscription, which is complete, provides the Emperor's name and the date and place of the dagger's manufacture encased within an elegant cartouche decorated with delicate floral and cartouche designs. Even more interesting is the small *chattra*, or royal parasol, placed beside the cartouche on each side of the blade.

The *chattra* is a royal symbol representing heaven as it sits above the head of a ruler who, according to the Mughals, was believed to hold a special place between the divine and ordinary people. Therefore,

SWORD (TALWAR) OF SHAH JAHAN

INDIA

REGNAL YEAR 10
(A.H. 1047 [1637-1638])

MUGHAL

WATERED STEEL BLADE WITH GOLD INLAY AND OVERLAY, HILT DECORATED IN GOLD

L. 84 CM

MW.532.2007

when a *chattra* is held above the Emperor's head, his elevated status is represented; when it is engraved onto an object, such as the blades of swords and daggers of princes and members of the royal army, it symbolises a status of honour.

The inscription on the sword is more worn than the inscription on the dagger, but contains Shah Jahan's name and the sword's date of production. There is also a *chattra* on one side of the blade and a European stamp applied over the gold detail on both sides of the blade, which is an indication that the sword had been imported from Europe. The stamp is set onto a brown compound, which appears to be the same material on the hilt into which gold floral scroll designs are set. This is an indication that the hilt and stamp may have been produced at the same workshop at the same time. (Krishnan and Kumar, 1999; Zebrowski, 1997). *L.M. and S.R.*

DISH

SPAIN (VALENCIA, PROBABLY MANISES)

C.1470

HISPANO-MORESQUE

EARTHENWARE PAINTED IN LUSTRE AND COBALT BLUE ON A WHITE GLAZE

D. 45.5 CM

PO.206.2003

SOME OF THE most notable examples of Hispano-Moresque lustreware are the armorial dishes of the 15th century, such as these pictured here. These were mostly produced in Manises, near Valencia, which became the main centre of production. European heraldic motifs decorate their centres, which are surrounded by Moorish-style ornamentation, reflecting the primarily Moorish craftsmanship and Christian patronage. Impressive in scale and design, fine dishes, jugs, pitchers and alberellos – a type of earthenware jar – were produced for display, for serving at feasts and to honour important marriages. Some of the greatest examples of Spanish lustre ceramics were made during this period.

Wares from the mid-15th century usually depict generic emblems, such as eagles, lions and fleur-de-lis, placed inside crests. On large dishes, the reverse is sometimes decorated with an enlarged heraldic motif. Decoration, which often incorporates cobalt blue, is ornate and detailed, and is composed of intricate scales and scrolls or foliate patterns such as the striking "ivy leaf" design in the dish and pair of albarellos.

By the late 15th century more specific Christian coats of arms began to appear in lustre ceramics. These include the arms of Atienda of Aragon, Castile and Leon, and the arms of Castile and Navarre. Painting on the reverse remains less dense than the obverse, usually with foliate patterns executed in light brushstrokes, such as the lanceolate leaves, which are distinctly shaped like a lance's head.

Lustre-painting of pottery is an expensive and difficult technique, requiring a double firing and a glaze that combines copper and silver oxides. Dating back to 9th century Iraq, it has a long and diverse history in the Islamic world. It first arrived in Málaga in the mid-13th century, and was probably introduced by migrating craftsmen from Fatimid Egypt after the destruction in 1169 of Fustat, an important centre for ceramics and home to many lustre potters.

By the 14th century, lustreware production was well established in Málaga and in high demand from the Nasrid court, ruling from neighbouring Granada, as well as from noblemen in the Christian kingdoms to the north. Visiting the region in the middle of the century, the traveller Ibn Battuta remarked, "*… in Málaga is made a wonderful golden pottery and is sent abroad to far distant lands*".

In response to the decline of the Nasrid dynasty later that century, potters migrated north to work in Christian Spain where lustreware remained to be lucratively traded. The industry in Manises rapidly increased in the 15th century with pieces being traded in Europe to French and Italian noble families. (Caiger-Smith, 1985; Martinez Caviró, 1991; Ray, 2000). *K.K.*

CALLIGRAPHIC FOLIO AND BIFOLIO

TURKEY

1450-1500

OTTOMAN

INK AND PIGMENTS ON SIZED PAPER

38.8 X 28.5 CM
38.6 X 29.2 CM

MS.700.2009
MS.701.2009

THESE TWO COLOURFUL and striking calligraphic pieces by the 15th century calligrapher Asadullah Kirmani (d.1487-1488), probably come from an album compiled for the Ottoman Sultan Beyezid II (r.1481-1521) or for his father Sultan Mehmed II (r.1451-1481).

The folio and bifolio are composed of bold panels of calligraphy and various pieces of writing in varied calligraphic scripts, laid down on paper. The different calligraphic compositions include a heading of an instructive guide for assorted scripts, verses from the Qur'an and poetic verses, including one attributed to the calligrapher's father. An inscription on a panel of the recto of one of the non-illustrated bifolio page gives the name of the calligrapher, Asadullah bin Beyezid al-Sadiq al-Sufi al-Kirmani.

The details of Asadullah's life elude us and there is very little published on any of his existing works. He is best known as the teacher of many famous calligraphers, including the Ottoman calligrapher, Ahmad Qarahisari (d.1556). However, it is unclear in what city or region his famous pupils, including Qarahisari, studied with him.

It is possible to speculate that the main calligraphic panels and most likely various smaller versions were composed for other purposes and then compiled, perhaps posthumously, in an effort to gather and save the work of the respected calligrapher.

In these folios, Asadullah demonstrates the mastery of the various scripts in his repertoire, including thuluth (*sülüs* in Turkish), *nasta'liq* (*nesta'lik* in Turkish) and *naskh* (*nesih* in Turkish), while, at the same time, much of his calli-

graphic exercises could be termed experimental or innovative.

One example is a large black composition of the bifolio, which is a reflecting composition where the words are written so that they appear to be a mirrored image (*muthanna* in Arabic; *musenna* in Turkish) done in a proto-jali *thuluth* (*celi sülüs* in Turkish) script. A closer examination allows us to theorise on the method employed to compose this panel. The calligrapher probably tapped a type of powder through a perforated sheet to lay down the outline of the reflecting composition. He then outlined the resulting image with black and filled in the remaining space with black pigment, thereby creating the effect that the white lines of the letters are scratched into the black.

These pages are significant within the story of the development of calligraphy for many reasons. They are relatively unique in the manner in which they have been assembled and in the experimental quality of many of the calligraphic compositions. Asadullah Kirmani and his famous pupil, Qarahisari, can be credited with bringing the school of the 13th-century master calligrapher, Yaqut al-Musta'simi, into a Turkish context. However, shortly after Asadullah and his pupil Qarahisari the Yaqut tradition of calligraphy all but died out in Anatolia. By the 16th century, Ottoman calligraphers had adopted the methods of the revolutionary calligrapher, Sheikh Hamdullah (d.1520), whose approach completely reformed the art of calligraphy. (Derman, 1998; McWilliams and Roxburgh, 2007; Roxburgh, 2005). *F.H.*

HANGING ORNAMENT

TURKEY (IZNIK)

1575-1588

OTTOMAN

FRITWARE WITH UNDER-GLAZE PAINTING

H. 25.5 CM

PO.17.1997

CERAMICS BEGAN TO be produced in the Turkish town of Iznik in the late 15th century. By the mid-16th century, in response to growing elite and imperial Ottoman demand, Iznik potters were producing exceptionally high quality ceramics, such as the hanging ornament, bottle and dish here. Made from fritware, a stone paste combining quartz, clay and frit (ground glass), and decorated with underglaze painting, these new wares were very different to earlier examples produced in Turkey.

Dishes, jugs and tiles are the most commonly known types of Iznik ware. However, spherical hanging ornaments, such as the one above, were also in demand. Possibly originating from the use of ostrich eggs in ancient burials, it is common practice for religious groups in the Middle East, both Christian and Muslim, to hang spherical ornaments. To be viewed from a distance or from underneath, Ottoman ceramic hanging ornaments were often attached to mosque lamps and suspended in clusters around the *minbar*. As well as being decorative, their purpose could also have been functional, possibly serving as acoustic devices for the reading of prayers and to prevent rodents from drinking oil in the lamps.

This selection of objects shows that it is possible to trace a general chronology of 16th-century Iznik wares by noting the development of designs and colour. Earlier wares are muted in colour, usually decorated with blue on white. By the 1540s, turquoise and blue was a popular combination, as were sage, olive greens and purple, as seen in the following pages. These mid-16th century wares often display naturalistic floral repertoires, typically including tulips, carnations, roses, hyacinths and plum blossoms. On occasion

DISH

TURKEY (IZNIK)

1545-1550

OTTOMAN

FRITWARE WITH UNDER-GLAZE PAINTING

D. 29.8 CM

PO.48.1999

WATER BOTTLE

TURKEY (IZNIK)

C. 1540

OTTOMAN

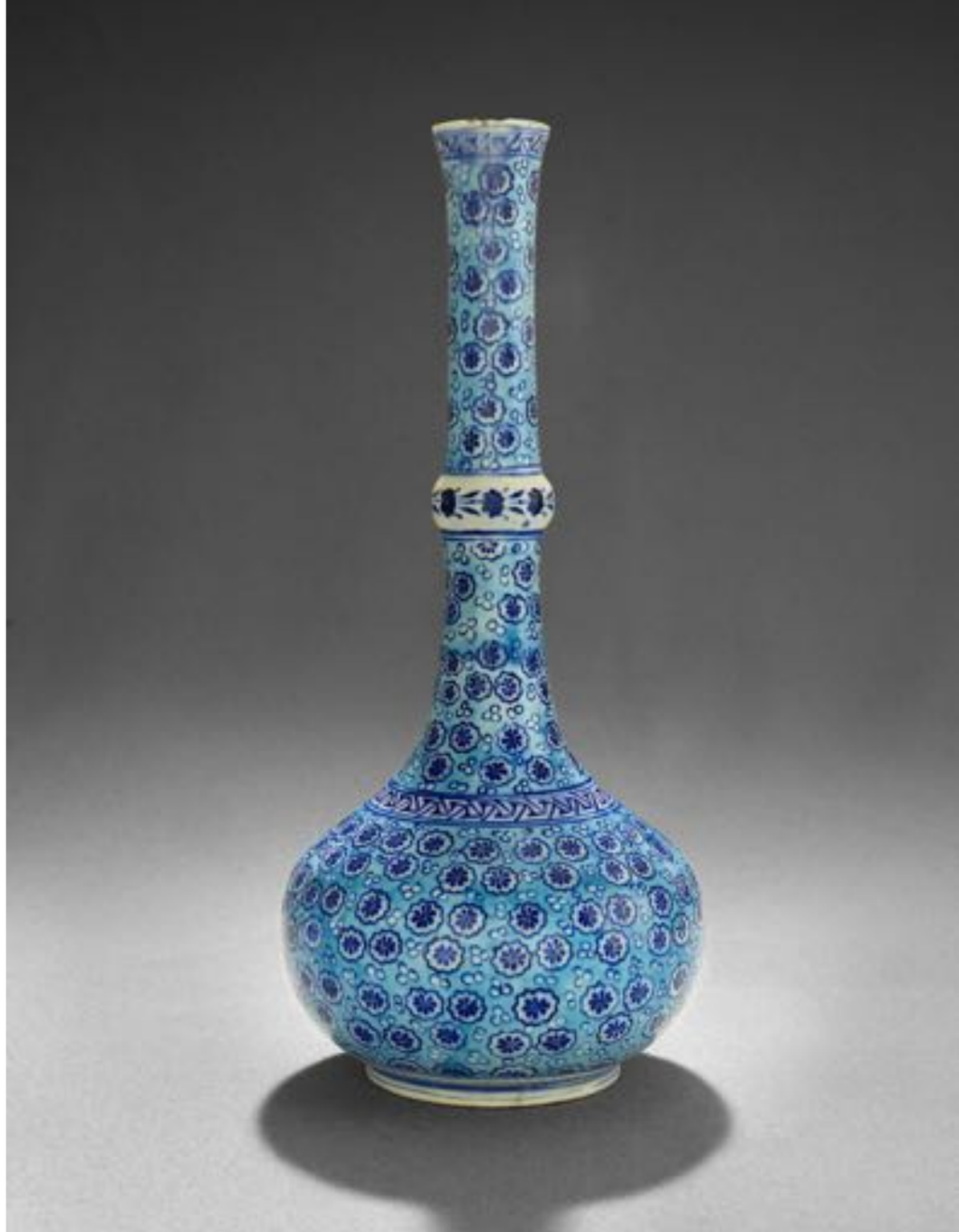
FRITWARE WITH UNDER-GLAZE PAINTING

H. 37.5 CM

PO.47.1999

other flowers and plants were included, such as the pomegranates and chrysanthemums, as seen on the dish here. *Çintamani*, a design of three grouped circles, clearly visible on the bottle pictured above and to the right, was another pattern that became popular during this period. Much has been written about the origin of *çintamani*, which has been linked to Buddhist traditions in Central Asia.

The addition of tomato red, painted in relief, during the second half of the 16th century marked a major development in Iznik ware. This new colour scheme, which also included emerald green, which is seen in this hanging ornament, was to characterise Iznik ceramics until the close of the century and the eventual demise of production. Designs and composition also diversified, becoming more abstract and including figurative scenes. (Atasoy and Raby, 1989; Carswell, 2003). *K.K.*



NAVIGATIONAL CHART OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

TURKEY

C. 1600

OTTOMAN

INK ON PAPER

APPROX. 120 X 260 CM (BOTH PARTS)

MS.709.2010

THIS MAP IS a navigational chart composed of two parts and compiled from several pieces of treated paper depicting the whole Mediterranean Sea, from the Straits of Gibraltar in the West to the Turkish and Lebanese coasts in the East. The names of cities, forts and ports on the coasts were written in Ottoman Turkish, while the inner parts of the countries were left blank. Islands were either painted in green, red or beige, although the reason for this is not clear. Some major cities or places are depicted by a small red perspective plan, while shallows are marked with small black dots. This clearly indicates that this chart had been drawn up for nautical purposes.

Several Ottoman Turkish navigational charts (portolans) are known to have existed from the late 15th or early 16th centuries onwards. The surviving material has led experts to believe in a strong interaction between the maritime traditions of Islamic and Christian states bordering on the Mediterranean.

The most famous of such charts is the map of Piri Re'is (ca. 1470-1554), which is dated from 1513 and is kept in the Topkapi Saray Museum (R.1633 mük). Lavishly decorated with fantastic inlands, ships and mythical beasts, it is a work of art. Re'is is also known for his *Kitab-i Bahriye* (*Book of Navigation*), which is notable for its section on the discovery of America based on Christopher Columbus' maps, which did not survive. Two different versions of this book exist, and while the first edition (1521) was intended to be a practical portolan, the second one (1526) has been revised and visually embellished and was designed to be presented to Sultan Sulayman (r. 1520-1566).

With this in mind, and given the overall size of both parts, of approximately 120 x 260 centimetres, the map presented here could well be an unfinished decorative wall chart.

The dating of this chart to around 1600 has been established by the presence of towns such as New Tripoli or New Alexandria, which are not depicted in Piri Re'is' map of 1526, as well as by the type of paper, which was made using wire moulds, a technique that was introduced to the Ottoman world at the end of the 16th or beginning of the 17th century. (Harley and Woodward, 1992; Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds, 2009). *J.G.*

SILK VELVET PANEL

IRAN

EARLY 17TH CENTURY

SAFAVID

VOIDED SILK BROCADE VELVET WITH METAL THREADS

81 X 114 CM

TE.204.2010

TEXTILES, AND PARTICULARLY silk velvets, were among the most treasured objects made in Safavid Iran. This composition of elegantly attired figures engaged in various leisurely pursuits is an example of a popular theme during this period. This panel presents two female figures equipped with the general fittings for the hunt, such as pigeon wings tied around their waists to use as lures, and the cord and hood for the falcon.

Falconry and hunting were favourite pastimes of the Persian elite and were popular subjects for Safavid artists, appearing in a variety of media, from textiles to miniatures. Other examples of Safavid figurative velvets exist, including an object in the permanent exhibition of the Museum of Islamic Art, which features pairs of women holding flowers in a vertical repeat, and surrounded by flowering shrubs that are of a similar style to those in this velvet. The foliage surrounding the two huntresses in this piece depicts a range of flowers including carnations and irises, along with some of the more stylised palmette motifs.

While the svelte figures, long robes, and pointed shoes of the figures in this silk panel are typical of Safavid fashion of the period, the small hats and the deep necklines of the bodices indicate a European influence. Stimuli from the West was common in Iran during this period and was welcome at the Safavid court. It became particularly strong in the 1600s, when European artists visited the royal courts in Isfahan and when Shah

Abbas II sent some of his court painters to Rome to study Italian art.

These luxury fabrics were admired throughout the known world, especially in Europe where they were valued for their highly skilled construction, detailed design, expensive material and overall exotic appearance. Members of the European elite were not the only admirers of Safavid textiles, and there are sources that suggest that Asian monarchs, such as the King of Siam, acquired Persian silks in great quantities. Iranian rulers often sent silk velvets as diplomatic gifts to foreign courts. Velvets given as gifts for political reasons were always of the highest quality and were made of the finest materials, such as silk enriched with gold and silver foil, in order to demonstrate the wealth and sophistication of the 17th century Safavid court. The gold velvet brocade of the Shah Abbas period, known as *zarbaft-i makhmal*, and the use of a silver-gold alloy with a high gold content in the threads used for the background of this textile leave little doubt about the expense and skill involved in making such a luxurious object. (Spuhler, 1978; Thompson, 2004; Pope and Ackerman, 1939; Baker, 1995; (Bier, 1987). *J.M.*

PRAYER CARPET

IRAN (ISFAHAN)

LATE 16TH OR EARLY 17TH CENTURY

SAFAVID

SILK, WOOL AND METAL THREADS

174 X 121 CM

CA.82.2010

THIS PRAYER RUG forms part of a prestigious set of Safavid Persian Niche rugs known as the Salting or Topkapi group. Calligraphic inscriptions are a common feature of the majority of these rugs. This one is inscribed as follows:

"As long as there is trace of this earth or sky/ Let the Ottomanhouse be the supreme lords/ On the throne of justice and good fortune/ May it be perpetually joyful and successful/ Let the name of Sultan Murad/ Be the beautifying ornament of sermons and coinage/ In Iran, as well as in Anatolia and the Arab lands/Let your might be that of a hero/ May your new spring never ripen to autumn/ Be young as long as the world is in existence/ Let the dust of your carpet, like Mirza Makhdum/Be the most noble caller to prayer"

This poetic inscription is executed in nast'aliq script, in Persian verse and includes the name Sultan Murad in the upper left-hand corner cartouche. Its content indicates that it was given as diplomatic gift from the Safavid Persian court to that of the Ottoman Turks. It is possible that the rug was presented in celebration of a peace treaty signed between the two powers in 1590, in which case, the name Sultan Murad would refer to the Ottoman Sultan Murad lll. Shah Abbas would have been the Safavid ruler during this period.

Another shared feature amongst many rugs in this group is the technique of metal thread brocading. Here we see it being used successfully as a contrast to the colourful palmettes, vines and curling leaves of the design.

Despite these similarities this rug is an anomaly because it is made of silk, while all of the other rugs in the Salting group are made of wool, therefore indicating that it was a particularly important and precious object. (Eiland and Pinner, 1999; Thompson, 2006; Canby, 2009). *J.M.*

PORTRAIT OF FATH ALI SHAH

IRAN

1231 AH (1816 AD)

QAJAR

OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS

168 CM X 109.5 CM

PA.18.2010

THIS PORTRAIT DEPICTS Fath Ali Shah, the second ruler of the Qajar dynasty. Born in 1771, he succeeded his uncle Agha Muhammad, the founder of the dynasty in 1797, and reigned until his death in 1834.

He is instantly recognisable in this portrait owing to his idiosyncratic appearance: observe the extremely long black beard, which reached well beneath his very narrow waist and his opulent dress and accoutrements. Here, we see him wearing a bejewelled royal cap and holding an impressive sword with a gem-encrusted dagger fastened behind his girdle. These trappings were clear symbols of power and obvious visual aspects of the iconography of his royal authority. Their repeated use in portraits of the Shah was an important part of the political message they carried. It is also likely Fath Ali Shah considered himself as the rightful heir to an ancient tradition of Persian kingship and it may be that this stylised aesthetic was inspired by the imperial art of the Sassanid dynasty, as seen in the rock-cut reliefs at Taq-i Bustan, in Western Iran.

Much of Fath Ali Shah's reign was marked by a literary and artistic revival known as *Bazgasht*, which literally means "return". Largely as a result of his personal patronage, both portraiture and large-scale oil painting reached heights previously unknown under any other Islamic dynasty.

Many iconic, large-scale court portraits of Fath Ali Shah were produced to convey the wealth, opulence and unquestionable power of his court to his own people and to an international audience. Objects such as this painting were given as gifts to foreign ambassadors, monarchs and governments to transmit notions about the superiority of Iran abroad. The majority were sent westwards to European nations, a reflection of the international political situation in Iran at the time, where Great Britain and Russia competed for influence at the Qajar court. One portrait was famously sent to the Prince Regent, later King George IV of Great Britain, in 1812, along with an illustrated manuscript of Fath Ali Shah's own poetry, *Diwan-i Khaqan*, which is now in the collection of the Royal Library at Windsor Castle.

The artist, Mir Ali, was the most prominent courtly portrait painter of the early period of Fath Ali Shah's reign. He painted at least 12 life-size oil portraits or smaller *verre églomisé* paintings of the monarch, and was clearly skilled at capturing the grandeur, power, majesty and wealth of the emperor, which seemingly satisfied Fath Ali Shah's vanity and helped to build an iconic imperial image. (Falk, 1972; Diba and Ekhtiar, 1998). *J.M.*

ROYAL SEAL OF MYSORE

INDIA

1748-1754

MUGHAL

GOLD SEAL SET WITH RUBIES, EMERALDS AND A SINGLE DIAMOND SET IN FOILED GOLD

5 X 5.5 CM

JE.215.2009

THIS ROYAL FOB seal was used to authenticate royal documents within the Mughal Empire during the reign of Ahmad Shah (r. 1748-1754). The seal demonstrates both the official and private sides of the ruler, and is important for its representation of power while at the same time retaining the intimate quality of a personal object. It is set with alternating table-cut emeralds and rubies in foiled gold mounted in lines to form a strip effect, with a diamond at the top of the seal where the loop meets the base.

The Mughals had a great passion for jewellery and gems, and many functional items, such as this seal, were gem-encrusted objects of art designed to display the status and wealth of the owner. They were often sent as gifts from emperors to vassal rulers and other notables.

At the base of the seal is an engraved Arabic inscription in nasta'liq script, which says, "*Raja Jagdev Raj Ahmed Shahi 1162 (1748-1749)*." This refers to Raja Dev Raj, feudatory of the Mughal Emperor, Ahmed Shah, in the Emperor's second regnal year. This seal, therefore, was used as a signature of Raja Dev Raj to authenticate, or sign off, royal documents. However, it appears as though this item could be a copy of an earlier seal.

Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707) is reported to have sent a ring inscribed, "*Jug Deo Raj*", to Chikka Deva Raja of Mvsore [Mysore] (1672-1704) in 1700. This is the same inscription as the Museum of Islamic Art's Mysore seal with the exception of Ahmad Shah's name and date. Chikka Deva Raja was also a feudatory, a ruler of Mysore. This earlier ring would have been sent by the Mughal Empire in recognition of Mysore's significant expansion as a tributary state, which would have helped the Empire extend its centralised military rule. By closely modelling this seal on the earlier one, a political tradition of courtly rewards was maintained.

It is possible that the original seal was either lost or destroyed and a request for a new ring was sent by Raja. Therefore, this seal may be a duplicate of Aurangzeb's original seal of 1700 with Ahmad Shah's name and date added to it. *S.N.*

COFFEE CUP HOLDER

TURKEY OR EUROPE (PROBABLY SWITZERLAND)

19TH CENTURY

OTTOMAN

DIAMOND AND RUBY-SET GOLD

H. 5.1 CM, D 5.5 CM

JE.206.2008

THIS IMPRESSIVE 19th century coffee cup holder (*zarf* in Turkish) is richly decorated with diamonds and rubies, attached to a golden metal skeleton. This piece is also remarkable for the method of its manufacture: the rubies have been cut to fit, which could have resulted in a considerable wastage of stones.

Coffee-cup holders held fine porcelain cups without handles to protect the hand from the heat. These cups were first imported from Meissen in Germany, and later made after models from Sèvres, by court manufacturers in Istanbul. Complete sets containing coffee-cup holders, coffee-cups and a tray are preserved in the Topkapi Saray Museum.

Coffee played an important role in Ottoman culture from the 16th century onwards. The plants originated from the Ethiopian mountains and were imported via the Yemeni harbour Mokha (the origin of the word "mocca"), where according to legend, a local sheikh discovered the healing power of a beverage made from coffee beans.

As a result of the Ottoman expansion of the Balkans, coffee rapidly reached Europe, and by the 17th century the first coffeehouses were opened in Venice (1645), London (1652) and Marseille (1659). The new taste became so fashionable that laws against its consumption were soon put in place. Sultan Murad IV (r. 1634-40) imposed a complete ban on coffee, and gave orders to pull down all coffee houses. In 1710, Pope Clement XI banned coffee as an Islamic beverage, but with little effect.

In the 19th century, coffeehouses existed all over Istanbul, serving as social and cultural meeting-places. Serving coffee to guests became a traditional part of any invitation, in a private home as well as during a reception at the Sultan's palace. During the 19th century, when late Ottoman culture was already heavily exposed to European influence, luxury goods commissioned by the court (the Sultan) were often produced by European manufacturers, mainly in France, owing to the specific needs of the patron.

It is not clear whether this coffee-cup holder was made in Ottoman court factories, perhaps by European craftsmen working there together with local masters, or whether it was imported from Europe, in this case most likely from Switzerland. (Rogers and Köseoglu, 1986; Kleiterp and Huygons, 2006). *J.G.*

WOODEN ARCH PANEL

MOROCCO

16TH-17TH CENTURY

POST MARINID

CARVED AND STAINED WOOD

182 X 249 CM

WW.80.2002

THIS IMPRESSIVE WOODEN arch is a typical example of North African woodwork of the late medieval or early post-medieval period, and would originally have been part of the architectural decoration of a wealthy house, a palace or most probably of a *madrasa*, a term often translated as Qur'anic school. In fact a *medersa* – as it is spelled in North Africa – is a college with living rooms for the students, where, in addition to Qur'anic studies, subjects such as Islamic law, astronomy, mathematics and other sciences were taught.

The arch – approximately 2.50 metres in width – has the shape of the upper part of a portal, in which a round arch is surrounded by a rectangle frame. Both sides are decorated mainly with floral motifs, interlaced with a simple geometrical pattern in the spandrels. The different parts of the ornament are separated by small bands painted with stylised blossoms or a herringbone pattern. The decoration is flat carved and painted in several colours: red, yellow, green and brown, among others. The intrados (of the arch) is filled with *muqarnas*, that is little separate honeycomb-like pieces of wood that have been put together to form stalactite ornaments and create a so-called "lambrequin arch".

Similar wooden arches can be found in the courtyard of the Bu Inaniya Medersa in Fez, Morocco, which was built in the middle of the 14th century, and is notable for its coloured tiling that covers the lower portion of the interior walls, while stucco and wooden panels decorate the upper part of the two-storey courtyard. The best comparison is the fountain house of the Qarawiyin Mosque in Fez – a reflection of one of the fountains in the Alhambra at Granada – where a very similar wooden panel is integrated into the transition zone between the columns and capitals and the roof.

While stucco and wood are similar in terms of technique in that they are both carved, they are otherwise quite different. The light stucco contrasts strongly with the dark brown woodwork. The result is a sophisticated general decoration that varies during the day owing to the different colour and density of the light. (Gros & Dellettrez, 2002); (Gabrieli et al., 1991). *J.G.*

EAR ORNAMENTS

MOROCCO

18TH CENTURY

ALAOUITE

GOLD SET WITH DIAMONDS, EMERALDS AND SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES

D. 8.7 CM

JE.4.1997

WHILE THE MUSEUM displays objects from the 8th to the 19th century, the permanent exhibition focuses on the medieval period. These gold ornaments are therefore important because they shed light on an artistic tradition in the Islamic world. Unlike the typical jewellery of 18th and 19th century Morocco, characteristically made in silver, these three pieces were crafted in gold. They are also important in that they give a sense of the wealth and sophistication of a particular section of Moroccan society, the small aristocratic community in the urban centres, in the run-up to the 20th century.

This style of jewellery reflects Berber traditions in addition to showing signs of Ottoman and Spanish influences. Parallels can be seen, for example, with the necklace with the three large roundels, *tab'as*, set with gems in 17th century Spanish jewellery. However, despite external influences, these necklaces and ear ornaments are strongly representative of Moroccan style and craftsmanship. It is interesting to note the intricate work of the goldsmith in creating the filigree and enamelwork, particularly given that most ornaments at that time would have been valued according to weight rather than by workmanship. This type of enamel is considered one of the superior crafts in Islamic art and is used in the most valuable jewels in Morocco and across the Islamic world, as can be seen in the Mughal ornaments on display at the Museum.

Since the jewellery is a traditional design from Northern Africa, it carries the cultural symbols passed through the generations in the region. Soft, ovoid forms and droplets are meant to represent female virtues, while the choice of jewels carry their own symbolism, such as pearls for purity, emeralds for protection against

NECKLACE

MOROCCO

19TH CENTURY

ALAOUITE

GOLD, PEARL NECKLACE WITH SAPPHIRE, EMERALD, RUBY-SET GOLD PENDANTS

43 X 45 CM

JE.5.1997

NECKLACE

MOROCCO

18TH CENTURY

ALAOUITE

ENAMELLED AND ENGRAVED GOLD SET WITH EMERALDS AND AMETHYSTS

D. 13 CM

JE.3.1997

poison, according to folklore, and ruby for strengthening the heart.

As seen in the necklace above, which has melon-fluted beads and nine droplets, a common motif is the pomegranate, symbol of fertility and protection against the evil eye. This type of necklace, along with the earrings, was an important part of a bride's adornment for the wedding ceremony. The ceremonial ear ornaments would have been suspended from the headdress, falling at the level of and covering the ears. Indeed, these fine pieces of jewellery were all parts of dowries of upper-class Moroccan ladies at one time; the pieces passed through generations and eventually sold as fashions changed. (Behrens-Abouseif and Vernoit, 2006; Hasson, 1987; Jenkins and Keene, 1982). *M.W.*

MAMLUK REVIVAL MOSQUE LAMP

FRANCE (PARIS)

1870-1880

FRENCH THIRD REPUBLIC

ENAMELLED GLASS

H. 40.5 CM, D. 29 CM

GL.153.2003

AT FIRST GLANCE, these lamps and this Qur'an stand seem to be the epitome of Mamluk period art and could be recognised as medieval Islamic pieces to judge from their design and techniques. In truth, these objects look to the deeper past for inspiration and, moreover, represent a cultural reflection and connection to this medieval heritage. Revival occurs with a rediscovery of a certain aesthetic, or political or cultural identification with past eras. The art of the Mamluk dynasty, with its bold calligraphy and grand design, embodies the power of the rulers; with their patronage, these objects were created to display and proclaim their authority. The associations of power and romanticising the Mamluk era appealed to both local and foreign markets. These metalwork pieces, which were crafted in Egypt and France in the 19th century, demonstrate the significance of Islamic art as a major influence in the world of design, even for non-Muslims.

The political climate in Egypt changed dramatically with the overthrow of the Mamluks and, subsequently, of the occupying French by the Ottomans, although this did not stop the admiration for Mamluk aesthetics nor European influence on the arts in the late 18th and early 19th century. To some extent, the identification with Mamluk rule was used to bolster the Ottomans by solidifying their right to rule Egypt. This began with the revival of the architecture, followed closely by the decorative arts, as seen by these lanterns and the Qur'an stand on the following page. Curiously, this was further bolstered by the growing wave of Orientialism throughout the West: the idealised depiction or imitation of aspects of Eastern cultures became a prominent influence in the late 19th century.

CAIROWARE LANTERNS

EGYPT (CAIRO)

19TH CENTURY

ALAWIYYA

BRASS WITH SILVER AND COPPER INLAY

H. 84 CM, D. 34.5 CM

MW.235.2003

Cairoware, as the name suggests, was crafted in Cairo by local artisans. The romanticism did not end with evocation of the Mamluk dynasty; many cairoware pieces bear depictions of ancient Egyptian monuments and iconography as well. The copper and silver inlaid brass stand and lanterns could have been made for either the regional market or, more likely, export to Europe. The Islamic script cartouches with simple endless knot medallions and strapwork are direct copies of metalworking traditions from the 13th to 15th century. The revival objects are resplendent with inlay as their medieval counterparts would once have been before the precious metals were picked away, and therefore provide an insight into how medieval inlaid metalwork would have appeared.

By contrast, the glass mosque lamps on the following page are completely European. Several world fairs, held in Paris in 1867 and 1878, and in Vienna in 1873, assisted in reintroducing Middle Eastern art and culture to Europe. As floral and geometric designs from Islamic

MAMLUK REVIVAL MOSQUE LAMP

FRANCE (PARIS)

1881 OR 1884(?)

FRENCH THIRD REPUBLIC

ENAMELLED GLASS

H. 41 CM

GL.512.2008

art became more popular in the West, objects decorated with "oriental" motifs became fashionable. In the 19th century, glassmakers in Austria, Bohemia and France began to create objects that were decorated in the Islamic style. Philippe-Joseph Brocard, Émile Gallé, Joseph and Ludwig Lobmeyr, and Antonio Salviati were some of the more famous glass artists who manufactured hanging lamps, beakers and long-necked bottles inspired by Islamic works for eager European consumers.

The lamps were both made by Philippe-Joseph Brocard (1831-1896) who began as a restorer of glass. He is considered the first to revive Mamluk enamelling techniques. Several of his works were included in the Exposition Universelle in Paris (1867), notably mosque lamps with finely executed enamel. A bulletin of the Union Centrale

des Arts Decoratifs in 1874 states that, inspired by the mosque lamps at the Musée de Cluny in Paris, he began to collect and copy them. He painstakingly researched the glassmaking techniques of Islamic glass artists, particularly enamelling and glazing. Brocard distinguished himself by mimicking every minute detail of original Islamic glass objects. He was so skilful in imitation and his designs were so thorough that his contemporaries could confuse his work with the originals. To this day, experts have difficulty distinguishing his products from the 14th-century works that inspired them. (Rudoe, 1994; Ribeiro and Hallet, 1999). *M.W.*

CAIROWARE QUR'AN STAND

EGYPT (CAIRO)

LATE 19TH CENTURY

ALAWIYYA

BRASS WITH SILVER AND COPPER INLAY

H. 85 CM, D. 40.5 CM

MW.234.2003

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GLOSSARY

References to dates and centuries are to the Christian era, unless otherwise stated.

Abbasid dynasty
The second of the two great dynasties of the Muslim empire of the caliphate. It overthrew the Umayyad caliphate in 750 and reigned until it was destroyed by the Mongol invasion in 1258. The Abbasid period is defined as the beginning of the Golden Age.

Achaemenid
This Persian empire was the largest in the ancient world, and was founded by Cyrus the Great. It extended from Iran to Anatolia and Egypt, Western and Central Asia, and Northern India.

Al-Andalus
The southern half of the Iberian Peninsula that was under Muslim rule between 711 and 1492.

Albarello
The oldest known type of pharmaceutical jar. Made from ceramic, they are usually cylindrical and tapered in the centre for easier handling.

A.H.
Abbreviation of the Latinised phrase Anno Hegirae. The Islamic calendar is dated from the first day of the lunar year in which the Hegira took place (16 July 622), and the abbreviation A.H. is used with that year (A.H. 1) and subsequent years.

Ayyubid dynasty
A Sunni Muslim dynasty of Kurdish origin, with capitals in Cairo and Damascus that ruled much of the Middle East c.1171-1260. Their rule was marked as the beginning of a new era of economic prosperity and intellectual activity stimulated by Ayyubid patronage.

B.C.
Before the Christian era. In academic circles, this term is also known as Before Common Era (B.C.E.).

Bohkta
Towering headgear worn by upper-class Mongolian women between the 13th and 15th centuries.

Brocade
A textile with a woven pattern, particularly with metal thread, where a discontinuous weft (known as supplementary weft) is added to the ground weave.

Brocading weft
A supplementary weft introduced into a ground weave for only the width of the motif that is required by the pattern such that it does not extend from selvedge to selvedge of the fabric.

Cameo glass
Glass of one colour covered with one or more layers of contrasting colours. The outer layers are carved, cut or engraved to produce a design that stands out from the background.

Çintamani
A pattern comprising three balls and wavy lines that probably originated in Central Asia, but is most often found in Ottoman art.

Engraving
A technique in which a design or inscription is created by removing material from a surface by cutting into it with a tool.

Folio
Folio is one of the two leaves constituting a bifolio (a two-leaf folded paper or parchment). Folio is only a one-leaf with two pages (verso and recto), but it originates from a bifolio.

Fatimid dynasty
This Shi'a caliphate was centred in Tunisia and then in Egypt, ruling over areas of the Maghreb, Sicily, Malta, Hijaz and the Levant from 909 to 1171. The Fatimids were known for their tolerance of other faiths, a political structure based on merit and for their arts. Lustreware (c.f.), a type of ceramic was popular during this period, as was glassware and metalwork.

Fritware
A ceramic body, also known as "stone-paste", made from ground quartz with small additions of clay and ground glass.

Hispano-Moresque ceramics
Ceramics produced in Christian Spain predominantly by Moorish potters. Its decoration combines Christian symbolism with Islamic design.

Ilkhanid dynasty
This Mongolian dynasty ruled over Iran, Iraq, parts of Syria, Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus from 1252/56 to1335, with their main capitals in Tabriz and Sultaniya. They were noted for bringing both European and Chinese influences into Iran, thereby changing the face of Islamic art.

Inlay
A technique in which gold, silver or copper is hammered into depressions that have been engraved (in designs) on the surface of a bronze or brass object.

Iridescence
The rainbow-like effect caused by the interference effects of light reflected from several layers of weathering.

Iznik ceramics
Ceramics produced in Iznik, Turkey, since the 15th to 17th centuries. Made from fritware (c.f.), they are decorated with underglaze painting in distinct colours.

Kufic script
An angular Arabic script with clear vertical and horizontal lines that was developed in the 7th-8th century. Its name derives from the town of Kufa in Iraq.

Lampas
A complex figured weave in which a pattern-weave (weft floats bound by a binding warp) is added to the ground weave, which is formed by a main warp and main weft. A secondary or binding warp is essential to bind the wefts that form the design.

Lustre
A type of decoration achieved by painting a pigment containing a metallic oxide (usually a mixture of copper and silver) onto a fired glaze and then re-firing in a reduced atmosphere. The oxide is reduced to a metallic state and bonds with the glaze, leaving a golden and iridescent effect.

Mamluk dynasty
This dynasty was founded by Turkish slave soldiers in 1250, who overthrew the last Ayyubid sultan and established their rule across Egypt and Syria. The Mamluks are renowned for fighting the Crusaders and defeating the Mongols.

Marinid dynasty
A North African Zenata Berber dynasty that ruled over Morocco and the central Maghreb from 1196 to 1465, with its capital at Fez.

Mashrabiya
A screen made of turned wooden pieces, glued together. Used in houses to circulate air, they also served as screens to conceal those standing behind them.

Minbar
A pulpit often made of wood or marble, on the right of the mihrab (c.f.), from where the Friday sermon (khutba) is delivered.

Mihrab
A niche in a wall of a mosque indicating the qibla, the bearing towards Mecca to which prayers are directed.

Mughal dynasty
This dynasty of emperors ruled the Indian subcontinent from 1526 to 1857. Claiming descent from the Mongols, they were the richest and most powerful of the Islamic empires in the later period and were known for their arts and architecture.

Muhaqqaq script
A cursive Arabic script characterised by a minimal zone below the baseline, descenders with shallow bowls and letters with straight pointed tips. It evolved in North Africa (the Maghreb) and Spain in the 10th century.

Naskh script
One of six forms of cursive script that was adopted during the reforms of the 10th-century calligrapher Ibn Muqla. These largely replaced kufic (c.f.), especially for copying the Qur'an.

Nasrid dynasty
The last of the Muslim dynasties in Spain, it rose to power following the defeat of the Almohads in 1212. They ruled Granada, and also Jaén, Almería and Malaga, in the Southern Iberian peninsula, from 1238 to 1492.

Nasta'liq script
Literally translated as "hanging naskh", this was developed in Iran in the 15th century. Popular in Iran and Mughal India from the 16th century, it was commonly used for poetry rather than for copying the Qur'an.

Oliphant
A hunting horn carved from an elephant tusk.

Openwork
Any kind of work, especially ornamental, such as embroidery, lace, metal, stone or wood, with a lattice-like nature.

Ottoman dynasty
The Ottoman Empire (c.1280-1922) emerged after the collapse of the Seljuk sultanate in Anatolia. Its territory expanded to cover Byzantine regions in Anatolia, culminating in the capture of Constantinople in 1453. By the 16th century the Ottoman Empire extended across the Middle East and into Central Europe.

Palmette
A design derived from the fan-shaped leaves of palm trees.

Qajar dynasty
An Iranian royal family of Turko-Persian origin that ruled Iran from 1794 to 1925. The Qajar monarch Fath Ali Shah (r. 1797-1834) is famous for having commissioned European-influenced oil-on-canvas portraits.

Rock crystal
Quartz, chemically pure silicon dioxide, which is usually colourless, and which glassmakers have sought to imitate from the earliest times.

Safavid dynasty
This dynasty of Shahs ruled Iran from 1501 to 1732 and made Shi'a the state religion. Their capital at Isfahan became the centre of a vast commercial network based on the production and export of textiles and commissioned illustrated manuscripts.

Sassanid dynasty
Successors to the Parthian Empire, this was the last pre-Islamic empire to rule from Iran c. 220-650. Their empire stretched from the River Euphrates to the River Indus, and included Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Sufi/Sufism
Mystical or ascetic order in Islam under the authority of a sheikh.

Tempera
A permanent, fast-drying painting medium consisting of coloured pigment mixed with a water-soluble binder (usually a glutinous material, such as egg yolk).

Thuluth script
Literally translated as "one third", this is an Arabic cursive script characterised by large and rounded endings. It was often used for inscriptions on monuments, especially by the Mamluk (c.f.) sultans of Egypt.

Timurid dynasty
This Mongol-derived dynasty, which was descended from Timur (r. 1370-1405), ruled Iran and Central Asia from 1370 to 1501. The dynasty had a Turko-Mongol heritage mixed with a sophisticated Persian literary and artistic court culture.

Umayyad dynasty
The second of the four Islamic caliphates established after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, with Damascus as its capital. The Ummayad territory (661-750), eventually covered more than 5 million square miles, making it the fifth largest contiguous empire ever to exist.

Umayyad Spain
Also known as the Caliphate of Córdoba. Abd al-Rahman III escaped Abbasid persecution as the last of the Umayyad line, and proclaimed himself caliph. He ruled al-Andalus (c.f.) and North Africa from the city of Córdoba. The Umayyads ruled from 756 to 1031.

Verre églomisé
French term for gilded glass where the back side of the glass is gilded with gold or metal leaf leading to a mirror-like reflective finish in which designs are engraved.

Wheel engraving
A process of decorating glass through the grinding action of a wheel, using disks of various sizes and materials (usually copper, but sometimes stone), and an abrasive grease or slurry applied to a wheel.

Zengid dynasty
This Turkish dynasty ruled over Northern Iraq and parts of Syria from 1127 to 1262, on behalf of the Seljuk Empire, from their main capitals of Aleppo and Damascus.