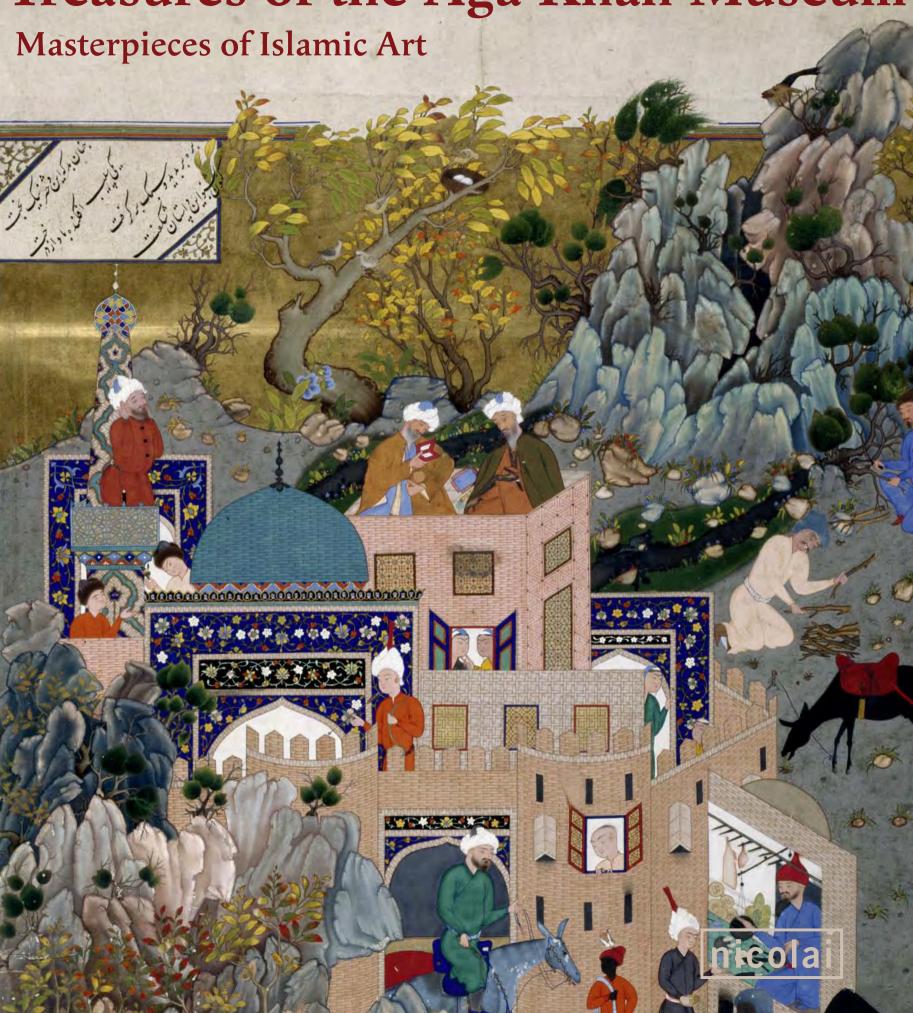
Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum



»Civilisations manifest and express themselves through their art.« His Highness the Aga Khan IV.

For several decades, members of the family of the Aga Khan, and His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV in particular, have been collecting art objects from the Islamic world. This magnificent collection will be housed in the future Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, Canada. Before the collection departs for North America, the Aga Khan wanted to offer the European public a special viewing of its masterpieces. Hence the exhibition in Berlin, which is the largest and most complete presented so far.

Cover illustration: Haftvad and the worm
Detail from cat. no. 166
Text from the banner in the upper left:
»It happened that this lucky girl
Saw an apple, thrown from a tree by the wind,
on the alley and quickly picked it –
Now, listen to this astounding story«
(Translated from Persian by Stephan Popp)



Schätze des Aga Khan Museum Meisterwerke der islamischen Kunst Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin 17. März bis 6. Juni 2010



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# Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum

Masterpieces of Islamic Art

nicolai

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# **Foreword**

Joachim Sartorius, Artistic Director, Berlin Festival Gereon Sievernich, Director, Martin-Gropius-Bau

Prince Karim Aga Khan is one of the leading collectors of Islamic art. From 2013, his large and valuable collection will be on display in a newly-built museum in Toronto. Karim Aga Khan is the spiritual leader of the Ismailis, an Islamic community with some 20 million members living in many different parts of the world. They recognise Prince Karim Aga Khan as a direct descendent of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Martin-Gropius-Bau has succeeded in bringing the Aga Khan's magnificent collection to Berlin for a period of several months. This is the first time it has been seen in Germany. More than 200 masterpieces – illuminated manuscripts and paintings, drawings and inscriptions, metal receptacles, ceramics and woodcarvings – represent more than a thousand years of Islamic cultural history.

The exhibition includes some of the most spectacular works of Islamic art and scholarship. Among them are pages from the heroic Persian epic Shahnama, or Book of Kings, by the poet Firdawsi, which was first published one thousand years ago. The miniatures in this edition of the book are among the most remarkable pieces in the collection. Similarly, the oldest known Arabic manuscript of the Canon of Medicine, written by Ibn Sina known in Europe as Avicenna - at the age of 21 some time around 1000 CE, can rightly be described as sensational. Not only does Avicenna's magnum opus document early scientific findings by Islamic scholars, it is also a prime example of the exchange of knowledge between cultures. After it was translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona in the twelfth century, it was regarded as the most important textbook for the training of doctors throughout Europe for the next 500 years. Another outstanding cultural asset is the bifolium of the ninth-century Blue Our'an. Written in gold Kufic script on sheets of blue parchment, it is one of the world's most precious Qur'anic manuscripts. These are only a few examples of pieces found in the Aga Khan's impressive collection. As works of art, they testify to the astounding artistic richness and extraordinary diversity of a cultural space dominated by Islam, spanning North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula to as far as China.

We extend our warmest and most heartfelt thanks to Prince Karim Aga Khan for allowing the most precious treasures from his collection to be placed on show at the Martin-Gropius-Bau. Mr Luis Monreal, general director of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Geneva, has worked closely with us to bring the project to fruition. We should like to thank him as well as the Trust's director of museums, Benoît Junod, who is also the exhibition curator. His continuous hard work has encouraged us to present this exhibition to a large audience in Berlin. For us in Europe, it is both a pleasant duty and a cultural challenge to better acquaint ourselves and learn to more fully appreciate Islamic art. With its dazzling treasures, this exhibition will help us to achieve this.



# Introduction

His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV

I am particularly pleased that the Martin-Gropius Bau is hosting this exhibition of highlights of the Aga Khan Museum collection of artworks from the Islamic world. This historical building, which survived the darkest turbulence of twentieth century Europe, and which was for decades at the dividing line of the city, is today the host of countless major art exhibitions, both German and international, shown in Europe and worldwide.

The exhibition presented here shows some highlights of what will be, in a few years' time, the nucleus of the permanent exhibition of Islamic art of the future Aga Khan Museum in Toronto. This museum, which has been designed by the renowned Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki, and of which a model can be seen in the exhibition, is conceived primarily as an educational institution in the field of Islamic art and culture, a specific institution the likeness of which does not yet exist on the North American continent.

Germany, and Berlin in particular, is a living example of the cultural and ethnic pluralism which has resulted from the last decades of its history. It has become a destination of the hopes of people from many nations, all over the world, of which a large part are Muslims. They came here seeking to work in a stable, democratic society, and were made welcome. Today they are valued and contribute positively to the collective well-being of the country.

Germany has always had admiration and interest in the universality and plurality of culture. As a result, an exceptional range of artworks can be seen in its museums, including the wonderful Museum of Islamic Art of Berlin. This exhibition has no intention of competing with the treasures you have here: on the contrary, my wish for the Berlin public is that this exhibition should be a comple-

ment, an additional discovery. It should work in synergy with the Museum of Islamic Art to try and bring a spotlight onto its richness and variety, its geographic diversity, and its artistic accomplishments.

No one can deny that today, there are distressing and even dangerous tensions between the Muslim world and the West. With its history and cultures, and indeed its different interpretations of Islam, the Muslim world is still little known in the West, as are its contributions to global cultural heritage and patrimony. This lack of knowledge is a dramatic reality which currently manifests itself in a particularly serious way in many western democracies, through widespread attitudes and approaches to Muslim societies and countries. Be that as it may, the two worlds, Muslim and non-Muslim, Eastern and Western, must, as a matter of urgency, make real efforts to get to know one another better, for I fear that what we have is not a clash of civilisations, but a clash of ignorance on both

Insofar as civilisations manifest and express themselves through their art, museums have an essential role to play in facilitating respect and appreciation of social structures, values and faiths that are an integral part of the societies which produced the art, thereby ensuring that whole populations are given the opportunity to understand each other, using new, modern methods imaginatively and intelligently.

It is my hope that this exhibition will bring to the Berlin public a better understanding of the Muslim world. The works of art which we can see here speak for themselves. They express the values of tolerance and pluralism, specific to the Muslim world and related to its ethnic, linguistic, and social diversity throughout its history, and are important witnesses today.



# Museums as Collective Memory and Cultural Vectors

Stefan Weber, Director, Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum

In recent years, there have been some interesting changes in the world of Islamic art. No longer is it only the collections held in the large, long-established museums in London, New York and Paris, or those in Istanbul and Cairo, which serve to introduce visitors to the splendour and diversity of Islamic cultures. Muslims are also becoming more and more interested in their own cultural heritage, building up collections or putting them on public view. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture's travelling exhibition, which has been on tour in Europe and which we now welcome to Berlin, is at the cutting edge of this development. Since the foundations of the great collections were laid in Europe, the USA and the Middle East in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, their audience has changed. Public interest in the cultural heritage of the Islamic world has intensified. The most recent visitor survey carried out at the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin clearly shows that people want to know more about the geographic, historical, political, social and religious connections forged by Islamic art. The reasons are obvious: visitors enter the museum to experience aspects of another culture in the hope of finding answers to present-day questions.

The Muslim world, one of the most important cultural spaces of all, is not only geographically close to Europe (and for many years Islamic Spain, Sicily and the Balkans were inside Europe), but also closely connected culturally and historically to Europe. We only have to think, for example, of what both worlds have inherited from Antiquity and from the history of science and philosophy; of our shared activities in Mediterranean trade, and also of those regions where cultures merge, with Middle Easterners based in Europe, or Europeans in the Middle East, such as the Genoese in Istanbul. Today, Muslims are a permanent part of everyday life in Europe. In order to grasp the significance of Muslim culture, we need to bear in mind that we are dealing with a vast and very diverse area. Societies where Islamic influence predominated were multi-ethnic and multi-faith. Across the centuries, people of practically all Christian denominations have lived in Muslim countries, as have Jews, Parsees, Buddhists and Hindus. Geographically, the Islamic world stretched from Spain to South-East Asia. Chronologically, it extended from Late Antiquity to the modern age. Museums of Islamic art are the custodians of this diversity. The many thousands of objects held in museums are testimony to the cultural achievements of Muslim-dominated countries. Nevertheless, collections of Islamic art are not self-explanatory and most museums do not do enough to communicate the immense scope of Islamic culture.

Objects recall historical realities far removed from us, both chronologically or geographically. They have come from houses, palaces, mosques and markets, from the archaeological rubble that has long lain buried beneath our modern cities. What do we know of the people who created, used and then largely forgot them? What is the significance of an object? Some objects tell of long journeys. They recall how their meanings have changed and how they have been reintegrated into new cultural systems. Others, because of their beauty, were made into albums and kept safely in court libraries. Most, however, have been forgotten, trodden into the soil of history and only slowly and painfully retrieved from their dusty hiding places. When properly set in context, objects can build bridges to those other times and realities. The role of cultural educators has been assigned to museums. We are delighted that His Highness Prince Aga Khan IV has, alongside our collection in the Pergamon Museum, contributed to the cause of cultural education with this exhibition at the Martin-Gropius-Bau.

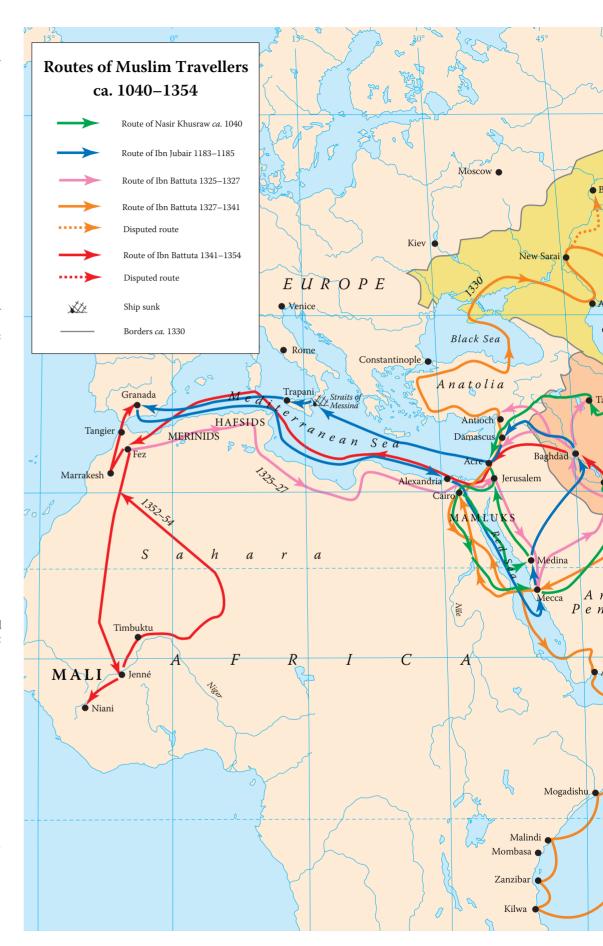
A young noble and a dervish in conversation

In medieval times, numerous travelers explored all areas of the Islamic world. Many wrote memoirs recounting their travels to the holy cities Mecca and Medina or to renowned places of learning like Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad. Some of these texts were passed down over the centuries and became internationally well-known.

The Khurasanian scholar Nasir Khusraw (1004-1088) served at the courts of the Ghaznavids and the Seljugs until he guit his post early 1046 to set out for his first pilgrimage. He travelled westward through northern Iran, across Armenia and Azerbaijan, down through Syria to Jerusalem, Hebron and other cities of the region. He spent three years in Cairo, the capital of the Fatimids. From his last pilgrimage, he continued north across Arabia, then through Iran, going eastward, back home to Balkh where he composed a record of his seven-year journey in his Safarnāma ("Travelogue"). He turns his keen eve toward both the physical and administrative structures of each society. Intellectually precise and attendant in detail, nothing fell outside his curiosity: local superstitions; a royal banquet; poetry sessions with local poets; Christian shrines; the presence of women in the cafes of Armenia; and the wonders of Cairo's bazaars.

The Andalusian traveller and writer, Ibn Jubayr (1145-1217) worked as a secretary to the governor of Granada until he set out for the pilgrimage in 1183. He embarked in Ceuta for Alexandria on a Genoese ship, which took a route by way of Sardinia, Sicily and Crete. After performing the pilgrimage in Mecca, he visited Medina, and continued his journey across the desert as far as Kufa, Baghdad and Mosul, crossed to Aleppo, coming down to Damascus, and then went to Acre to embark for Sicily in October 1184, narrowly escaping with his life in a dramatic shipwreck in the straits of Messina. He died in 1217 on his last journey in Alexandria. Ibn Jubayr composed an account of the first journey in his Rihla ("Travelogue"), as a multi-thematic narrative concerning political, economic, historical, sociological and other subjects. It is considered one of the best works of the genre, and was translated into various western languages.

Born into a family of legal scholars and judges at Tangier, Ibn Battuta (1304-1368 or 1377) is considered one of the world's most famous travellers. Aged twenty-one, Ibn Battuta set out alone to visit "the illustrious sactuaries" [Mecca and Medina] to return back to Morocco only in 1349, some 24 years later, having traversed some 120,000 kilometres (75,000 miles) crossing what, on a modern map, would be over forty countries. In his travelogue Tuhfat al-nuzzār fi gharā'ib alamsār wa-'ajā'ib al-asfār ("A Gift to those who contemplate the wonders of cities and the marvels of travelling") he brought new dimensions to travel writing, embracing geography, politics, personalities, natural history, local customs, and his own exploits. His descriptions of life in India, Turkey, Central Asia, East and West Africa, the Maldives, and the Malay Peninsula are an extremely important source of contemporary knowledge about those areas, and in some cases they are the only source. AM







# A Plural Vision of Islam for a Singular Museum

Luis Monreal, General Manager, Aga Khan Trust for Culture

Since 2007, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has developped a programme of exhibitions of Islamic masterpieces that have visited various European cities. The initiative's main purpose is to allow the public of many countries – initially in Europe and then in other parts of the world – to get to know the anthological aspects of the collection that in the near future will be permanently exhibited in the Aga Khan Museum, a museum that will start being constructed in Toronto (Canada) in the next few months.

It is a very special honour to be able to present the future Aga Khan Museum collection in Berlin, a capital whose museums have very important holdings of arts of the Islamic world. Germany, moreover, is one of the European countries whose population, increasingly culturally plural, will most appreciate this exhibition as an opportunity to better know and understand the richness of the arts created by Muslim societies throughout history.

It is reasonable to ask ourselves: Why, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, establish a museum of Muslim art and culture in North America? The reasons are obvious. Nowadays, for social and geopolitical reasons, Islam is closer to us than it was in our parents' time. Migration phenomena and the circumstances that have prevailed in the Near East since the Second World War make the Muslim world very present in our daily lives. Nevertheless, the rapprochement of these civilizations has not resulted in improved knowledge of each other. Until recent times, public opinion was not interested in Islam, its history, culture and social composition. Thus people are unaware that throughout history and geographical space, the Muslim world has been a plural and pluralistic civilisation that interprets Qur'anic faith in different ways and has developped a great variety of material cultures and artistic expressions. Also, there is marked ignorance of the ethnic pluralism of Muslim societies and their linguistic diversity. For instance, it would come as a surprise for many that for a great number of Muslims, Arabic is just a vehicular language for religion, as incomprehensible as Latin is for Christians today.

The Aga Khan Museum will therefore aim to undertake an informative and educational mission. Its natural audience will be some 70 million people (the population living in a radius equivalent to one hour's flying distance from Toronto to areas on both sides of the border between Canada and the United States). In order to capture this potential public and attract visitors from other countries, the museum will develop an active programme of temporary exhibitions that will contribute to highlight its permanent collections. The Museum is looking to attract a very diverse public, not only in terms of cultural origins - the Muslim communities in North America constitute, obviously, a priority -, but also with different sociological origins and ages. The project is looking to develop specialised programmes and activities for different types of visitors (school and family groups, students, researchers, minorities, etc.) and use the most advanced technological methods to give the museum a virtual existence that will allow its access via Internet to millions of people around the world.

The Toronto Museum will be located in a building of around ten thousand square metres that has been designed by the renowned Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki and will be situated in a large park, conceived by the Serbian landscape architect Vladimir Djurovic. As contemporary designers with an external vision of Muslim culture, these architects have tried to establish a formal dialogue with pluralistic Islam, which through the ages has been open to influences from other cultures and diverse in its artistic expressions.

This museum project is part of the wider framework of the institutional mission of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), that primarily promotes conservation programmes and the rehabilitation of historic cities in the





### A rendering of the building of the future Aga Khan Museum in Toronto

Muslim world. In order to improve the local living conditions of the inhabitants of these cities, the Trust sets out to restore the urban fabric, such as its houses, public spaces and monuments, and to introduce new socio-economic development initiatives via micro-credit programmes, professional training, public health, education and technical assistance in various fields. Presently, AKTC, with the cooperation of various institutions of the public sector in each country, undertakes projects in Cairo, Delhi, Aleppo and Damascus, Zanzibar, Timbuktu, Djenné, Mopti, Kabul and Herat.

Secondly, AKTC seeks to encourage architectural creation with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, which was created over three decades ago and awards triennially contemporary architectural creation as well as the conservation of heritage of the Muslim world. It also supports the programme of

study and research of Islamic architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), as well as ArchNet, the largest existing on-line resource of architecture and urbanism for Muslim countries.

It is in this context that the decision to create the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, of which this exhibition is a small representative sample, should be placed. The institution will have a relevant role in the cultural, social, educational and development policies that His Highness the Aga Khan promotes through the Aga Khan Development Network, of which AKTC constitutes the cultural agency. In short, with its educational mission, the museum will try to promote a better understanding of Islam as a tolerant, pluralistic culture that has contributed to the universality of knowledge and to the dialogue between civilisations.

Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan's "Salon Persan" in Bellerive Castle, Geneva, Switzerland.

Princess Catherine has generously donated the showcases and ceramics of this room to the future Aga Khan Museum, where it will be reconstituted as seen here.



# The Historical Context

Azim Nanji

The last in the line of the Abrahamic family of revealed traditions, Islam emerged in the early decades of the seventh century. Its message, addressed in perpetuity, calls upon people to seek in their daily life, in the very diversity of humankind, signs that point to the Creator and Sustainer of all creation. Revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia, Islam's influence spread rapidly, bringing within its fold, within just over a century of its birth, the inhabitants of the lands stretching from the central regions of Asia to the Iberian Peninsula in Europe.

A major world religion, Islam today counts a quarter of the globe's population among its followers. All Muslims affirm the absolute unity and transcendence of God (tawhīd) as the first and foremost article of the faith, followed by that of Divine guidance through God's chosen messengers, of whom the Prophet Muhammad was the last. This affirmation constitutes the shahāda, the profession of faith, and is the basic creed of all Muslims. In its essence, Islam refers to the inner struggle of the individual, waged singly and in consonance with fellow believers, to engage in earthly life, while rising above its trappings in search of the Divine. This quest is only meaningful in tandem with the effort to do good for one's kin, for orphans, the needy, the vulnerable; to be just, honest, humble, tolerant and forgiving.

### Shia Islam: historical origins

Within its fundamental unity, Islam has evoked, over the ages, varying responses to its primal message calling upon man to surrender himself to God. Historically, these responses have been expressed as two main perspectives within Islam: the Shia and the Sunni. Each encompasses a rich diversity of spiritual temperaments, juridical preferences, social and psychological dispositions, political entities and cultures. Ismailism is one such response from within the larger Shia perspective which seeks to comprehend the

true meaning of the Islamic message. During his lifetime, Prophet Muhammad was both the recipient and the expounder of Divine revelation. His death marked the conclusion of the line of prophecy, and the beginning of the critical debate on the question of the rightful leadership to continue his mission for future generations. In essence, the position of the group that eventually coalesced into the majority, the Sunni branch, which comprises several different juridical schools, was that the Prophet had not nominated a successor, as the revelation contained in the Our'an was sufficient guidance for the community. There developed a tacit recognition that spiritual-moral authority was to be exercised by the 'ulama', a group of specialists in matters of religious law, or *sharī* ah. The role of the caliph, theoretically elected by the community, was to maintain a realm in which the principles and practices of Islam were safeguarded and propagated.

The Shīcat 'Ali or the "party" of 'Ali, already in existence during the lifetime of the Prophet, maintained that while the revelation ceased at the Prophet's death, the need for spiritual and moral guidance of the community, through an ongoing interpretation of the Islamic message, continued. For them, the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad could only be entrusted to a member of his own family, in whom the Prophet had invested his authority through designation. That person was 'Ali, the Prophet's cousin, and the husband of his daughter and only surviving child, Fatima. 'Ali was also the Prophet's first supporter who devoutly championed the cause of Islam. Just as it was the prerogative of the Prophet to designate his successor, so it is the absolute prerogative of each Imam of the time to designate his successor from among his male progeny. Hence, according to Shia doctrine, the Imamate continues by descent from the Prophet through 'Ali and Fatima.

In time, the Shia were sub-divided. The Ismailis and what eventually came to be

Firdawsi and the three court poets of Ghazna

known as the ithna asharī, or Twelver Shia, parted ways over the succession to Jacfar al-Sadiq, the great-great-grandson of 'Ali and Fatima. The Ithna asharis transferred their allegiance to al-Sadiq's youngest son Musa al-Kazim and after him, in lineal descent, to Muhammad al-Mahdi, their twelfth Imam who, they believe, is in occultation and will reappear to dispense perfect order and justice. Today, the Ithna asharis are the largest Shia Muslim community, and constitute the majority of the population in Iran. The Ismailis gave their allegiance to Imam Jacfar al-Sadiq's eldest son Isma 'il, from whom they derive their name. They trace the line of Imamate in hereditary succession from Isma cil to His Highness the Aga Khan, who is currently the forty-ninth Imam in direct lineal descent from Prophet Muhammad through 'Ali and Fatima. The Ismailis are the second largest Shia Muslim community, and are settled in over twenty-five countries, mostly in the developing world, but now also with a substantial presence in industrialised nations.

# The Ismaili Imamate from the time of the division in the Shia community: an overview

The foundation of the Ismaili Fatimid caliphate in North Africa in the year 909 was the culmination of a long and sustained commitment of the descendants of Imam Isma'il to promote the Islamic ideal of social justice and equity.

Centred in Egypt, the Fatimid caliphate at its peak extended westward to North Africa, Sicily and other Mediterranean islands, and eastward to the Red Sea coast of Africa, Palestine, Syria, the Yemen and Arabia. The Fatimids encouraged intellectual and philosophical inquiry, and attracted the finest minds of the age to their court, whatever their religious persuasions. Al-Azhar, the Cairo mosque built by Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz in 972, was a great centre of learning, and the Dar al-'Ilm, the House of Knowledge, established in 1005, was the first medieval institution of learning, a precursor of the modern university combining in its programme a full range of major academic disciplines, from the study of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions through jurisprudence, philology and grammar, to medicine, logic, mathematics and astronomy. In the same spirit, the Ismaili view of history, which accorded due respect to the great monotheistic religions of the Abrahamic tradition, provided the intellectual framework for the participation of the followers of different faiths in the affairs of the Fatimid state. Christians and Jews, as much as Muslims of either branch, were able to rise to the highest echelons of state office on grounds of competence alone. The Fatimids' policies reflected a plurality of pious ways rather than a monolithic interpretation of the faith.

In the last decade of the eleventh century, the Ismaili community suffered a schism over the succession to Imam-caliph al-Mustansir billah. One part of the community followed his youngest son al-Musta 'li. The other gave its allegiance to his eldest son Imam Nizar from whom the Aga Khan, the present Imam of the Ismailis, traces his descent. The seat of the Ismaili Imams then moved to Alamut, in northern Iran, where the Ismailis had succeeded in establishing a state comprising a defensive network of fortified settlements. These fortresses housed impressive libraries and study rooms whose collections ranged from books on religion and philosophy to scientific instruments, and the Ismailis did not abandon their liberal policy of patronage to men of learning of Muslim as well as non-Muslim backgrounds. However, the invasions by the Mongol hordes led to the destruction of the Ismaili state in 1256. After this, the Ismailis lived in dispersed communities and, under the direction of each succeeding Imam, centres of activity were established in the Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan, the mountainous regions of the Hindu Kush, Central Asia and parts of China over the course of several centuries.

The modern phase of Ismaili history began when the forty-sixth Imam, Aga Hasan 'Ali Shah, emigrated from Iran to India in the 1840s. He was the first Imam to bear the title of Aga Khan, bestowed by the Persian emperor, Fath 'Ali Shah. He established his headquarters in Mumbai (Bombay), and this marked the beginning of an era of regular contacts between the Imam and his widely dispersed followers. Aga Khan I was succeeded by his eldest son Aga 'Ali Shah, who assumed the title of Aga Khan II, and was honoured with the courtesy of His Highness, first granted to his father by the British government. Building on the initiatives of his father, Aga Khan II set about the long-term task of social development of the community, with emphasis on education. He passed away in 1885, and the institution of the Imamate then devolved upon his son Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III, who was eight years old at the time of his accession.

His life marks a remarkable era of momentous significance. From every platform, the third Aga Khan advocated free, universal, practically oriented primary education, improved secondary schools for Muslims, and a generous provision of government and private scholarships to enable talented Muslim students to study in Britain, Europe, and America. It was in pursuit of his educational vision that Aga Khan III successfully transformed the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, India, into a leading university.

Aga Khan III's abiding concern, throughout his seventy-two years as Imam – the longest in history – was the welfare of the Ismaili community. This period was a critical one in the modern history of the Ismaili community, and it was his inspiring leadership as much as its enthusiastic response to his guidance that enabled the community to enter a period of remarkable progress in the areas of health, education, housing, commerce and industry, leading to the establishment of a network of health clinics, hospitals, schools, hostels, cooperative societies, investment trusts, and insurance companies.

### The contemporary period

Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III passed away on 11 July 1957, having designated his grandson, Prince Karim – twenty years old at the time of his accession – to succeed him as the forty-ninth hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community. Under the leadership of Aga Khan IV, the insti-

tutions and activities of the Imamate have expanded far beyond their original scope. The Aga Khan has explained many times that the impulse that underpins these activities and shapes the social conscience of his community remains the unchanging Muslim ethic of compassion for the vulnerable in society.

To give an operational structure to his humanitarian activities, the Aga Khan created the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of private, international, non-denominational agencies working to improve living conditions and opportunities for people in specific regions of the developing world. The Network's organisations have individual mandates that range from the fields of health and education to architecture, rural development and the promotion of privatesector enterprises. Together they collaborate in working towards a common goal - to build institutions and programmes that can sustainedly respond to the challenges of social, economic and cultural change. The Aga Khan Foundation, Aga Khan Education Services, Aga Khan Health Services, Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Aga Khan University, and the University of Central Asia operate in the field of social development. Economic activities are the province of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development and the Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance with their affiliates in tourism, ecotourism, promotion of industry and financial services. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) implements cultural initiatives aimed at revitalising the heritage of communities in the Islamic world. One of the newest undertakings of AKTC is the project, set up in 2003, to establish an Aga Khan Museum in Toronto.



# Introduction to Islamic Art

Sheila Canby

Works of art like those in this exhibition have made up the visual landscape of the Islamic world for 1,400 years. The scope and diversity of these objects, religious and secular, mirrors that of the societies in which they were produced. For this reason, the exhibition which this catalogue accompanies has been structured in two parts, 'The Word of God', consisting of sacred texts and related objects, and 'The route of the travellers', where objects from a wide geographical area are shown, extending from part of the Iberian peninsula – al-Andalus – to China, and which reflect different traditional cultures and a multiplicity of aesthetic choices.

The sacred and profane were never strictly separate in Islamic lands. In fact, from at least as early as the eleventh century, some Muslim sultans incorporated the phrase 'wal-dunyā wa-l-dīn' in their titles, meaning that they were princes of 'the world (or state) and of the faith (religious domain)'. Various dynasties considered themselves protectors of the faith as well as temporal leaders.

How did these dual roles manifest themselves in art? The earliest artefacts in Muslim history are found in the mosque and in the Our'anic texts written in the Arabic alphabet. The codification of the text occurred during the reign of the third Rightly Guided Caliph, 'Uthman (r. 644–655) in connection with his move to have a canonical text of the Qur'an produced in written form. Revealed to Muhammad by God between the first decade of the seventh century and Muhammad's death in 632, the Our'an, consisting of one hundred and fourteen chapters or sūras, is the holy scripture of Islam. 'Uthman's efforts ensured that the Qur'an was not corrupted by textual variants of any sort. The copying of Qur'ans from the outset was considered an act of piety. To attain the most beautiful outcome, calligraphers manipulated Arabic letter forms in artistic ways. Although some scholars have suggested that the elongation or bunching of letters in early Qur'ans is the visual analogue of the spoken word, scribes

were more likely concerned with the visual rhythms and balance of words on a page.

Muslims fulfil several obligations: to accept one God; to say the formal ritual prayers facing in the direction of the Ka ba in Mecca; to share their wealth; to fast during the month of Ramadan; and to perform the hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca. Most practising Muslim families today possess a copy of the Qur'an, but in early Islamic times this was probably not the case, and memorization of the Qur'an was not unusual. Figural imagery is absent from mosques and other religious buildings and the Qur'an is never illustrated. Nonetheless, a religious iconography of Islamic art exists, centred on the Arabic script, geometry and vegetal designs, including the vine scroll known as the arabesque. While depictions of the human form are also absent from prayer books and collections of hadīth (the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad), narratives on religious and important personalites of Islam composed from the thirteenth to nineteenth centuries include illustrations.

The Shia and Sunni communities in Islam differ on the question of the succession to the leadership of the Muslim world after the death of the Prophet. The Shia accept 'Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, as the designated Imam, while the Sunnis accept him as the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph. Thus the notion of the Imam, a divinely inspired guide for the faithful, is a key tenet of Shiism. Although the Shiite followers of 'Ali and the Imams who followed him held no political power in the early period of Muslim history, their religious movement survived and in the tenth century the Shia Fatimids founded a caliphate in Tunisia and Egypt.

One tradition common to all forms of Islam was mysticism. Groups of mystical devotees, or dervishes, gathered around spiritual masters, or *pīrs*, who acted as guides to achieving mystical states and ultimately oneness with God. To accommodate the large crowds of disciples who clustered around

their spiritual leaders, dervish lodges were constructed in which the faithful could pray and enact their rituals as well as be housed and fed. When a *pir* died, he would be buried within the precinct of his dervish lodge. While his followers would continue to impart his teachings, the *pir*'s grave became a place of veneration in its own right. As a result, large cemeteries grew up around the tombs of *pirs*.

Many paintings from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries depict dervishes and holy men. While certain dervish practices such as whirling in order to induce a heightened spiritual state are dynamic subjects for manuscript illustrations, a great number of Persian and Mughal paintings portray princes consulting their spiritual masters. The importance of such figures in the lives of great rulers such as Timur (Tamerlane) (r. 1370–1405) and Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) is attested not only by historical texts but also by their building shrines and mosques to honour these spiritual guides.

The Qur'an contains many graphic descriptions of Paradise as a verdant land, intersected by rivers of water, milk, wine and honey, planted with fruit trees and flowers and filled with celestial beings of great beauty. Such a vision of Paradise not only is a desirable contrast to the arid desert of Arabia. where the Qur'an was revealed, but also reflects ideas inherited from Zoroastrian and biblical sources. The need for water for irrigation as well as drinking and bathing has consistently informed the construction of gardens and buildings in much of the Islamic world. Gardens in the Islamic world, with fruit trees and shade trees, roses and watercourses, are often equated with Paradise.

The Qur'an encourages a reverence for nature and the humane treatment of animals, both of which are reflected in the pictorial arts of the Islamic world. The artists of some periods and regions, such as Ottoman potters from Iznik, concentrated on incorporating flowers or graceful plants in their designs. Others, particularly from Iran and India, preferred to depict animals in landscapes or make objects of daily use in the form of animals. The artists' powers of observation and understanding of animal and plant life animate their depictions and often inject an element of humour into otherwise humble objects. At its best, Islamic art communicates the balance of the natural world. Its gardens can be likened to Paradise and its pleasures can echo those enjoyed in the afterlife, but the physical world in an Islamic context is the illusion and the spiritual world the reality.

Studying the political history of Islam, one might be forgiven for believing that caliphs and kings concentrated on the realities of the material world such as dominion and conquest rather than on their roles as leaders of the faithful. Even within the Abbasid Caliphate, which ruled from 750 until the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258, local dynasties exercised considerable power and in some cases operated independently of the Abbasids. Although the plethora of dynastic names and complex feudal interrelationships can be confusing, stylistic differences across the various media of Islamic art often reflect regional modes that developed under the patronage of local dynastic potentates. Works from a variety of courts included in the exhibition range from precious gold and rock crystal pieces produced for the Fatimids in the tenth to twelfth centuries, to portraits of Ottoman sultans and Qajar shahs made two hundred years ago. Through coins and objects inscribed with the names and titles of the king or caliph, rulers ensured their public presence in their realms. Luxury items produced for kings and their courtiers, by contrast, existed within the rarified world of the court, simply for the pleasure of their

This exhibition contains many works of art that represent the preoccupations of medieval and early modern Islamic courts. Because of the paramount importance of the written word in Islam, princes and 'men of the pen' were trained to read and write. Writing beautifully was a skill that required training, and historical texts describe the education of princes by leading calligraphers. As a result, not only were examples of calligraphy produced and collected by princes, but also richly decorated pen cases, inkwells, knives for cutting pen nibs and other accoutrements of the scribe's studio were created for wealthy calligraphers.

While theology was studied by all educated Muslims, ethics, science and mathematics were also important subjects which were encouraged at the most enlightened courts. Arab and Persian mathematicians not only translated treatises on their subject from Greek and Latin, but they were also responsible for extremely important advances of their own, especially during the eighth to the eleventh centuries. Likewise, Muslim scien-

tists translated Greek and Latin scientific texts on medicine, botany, and astronomy and significantly added to the literature on these subjects well into the fifteenth century. With the introduction and spread of the use of paper, the production of books of all sorts increased enormously from the eleventh century onwards. Poetry, books of fables, collected biographies, histories, and cosmographies filled the libraries of princes and scholars. Another aspect of life within the palace walls was the enjoyment of music. In Iran, from the sixteenth century on, rooms were constructed with specially shaped niches on the walls to provide improved acoustics. Here concerts of singers accompanied by stringed instruments would entertain the master of the house and his coterie.

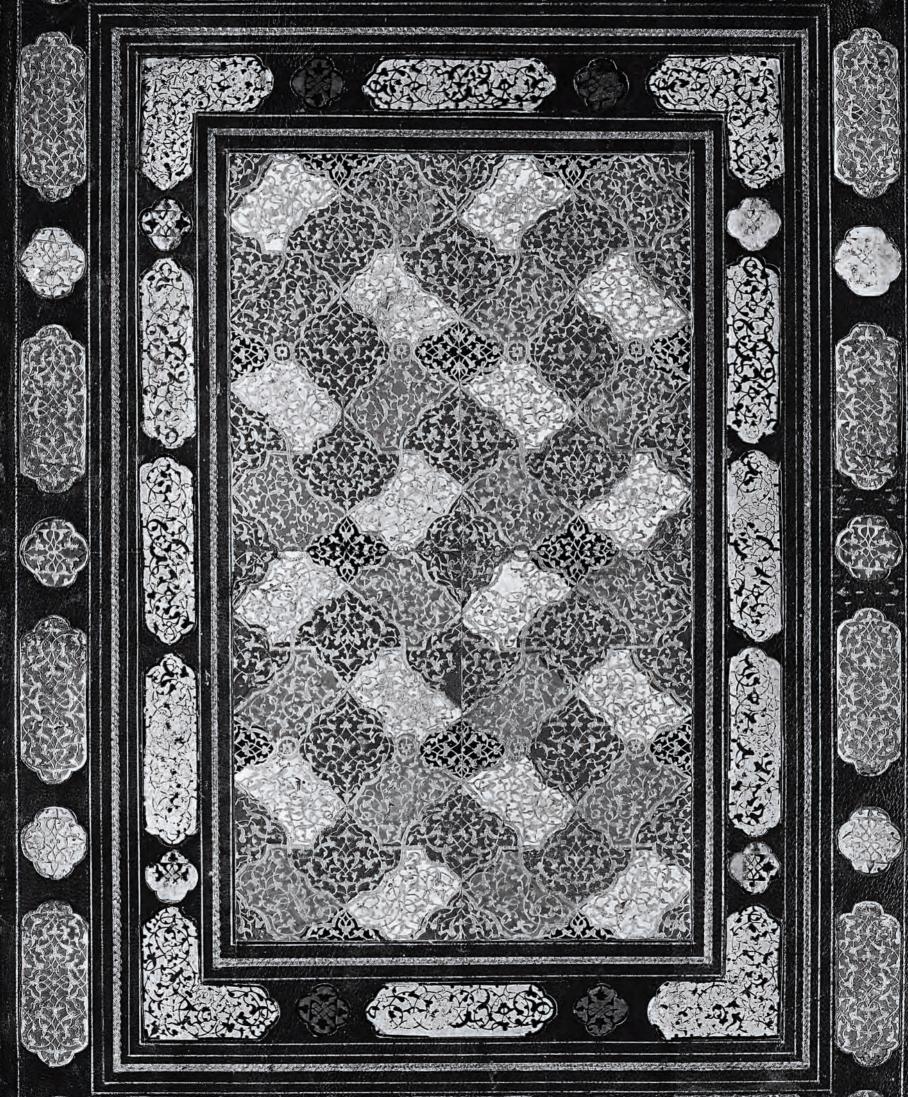
In addition to reading, writing, and statesmanship, princes at Islamic courts were expected to be accomplished horsemen and hunters. These skills are celebrated in manuscript illustrations, pottery and metalwork. Finely ornamented arms and armour would have been used for sport as well as battle. Polo enjoyed popularity in Iran and Central Asia, while falconry was practised across the Islamic world. Proficiency at riding horses was necessary not just for the sporting pleasure of the prince; it was crucial so that he could lead his armies in battle. Although kings did not enter the fray every time they went to war against their enemies, their pres-

ence could be intimidating and make the difference between victory and defeat.

In times of peace and prosperity rulers in the Islamic world used their wealth to commission monuments such as mosques, mausoleums, palaces, religious colleges, and hospitals. They also amassed collections of luxurious items including gold objects, silks, carpets. Chinese porcelains, and rare and precious substances such as the bezoar stone, extracted from the stomachs of goats and antelopes and thought to be an antidote to poison. Lavish gifts were exchanged between courts and later rulers corresponded with one another about gems and cures. They encouraged their agents to look out for rare substances on behalf of their royal allies. Unfortunately, political turbulence led to the dispersal or destruction of royal collections. Gold and silver objects were melted down, delicate textiles disintegrated, ceramics and glass shattered. Yet, as this exhibition demonstrates, enough of the rarities of Islamic art remain to validate the historical descriptions of the magnificence of, for example, the Abbasid, Fatimid, Safavid and Mughal courts. While the medieval and early modern courts of the Islamic world are remote from the present day in many ways, their treasures can still inspire wonder and fascination, much as they would have done when they were first produced.



# The Word of God



# The Qur'an

**Sheila Canby** 

As the word of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, the verses of the Qur'an are canonical and cannot be changed. Because of the centrality of the Qur'an to the religion of Islam, copying all or some of its verses in any medium is considered a pious act.

Over time a wide variety of styles of writing Arabic script developed, but not all of these were considered appropriate for copying Qur'ans. Qur'an manuscripts from the first two centuries of Islam were written on parchment in an angular style called Kufic after the Iraqi city of Kufa, an early Muslim capital.

Recent research suggests that the horizontal-format Kufic Qur'ans (cat. nos. 1–3) were used for recitation in mosques, a practice that probably originated in Iraq, while large vertical-format Kufic Qur'ans would have been placed in cradles (*kursīs*) on display in mosques, possibly in the Hijaz, the area around Mecca in Arabia. If this supposition is correct, the evidence for production of horizontal-format Qur'ans in ninth-century North Africa demonstrates the widespread need for such volumes for recitation purposes.

In the tenth century variants of the early squared letter forms began to appear in Our'an manuscripts from the Maghreb, the western edge of the Islamic world, as well as examples from Iran. A distinctive script developed in North Africa (cat. no. 4) which features nearly circular letter terminals below the line. Rounded script was not new but the application of this style to Our'ans seems to have begun in Iran and marks a major innovation. Thanks to a secretary in the administration of the Abbasid government called Ibn Muqla, a system of proportions based on the rhombic dot was devised. Ibn Mugla is also credited with the invention of six cursive scripts, thuluth, naskh, rīhān, muhaqqaq, tau $q\bar{t}^{c}$  and  $riq\bar{a}^{c}$ , which range from monumental to small, and fulfilled different calligraphic purposes. Additionally, regional styles of writing developed. When pages of Qur'ans

from different centuries and production centres are exhibited together, the remarkable stylistic variety of Arabic writing becomes evident.

Thanks to the replacement of paper for parchment from the tenth century on, Qur'an production expanded exponentially across the Muslim world. As a result many Qur'ans have survived from the last millennium and we are thus aware of the range of purposes for which these manuscripts were produced. Some very large Qur'ans, written on sheets of paper glued together, would have come from manuscripts intended for display in royal mosques. By contrast, more conventionally shaped Qur'ans may have been for personal use in a domestic setting (cat. nos. 10, 13, 14). Tiny Qur'ans that fit into metal cases would have been worn as amulets and Our'an scrolls would have been equally portable.

One of the striking features of Qur'ans of all periods is the decorative illumination that appears at the beginning of the manuscript, around chapter (sūra) headings, and to mark the fifth and tenth verses within the chapters, consisting of foliate, floral and geometric motifs. Illuminated ornament also varied by period and region. Although gold decoration appears often in early horizontal-format Our'ans, lapis lazuli blue was combined with gold by the beginning of the eleventh century. In Mamluk Egypt and Syria, Ottoman Turkey, and Timurid and Safavid Iran, lavishly illuminated Our'ans, sometimes in thirty volumes, were compiled for the rulers and their mosques and madrasas. Qur'ans were also copied on tinted paper, from the ninth or tenth century onward. One of the earliest, most famous examples of this type (cat. no. 2), with gold writing on a blue parchment ground, was produced in ninth-century North Africa.

Great artistic skill has also been lavished on the bindings that enclose and protect Qur'ans. Made of leather and, from the seventeenth century on in Iran and India, of lacquer, these bindings often have Qur'anic verses stamped on the leather exterior and gilded filigree decoration laid over coloured paper on the interior surface. Because of the Islamic prohibition against anthropomorphic or zoomorphic imagery in a religious context, the decoration of such bindings is limited to the floral, epigraphic and geometric.

In architecture Qur'anic inscriptions were carved into stone panels in the form of bands running around the interior or exterior of mosques and other religious edifices. Tile panels and walls of glazed and unglazed bricks also feature Qur'anic verses. The analysis of the choice of Qur'anic verses on specific buildings can lead to a better understanding of the patron's religious or political preoccupations.<sup>2</sup> The large number of tiles from the Il-Khanid period in Iran (13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup>

century), the result of refurbishment and new building after the destruction of the Mongol invasions, indicate a new taste for inscriptions in relief used for *mihrābs* (prayer niches), tomb markers and wall decoration.

Finally, the power of the Qur'an is so great that its verses are considered capable of protecting people from evil. Thus, amulets and undershirts were inscribed with Qur'anic verses to save the wearer from harm. Even on humble surfaces, a shell (cat. no. 17) or a leaf (cat. no. 19), the word of God was lovingly written, an enduring act of devotion and artistic virtuosity. As if to remind Muslims that God is ubiquitous and all-powerful, the Qur'an in all its forms is a constant presence throughout the Islamic world.

- 1 Blair 2006, pp. 110–116, summarising the theories of Estelle Whelan.
- 2 Grabar 1959; Necipoğlu 2005, p. 200 ff.

### 1 Qur'an folio in gold Kufic script

North Africa, 9th-10th century Ink and gold on parchment 17.9 x 26 cm Text: Sura *Qāf*, 50:14–22 AKM 00479 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 35; AKTC 2009a, p. 32; AKTC 2009b, p. 32. As with the pages of the celebrated "Blue Qur'an" (see cat. no. 2), the execution of this Qur'an folio in gold Kufic script on vellum involved the lengthy and expensive process called chrysography (see Fraser and Kwiatkowski 2005, p. 30). The letters were written in "liquid glue," filled in with a careful application of ground gold suspended in a solution, and finally outlined with pale brown ink using a thin-nibbed stylus. The vocalisations used to read and recite the text have been applied in the form of dots painted in red,

blue and green. An eight-petalled rosette framing the letter  $k\bar{a}f$  ("k") signals the end of a group of ten verses in the *abjad* system, found also in other Kufic Qur'ans. Each letter of the Arabic alphabet is assigned a numerical value to signal the completion of a particular verse in a chapter – in this case,  $k\bar{a}f$ , which equals 20, marks the end of the twentieth verse of Sura  $Q\bar{a}f$ . Two other leaves from this Qur'an manuscript are housed in the National Library, Tunis. AF/LA



### 2 Bifolium from the "Blue Qur'an"

North Africa, 9th–10th century Ink, opaque watercolour, silver (now oxidised), and gold on blue-dyed parchment 26 x 69 cm

Text: Sura *al-Furqān* (The Criterion), 25:55–64 AKM 00477

Published: Bloom 2007, p. 42–44; Makariou 2007, pp. 108–109 (no. 34); AKTC 2008a, pp. 44–45 (cat. no. 2); AKTC 2009a, p. 33; AKTC 2009b, p. 33.

This extraordinary bifolium of gold Kufic calligraphy on indigo-dyed parchment comes from the celebrated "Blue Qur'an", one of the most lavish Qur'an manuscripts ever created. Careful attention to detail was devoted to every aspect of the manuscript, including the complex and costly technique of chrysography, as described in cat. no. 1. Silver rosettes (now oxidized) were also used to indicate the divisions between the verses. The virtual simplicity of decoration and illumination using the finest materials – indigo-dyed parchment, silver, and gold – combined with the angular Kufic script results in an overwhelming effect on the viewer regardless of his or her level of literacy.

Although the two folios are attached, they do not represent sequential pages in the manuscript. Fifteen lines of text fill each page in a dense, angular Kufic script typical of manuscripts attributed to the tenth century (Déroche, 1983, p. 42); no diacritical marks are used to indicate vowels. The calligrapher also inserted *cæsuræ* within the words in order to place isolated letters at the beginning of the line as much as possible, creating a column effect. The rhythm of the script is made even more striking by the reduction of illuminating elements to a minimum: in the margin of the left folio, an almost obliterated silver rosette marks each group of twenty verses.

Differing views exist as to the exact origins of this manuscript. One scholar has relied on palaeographical and historical evidence to suggest that it was created for the Fatimids, who ruled North Africa from Qayrawan during the first half of the tenth century (Bloom 1986, pp. 59-65; Bloom 1989, pp. 95–99; Bloom 2007, pp. 42–44). Another, however, notes that the alphanumeric notation system (abjad), here apparent in the form of letters appearing in medallions at the end of each verse, was subsequently reserved only for the western Islamic world (Stanley 1995, pp. 7–15). The unusual colour scheme may have been inspired by Byzantine manuscripts or documents, some of which are written in silver and gold on parchment dyed blue or purple. The blue and gold decoration of the mihrab at the Great Mosque of Cordoba may also bear some relation to the similar decoration used for the Blue Our'an.

A section of the manuscript is currently housed in the National Institute of Art and Archaeology in Tunis and detached leaves or fragments are in the National Library, Tunis, the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, and in other public and private collections.



## 3 Qur'an folio in gold Kufic script

Near East or Iran, 9th – 10th century Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on parchment 14.9 x 20.9 cm

Text: Sura *al-°Ankabūt* (The Spider), 29:31–33 AKM 00480

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 34; AKTC 2009b, p. 34

The Qur'an to which to which this folio once belonged has often been given a Maghribi attribution because sections of the manuscript were purportedly discovered in the mosque at Qayrawan, Tunisia. However, as the *abjad* system (by which Arabic letters are used for verse counts) in this Qu'ran has been identified as "eastern," it is possible that the manuscript was produced in more eastern Islamic lands, perhaps in the greater Iranian world. As with cat. nos. 1 and 2, no expense was spared in the preparation of this Qur'an, which was also calligraphed in gold ink using the technique of chrysography. At only five lines of fine Kufic script per page, the cost of production

would have been high, as its completion would have required a proportionately greater amount of vellum, ink, colours, and gold. Like the folio in cat. no. 1, vocalisations appear in the form of red, blue, and green dots. Singular verses are divided by gold rosettes, while every tenth verse receives an *abjad* letter, echoed in the margin within a larger medallion containing the verse count in gold (in this case, *thalathūn* for "thirtieth"). Other leaves and sections from the same Qur'an can be found in various collections, including the Bibliothèque Nationale, Tunis; the National Institute of Archaeology, Tunis; the Beit al-Quran, Bahrain, and the Nasser D. Khalili collection, London.



## 4 Qur'an folio in Kufic script

North Africa or Near East, 10<sup>th</sup> century Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on parchment 23.8 x 33.1 cm Text: Sura *al-Rahmān* (The Most Gracious), 55:62–65 AKM 00483 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 37 (AKM 00481); AKTC 2007b, p. 33 (AKM 00482);

AKTC 2009a, p. 35; AKTC 2009b, p. 35

With only three grand lines of elegant and carefully attenuated script per page, the Qur'an to which this folio originally belonged was surely a luxury commission produced at enormous expense. The present leaf relates to folios from two known dispersed manuscripts located in public and private collections, including the National Library, Tunis, Museum of Islamic Arts, Qayrawan, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, the Al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait, and the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, London. Brown ink was used to calligraph the text against a background of parchment, red to indicate vowels, and gold to illuminate the large medallions and to mark verse endings. The characteristic features shared by all of the folios in the codex include a type of Kufic

script notable for its dominant verticals such as the  $l\bar{a}m$ -alif combination, countered by an exaggerated width in the strokes of some letters. In the terminal  $n\bar{u}n$  ("n") letters, for instance, the calligrapher has changed the angle of his nib at the mid-point of the round letter, creating an aesthetically pleasing, symmetrical  $n\bar{u}n$  that maximises the width of the stroke.

It is difficult to date and identify the geographical origins of Kufic-script Qur'ans. A three-line Qur'an folio very similar to this one has been attributed to the first half of the tenth century somewhere between Qayrawan and Damascus (see Fraser and Kwiatkowski 2006, pp. 52–57; Déroche 1992, pp. 42 and 109). AF/LA



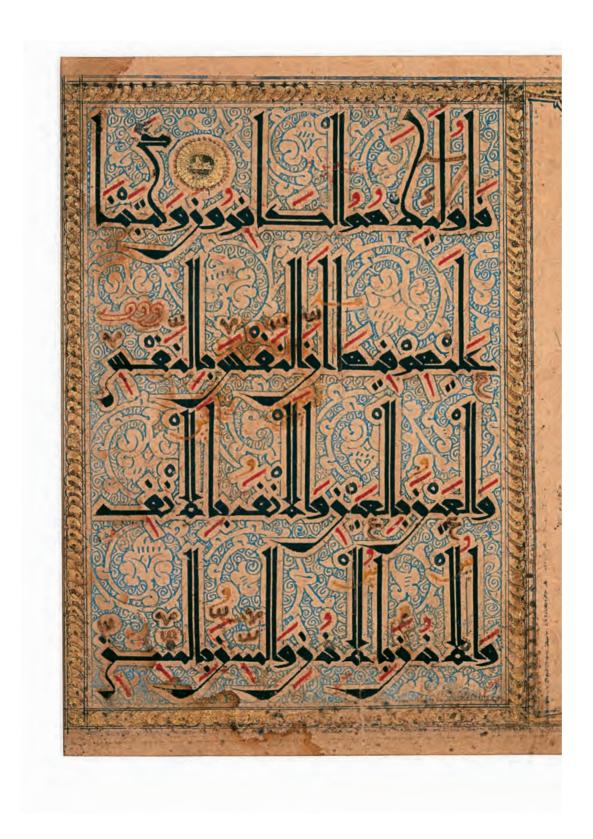
## 5 Folio from the "Qarmathian Qur'an"

Iran, mid-12<sup>th</sup> century
Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper
page: 31 x 20.8 cm; text: 21.4 x 14.2 cm
Text: Sura *al-Mā³ida* (The Table Spread), 5:44-45
AKM 00256

Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 46–48 (no. 11); AKTC 2007a, p. 38–39 (no. 5); AKTC 2007b, p. 34–35 (no. 5); AKTC 2009a, p. 36; AKTC 2009b, p. 36

This folio is from a dispersed copy of the so-called "Qarmathian Qur'an," one of the most elaborate large-scale Qur'an manuscripts produced between the eleventh and early thirteenth centuries. Each page contains four lines of a broken angular cursive script, characterised by towering verticals anchored to a strict horizontal baseline with dramatic modulation between thin and thick strokes. The decoration of each folio is appropriately extravagant. The script is complemented by a detailed background of stylized palmette scrolls in

reserve white on a ground of blue curls. These motifs recall contemporary ceramics and metalwork. Lavish gold braided borders frame the text and two half-medallions project into the right margin. The faded gold text panel on the right may have indicated the number of verses in the Sura, or where it was revealed, according to Sheila Blair, who also remarks that such extensive decoration executed on an estimated total of 4,500 pages must have been an extraordinarily time-consuming enterprise (see Blair 2006, p. 198). AF



## 6 Qur'an folio

Central Asia, 14<sup>th</sup> century Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper 24.7 x 19.9 cm Text: Sura *al-Rūm* (The Romans), 30:33–34 AKM 00310

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 37; AKTC 2009b, p. 37

Qur'an production from the eleventh century onwards was marked by a change in the selection of script styles. One of the scripts that gradually replaced the Kufic of earlier Qur'ans as the predominant style was the rectilinear but more monumental *muhaqqaq* featured on this folio. The earliest known Qur'an written in this script is dated 1160 and can be found in the National Library, Cairo (MS. 144; see Lings and Safadi 1976, cat. no. 60). Three lines of text fill the present page; they are

enclosed in a ruled margin outlined in red with multi-petalled rosette extensions rendered in gold, pale green, red, and black and framed in turn within stylised palmettes and half-palmettes. A gold rosette also marks the division between the thirty-third and thirty-fourth verses of *al-Rūm*, the thirtieth chapter of the Qur'an. This folio was formerly in the collection of Krikor and Adrienne Minassian in New York.

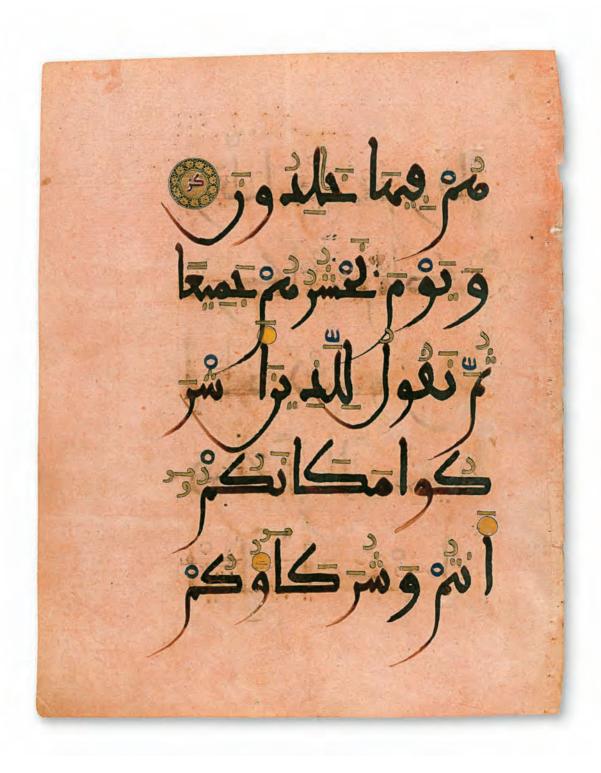


# 7 Qur'an folio from al-Andalus

Spain, early 13<sup>th</sup> century Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper 32.6 x 25.6 cm Text: Sura *Yūnus* (Jonah), 10:27–28 AKM 00258 Published: Falk 1985, p. 39 (no. 7);

Published: Falk 1985, p. 39 (no. 7); AKTC 2007a, p. 40 (no. 7); AKTC 2007b, p. 36 (no. 7); AKTC 2009a, p. 38; AKTC 2009b, p. 38 In the western Islamic world, a distinct round style of script with generous, sweeping curves of descending letters had developed by the mid-tenth century (Déroche 1999, pp. 239–241; Blair 2006, p. 223). Known as *magbribī*, this script was employed in al-Andalus and the Maghrib, modernday Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. *Maghribī*-script Qur'ans are usually written in brown or black ink with elaborate illumination in gold. Some, like

this one, are on tinted peach-pink paper believed to have been produced in Jativa, site of the earliest documented paper mill in Spain (Fraser and Kwiatkowski 2006, p. 64). The systems used for vocalisation, pointing, and orthography are also peculiar to *maghribī* script. This Qur'an folio is an elegant example of how the script had evolved by the early thirteenth century. AF



## 8 Folio from a Mamluk Qur'an

Egypt, Mamluk, *ca.* 1450 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper 41.3 x 32.1 cm Text: Sura *an-Nam*I (The Ant), 27:88–93 and Sura *al-Qasas* (The Story), 28:1–3 AKM 00243 Published: AKTC 2008a, p. 52–53 (no. 6);

AKTC 2009a, p. 39; AKTC 2009b, p. 39

Qur'ans decorated with illumination and gilding are known to have existed as early as the tenth century, their embellishment at first limited to marking a  $s\bar{u}ra$  or chapter, as well as the headings and ends of  $\bar{a}yas$ , or verses. On the present folio, the Sura al-Naml is introduced in an elegant white script, outlined in black and placed within a gilded rectangular frame. The frame contains a gold background and a series of lobed cartouches painted in red and blue and decorated with gilded vine scrolls and rosettes. Twelve-petalled rosettes outlined in black and illuminated with gold petals and red dots indicate the end of each verse.

The production of such lavish manuscripts required a team of calligraphers, artists, illuminators, and gilders, all contributing to a finished product that often represented the generosity and wealth of the patron who had commissioned it.

While the patron of the codex to which this page belonged is unknown, the manuscript itself can be attributed to Egypt based on stylistic grounds. Its monumental *muhaqqaq* script is typical of Qur'ans produced under the Mamluks (1250–1517) in the second half of the fifteenth century; earlier manuscripts would have avoided this script as it was also associated with the Qur'ans of the Ilkhanids (1256–1353), the Mamluks' former rivals in Iran). LA



#### 9 Illuminated folio from a Qur'an

Possibly Yemen, ca. 1300–1350 Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper 64 x 38.9 cms Text: Sura Yūnus (Jonah), 10:109 and Sura Hūd, 11:1–15 AKM 00814 Unpublished There are varying suggestions as to the geographical location of where this Qur'an may have been produced. Although an Ilkhanid Persia or Mamluk Egypt origin cannot be discounted, this Qur'an has certain features that suggest an alternative place of manufacture: Yemen, during the period of Rasulid rule (1229–1454). This Qur'an is copied in a combination of three scripts: the first and last lines are in *muhaqqaq*, the middle line (5<sup>th</sup> line on the right page and 7<sup>th</sup> line on the left page) is in gold *thuluth*, and the remainder of the text is written in black *naskh*. It is rare to find Mamluk Qur'ans in different types of script, and none are known "with three styles on the same page" (James 1992, p. 160). Another unusual fea-

ture is the decoration of the chapter heading: in this case, that of Sura  $H\bar{u}d$ . The text is in white Kufic and this is set within a gold panel with latticework decoration at either end, terminating in a pear-shaped medallion in the outer margin; squares of interlace, although seldom found on Mamluk Qur'ans, are known in Ilkhanid manuscripts, however. The verses on this bifolium – which is sequential – are separated by eight-petalled gold rosettes, with each fifth verse identified "in the margin by a gold pear-shaped device with a floral motif in the centre and an irregular blue border culminating in a long finial" (ibid.); the tenth verse is marked by a gold roundel with a blue border. AM



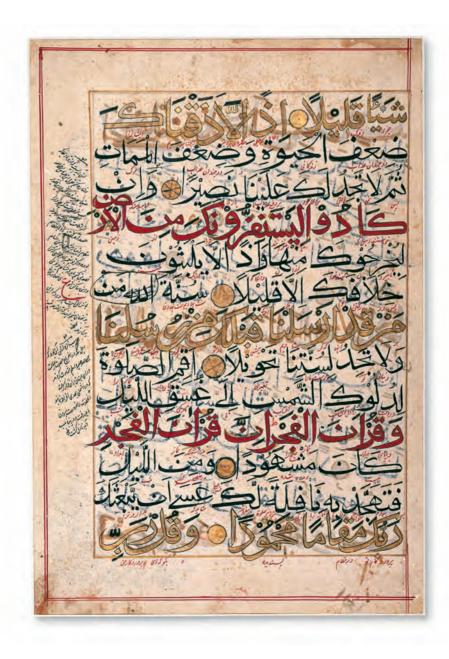
## 10 Qur'an folio in Bihārī script

India, 15th century
Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper
36.8 x 27.8 cm
Text: Sura *al-Isrā*<sup>2</sup> (The Night Journey), 17:74–80
AKM 00252
Published: Falk 1985, p. 142 (no. 115);
AKTC 2007a, p. 41 (no. 9); AKTC 2007b,
p. 37 (no. 9); AKTC 2009a, p. 40–41;
AKTC 2009b, p. 40–41

This folio belongs to one of a very few Qur'an manuscripts that survive from the period between Timur's invasion of northern India in 1398-9 and the founding of the Mughal dynasty in 1526. It has been a challenge to understand the general development of the arts of the book in this region during the fifteenth century due to the diversity of artistic styles corresponding to the cultural centres of independent Muslim sultanates. Manuscript production seemed to follow the Timurid tradition in Iran and Central Asia, with one distinguishing feature: the use of the bihārī script, as shown here. A strange mutation of naskh script with obscure origins, bihārī appears only in manuscripts predating the Mughals (James 1992b, p. 102). It is characterized by an exaggeration of the sublinear letter forms through a thickening of the letter's curves and a sharpening of its end points.

On the present page, thirteen lines have been calligraphed in gold, red, and black, with black

diacritical marks and interlinear Persian translations in red *nasta* clīq script. The first of every three lines is alternately executed in gold or red ink, outlined in black, followed by two lines of black script. The gilded and coloured lines do not include text that varies in significance from the following lines in black, but the formula creates a visual rhythm that brings a sense of order to a somewhat overpacked page of text. Gold circular pendants separate singular verses and the letter 'ayn, standing for 'asharah (ten) to mark a group of ten verses, appears in the left margin, sandwiched vertically by glosses in black Persian nasta<sup>c</sup>līq. A clearly visible mistake in the six and seventh lines - additional words that do not appear in the Qur'anic verses have been circled and crossed out after it was too late - suggests that this particular Qur'an was not executed by a scribe of the highest calibre. LA



# 11 Manuscript of a Mauritanian Qur'an

Northwest Africa, Mauritania, 18th century Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; leather binding folios 27.5 x 21 cm bound manuscript 29 x 21.7 x 3.4 cm AKM 00807 Published: AKTC 2008b, cat. no. 4; AKTC 2009a, p. 41; AKTC 2009b, p. 41 One of the folios appearing at the end of this Qur'an manuscript includes the name of a copyist, Muhammad bin Musa al-Yusufi, and the date the copy was completed (1036 H / 1626 CE). The Qur'an's illumination, which might be later than the script, suggests an attribution to Mauritania in the  $18^{\rm th}$  century. Other features, such as the char-

acteristic Saharan-Maghribi (or Sudani) script style and a format recalling the square shape of twelfth-century Maghribi manuscripts in a revivalist manner (Bayani, Contadini, and Stanley 1999, p. 43), likewise support a Northwest African provenance. LA



# 12 Manuscript of an Ottoman Qur'an

Ottoman Empire (Turkey), ca. 1500 Copied by Shaykh Hamdallah b. Mustafa Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper 39.2 x 26.5 cm Text: al-Fātiḥa (The Opening), 1:1–7 AKM 00262

Published: Welch 1979, pp. 92–93 (no. 29); Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 27–29 (no. 4); Falk 1985, p. 133 (no. 105); AKTC 2007a, p. 45 (no. 15); AKTC 2007b, p. 42 (no. 15); AKTC 2009a, p.42–43; AKTC 2009b, p. 42–43

## 13 Manuscript of a Safavid Qur'an

Copied by 'Abdallah Shirazi Iran, Qazvin or Mashhad, Safavid, ca. 1550–1565 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper Folios: 37.4 x 24.4 cm; binding: 38 x 25 x 6.5 Text: Sura al-Baqara (The Cow), 1:1–17 AKM 00485

Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 124-25 (no. 42); AKTC 2009a, p.42-43; AKTC 2009b, p.42

This manuscript is one of the greatest early Ottoman Qur'ans. The colophon in Ottoman Turkish on folio 278r identifies the scribe as Shaykh Hamdallah ibn Mustafa. Although the patron of the manuscript is not named, it may have been Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512). Shaykh Hamdallah (d. 1520) was one of the most celebrated Ottoman calligraphers. He revised the six canonical scripts of Yaqut and influenced generations of Ottoman calligraphers. Nearly fifty Qu'rans and numerous prayer books and single sheets of religious texts are credited to his hand. A native of Amasya, Shaykh Hamdallah taught the future Ottoman

This manuscript is similar to Qur'ans produced in workshops of Shiraz in the sixteenth century, although it was probably not done in that city. Such Qur'ans stand out for their rich illuminations, of which the best compositions are reserved for the first and last pages of the volume. Thus, this manuscript does not start directly with the Qur'anic text, but is preceded by two pages, each decorated with an inscribed rosette. The following bifolium carries the first Sura, al-Fātiha, which can be read on two polylobate mandorlas in the centre of two completely illuminated bifolia. The last pages of the volume were also subject to special treatment. These are two additional texts; a final prayer  $(du^{c}\bar{a}^{a} khatm)$  to be recited upon completion of the reading of the Holy Book, and a Fālnāma, an abridged bibliomancy manual which indicates the divinatory values of the letters of the Arabic alphabet (Makariou 2007, p. 139, n. 64). More modestly, an illuminated frontispiece lies above the first few verses of Sura 2 (al-Baqara), the last Sura (al-Nas), and Sura 18 (al-Kahf), which is highlighted because it marks the beginning of the second half of the Qur'anic text.

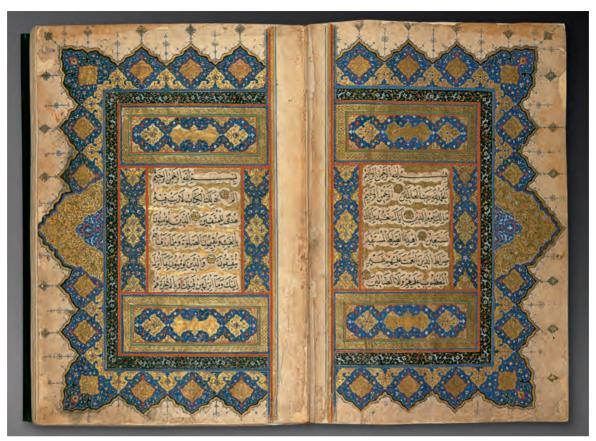
The bifolium that is reproduced here corresponds to the beginning of al-Bagara, the second and longest Sura in the Our'an. The frontispiece (sarlaw) consists of a rectangular cartouche, surmounted by four identical florets, with alternating dark blue and gold backgrounds scattered with fine flowery foliage. At the centre of the cartouche, a polylobate medallion encircles the title of the Sura, written in riga<sup>c</sup> in white ink on a gold background. The text of the Sura starts beneath this rich frontispiece and runs along in visual discontinuity; the text is divided into panels of unequal width, alternating between two writing styles, different inks and colour backgrounds. Three then five lines of *naskh* are etched on a white scalloped edge demarcated by a gold background decorated with fine flowery foliage. These alternate with a longer line in muhaqqaq copied in white ink against a blue background outlined in red, or against a gold background outlined in blue. Rectangular cartouches covered with flowery foliage are on either side of the lines in naskh. This visual discontinuity is purely aesthetic and does not signify, for example, the transition from one verse to the next. If the end of a verse occurs

sultan Bayezid II calligraphy while the latter was governor there. Thus began a lifelong relationship that continued throughout the entire reign of Bayezid II. The complete opening chapter of the Qur'an appears on this elaborate double frontispiece in *naskh* script, a specialty of Shaykh Hamdallah and a standard script for Ottoman Qur'ans. The elongated letter *sīn* ("s") in the *basmala* and the far-reaching *nūn* ("n") that wraps under the gold roundel verse markers add rhythm to the calligraphy and are hallmarks of Shaykh Hamdallah's style. AF

mid-line, this is only indicated on this page by a slight space between the words (e.g., the eighth and ninth lines). Outside the written surfaces, medallions punctuate the margins every five verses (with blue rosettes) and ten verses (with gold rosettes).

In the margins, there is a notation made in black ink; this is the Arabic expression *waqf* which recalls the transformation of this manuscript into an inalienable good (*ibid.*, n. 65). This mark is explained in the founding text which follows the *Fālnāma* and which declares that this manuscript was a gift from the Ottoman sultan, Selim II (r. 1566–1574), to the mosque he founded in Edirne - the Selimiye. It is possible that this luxurious manuscript was one of a number of diplomatic gifts, presented in 1568 by the Safayid sovereign Shah Tahmasp to Selim II to mark the renewal of the peace treaty of Amasya, signed in 1555 with Selim II's father, Süleyman the Magnificent (*ibid.*, n. 66).

As with many sixteenth century Qur'ans, we do not know the date of this manuscript's copy, but the calligrapher, or more likely the illuminator, 'Abdallah Shirazi, signed his name at the end of the last Sura. Two miniaturists bearing this name are identifiable: the first worked in the scriptorium of Shah Tahmasp in Oazvin around 1550-1560 and died in this same city in 1574 (*ibid.*, n. 67); the second, who is better known, worked in the scriptorium of the Safavid prince and governor of Mashhad, Sultan Ibrahim Mirza (1540-1587) in Qazvin. He died in Mashhad at an unknown date while attached to the service of the mausoleum of Imam Riza and of the tomb of his diseased protector. He contributed notably to the completion of the famous Haft Awrang created for Ibrahim Mirza and a dīvān for this same prince housed at the Aga Khan Museum. Only a close and careful analysis of the illuminations of these manuscripts and their respective signatures could confirm that the decoration of the Qur'an and of these manuscripts have been done by one and the same person (ibid., n. 68). Whether it was by the first 'Abdallah Shirazi or the second, this sumptuous Qur'an could have been copied and illuminated in the royal and princely workshops of Qazvin or Mashhad. CM





#### 14 Manuscript of a Mughal Qur'an

India, Mughal, dated 1093 H / May-June 1682 CE Scribe: Muhammad Fazil

Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; tooled leather binding

Folios: 26.6 x 17 cm

Text: al-Kahf (The Cave), 18:75-80

AKM 00319

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 44; AKTC 2009b, p. 44

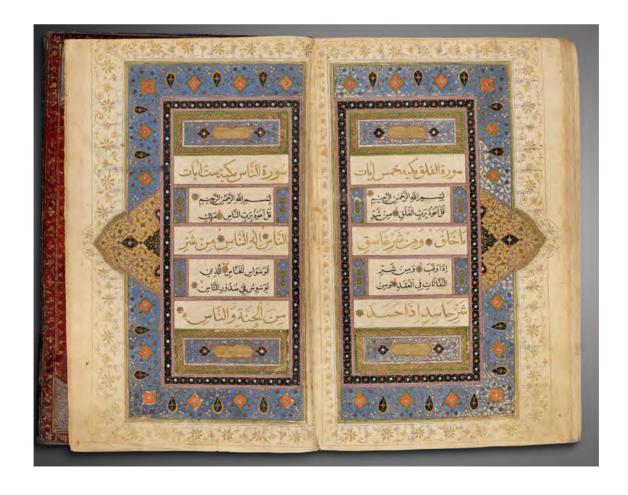
Unlike the embracing and open-minded attitudes of his predecessors toward the diverse religions practiced in the Indian sub-continent, the Mughal emperor Awrangzeb's reign (1658-1707) was characterised by a strict and severe religious policy that showed little tolerance for opposing beliefs. It should come as no surprise, then, that the heyday of illustrated manuscript and album production enjoyed under the emperors Akbar (r. 1556-1605), Jahangir (r. 1605-1627), and Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1658) came to an end under his rule, especially in light of Awrangzeb's embracement of Muslim orthodoxy, which exercised a more stern and restrictive attitude towards figural representation. On the other hand, Awrangzeb appears to have shown a greater interest in Qur'an production, especially those executed in *naskh* script, before he even ascended the throne (Bayani, Contadini, and Stanley 1999, p. 172).

The present manuscript holds approximately 460 leaves and contains thirteen lines per page, with the majority of text copied in *naskh* and the first, middle, and last lines written in the more monumental *muhaqqaq*. The margins are ruled in black ink and gold and chapter headings are highlighted in gold *muhaqqaq* script, while small, multi-petalled and gilded rosettes mark verse divisions. The two pages shown here constitute the middle pair of three sets of illuminated bifolia appearing in the manuscript. Similar to other Qur'ans produced in the later Mughal period, text areas are divided into bands of varied widths,

including panels with gilded and inscribed cartouches outlined in red against a blue background filled with small red and white flowers. The bands of text are consolidated within a series of colourful and gilded ruled and floriated narrow frames, enclosed within a larger border containing polychrome vignettes and lotus blossoms among the smaller red and white flowers. This pattern, along with the green-and-gold outlined "hasp" extending from the frame on each side of the doublepage composition, is another design typical of seventeenth-century Indian manuscripts; it is repeated in panels flanking each of the smaller text boxes containing black naskh script. A gold, floriated scroll pattern fills the margins, surrounding the overall illuminated composition, its rhythm broken at one point by the gilded and polychrome-bordered cartouche appearing on the right margin of the right-hand page.

Persian manuscripts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries appear to have been a great source of inspiration for Qur'an illumination in seventeenth-century India, this manuscript, however, being an exception (*ibid.*, pp. 174, 194–200), although the combination of small and large scripts on one page is reminiscent of Qur'ans produced in Shiraz, Iran, in the sixteenth century.

A colophon provides information about the scribe, a certain Muhammad Fazil who identifies himself as a *shāgird*, or pupil, of Mulla al-Yas, along with the manuscript's completion date, Jumada al-awwal 1093 H / May—June 1682 CE. LA



## 15 Manuscript of a Qajar Qur'an

Scribe: 'Abd al-Mudhnab al-Khatti al-Jani 'Abdallah Iran, Tehran, Qajar, dated 1233 H / 1817-8 CE Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; later leather binding

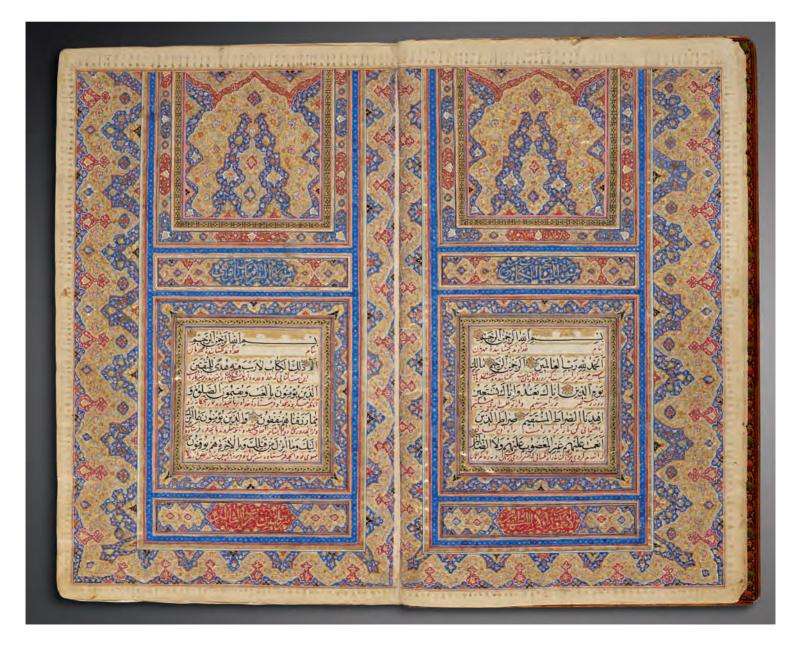
Folios 19.8 x 12.6 cm; bound manuscript 22.6 x 16.9 x 4.1 cm Text: Sura *al-Fātiha* (The Opening), 1:1–7 and

Sura *al-Baqara* (The Cow), 2:1–4 AKM 00287, fols, 1v–2r

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 45; AKTC 2009b, p. 45

Thanks to the political stability brought about by the first Qajar ruler, Muhammad Khan, in 1785, the early Oajar period witnessed a cultural revival lasting over a century, demonstrated in particular by large-scale architectural and artistic patronage under the reigns of Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834) and his grandson, Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–1896) (Diba 1998, p. 169). The production of illustrated manuscripts dwindled as the taste for life-size painting rapidly increased, never to recover from this decline (Diba 1998, pp. 169-170). As this Qur'an suggests, however, the production of illustrated and illuminated manuscripts did not come to a complete end. The manuscript includes the entire text of the Qur'an, copied in Arabic in a combination of naskh and thuluth scripts. On the double-page illuminated frontispiece shown here, verses from

the first chapter and part of the second are highlighted by frames created with gilded cloud forms while interlinear Persian translations appear in the narrower bands in a dark pink nasta clīq. Central cartouches above the text frame on each page provide the name and number of verses contained in each chapter in red naskh script (seven for al-Fātiha and 286 for al-Bagara). A ruled pink lozenge scroll frames the text and is surrounded by polychrome gilded illumination composed of projecting polychrome half-medallions filled with heartshaped knots and orange, pink and blue floral rosettes set against a blue background. The colophon on folio 302r identifies "the humble scribe," ʿAbd al-Mudhnab al-Khatti al-Jani ʿAbdallah and gives the date of 1233 H / 1817-8 CE, but it appears that another colophon was added on the verso of the same folio, with a later date. LA



## 16 Manuscript of a Sulawesi Qur'an

Scribe: Isma il bin Abdallah al-Jawi of Makassar Indonesia, Sulawesi Island, Laiyaka (probably Laikang), dated 25 Ramadan 1219 H / 28 December 1804 CE

Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on European paper, leather binding Folios 35.5 x 20 cm
Text: al-Kahf (The Cave), 18:1–6

AKM 00488

Published: AKTC 2008b, no. 28 (different folios illustrated); AKTC 2009a, p. 46; AKTC 2009b, p. 46

# 17 Mother-of-pearl shell

India, Iran, or Turkey, 18<sup>th</sup> century Mother-of-pearl maximum Ø 14.5 cm AKM 00665

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 47 (no. 17); AKTC 2007b, p. 43 (no. 17); Makariou 2007, pp. 132–33 (no. 46); AKTC 2008a, pp. 20 and 64–65 (no. 12); AKTC 2009a, p. 47; AKTC 2009b, p. 47 Although the spread of Islam reached the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia as early as the thirteenth century, the earliest surviving manuscripts of the Qur'an from the region date to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The present example has been identified as one of only three core exemplars in a group of eighteen Qur'ans illuminated in the "Sulawesi geometric style"; the other fifteen represent localised variations. They are characterized by a few distinct features, including double illuminated frames formed from geometric shapes and appearing on the manuscript's initial and ultimate bifolia as well as by a bold and dark colour palette.

The Aga Khan Museum's Qur'an is one of the most impressive of this group in size, quality, and condition; it survives in its complete form and contains a full colophon identifying its scribe and attesting to a production in south Sulawesi. It was

Using the natural shape of this shell and its lustrous mother-of-pearl lining, the artist has created a pleasing decorative programme of eight concentric circles engraved with verses from the Qur'an. The delicate floral vinescrolls in the widest circle recall Deccani painting as well as the spiral scrollwork backgrounds of Ottoman sultans' tughras (monograms, tuğra in modern Turkish) and the cobalt blue decoration of early sixteenth-century Ottoman ceramics. The style of *nasta<sup>c</sup>līq* script, however, would suggest an Indian or Iranian hand. Gujarat was a major centre of manufacture of mother-of-pearl and perhaps this object was made for export to Turkey. No matter where it was produced, the quality of skill demonstrated on this object suggests that it was made for a person of high standing.

It is difficult to find an equivalent object that has been written about or even discovered. A shell of 14.3 cm in diameter bearing Qur'anic inscriptions and described as being Iranian, was sold recently, but seems to have later origins (19th century). The structure of the decoration on the inside is reminiscent of therapeutic magical cups. It consists of double concentric circles which define the areas for "magical writing", engraved on marked lines in the middle circle. A motif with splayed beams starts in the third circular band from the bottom of the object and is recalled in the seventh band, "in sun-like fashion", revealing the medallions on which the texts are engraved. Finally the eighth band bears concentric circles and lines of "magical writing". Liquid can be poured into the shell's concave space, thereby coming into contact with all the inscriptions and elements inside. Depending on the different known uses of these cups, the patient can drink

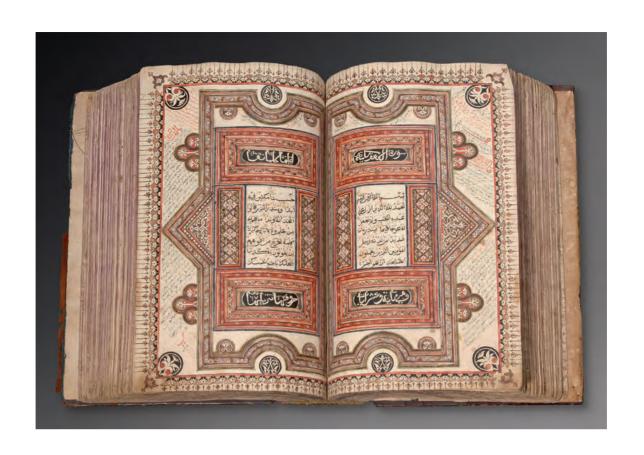
written in *thuluth* script with explicatory glosses added in *naskh*. The Sura heading appears at the top of the right-hand page in an oval cartouche painted in black, while the number of verses in the chapter (110) is given in the matching cartouche at the bottom of the same page. The cartouches on the opposite page provide the numbers of verses (110) and words (1877) in the Sura, as well as the number of letters (6360) in the chapter and its order of revelation to the Prophet (67th), respectively. Some of the commentators who have added explanations have been identified in the margin on the left-hand page.

The extraordinary amount of artistic variation among these manuscripts and the fact that they reflect far-flung provenances and locations has led some scholars to propose the existence of a diasporic artistic idiom rather than one restricted to south Sulawesi. LA

the liquid, pour it over his head, spray himself with it or use it to massage parts of the body.

Apart from the "magical writings" in the middle circle, there is a Shiite supplication starting with "qul" ("speak"), followed by "yā 'Ali", repeated three times, on the second circular band. Within the medallions of the next, third, circular band is to be found a series of extracts from the Qur'an, each time introduced by the expression bismillah, which signals a change of Sura. Thus, starting with the medallion which we will number 1, since it is the only one with the expression bismillah in the first line, moving clockwise around to medallion 11, we can find Suras al-Kāfirūn (The Unbelievers), 109, verses 1-6; al-Tawhīd (Pure Worship), 112, verses 1–4; al-Falag (The Dawn), 113, verses 1-5; al-Nas (Mankind), 114, verses 1-6; al-Qalam (The Pen), 68, verses 51-52, which are the last two of the Sura; finally, al-Isrā<sup>3</sup> (The Night Journey), 17, verse 81. Suras 109, 112, 113 and 114 are special in that they all start with "qul" and appear on the object in full. In the fourth, sixth and eighth circular bands, the inscriptions are engraved on lines radiating from the centre. Whereas, on the one hand, the inscription in nasta<sup>c</sup>līq of the fifth circular band, verse 31 of Sura *Āl 'Imrān* (The Family of 'Imran), 3, once again beginning with "qul", is circular; on the other hand, the texts of the seventh circular band are again to be found engraved on the medallions. Among the latter, we find the beginning of Sura 48, al-Fath (Victory).

Suras 109, 112, 113 and 114, as well as Sura 17, verse 81, the beginning of Sura 48 and Sura 68, 51-52 appear in therapeutic magical cups, and often as well the first four Suras. Furthermore, the same verses of Suras 48, 58 and 112 appear in the shell that was recently sold. AF





## 18 Talismanic pendant

Iran, 19th century

Agate and rubies in silver-gilt mount; L 12.1 cm Text: Sura Yā Sīn (the letters yā and sīn, signifying "O Man"), 36:1–83; two verses of Arabic poetry: "Call upon 'Ali, sign of miracles, you will find him a help in time of crises / Every anguish and misfortune will disappear, through your prophecy, O Muhammad, through your province / O 'Ali O 'Ali O 'Ali" (trans. Abdullah Ghouchani) AKM 00668

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 48 (no. 19); AKTC 2007b, p. 44 (no. 19); AKTC 2009a, p. 48; AKTC 2009b, p. 48 A beautiful frame of rubies surrounds the circumference of this oval-shaped pendant, which was meant to be worn, as suggested by three loops added at its top for suspension. After the invocation of the *shahāda* ("there is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger"), which appears in the centre, the entirety of the thirty-sixth chapter of the Qur'an, generally reserved for recitation during challenging or difficult times (such as hunger, adversity, illness, or impending death) has been densely inscribed onto the surface. The chapter begins on the outer border and is followed by text written in pairs of panels framing the rec-

tangle, continuing in this manner towards the centre of the pendant. The choice of Sura  $Y\overline{a}$   $S\overline{\imath}n$  emphasizes the talismanic nature of this object, which would have been used to protect its wearer from harm. The final lines of text suggest the pendant was probably made for a Shia Muslim. They include two lines from a well-known Arabic poem invoking the help and protection of the Prophet Muhammad and his cousin and son-in-law, 'Ali, followed by the ninety-nine names of God, and ending with the names of Muhammad, 'Ali, and 'Ali's sons, Hasan and Husayn. LA



## 19 Sweet chestnut leaf with calligraphy

Ottoman Empire (Turkey), 19th century Sweet chestnut leaf 28 x 13.5 cm Text: Sura al-Isrā<sup>2</sup> (The Night Journey), 17:80 AKM 00538 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 49 (no. 20); AKTC 2007b, p. 44 (no. 20); Makariou 2007, pp. 134–35 (no. 47); AKTC 2008a, p. 70 (no. 15);

AKTC 2009a, p.49; AKTC 2009b, p.49

Qur'anic verses were applied to objects using an astonishingly wide variety of techniques. One of the most beautiful and unusual examples is the gilded leaf, popular in nineteenth-century Ottoman Turkey. This example features a verse from *al-Isrā*. (The Night Journeyl, 17:80): "And say, 'Lord grant me a good entrance and a goodly exit, and sustain me with Your power." The calligrapher has made masterful use of his elegant *thuluth murakkab* script to create a calligraphic composition resembling a boat filled with a crew, their long oars dipping into the water that is the

skeleton of the leaf. Related visually to Ottoman cut-out work or *découpage*, the technique for leaf gilding was actually quite distinct. The inscription was either written or stencilled and sealed on both sides with a wax barrier. The leaf would be soaked in an alkaline solution long enough to yield only its skeleton and the inscription. The virtuosity of the present example is further highlighted since its foundation is a sweet, or Spanish, chestnut leaf (*Castanea sativa*), a leaf more fragile than many of those employed for such compositions. AF



## Two calligraphic lustre pottery tiles

Iran, probably Kashan, early14<sup>th</sup> century Fritware, painted in lustre, blue, brown and turquoise on an opaque white glaze

Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 172–173; Falk 1985, p. 235 (no. 237); AKTC 2007a, p. 51 (no. 21); AKTC 2007b, p. 45 (no. 21); Makariou 2007, p. 120 (no. 40); AKTC 2009a, p. 50; AKTC 2009b, p. 50

20 17.5 x 38.1 cm AKM 00796

Kindly lent by Princess Catherine Aga Khan Text

(Top) Sura *al-Rahmān* (The Beneficent), 55:14–19 (Centre) *al-Jum* <sup>c</sup>a (Friday) 62:8 (Bottom) Sura *Sabā* <sup>3</sup> (Saba) 34:2–3

21 18.6 x 43 cm AKM 00565

(Top) Sura *al-Rahmān* (The Beneficent), 55:32–35 (Centre) Sura *al-Jum* a (Friday), 62:8 (Bottom) Sura *Sabā* (Saba), 34:7–9

These two tiles were part of the same frieze, but not quite contiguous. The central inscription stands in moulded relief with elegant *thuluth* writing, decorated in blue cobalt over a turquoise field of vine rolls, superimposed on small embossed white canes over a golden background. The top and bottom inscriptions, made in *naskh* writing, appear on a raised section at the top and bottom part of the main decorative band.

Kashan is considered the most important centre of tile and ceramic production, according to

the kept written documentation, but some of the glazed tiles might have been produced in other parts of Iran. These two objects are probably parts of a frieze decorating the walls and tombs of a Shia mausoleum. According to Sheila Blair, they were made to decorate the cenotaph of the Sufi master 'Abd al-Samad, in Natanz, Iran. Similar objects are kept in public collections and others have appeared on the market over the past years. Such lustre-glazed ceramic tiles were also used to decorate mihrabs, and cenotaphs. AF/MB





# 22 Chinese 'swatow' dish

China, 17th century Porcelain, painted in overglaze green and black enamels on opaque white glaze Ø 35.1 cm AKM 00591

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 46–47 (no. 16); AKTC 2007b, p. 42 (no. 16); AKTC 2008a, p. 62–63 (no. 11); AKTC 2009a, p. 51; AKTC 2009b, p. 51 Coarsely potted and covered with a thick, crackled glaze, this dish belongs to a distinct group of porcelain, the so-called 'Swatow wares'. Swatow is a Dutch mistranslation of Shantou, the port from which such ceramics were supposedly exported, although this port was actually not used until the Qing dynasty (1644–1912). Recent archaeological research by Chinese scholars has established that Swatow wares were produced in Zhangzhou prefecture between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries for export to Europe, Japan and South East Asia. Dishes similar to this one ap-

peared in Indonesia and are believed to have been commissioned by the powerful seventeenth-century Shia sultans of Aceh in northwest Sumatra, including Sultan Iskander Muda (1607–1636) (Canepa 2006, no. 40). The inscriptions on this dish include invocations to Allah, verses from the Qur'an, including Sura al-Bagara (The Cow), al-Ikhlās (Fidelity) and al-Nās (The People), the Nadi'Alā prayer and the word 'Allah' which is repeated along the cavetto of the dish. The inscriptions are talismanic, seeking protection and assistance for the owner.



## 23 Carved beam with Qur'anic inscription

North Africa?, 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century Wood 16.7 x 427 cm AKM 00628 Published: AKTC 2007a, pp. 52–53 (no. 23); AKTC 2007b, pp. 46–47 (no. 23); AKTC 2009a, p. 52; AKTC 2009b, p. 52 A rare, intact survival from the Umayyad period (756–1031), this long, carved wooden beam is a work of austere beauty. The foliated motifs do not seem to grow organically from the letters as they usually do in Fatimid (909–1171) objects; rather they act as added decoration. There are some exuberant moments, however, in the decorative use of letters. The word for God ( $All\bar{a}b$ ) is treated with special decorative significance the three times it is repeated in the inscription. The wooden beam, which would most likely have been fitted in a mosque, is inscribed with parts of the "Light Verse" from the Qur'an ( $Ayat al-N\bar{u}r$ , 24:35–36):

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp, the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West whose oil wellneigh would shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light; God guides to His Light whom He will. And God strikes similitudes for men, and God has knowledge of everything. In houses God has allowed to be raised up and His name to be commemorated therein.

This famous verse from the Qur'an is often inscribed on mosque lamps, which thus become symbols of divine light. One can imagine the present wooden beam in a mosque, its monumental Kufic inscription softly illuminated by a nearby hanging lamp, both objects symbolising the presence of God. AF



## 24 Iznik tile frieze

Turkey, Iznik, Ottoman, ca. 1500
Fritware, polychrome underglaze painted
15.5 x 75 cm
Text: Sura al-Yūsuf, 12:64
AKM 00698
Kindly lent by Princess Catherine Aga Khan
Published: AKTC 2008a, p. 72 (no. 16);
AKTC 2009a, p. 53; AKTC 2009b, p. 53

The growth of the ceramic industry in Iznik played a significant role in the codification of a distinctly Ottoman court aesthetic and ceramic technique (see cat. nos. 102–106). Small square tiles produced in Iznik were transported to Istanbul to decorate numerous palaces and mosques in brilliant colours of blue, white, turquoise, green,

and an astounding relief red. This frieze, formed from three separate tiles, might once have decorated part of a mosque. Its inscription, written in Arabic in a graceful *naskh* script, comes from the twelfth chapter of the Qur'an, and reads: "God is the best guardian and He is the most merciful of the merciful." LA





## 25 Qur'an on cloth

India, Mughal, dated 1130–1132 H / 1718–1720 CE Ink on green painted cotton cloth 111.8 x 241.4 cm

AKM 00487

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 187 (no. C);

AKTC 2007b, pp. 26–27 and 48 (no. C); Doha museum catalogue 2008; AKTC 2009a, pp. 54–55;

AKTC 2009b, pp. 54–55

This unusual Qur'an represents the fusion of Persian and Indian art that flourished in eighteenth-century Mughal India. The text of the Qur'an is written in minute black *naskh*, termed *ghubari*, while red and black roundels indicate the start of each verse. In addition to chapter headings written in red *thuluth*, five large roundels contain the *basmala* composed in black on gold and decorated with gold and polychrome illumination. According to the colophon, the scribe, Munshi 'Abdulghani al-Qadiri, began this Qur'an on 3 Ramadan 1130 H / 31 July 1718 CE and complet-

ed it on 5 Ramadan 1132 H / 11 July 1720 CE. The challenges involved in writing on a painted cloth perhaps explain the amount of time it took to make. This Qur'an was presented to the governor of Allahabad, Amir 'Abdallah. Although the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) designated Allahabad as one of his capitals in 1583, its importance in the eighteenth century derived from its strategic location at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers rather than from its former imperial status. AF







# Pilgrimage and prayer

Sheila Canby

Pilgrimage to Mecca, or haji, plays an important role in Islam. The first two weeks of the Muslim calendar month, Dhu'l-Hijja, are devoted to it. In the modern world the *hajj* is organised with great precision by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which sets quotas for the number of pilgrims allowed entry yearly from each country. Before the age of modern transport, the *hajj* was expensive, arduous and time-consuming, especially for Muslims travelling from the fringes of the Islamic world, Spain and the Maghrib in the West and Central Asia and India in the East. Often the pilgrims, or *hajjī*s, performed the *hajj* in old age and many of them did not survive the journey. However, dving while performing the *hajj* was thought to ensure that the *hajjī* would go to heaven.

Because of the vagaries of politics in the Islamic world, Muslims often did not have the freedom of movement and required documents to ensure safe passage to Mecca. While some of these were supplied by clerics at the point of departure, others in the form of diagrammatic pictures of the Ka<sup>c</sup>ba and the Great Mosque at Mecca were produced in the Hijaz to verify that pilgrims had performed the *hajj*. The desire to demonstrate that one had performed the *hajj* resulted in pilgrims returning from Mecca with plans of

the Great Mosque (cat. no. 27) and other key sites visited, produced and sold in or near Mecca and in the production of Iznik tiles depicting the Kacba and the stations of the hajj (cat. no. 31). In Egypt, to this day, pilgrims paint scenes from the hajj on the exterior of their houses. Although Shia muslims do perform the *hajj* to Mecca, they also travel to other shrine cities which are central to their beliefs. As a result the shrine of Imam <sup>c</sup>Ali at Najaf and the shrine of Imam Husayn at Karbala, both in Iraq, draw Shia communities from all parts of the world. In Iran, the Safavid shahs promoted the shrines of Fatimeh Macsumeh at Oum and Imam Riza at Mashhad as alternatives to Mecca in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when their Ottoman enemies controlled Mecca, Madina, and Jerusalem, the three holiest cities in the Muslim world.

In addition to the major Islamic shrines at Mecca, Madina and the tombs of the Shia Imams, smaller shrines developed around the graves of the children and descendants of the Shia Imams. Called *imāmzādeh*s, these centres were often lavishly decorated with tilework. Some of these shrines functioned as satellites to the great shrines, while others were important focal points for local worshippers.

# 26 Pilgrim's flask

Greater Iran (Iraq or Iran) or Syria, 7th-8th century Earthenware, with carved decoration and painted in a green lead glaze H. 19 cm

AKM 00540

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 58; AKTC 2009b, p. 58

While pilgrim flask shapes can be traced in the pre-Islamic Iranian world to as early as the second millennium BCE (Fehérvári 2000, p. 29), flasks covered in glaze date to the later pre-Islamic Parthian (2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE-3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE) and Sasanian ( $2^{nd}-7^{th}$  c. CE) periods. According to Oliver Watson, in the early Islamic period, three distinct trends of glazed pottery appear, including the continuation of pre-Islamic glazed ceramics; the invention of new glazed ceramics; and the addition of new glazes on previously unglazed wares (Watson 2004, pp. 161-162). The present bottle falls within the first category; it has an oval form, its surface decorated with impressed and carved patterns and featuring the figure of a bird with a fish-like tail. The existence of an Arabic inscription in Kufic, possibly a blessing, distinguishes the flask from its

pre-Islamic models; the outline format of the calligraphy can be found on early ceramic dishes from this part of the world (see, for example, a dish in the David Collection, Copenhagen, published in von Folsach 2001, p. 129 [no. 99, inv. no. 50/1999]); and one in the British Museum, London, published in Pancaroğlu 2007, p. 29 [fig. 14, inv. no. OA1963.4-24.1]). The ceramic technique and bird motif, however, pre-date the Islamic period. Representations of birds in profile may have been inspired by Sasanian prototypes of different media (Auld 2005, p. 5; see Harper 1978, pp. 63-65 [nos. 19, 21, 26, 49, and 77]). The shape of the present flask is rare among the variety of Islamic pilgrim flasks; the closest parallel found for it so far is also a one-handled vessel with a design of birds carved in relief; it is housed in a private collection in Japan. LA



# 27 Map of the Masjid al-Haram

Probably the Hijaz (Arabia),  $18^{\text{th}}$  century lnk, opaque watercolour, and silver on paper  $85 \times 61.5 \text{ cm}$ 

AKM 00529

Published: AKTC 2007a, pp. 62–63 (no. 31); AKTC 2007b, pp. 58–59 (no. 31); AKTC 2009a, pp. 58–59; AKTC 2009b, pp. 58–59 This map of the Great Mosque of Mecca (*Masjid al-Haram*) is part of the literary tradition surrounding the pilgrimage to Mecca (*bajj*), including books of prayers, practical guides with schematic depictions, and pilgrimage certificates. Important locations within the precinct of the

mosque are identified in Arabic in black *naskh* script. Similar maps are thought to have been produced for Indian pilgrims in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by draughtsmen working in the Hijaz. AF



## 28 Prayer amulet and accompanying case

Egypt, ca. 11th century

Paper amulet:  $7.2 \times 5.5$  cm; lead case:  $2.7 \times 1.3$  cm AKM 00508

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 61 (no. 30); AKTC 2007b, p. 58 (no. 30); Makariou 2007, pp. 130–31 (no. 45); AKTC 2008a, pp. 86–87 (no. 23); AKTC 2009a, p. 60; AKTC 2009b, p. 60 This prayer amulet is a rare example of an early Arabic printing technique known as *tarsh*. The paper displays eighteen lines of Kufic text on the page shown here and further lines on the reverse, which may have been offset from the recto when the paper was folded inside its lead case, also a very rare survival. The text, which has been translated by Abdullah Ghouchani, contains excerpts from different Suras or chapters of the Qur'an, including *al-An'ām* (6: The Cattle),  $\bar{A}l$  'Imrān (3: The Family of 'Imran), *al-Hijr* (15: The Rocky Tract), and *al-Baqara* (2: The Cow). The style of the Kufic charac-

ters in the present example would indicate a Fatimid origin and no later, since this script was no longer used for manuscripts after the Fatimid period. The printing technique probably involved metal plates or woodblocks. The history of early printed amulets has yet to be written. What is known about them is based on a small group of extant printed amulets and literary sources. Bulliett cites poetry verses from tenth- and fourteenth-century authors referring to printed amulets from wooden blocks and cast tin plates (Bulliet 1987).

AF





## 29 Illustrated manuscript of the Dalā'il al-khayrāt (The Ways of Edification) of al-Jazuli (d. 869 H / 1465 CE)

Turkey (Ottoman Empire), 1207 H / 1793 CE Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper 15.2 x 10.5 cm

AKM 00382

Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 137–143; AKTC 2007a, p. 53 (no. 26); AKTC 2007b, p. 58 (no. 26); AKTC 2008a, pp. 82–83 (no. 21, ff. 110b–111a); AKTC 2009a, pp. 60–61; AKTC 2009b, pp. 60–61

The Dalā'il al-khayrāt of Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Jazuli (d. 869 H / 1465), a member of the Berber tribe of Jazula in southern Morocco, is a devotional prayer book comprised of a collection of prayers for the Prophet, a description of his tomb, his names and epithets, and other devotional material. Al-Jazuli compiled the material for the manuscript using books from the library of al-Qarawiyyin, the celebrated Marinid mosque and University at Fas (modern Fez) in Morocco. The Dalā'il became the centre of a popular religious brotherhood, the Ashāb al- Dalā'il, the essential function of which revolved around the recitation of this book of religious piety. This manuscript is an early nineteenth-century Ottoman copy of al-Jazuli's text, opened to two fully illustrated pages containing depictions of Mecca and Medina. The images have been executed in black and painted in bright shades of red, blue, green, white, and

gold, with landmarks and attributes rendered clearly for immediate recognition; Medina is identified by a large courtvard and the Prophet's minbar (pulpit), while the Ka ba in Mecca is brought to the viewer's attention as the focus of four mosques representing the cardinal directions. Covered in a black and gold cloth and set against a blue backdrop with gilded floral decoration, the Ka ba is framed by a geometric red and white circular band that spills out into the bottom half of the painting where the Prophet's *minbar* appears. Views from multiple perspectives in both images result in stylized renditions of each city and prioritize the inclusion of essential information over naturalistic representation; they recall a rich history of geographic manuscripts with similarly executed illustrations in the Ottoman world, dating back to the sixteenth century. LA/AF



## 30 Chao jin tu ji by Ma Fuchu

China, 1861 Woodblock on rice paper 15 x 26.5 cm AKM 00681 Published: AKTC 2007b, pp. 54–55 (no. 29); AKTC 2008a, pp. 84–85 (no. 22); AKTC 2008b, no. 26; AKTC 2009a, p. 62; AKTC 2009b, p. 62 The *Chao Jin Tu Ji* is the travelogue of Ma Fuchu (Ma Dexin, 1794–1874), considered the most eminent Chinese Hui scholar of Islam and Sino-Muslim philosophy during the Qing dynasty. Originally from the Yunnan, his travels covered distances from China to Mecca and Cairo as well as the Ottoman Empire; this book recounts his pilgrimage to Mecca from China. Ma Fuchu left China with a group of Muslim merchants, travelling overland and by riverboat to Rangoon, where he boarded a steamship to take him to the Ara-

bian Peninsula. After performing the pilgrimage, he spent two years in Cairo, where he studied at Al-Azhar University, and thereafter travelled throughout the Ottoman Empire before returning to Yunnan. Ma Fuchu is also well-known for his five-volume Chinese translation of the Qur'an and for writing over thirty-five works on metaphysics and history in both Chinese and Arabic. This scholar's work attests to the several cultural networks existing between China and the Islamic world. AM/LA



## 31 Polychrome qibla tile

Turkey (Ottoman Empire), 17th century Fritware, polychrome underglaze painted 52 x 32 cm

Text: Sura  $\bar{A}l$  °Imr $\bar{a}n$  (The Family of °Imran), 3:96–97 AKM 00587

Published: Falk 1985, p. 238 (no. 240); AKTC 2007a, p. 57 (no. 25); AKTC 2007b, p. 52 (no. 25); Makariou 2007, pp. 202–203 (no. 73); AKTC 2008a, pp. 80–81 (no. 20); AKTC 2009a, pp. 62–63; AKTC 2009b, pp. 62–63

This tile depicts the black-shrouded Ka ba within the Great Mosque of Mecca (Masjid al-Haram), the site of the annual Muslim pilgrimage (hajj). It is inscribed with an excerpt from the Qur'an that reinforces the image: "The first House established for the people was that at Bakka [Mecca], a holy place and a guidance to all beings. Therein are clear signs – the Station of Abraham and whosoever enters it is in safety. It is the duty of all men towards God to make a pilgrimage to the House if they are able." The artist uses multipoint perspective – both plan and elevation – to give a sense of the overall form of the site. As in pilgrimage

guides, which were produced throughout the Islamic world, essential locations are labelled here for further clarity. Decorated with the characteristic Ottoman ceramic palette of turquoise, cobalt blue, green, and red on a white ground, tiles like this one were produced in the seventeenth century. They were often placed in an architectural setting such as a mosque's south-facing wall to indicate the geographical direction of Mecca and one's prayers. This plaque reflects the Ottoman interest in topography and the long-standing Islamic tradition of depicting the holy shrine of Mecca in various artistic media. AF



## 32 Chinese plate for ablutions

China, Jiangxi province, Jingdezhen, Zhengde era, 1506–21

Porcelain

H 7.5 cm; Ø 41.8 cm

Inscription (in Arabic): (central medallion) "Purity"; (cavetto medallions) "Blessed is he who purifies his hand from wrongdoing"; (exterior) "Ablution upon ablution is light upon light"

AKM 00722

Published: Welch 1978a, pp. 211–212; AKTC 2008b, no. 27; AKTC 2009a, p. 64; AKTC 2009b, p. 64

Muslim merchants from the Middle East and Central Asia settled in China's Fujian province as early as the eighth century and continued to immigrate to various regions in that country after the Mongol invasions. Blue-and-white porcelain wares with Arabic inscriptions, such as the beautiful dish shown here, may have been made either for the Chinese Muslim community or for export to foreign lands. The present object may have come from one of the thousands of kilns around Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, where several blueand-white porcelains have been excavated. The centre of the dish includes an inscription in cobalt blue of the Arabic word for purity, tahārah, enclosed first within a circular frame, then within two squares and a larger circle. The interstices of the circles and squares contain blue cloud scrolls and another scroll design that is repeated on the rim of the dish. Four small, square panels appear at regular intervals along the rim and enclose Arabic inscriptions that collectively read, "Blessed is he who purifies his hand from wrongdoing." Six panels arranged in a similar format on the exterior together contain the Arabic inscription: "Ablution upon ablution is light upon light." The six-character reign mark of the Ming emperor Zhengde

(r. 1506-1521) has been added to the base of the dish.

Ming China (1368–1644) was marked by a period of xenophobia that stood in stark contrast to the great amount of East-West exchange under the Mongol rule of the Yuan emperors (1271–1368). In spite of this, the Ming did allow a certain level of foreign trade, and blue-and-white porcelain wares continued to be coveted by the courts of Iran, Mamluk Egypt and Syria, India, and the Ottoman Empire. This dish may have been produced for an Iranian market, where the taste for Chinese art and khitā'ī (a Chinese-inspired aesthetic) seems to have been most pronounced, but blue-and-white porcelains and other Chinese ceramics were also exported to other parts of the Islamic world as well, both by land and by sea, particularly to Indonesia. Blue-andwhite Safavid and Ottoman Iznik wares attest to a taste for the Far East, as shown in the efforts made by Islamic potters to emulate Chinese porcelain prototypes on a frit body. The present dish was previously in the Eumorfopoulos collection and included in the 1966 exhibition at the Quantas Gallery, A Thousand Years of Chinese Art (Quantas Gallery 1966). LA



## 33 Manuscript of 'Ali's Kalimāt

Shaykh Mahmud Haravi Greater Iran, possibly Baghdad (Iraq), 869 H / 1464-5 CE Ink and coloured pigments on vellum; leather binding 17.5 x 12 cm AKM 00518 Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 142–143 (no. 49); AKTC 2009a, p. 65; AKTC 2009b, p. 65

This manuscript contains a compilation of one hundred short maxims attributed to the caliph and first Shia imam, 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, all accompanied by an anonymous Persian translation rendered in quatrain form (Makariou 2007, p. 158, n. 1). The first page of this nineteen-folio volume is decorated with an illuminated frontispiece containing the basmala and introducing the text. The succession of Arab maxims and their Persian translations are executed in different scripts and at differently sized fonts, creating a visual rhythm that subdivides the surface of each page. This fragmented organization mirrors the similar nature of the text, the development of which is simultaneously two-fold (first in Arabic, then in Persian) and discontinued (the succession of words). The Persian quatrain is disposed in two separate panels that meet the first hemistich of each verse at left and the second of each at right. The reader's eve thus moves beyond the manuscript's central fold and follows the same line to read the complete *bayt* (distich). The use of a central caesura in the middle of the verse and the separate columns that result respond here to the rhythmic structure of Persian poetry; the bayt, composed of two hemistiches, constitutes a semantic unity, and the hemistich contains the metre of the poem and serves as its rhythmic measure. The end of the metre coincides with the end of a hemistich, necessitating a pause in diction, which

materializes the central caesura. If the type of presentation in panels juxtaposed with the alternating scripts is adapted to the translated texts or commentaries, it is equally acceptable in the fifteenth-century Iranian world for copying Our'anic texts, giving scribes the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of different types of calligraphy (ibid., n. 2). In this copy of one hundred maxims, the calligrapher wrote in the supple and elegant tawqī<sup>c</sup> script, which figures among the six canonical scripts (aqlām al-sitta). For the Persian text, the scribe chose *nasta<sup>c</sup>līq* (*ibid.*, n. 3). The ensemble was written on parchment and paper, which is unusual as parchment was no longer - or only rarely - used in the Islamic world after the eleventh century.

Born in Herat, Mahmud Haravi entered the service of the Qaraqoyyunlu prince Pir Budaq around 1458, at the time governor of Shiraz and a great bibliophile (*ibid.*, n. 4). The prince's desire for autonomy soon paid off due to an open conflict with his father Jahanshah, that was rapidly settled and which resulted in the compensatory nomination of Pir Budaq to be governor of Baghdad in 1460. Haravi followed Pir Budaq to Baghdad and stayed there most likely until the death of his patron in 1466. He ended his career at the court of the Aqqoyunlu sultan Yaʻqub (r. 883–896 H / 1478–1490 CE) (*ibid.*, n. 5). CM



# 34 Hadīth manuscript

Iran, dated 1130 H / 1717-8 CE
Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper
20.7 x 13 cm
AKM 00527
Published: AKTC 2007a, pp. 58–59 (no. 28);
AKTC 2007b, pp. 54 (no. 28) and 56–57;
AKTC 2009a, pp. 66–67; AKTC 2009b, pp. 66–67

Arranged in four sections, this manuscript is a book of *ahādīth* or Traditions (sing., *hadīth*) containing supplications to be recited after the daily prayers as well as during different days of the week. The pages shown here refer to the Saturday and Sunday prayers as well as to the start of the Monday prayer, which begins at the bottom of the left-hand page. The colophon suggests that this manuscript was copied by Ahmad al-Nayrizi, one of the most important and prolific calligraphers of the late Safavid period who was active between

1682 and 1739. He is known to have copied numerous Qur'an manuscripts, prayer books, and calligraphy samples in a characteristic form of Arabic *naskh* script. Because of the popularity and prestige associated with al-Nayrizi's style, his works were sometimes copied in their entirety – colophon included – by later scribes in the Qajar period (1794–1925). As a result, it is sometimes difficult to attribute works to his hand with certainty, especially if the calligrapher copying his style were a talented one. AF



# 35 Calligraphic panel

Iran, Safavid, 16th-17th century Cardboard 15.5 x 36 cm

Text: Al-Mustafā wa-l-Murtadā wa-bnāhumā wa-l-Fātima (referring to the Prophet Muhammad, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn)
AKM 00521

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 67; AKTC 2009b, p. 67

This oblong-shaped, lobed cartouche frames a panel of calligraphy executed in gold *nasta'līq* against a gold foliated background of cobalt blue. The border is painted in pink and filled with green and blue dots. The inscription on the panel names the celebrated *panjtan*, or "band of five", which included the Prophet Muhammad, his first cousin and son-in-law 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, his daughter Fatima ('Ali's wife), and his two grandsons (the children of 'Ali and Fatima), Hasan and Husayn.

The text is the second half of an Arabic couplet, the complete version of which appears in an angular Kufic script at the Madrasa Chahar Bagh Mosque (Madrasa Madarshah) in Isfahan (Ghouchani 1985, p.157, pl. 143): I have five [persons] whom by them I will smother the heat of burned hell, (they are) al-Mustafā (the prophet) and al-Murtadā ('Ali) and their two sons (Hasan and Husayn) and Fātima. LA



## 36 Mihrab panel

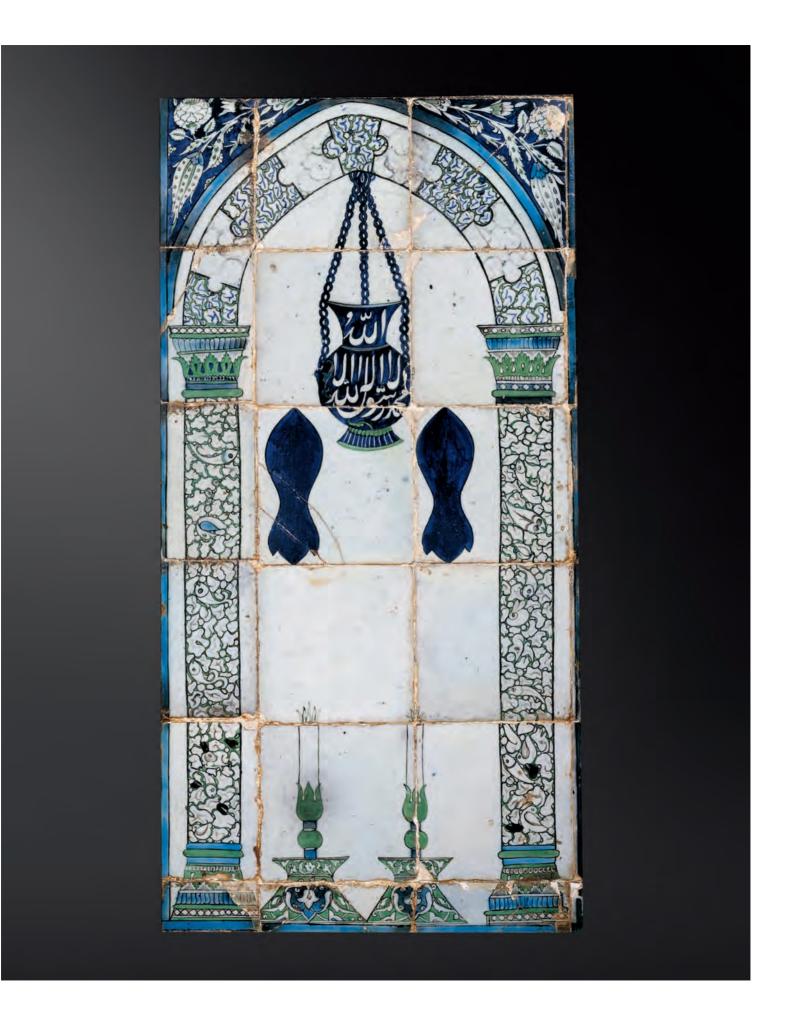
Syria, Damascus, Ottoman, *ca.* 1575–1580 Fritware, polychrome underglaze painted 123 x 62 cm AKM 00585

Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 200–201 (no. 72); AKTC 2008a, pp. 76–77 (no. 18); AKTC 2009a, pp. 68–69; AKTC 2009b, pp. 68–69 The set of eighteen tiles comprising this panel displays numerous points in common with two similar mihrabs located on the north courtyard wall of a mosque founded by Governor Darwish Pasha in Damascus in 1572–1575: the two candelabra, the Prophet's sandals, the suspended lamp bearing the *shahāda*, and the false marble of the columns inhabited by hidden creatures. At the Darwish Pasha Mosque (*Darwishiyya*), one of the mihrabs is topped by a ceramic tympanum bearing the date 982 H / 1574-5 CE (Makariou 2007, p. 206, n. 1).

However, there are some differences between the Darwishiyya mihrabs and this panel, such as the number of tiles, the narrower set, and the fact that the two candelabra touch each other, which is not the case on the Darwishiyya panels (*ibid.*, n. 2). Several clues, such as the design of the lamp's chains, which curve softly to the left, and the false marble, indicate that these were probably produced in the same atelier. The false marble's decoration serves as a refuge for a crowd of small animals. Still, the variety of animals – rabbits, flatfish, small quadrupeds, and ducks – is richer here (*ibid.*, n. 3).

In the centre of the panel, the Prophet's sandals occupy a place of paramount importance. The iconography of the Prophet's sandals, which sometimes seems to be confused with the representation of his footprints, became widespread in the sixteenth century and is also present in Safavid Iran and in India (*ibid.*, n. 5). The sandal is a sign of distinction specific to the Prophet of Islam, in comparison to Moses; its protective shape (*mithāl*) "leads to life in both homes" (earthly then eternal).

This devotional context explains the singularity of an image of a pair of sandals right in the middle of a space where all faithful believers are required to remove their shoes. The sandals, believed to have touched the throne of God, made the Prophet of Islam the quintessential intercessor par excellence and an example to be followed (ibid., n. 10). SM





# g-images, Gérard Degeorge

## Mysticism

Sheila Canby

In the Islamic world, mysticism has played an important role in both Shia and Sunni contexts. Mystics, known as Sufis, have sought to achieve oneness with God through prayer and specific exercises, such as dhikr, the repetition of sacred words or phrases. While some mystical thinkers, for example al-Hallaj in the ninth-tenth century, were considered heretical, many others led lives as wandering mendicants, seeking the company of other dervishes or settled in dervish lodges in the presence of their spiritual advisors, or pīrs. Mughal paintings depict dervishes alongside their Hindu counterparts, sadhus - holy men in the Indian tradition. The Mughal emperors and many Iranian and Central Asian rulers before them employed religious advisors and are portrayed in spiritual or philosophical questions with the sages of their day (cat. no. 41). Even when political leaders did not sanction particular Sufi orders, the ideas that they espoused were spread by the faithful through pilgrimage to shrines and other holy sites. In the same way, the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) enabled Muslims from throughout the dar al-Islam, or Muslim world, to meet and exchange ideas, thus cementing a unity that depended on a shared faith and the

communal understanding of the Arabic language.

In association with their ascetic lifestyle, a range of objects is associated with dervishes. These include begging bowls (kashkūls) and animal skin cloaks. In paintings of dervishes (cat. no. 40), small, lightweight begging bowls of metal or wood are often suspended from their belts or carried on a stick. By contrast, most extant examples are made of metal, ceramic, or nineteenth-century coco-de-mer shells (cat. nos. 42 and 43). Even if the coco-de-mer kashkūls were used by mendicant Sufis, the heavy metal and fragile ceramic versions must not have had a practical use as begging bowls. Rather, their function would have reverted to the original use of such vessels, that is, as wine bowls. Although wine is prohibited in Islam, it was one of the aids used to achieving a mystical state.

Finally, the works of the great mystical poets such as Jalal al-Din Rumi, the originator of one of the best known Sufi brotherhoods, have inspired Sufis for the past five hundred years. Not only are his followers, the Mevlevi dervishes, famous for their whirling, but also his poetry remains popular across the globe.

#### 37 Manuscript of the Masnavī by Rumi

Iran, Shiraz, dated 1011 H / 1602 CE
Ink and opaque watercolour on paper; red Moroccan
leather binding
Folios 29.5 x 16.3 cm;
leather binding 29.5 x 16.3 x 4.5 cm
AKM 00376

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 64 (no. 33); AKTC 2007b, p. 61 (no. 33); AKTC 2008a, pp. 92–93 (no. 26); AKTC 2009a, pp. 72–73; AKTC 2009b, pp. 72–73

The *Masnavī-i Ma' navī* is a poetic masterpiece of around 25,000 couplets, written by Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi (d. 1273) and concerned with the main theoretical issues and themes of Sufi doctrine. Although his nationality is debated among Iranians, Turks, and Central Asians, Rumi is one of the most celebrated mystical poets in Sufi and Persian literature and the originator and ultimate *pīr*, or spiritual master, of the Mawlavi (Turkish *Mevlevi*) dervish order. While illuminated manuscripts of Rumi's writings, sometimes enclosed in elaborate bindings, are not unusual, illustrated manuscripts of this text are rare.

The image on the right-hand folio shown here illustrates the tale of the lover who had spent many years searching for his beloved in vain. One night, however, as the lover was running from a night-watch, he accidentally ended up in an unfamiliar garden where, to his great surprise and delight, he found his beloved. Another image in this

manuscript (shown at top right of the group of four smaller reproductions) depicts a game of chess. Two stories are embedded in this narrative in order to bring its major points to light; the one illustrated here recounts an episode in which Sayyid Shah Tirmidh is checkmated by his court jester and reacts angrily by throwing the chessboard at the courtier's head. The next time the two sit down to a game, the jester anticipates the need to protect himself by covering his head with a turban of felt. The scene is identified both by the figures seated on either side of a chessboard as well as by a caption just above the painting. Its depiction suggests the importance of this story, perhaps to the patron who commissioned the manuscript; not only was the episode selected for illustration, but it was also allotted most of the space on the page, leaving room for only three lines of Persian text above and below the image. LA











# 38 Shab-i qadr ("The Night of Power") Folio from a dispersed illustrated manuscript of the Khamsa ("Quintet") of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi (d. 1325)

India, ca. 1350-1450

Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; 34.8 x 25.2 cm

AKM 00013

Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 144–46 (no. 48); AKTC 2009a, p. 74; AKTC 2009b, p. 74

Amir Khusraw Dihlavi (d. 1325), one of the best known poets of Persian in Islamic India, was a Turkish military aristocrat who served the Delhi sultanate under the Khalji and Tughluq dynasties. His *Khamsa*, or Quintet, was composed for the second ruler of the Khaljis, 'Ala al-Din Khalji (r. 1296–1316), in Delhi, between 1298-9 and 1301-2. Amir Khusraw was also a Sufi mystic who followed the teachings of the Chishti shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya (d. 1325) and is buried next to him in his tomb in Delhi (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 144).

The present page depicts the eighteenth story recounted in the first section of the *Khamsa*, the *Matla* 'al-anwār ("The Ascent of Lights") story of a saint who made a failed attempt to stay awake until the 27th day of Ramadan, known as the

"Night of Power" (Arabic laylat al-qadr and Persian shab-i qadr). The laylat al-qadr is mentioned in the Our'an (al-Oadr, 97:1-5) and refers to the night when Muhammad was called to his mission through the first revelations from God. The painting appears to be a continuous narrative, at right illustrating the saint in his efforts to remain awake, and then, at left, after he has fallen asleep. Along with its narrow horizontal format, the saturated pigments used to colour the image recall the painting styles of both Mamluk Egyptian and southern Persian (in particular, Shiraz) painting of the fourteenth century, but some scholars believe that the script style of this manuscript dates it to the second half of the fifteenth century (see ibid., pp. 144 and 146). LA



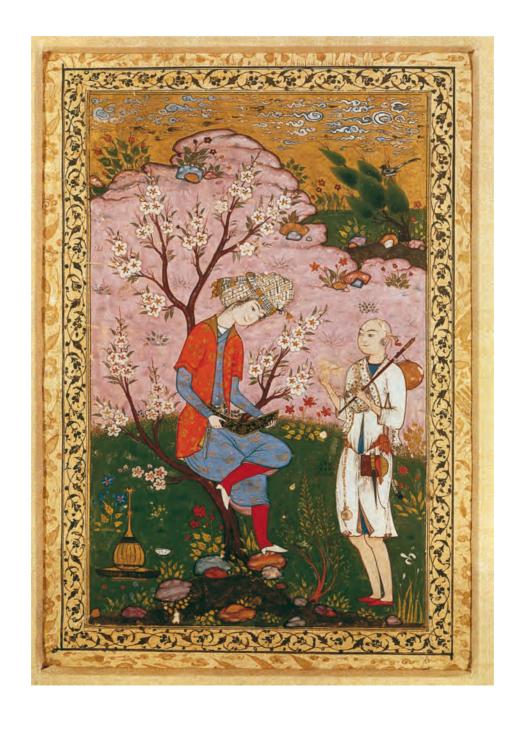
### 39 A young noble and a dervish in conversation

Iran, ca. 1590

Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; Folio 32.2 x 20.2 cm; image: 19.9 x 12.7 cm AKM 00074

Published: Canby 1998, p. 69 (no. 41); AKTC 2007a, pp. 65–66 (no. 34); AKTC 2007b, pp. 50 and 61 (no. 34); AKTC 2009a, p. 75; AKTC 2009b, p. 75 A young man dressed in fine robes and a gold-edged turban gazes at a safīna, the small oblong album in his hands. His seat is the trunk of a blossoming tree, whose curving branches gently surround him. The tripartite division of the landscape into a gilded sky full of scrolling clouds, a lilac mountain background, and a flower-filled dark grassy ground is typical of the Khurasan style at the end of the sixteenth century. Opposite the youth is a fresh faced young dervish with a shaven head, accessorised by a white leopard skin, a kashkūl or begging bowl, a purse, and a knife. He holds out something, perhaps a cup, which

has been effaced. Some dervish groups may have incited trouble, but late sixteenth-century Persian sources also laud the personal qualities of dervishes, calling them self-effacing, noble-minded and kindly. In this vein, Sheila Canby has proposed that the young dervish here may not represent an actual dervish but a metaphor for the admired ideals of a dervish. Although this painting is currently mounted on an album page, its composition – that of a youth in conversation with a dervish – was seen often on colophon pages of manuscripts. AF



#### 40 A gathering of dervishes

Iran, Khurasan, late 16<sup>th</sup> century Ink and watercolour on paper; Folio 38.5 x 28.5 cm AKM 00104

Published: Welch 1978a, pp. 98–99; AKTC 2007a, p. 68 (no. 37); AKTC 2007b, p. 65 (no. 37); AKTC 2009a, pp. 76–77; AKTC 2009b, pp. 76–77 Drawings intended for inclusion in albums became increasingly popular in the second half of the sixteenth century. Less expensive to produce than paintings or illustrated manuscripts, drawings could be afforded by a broader market than simply the court. As a result, artists expanded their choice of subject matter to include dervishes, nomads, and working people. This scene depicts six dervishes in varying states of dizziness and collapse after whirling to induce a mystical state. Two bearded figures stand with the aid of young novices, while two others are seated on the ground. At the lower left, a youth holds a book, perhaps

of poetry, while at the right, another beats his tambourine.

The technique of drawing with the addition of touches of colour was practised in this period by Muhammadi of Herat, an artist with wide influence in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Although this work cannot be attributed to him, the jackdaws in the tree, the subject of dervishes, and the technique all derive from his works. The empty rectangles at the upper right and lower left suggest that this was an illustration to a text, though it is more likely that these were added long after the drawing had been completed. AF



#### 41 A prince visits a hermit

Attributed to 'Abd al-Samad, also known as *Shīrīnqalam*, or "Sweet Pen" India, *ca.* 1585–1590 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper Folio 39.6 x 31.3 cm; image 34.5 x 22.8 cm AKM 00122

Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 160–162 (no. 55); Canby 1998, pp. 111–113 (no. 81); AKTC 2009a, pp. 78–79; AKTC 2009b, pp. 78–79

This colourful rocky landscape depicts a prince visiting a hermit at his cave. The prince is seated pensively before the hermit while his eight attendants wait on both sides of a small creek. His stately horse appears to be the focus of the painting, its grand and stocky figure occupying the major part of the lower half of the painting and emphasised by a natural halo formed by the sandy-coloured ground upon which it rests. As Anthony Welch has observed, the stallion was a symbol of authority and splendour but also one of "worldly impermanence" (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 160). Along with the brightly and colourfully dressed servants, the great horse stands in stark contrast to the hermit and his companion (perhaps a disciple), who sits before the cave at the water's edge; their gaunt figures indicate their renouncement of worldly possessions in favour of following the path to enlightenment through mysticism. The top half of the painting evokes an air of meditation and sombreness that affects even the prince, who may have come here seeking the guidance of a spiritual advisor.

The relationship between a Sufi master (shaykh, murshid, or pīr) and his disciple (murīd or shāgird) was a popular theme in Persian poetry and painting. The master was charged with the task of leading his student along the challenging path (tarīqa) towards enlightenment and the attainment of oneness with God. The transfer of knowledge between murīd and murshid was seen as the transfer of light from the heart of the teacher to that of the student. The combination of a Persian painting style fused with the use of a more earth-toned palette and naturalistic rendering of figures and landscape, however, suggest that the present painting was produced in India under the reign of the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), a period marked by the synthesis of a diverse foreign and

indigenous artistic styles. This combined aesthetic was a reflection of the ruler's great tolerance for different religions; Akbar created the  $D\bar{t}n$ -i  $ill\bar{u}b\bar{t}$  ("Divine Faith"), which borrowed ideas from Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Jainism (Canby 1998, p. 111).

Welch has attributed the work on stylistic grounds to the Persian painter 'Abd al-Samad, an artist of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1732) who left the court of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-1576) to work first for Akbar's father, the emperor Humayun (r. 1530 -1539 and 1555 -1556), and then for Akbar (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 160). Welch also believes that the prince represented in this image could be Akbar's son Salim, the future emperor Jahangir (r. 1605-1627), based on the likeness of this figure to that of a seated prince in a tinted drawing identified as Prince Salim and signed by the 'Abd al-Samad, also in the AKM collection (ibid., p. 162; for an image of this work, see Canby 1998, p. 110, no. 80, although Canby identifies this figure as Akbar). Sheila Canby, however, has suggested that the princely figure may represent Akbar if it can be linked to a hunting event (qamargha) in the Punjab ordered by the emperor in April-May 1578 at the alleged site of one of Alexander the Great's successful battles (Canby 1998, p. 111). According to Akbar's historian Abu'l Fazl (d. 1602), Akbar experienced an epiphany in the midst of the hunt, which led him to cancel the hunt and free all of the captured animals. Unaware of what had caused his change of heart, Akbar's close friends imagined a few different theories, one of which involved the ruler's meeting with an anchorite who inspired him to adopt a more ascetic lifestyle, something he did, in fact, do for a while after the incident (ibid., pp. 111 and 113). LA



#### 42 Coco-de-mer kashkūl (beggar's bowl)

Iran, probably Qajar, 19<sup>th</sup> century
Carved nut shell (*coco-de-mer*), with chain
as later addition
L 24 cm
AKM 00640
Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 70 (no. 40);
AKTC 2007b, p. 67 (no. 40); AKTC 2009a, p.80;
AKTC 2009b, p.80

This <code>kashkūl</code> or beggar's bowl made from half of a <code>coco-de-mer</code> shell would have been carried by a dervish who had renounced all worldly possessions, subsisting only on almsgiving from devout Muslims. Beggars' bowls were often highly decorated and this one is no exception: intricate floral motifs, Arabic prayers, and Persian verses cover the entire surface of the shell. The upper band of inscription includes the famous <code>Nād-i</code> 'Alī, the devotional prayer to 'Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's first cousin and son-in-law. The spout of the

 $kashk\bar{u}l$  is inscribed with the signature of a certain Sufi mystic and the date 1028 H / 1618-9 CE; this date is probably optimistic, however, since the script and decoration are more characteristic of the Qajar period.

The Arabic prayer, inscribed in *thuluth* script, reads: *Help me with your hidden kindness, God is higher than the fire of your torture O ... with Your Mercy O You, Most Merciful of all those who are merciful, God is my Lord, my aid comes from You O ... (trans. Abdullah Ghouchani). AF* 



#### 43 Engraved brass boat-shaped kashkūl (beggar's bowl)

Iran, second half of the 16th century Brass

L 61 cm

AKM 00612

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1991, pp. 3-112 (especially pp. 35-37, 69, n. 172, and 97-98, figs. 60-63); AKTC 2007a, p. 63 (no. 32); AKTC 2007b, p. 60 (no. 32); AKTC 2008a, pp. 88-89 (no. 24); AKTC 2009a, p. 81; AKTC 2009b, p. 81

Snarling dragon heads project from either end of this boat-shaped kashkūl or dervish's begging bowl, which contains a wide band of elegant inscriptions engraved in cartouches in Arabic nasta<sup>c</sup> līq script and several bands of floral interlace decoration. This brass  $kashk\bar{u}l$  is one of five important Safavid examples from the end of the sixteenth century. The others are in the Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul; The Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar (ex-Khosrovani coll.); in a private collection (offered at Christie's, Islamic Art and Manuscripts, 27 April 2004, lot 97); and one formerly in the Rothschild and Edwin Binney III Collections (A. U. Pope, A Survey of Persian Art, London and Oxford, 1938, pl. 1386A; Welch 1973, fig. 42, pp. 470-471). A.S. Melikian-Chirvani presented this group in an article that demonstrates how the dervish's begging bowl developed from the ancient, pre-Islamic royal wine-boat shape. He notes that "... the idea [is] embodied in the shape: the crescent-moon out of which wine, seen as liquid sunlight, is poured." (Melikian-Chirvani 1991, p. 21). The Persian inscriptions on this vessel have been read in full by the same scholar, who comments that this kashkūl once belonged to the head of a khāngāh or Sufi hospice. AF

Inscriptions, side 1:

The prince of the two worlds, the seal of messengers He became the pride of the very first

He made his ascent o the throne and the seat, not to the sky,

The prophets and friends of God were in need of him

His existence was spent in guarding the two worlds The whole surface of the earth became his mosque The lord of the two worlds, the leader of mankind: The moon was split by the tip of his finger.

#### Side 2 (in a different metre):

The one had for him the friend of the Beloved While the other was the leader of the Pious bands (The servant of the Shah of Najaf, Shams al-Din) ... For this reason did they become friends of God The one was a fount of moral gentleness and spiritual modesty in the world

While the other was 'The Gate of the City of Knowledge'

That envoy of Truth/God that was the best among humans

His immaculate uncle was Hamza son of 'Abbas.

(Melikian-Chirvani 1991, pp. 35–36)



# The Path of the Travellers

From Cordoba to Damascus



# orenz Korn, Bamberg

## Looking to the Orient

Fernando Valdés

It is commonly accepted that the process of Islamisation of al-Andalus was over by the end of the eleventh century: the majority of the population had converted to Islam, regardless of the number of Arabs who arrived on the Iberian Peninsula, and Arabic had become the vehicular form of written and oral expression, regardless of creed. It does not appear that Latin and Hebrew played any role outside the private or religious sphere. As for Berber dialects, it is not even certain that they actually passed the Straits of Gibraltar in any of the successive North African migrations. Therefore, one can speak of al-Andalus as a land fully integrated in dar al-Islām, in its religious aspects as well as in its linguistic and cultural ones.

Immediately after the Arab conquest, everything new came from Damascus. There were a few well-known Andalusians in the East, but only after the eleventh century did they become an important presence – not just a few devoted believers performing their *bajj*, but traders, scholars, academics, or sometimes all at once.

After 750, when the *coup d'état* of the Abbasids and the enthronement of an Umayyad prince in this Western edge of Europe occurred, cultural exchanges between both sides of the Mediterranean do not seem to have been interrupted, despite the obvious emnity between the two dynasties. Some valuable pieces from the treasury of the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (786-809) ended up in the hands of the emir 'Abd al-Rahman II through traders aware of the interest the court of Cordoba had in the novelties that came from the East; indeed western sovereigns watched closely what was going on in their enemies' courts. In fact, the Orientalisation of the Andalusian State - which was a Persianisation - was a phenomenon that occurred at the same time that the presence of Mesopotamian artistic forms increased in the art of al-Andalus. Exchanges with the East were intense, but were mostly from East to West rather than in the opposite direction. Soon, devout Westerners would start going on pilgrimages to the East, but not only for religious reasons. One thing was the official political attitude; another was the need to refresh their cultural tradition, something that could not be done by any means in the West.

There were diplomatic contacts with Byzantium, which became very sustained during the second half of the reign of caliph 'Abd al-Rahman [III] al-Nasir and that of al-Hakam [II] al-Mustansir's. Also, new Byzantine artists arrived in order to fill certain Andalusian gaps - such as mosaic makers sent by Emperor Constantine VII to decorate the magsūra of the third phase of the Cordoban Mosque (961). However, the increasing appearance of floral patterns, clearly of Mesopotamian origin, in Western Umayyad decoration shows evident connections between what the Iraqi Abbasid artists and their homologues in Egypt were doing at the time and testifies that each had a precise knowledge of the other's work.

The production of ivory caskets is the best testimony of the flagrant Cordoban interest in the East. Certain decorative elements and, above all, iconography, where it exists, have their distant roots in Iran and close ties with Iraq and Egypt. But the mere presence of this industry, without known precedents in the peninsula, indicates that an oriental workshop was established in the capital of al-Andalus. Its products, intended both for the court and as diplomatic presents, were and still are the best showpieces of the dynasty: they returned to the East, in the form of caskets, as reinterpreted versions of the artistic influences they had received.

The collapse of the Umayyad State of al-Andalus did not interrupt the cultural contacts that came with the pilgrims and traders. There are testimonies in manuscripts found in the still unfathomed depths of the *genizah*, or storage room, of the old synagogue of Ben Ezra in Cairo. Andalusian traders, mostly – but not only – Jewish, moved around the

Mediterranean easily, surmounting all political or physical obstacles. That was the case of the family of a so-called Ismael ben Isaac, from Badajoz, who carried out his activities between Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem in the second half of the eleventh century.

One of the most interesting testimonies of Andalusian travellers to the East might perhaps be the one of Yusuf b. al-Shaykh (1132-1207), who came from an affluent family in Malaga and lived during the Almoravid and Almohad rule. As a devout Muslim, he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and took the opportunity to attend lectures by scholars in the cities on his way, which was not uncommon at a time when journeys could be so time-consuming and dangerous, that it was usual for travellers to plan stops in their itineraries, which allowed them to stay for longer periods in certain cities. Yusuf arrived in Alexandria in 561 H / 1165 CE and stayed for two years. When he finished his pilgrimage and went back to al-Andalus, he decided to write a book to help his younger son's education. The book, entitled Kitāb Alif Bā' ("The ABC Book"), contains materials on arithmetic, physics, botany, zoology, anthropology, religion and philology, as well as an invaluable description of the Pharos (light house) of Alexandria, the most precise description left by any Arab author. It was published in 1933 by the Spanish Arabist Miguel Asín. Yusuf b. al-Shaykh would have never expected his testimony to be so useful to archaeology.

Abu 'l-Hasan ibn Jubavr (1145–1217), a Valencian contemporary of Yusuf, came from an affluent family and had studied in Jativa, before starting his hajj from Granada in 1183. He took a boat from Tarifa to Ceuta, then to Sardinia, Sicily, Crete and disembarked in Alexandria. From there, he crossed to Cairo, navigated the Red Sea to Arabia, and accomplished his pilgrimage to Mecca. He then moved on to Baghdad, Mosul, Aleppo and Damascus, and from there, to Saint John of Acre, via Tyre. In this Palestinian port, he embarked to Carthage, via Sicily. He lived in Granada until he received the news of the reconquest of Jerusalem by Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin). He then undertook a second trip to the East (1189-1191), but it seems that he did not leave any account of it. It is surprising to read in his work how relatively easily one could transit through the Mediterranean area, sometimes at war, as long as one was willing to face the dangers of seafaring as well as, in some regions, the arbitrariness of the governors. His biography is also an example of how simple it was to initiate hazardous voyages with sufficient financial means. Faith, curiosity, thirst for profit, or all of them at the same time, pushed the restless from the West to look for knowledge in the East, and the only way of acquiring it then was by doing so under their own steam.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> of Rajab 725 H / 13<sup>th</sup> of June of 1325 CE, a traveller from Tangier initiated a pilgrimage to Mecca. It was Shams al-Din b. Yusuf al-Tanji, better known as Ibn Battuta (1304–1377). In his journey he visited Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Mecca, and far from ending there, continued to Iraq, Khazakhstan, Fars, Tabriz, Kurdistan and Baghdad; another time he travelled from Mecca to Yemen, Aden and the eastern coast of Africa. In 1332, he made the pilgrimage again and, after living for three years in Mecca, travelled through Egypt, Syria, Anatolia, the south of Russia, Constantinople, Transoxania, Afghanistan, India (where he lived between 1333 and 1342) the Maldives, Ceylon, Bengal, Assam and Sumatra. Although he mentions going to China, there are serious doubts that this is true. In 1347, he was in Malabar; from there he came back by sea to Baghdad, Syria and Egypt and accomplished the pilgrimage for the fourth and last time. In 1349, he went to Tunisia, and from there he went on to Sardinia, then to Algeria, and finally to Fez. He then crossed over to al-Andalus, visit Granada, and travel to the remote African region of Mali.

Ibn Battuta's testimony, with its invaluable information on the regions he visited, not only makes him the Arab traveller *par excellence* and a symbol of Islamic culture, but it is also a trustworthy testimony of the permanent interest of the western Muslims for the East and everything eastern. At the same time, if one considers the relevance of what he wrote on al-Andalus, his testimony shows the brief role that this territory played in the Islamic world, only a century before the extinction of the last Iberian Muslim state: the Nasrid Sultanate of Granada.

There is no doubt that the Islamic West was always inclined to the East. However, once the caliphate of Cordoba collapsed at the beginning of the eleventh century, Andalusian Islam stopped having, in some aspects, the active role of importing the eastern trends, specially the artistic ones. This does not mean, as can be deduced by the long voy-

ages mentioned above, that contacts ceased, but rather that they moved to other areas less related to the arts. In order to legitimate their own power and show their link with the western Umayyads, successive western dynasties limited those creations, with a few exceptions, to the – reinterpreted – repertory of the formal world created by them.

The East continued being the source of Islamic intellectual contribution, but al-Andalus did not take any more interest in Eastern art. In some cases new techniques were adopted for specific fields of industrial activity – pottery, fabrics, etc. – but the great ar-

chitectural buildings, most of them due to the patronage of the political oligarchy, show little impact of what was happening in the central regions of Islam. And this, despite extensive commercial trade exchanges with the eastern Mediterranean, especially with Egypt. Al-Andalus stopped being clearly part of the East and only the watchful eyes of the travellers, whose stories have fortunately been kept, reflect the curiosity that anything Eastern generated. Actually, it was the longing for a past that was perceived as better and anguish at what was intuitively felt to be the colophon of a world about to be lost.



# kg-ımages, Werner Forman

### Al-Andalus: The Orient in the West

Fernando Valdés

In 711 the Arabs (in the Iberian Peninsula, "Arab" and "Muslim" are synonyms) arrived in the western-most territory of Mediterranean Europe. Within a short time, after very few battles and some sieges that were nearly all solved through negotiations, the Arabs provoked the collapse of the Visigothic Kingdom of Toledo, and incorporated what has since then been known as al-Andalus, the political territory under Muslim Arab dominance, into dar al-Islam. Such a quick expansion would have been unimaginable without support from part of the Visigothic aristocracy, a sector of the Church, the oligarchy of Roman Hispanic landowners, and, apparently, also from the large Jewish minority. The same process that made the conquests of Syria and Egypt possible was repeated, although with some differences.

In general, the history of the Iberian Peninsula, today incorporating Portugal and Spain, has since Prehistory experienced phases of Europeanisation and Orientalisation – depending on whether the main cultural influx came from north of the Pyrenees, the Italian Peninsula or the Eastern Mediterranean, directly or through Northern Africa. The Muslim Arab conquest was, beyond doubt, the last of the big Orientalisation phases that affected this extreme tip of Europe.

Spanish historiography, deeply influenced by ideological concepts that in some cases go back only to a few years after 711, has obstinately insisted on emphasising, or maybe even inventing, the role that native tradition at the time of the conquest - i.e. late Roman played on the origins, development and evolution of the historic phenomenon known as al-Andalus. Although the arguments have been very persistent, they have never been entirely convincing, except for those who want to believe them. The similarities between the material culture - leaving religion aside - of the invaders and the conquered should not be explained or interpreted as mere influence of the latter over the former.

Instead, other arguments not completely excluding this influence in certain matters, should be taken into account. At the peak of its power, the Umayyad dynasty, the main political protagonist of the conquest, was creating at its epicentre an artistic world with Syrian roots mixed with Roman-Byzantine and Iranian elements, to the extent that even Syria, where the dynasty settled, started copying this method in its artistic tradition.

For years, the most western province of the Islamic Empire did not vary substantially with regard to the method implemented after the conquest. However, three different processes started to occur slowly: *Arabisation*, or change of vehicle of expression from Latin to Arabic; *Islamisation*, namely the conversion to Islam of the majority of the population; and *Berberisation*, the occupation of sparsely populated areas by people from the Maghreb, in line with Arabisation and Islamisation.

It could be the arrival of the last Umayyad Prince 'Abd al-Rahman [I] al-Dākhil ("The Emigrant") (r. 756-788), who had escaped from the coup d'état of the Abbasids and was the sole survivor of the massacre of his family, that caused a radical change. Al-Andalus separated from the Islamic Middle-Eastern Empire, which in turn accentuated its Iranian character and moved its centre of gravity to Baghdad, which had been until not long before, the epicentre of the Persian Empire of the Sassanids. Paradoxically, the western Umayyads did not initiate a Westernisation process that would emphasize their Roman cultural features. On the contrary, they kept an Umayyad appearance, especially with the claim for the right to the Empire that had been taken away from them, and they started copying their enemies' state structure in every sense. The same occurred with culture and art. Al-Andalus became more Iranian, in the sense that they adopted rules that had some resemblance to those of the Persians. This explains the building, in the middle of the eighth century, of the Almunia of al-Rusafa (756), near Cordoba; and of the first phase of

the construction of the Great Mosque of the Andalusian capital (786-787), thanks to the first monarch of the dynasty; and the construction of the palatine city of Madina al-Zahra (begun in 937) as well as the third phase of the Great Mosque in Cordoba (961), thanks to the second and third caliphs of al-Andalus, 'Abd al-Rahman [III] al-Nasir (912–961) and al-Hakam [II] al-Mustansir (961-976). Even fashion and most of the traditions from the western Islamic court were subjected to an Orientalisation process, that was represented by the famous musician Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali Ibn Nafi', known as Ziryab (789 - around 857), who arrived in Baghdad and played an outstanding role in the movement that introduced Abbasid cultural novelties. The indigenous population did not participate in this long and complicated process, which was to some extent responsible for the implosion of the Andalusian Umayyad Dynasty, which disappeared leaving a deep cultural and institutional legacy in the Mediterranean, in al-Andalus and in the Maghreb.

Immediately after the establishment of the Umavvad dynasty of Cordoba in al-Andalus, all their achievements had a very eastern style. However, since the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman II (822-852), this tendency is observed not only in religious architecture - the Great Mosque of Cordoba (848) - but also on military constructions - the Alcazaba of Merida (Badajoz, Extremadura) (855). It was the proclamation of the caliphate (929) that would give a clear Orientalisation process, based on the formal characteristics of the Syrian Umayyad tradition and the incorporation of other traditions that came from Iraq, as can be witnessed in what has been preserved from the palatine city of Madina al-Zahra and from the third phase of the Great Mosque of Cordoba (961), sponsored by caliph al-Hakam II.

Iranian heritage becomes even more evident in the iconography of ivories, probably created by non-native specialists, during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III, not long after he proclaimed himself Prince of the Believers (929). Made for the court and, above all, as diplomatic presents, the ivories constitute a paradigm of western Umayyad decorative style and a defining feature of what was becoming an authentic dynastic art. The iconography of ivories – e.g., the casket from Leyre in the Museum of Navarra – and its vegetal patterns, as well as the rare silver ex-

amples that arrived in Spain – e.g., the casket in the Cathedral of Gerona – give a precise idea of the image that the Cordoban caliphs wanted to portray: following an already Oriental tradition and adjusting it to the Abbasid artistic trends. Mesopotamian influence is also reflected in other art expressions like pottery, but it was not as developed in technique or in iconography at that time.

The collapse of the caliphate of Cordoba did not end the courtly art, which was partially taken over by the courts of the small principalities known as the Taifa Kingdoms (mulūk al-tawā'if) – from eleventh to beginning of the twelfth century –, although in a less monumental scale in its "imperial" appearance and entrepreneurial ambition, and by the Almoravid sultanate - end of the eleventh to the mid-twelfth century -, which introduced it in its new Maghrebian settlements and gave it a wider geographical range. Nevertheless, there was an almost radical change in the conceptual point of view: Andalusan art continued developing until well after the Castilian conquest of the Granada sultanate (1232-1492), prevailing in the socalled "Mudeiar style". Although there were some new influences from the Islamic East, one can say that the development of Andalusan art after the eleventh century was, essentially, based on its own tradition. From then on, it only used selected forms of vegetal and geometric patterns and opted for a more stylised form of the palms, elongated and intertwined. It was only during the Almohad period – from the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century -, that palms without much detail, or even plain ones, were preferred for official monuments. The plastic arts were a way of disseminating the political and doctrinal differences of the new western Sunni caliphate that considered itself, despite its Berber origins, successor and follower of the Umayvad caliphate of Cordoba.

It cannot be denied that the Nasrid sultanate of Granada reached a highly refined level in its artistic endeavours and that it developed an autonomous evolution of the Andalusian style, nearly untouched by Middle Eastern currents, despite intense commercial exchanges with Egypt.

The Andalusian artistic heritage continued in *al-Maghrib al-Aqsā*, nowadays Morroco, and it even reached sub-Saharan areas – Mauritania and Mali to the South; and the eastern border of Tunisia to the east, thanks to artisans that prolonged it for several more

centuries with remarkable technical ability nourished by stylistic means which came all the way from Umayyad Cordoba.

The Mudejar phenomenon started in some parts of the peninsula as they were absorbed militarily by the northern Christian kingdoms. It was not univocal, as it extended and diversified with time, dividing itself into different schools depending on the conquering states - Portugal, León, Castilla and Aragon – and chronologically. Considerable colonies of Muslim craftsmen, called mudejares, stayed, especially in some cities, and continued working with the artistic tradition inherited from their Andalusian ancestors. In most cases these artisans would stay isolated from their colleagues from Islamic territories and would repeat, or rather fossilise, the style of the place where they were living. On some occasions, royal patronage, aristocratic or ecclesiastic, would refresh the tradition and favour works from foreign artisans coming from what was left of al-Andalus. Although their roots were identical, these artisans had a more developed style. In other cases, people coming from newly conquered territories settled in places where Islamic tradition had disappeared or had never existed, and new manifestations, classified as mudeiares, appeared, which had no connection to previous local traditions. It should also be taken into account that Crusades and cultural exchange brought new Islamic trends that mixed with the local ones, especially in Aragon. Whether the authors were local artisans, experts on what was being done in the Middle Eastern Islamic states, or foreigners established in the peninsula thanks to the tolerance from which they benefited, the fact is that certain features, such as polygon-base towers in many Aragon churches, can only be explained as an imitation of the Ayyubid, Mamluk, or even Ottoman minarets from the same period.

#### 44 Silver-inlaid brass planispheric astrolabe

Spain, probably Toledo, 14th century Engraved copper alloy inlaid with silver Ø 13.5 cm

AKM 00611

Published: King 2005, pp. 831–914; Makariou 2007, pp. 28–29 (no. 3); AKTC 2008a, pp. 200–201 (no. 76); AKTC 2008b, no. 1; AKTC 2009a, p. 92; AKTC 2009b, p. 92

Everything about this astrolabe indicates that it came from Spain: the rete ('ankabūt, or "spider"), representing part of the celestial coordinate system; the fixed stars form a network ornamented with openwork, the line of which is characteristic of Maghribi and Andalusian instruments. Indeed, on the ecliptic circle, which bears the names of the zodiacal constellations in Latin and Arabic, the cut-outs are in the form of half quatrefoils; they end in three openwork rings and a long curved point. The point indicates the exact position of the star whose name is engraved on the base in Arabic and Latin; other star names are inscribed on the outer circle and the segment of the median circle (equator). There are four tympani, each bearing a projection of the celestial coordinates onto the given terrestrial coordinates. Three of them, which date back to the first phase of the instrument's history, are for latitudes ranging from Ierusalem to the north of Paris.

While many astrolabes made in *al-Andalus* (Arab-controlled Spain) during the eleventh through fifteenth centuries have been preserved, only five astrolabes from pre-fifteenth-century Christian Spain are extant. Four of them are from Catalonia. This one does not come from there,

and furthermore is the only one with inscriptions in Arabic, Latin and Hebrew, the latter in the form of scratches, more than engravings, on one of the tympani.

The ring topping the openwork "throne" (*kursī*) bears an Arabic inscription: "Its owner [is] the poor Mas 'ud confident in Him who should be adored". Moreover, the last tympan, which probably dates to the second phase of execution of the astrolabe, is marked 'Ard al-Jazā'ir (latitude of Algiers or the Balearic Islands); on the back is a tympanum corresponding to the latitude of Mecca, which is not mentioned by name. It is possible that the inscriptions on the ring and the last tympanum were done by the same hand, namely that of Mas 'ud.

On the back, the centre of the mater bears a double shaded square and, on the circumference, the signs of the zodiac in Arabic (to the outside) and the names of the solar months (to the inside), in inlaid and engraved silver cartouches. The inlaid silver cartouches are unique on a western astrolabe. In any case, there are a number of mistakes in the Arabic, which is probably evidence of a vernacular Arabic – and therefore, of the survival of Arabic in Spain long after the *Reconquista*. SM





#### 45 Carved marble capital

Spain, al-Andalus, Umayyad period, *ca.* 950–970 Marble 28 cm in each direction AKM 00663 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 177 (no. 153); AKTC 2007b, p. 177 (no. 153); Makariou 2007, pp. 90–91 (no. 28); AKTC 2009a, p. 93; AKTC 2009b, p. 93

This composite capital, with two lines of acanthus leaves, represents a brilliant phase of Andalusian architectural sculpture. The model of Corinthian capital, which can be found in numerous Roman ruins in Spain, as well as in later Visigothic interpretations, reaches here a very refined elegance. The general structure of Corinthian capitals is respected, rendered livelier by two rows of deeply carved foliage sprouting in a bee's nest arrangement and a base of plain stalks where the second row of leaves starts. Over the bead-and-reel band, an equinus, also with a bee's nest arrangement, is topped by four projecting volutes, demarcated by curling acanthus leaves; on top, there are four dados, also with vegetal motifs.

The Aga Khan Museum capital is similar to the ones made for the reception room of 'Abd al-Rahman III in the royal palace at Madinat al-Zahra, six kilometres from Cordoba, which date from between 342 and 345 H (952-3 and 956-7), according to inscriptions found on the bases. The same composite type, with two rows of acanthus, have been found there. The bead-and-reel pattern is also used, as well as the overall sculpture of the set, with rectilinear carving, and identical decoration of the volutes. From the forty capitals which originally crowned the marble columns of the

room, before its destruction in the eleventh century, only eleven remain in their original position. Had they been worked from cubic or nearly cubic blocks, the final result would have been very different from what we can see here. From their shape, the capitals from that room are not cubes. Our object relates more to a capital from Segovia dated 349 H / 960-1 CE; both capitals are drawn from a perfect 28cm cube. Aesthetically they are very close, although the one shown here shows cleaner craftsmanship, undoubtedly due to its good state of conservation.

Composite capitals reappear during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III. One from Loja dated 340 H / 951-2 CE, represents a good and early example. Another, from the collection of Al-Sabah (362 H / 972-3 CE, is a bit more decorated than the one here (Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya, LNS 2 S). Thus it is reasonable to date ours between 340 and 362 H (951-2 and 972-3 CE). During the *fitna* (revolution) of 1010 and the plundering of Madinat al-Zahra the same year, and later during the collapse of the caliphate of al-Andalus in 1031, objects were disseminated. Even architectural elements were affected; for this reason, many Andalusian capitals were reused elsewhere, even in Italy. SM



#### 46 Manuscript of Mi'a layla wa-layla ("One Hundred and One Nights") and the Kitāb al-jughrāfiyā ("Book of Geography") of al-Zuhri (d.1154–1161)

Copied by 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Mawla al-Nujum Spain, Al-Andalus, dated 632 H / 1235 CE Ink and opaque watercolour on paper 19 x 26.5 cm

AKM 00513

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 156 (no. 122);

AKTC 2007b, p. 155 (no. 122); AKTC 2009a, p. 94;

AKTC 2009b, p. 94

This manuscript contains the earliest extant copy of al-Zuhri's *Book of Geography*, followed by what is probably the earliest version of the famous stories of the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid, *A Thousand and One Nights*, thought to have been adapted from a Persian source. The *Book of Geography* was written as a companion for a map of the world commissioned by the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun. It provides a description of the world at the time, including important new information

about trade routes and commodities traded in the western Islamic lands and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as about the expansion of Islam. The second oldest copy is housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and is dated 1410 CE. The version of *A Thousand and One Nights* in this text is written in *maghribī* script and entitled *A Hundred and One Nights*, establishing its antiquity within the larger "Nights" tradition. AF/LA

#### 47 Wooden scribe's cabinet

Spain, Al-Andalus, Nasrid, 15th century
Walnut wood inlaid with bone, metal,
wood, and mother-of-pearl
22 x 49 x 33 cm
AKM 00634
Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 125 (no. 93);
AKTC 2007b, pp. 128–29 (no. 93); AKTC 2009a,
p. 94; AKTC 2009b, p. 94

This scribe's wooden cabinet is a rare survival and an extraordinary example of luxury woodwork production in Spain under the Nasrids (1232–1492). The tradition of inlaying walnut dates back to the Umayyad period in Spain (756–1031), and may be seen in extant mosque *minbars* (pulpits), doors and a variety of objects. The hallmarks of Nasrid era woodwork include

elaborate inlays of ivory, bone, metal, wood and mother-of-pearl. The decorative programme of this cabinet includes large eight-pointed stars formed from interlocking squares; these motifs appear on many of the extant Nasrid wooden pieces in Granada museums and at the Alhambra. The cabinet contains a lidded interior compartment which probably contained writing implements.





#### 48 Bronze lamp holder

Spain, al-Andalus, Umayyad, 10<sup>th</sup> century Inscription (Arabic): *Baraka* ("blessing"), repeated Cast bronze, with openwork, engraved, and punched decoration H 52.5 cm AKM 00593 Published: AKTC 2008b, no. 2; AKTC 2009a, p. 95; AKTC 2009b, p. 95 This rare lamp stand, of which there is a similar example in the David Collection, Copenhagen, was produced under the Spanish Umayyads (756–1031), descendants of the first Muslim Umayyad dynasty based in Damascus. When the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyads in 749, the

only surviving member of the family fled to the Iberian Peninsula and founded a new branch of the dynasty. Although the object includes a typical Islamic inscription in Arabic Kufic script, its form and decoration reflect the Byzantine culture that preceded Umayyad rule in Syria.



### A group of Mudéjar wooden corbels and beams

#### 49 Six carved wooden corbels

Spain, Toledo, 13<sup>th</sup> –14<sup>th</sup> century Carved oak Max. L 42 cm AKM 00719 Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 96; AKTC 2009b, p. 96

#### 50 Three carved wooden corbels

Spain, Toledo, 13th-14th century Carved oak L 72 cm AKM 00720 Published: AKTC 2009a, pp. 96-97; AKTC 2009b, pp. 96-97

#### 51 Wooden beam

Spain, Toledo, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century Carved oak L 160 cm AKM 00721 Published: AKTC 2009a, pp. 96-97; AKTC 2009b, pp. 96-97

#### 52 Wooden beam

Spain, Toledo, 13<sup>th</sup> –14<sup>th</sup> century Carved oak 34.5 x 73 cm AKM 00723 Published: AKTC 2009a, pp. 96–97; AKTC 2009b, pp. 96–97 The Mudéjar style of the Iberian Peninsula grew out of a synthesis of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish artistic idioms beginning in the twelfth century and continuing through the end of the fifteenth century, when the Mudéjars, i.e. Muslims who had remained in the region after the Reconquista but who continued to practice their own religion were forced to convert to Christianity. During the mediaeval period, Mudéjar artisans excelled in the crafts of woodwork, plaster work, pottery, metalwork, and textile production (Ecker 2004, p. 58). The beautifully carved wooden corbels and beams in this group contain design combinations reminiscent of other architectural elements attributed to Toledo. Split and curved palmettes, for example, appear in corbels in the collection of the Hispanic Society of America, New York (Ecker 2004, pp. 64-65 and 147-48 [no. 56, inv. no. D51-D60]). Heather Ecker notes that the combination of the curved palmette motif (which "sweeps back from the top volutes like the prow of a ship, in Spanish, canecillos de proa or quilla, between two vine tendrils that project outwards as points") and the appearance of multi-petalled rosettes distinguish these examples as typical of Toledo rather than Granada as a place of production (ibid., p. 147). Further comparative examples can be found in the David Collection, Copenhagen (von Folsach 2001, p. 271 [fig. 437, inv. no. 46 a-b/1999]). Traces of polychrome decoration on some of the works in this group (i.e., cat. 48) suggest that these architectural elements were once painted in colour. LA













#### 53 Three triangular ceiling panels with interlacing geometric designs

Spain, al-Andalus, Nasrid, 14th-15th century Wood, carved and painted each panel 151 cm AKM 00730 MWNF 2000, 285; AKTC 2009a, pp. 98-99; AKTC 2009b, pp. 98-99

The long tenure of Nasrid dynasty (1230-1492) in the Andalusian state of Granada was remarkable considering the frequency of political and military challenges that existed in the region while they were in power. As the centre of authority in the Islamic lands shifted from the central more towards the eastern Islamic lands in the Middle Ages, the western regions began to develop their own more uniquely regional styles; Spain and North Africa were no exception. In Spain, the coexistence of Muslims, Christians, and Jews led to a synthesized style which would distinguish the art and architecture of this region from that of the

The three architectural panels shown here probably originally belonged to a ceiling made of wood, a popular medium for the representation of interlacing geometric designs appearing in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Each equilateral triangular panel is subdivided into smaller panels that form a radiating design starting from an nine-pointed star shape at the centre. This is a

modification from a pattern based on the eightpointed star, produced from the superimposition of two interlocking squares at a 45 degree angle that appears as wall decoration at the Alhambra fortress of the Nasrids in Granada. Heather Ecker has described this design principle, known as the "lazo of eight", which consists of geometric designs built from various interlocking combinations involving the eight-pointed star. This design appears on several different media during the Nasrid period, including wood, stucco, and textiles (for textile and wood examples, see Ecker 2004, pp. 47-51 and 139-140, cat. nos. 42-44, from the Hispanic Society of America, New York, although there are several more in other collections). Each panel includes a floral or foliate design painted on a brown ground and divided from other panels with borders in high relief, painted in light blue outlined by bright yellow and red. Although wooden ceilings from Islamic Spain often survive in fragments, it is rare to find a coherent group of ceiling elements, such as these three panels. LA





#### 54 Calligraphic wood beam

Spain, Al-Andalus, Nasrid, 14th century Wood 29.8 x 146 cm AKM 00725 Published: AKTC 2009a, pp. 100-101; AKTC 2009b, pp. 100-101 This skilfully carved, long rectangular wooden beam includes an inscription in Kufic of an Arabic couplet framed between two horizontal bands. The inscription is intertwined with an intricate vegetal design composed of interlacing vine scrolls ending in single leaves and split palmettes. Vegetal and epigraphic ornament are differentiated from one another by the addition of an increased amount of detailing carved into the foliate pattern; this helps highlight the inscription carved in the bevelled technique against the dense background. The overall carving style seems to have been common in Nasrid Spain (1238–1492) and

even in contemporary North Africa in a variety of media. In Spain, it shows up in the stucco decoration of the "Hall of the Two Sisters" at the Alhambra, built in the fourteenth century (see Barrucand 2002, pp. 202–203). Similar motifs involving calligraphy juxtaposed with vegetal carving can also be observed in a wooden beam from Toledo dated 1360 and in a carved stucco panel from thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Spain or North Africa, both in the David Collection, Copenhagen (von Folsach 2001, p. 270 [no. 434, inv. no. D 14/1986] and p.251 [no. 400, inv. no. 35/1978, accidentally printed in reverse], respectively).





55

#### 55 Polychrome wooden beam

Fes, Morocco, Almohad period, 12<sup>th</sup> century Pine, carved and painted 30.8 x 313 cm AKM 00631

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 189 (no. E); AKTC 2007b, p. 191 (no. E); Makariou 2007, pp. 192–193 (no. 70); AKTC 2008a, pp. 252–253 (no. 99); AKTC 2009a, pp. 100–101; AKTC 2009b, pp. 100–101

Inscription (in Arabic):

"We are a people who do not find shame at death in combat

Even when we consider [the tribes of] Amir and Salul.

Love of death brings us closer to our fated time Whereas they hate the moment and drag out the hours.

None of us has died in his bed

And no one was killed without being avenged.

Our lives are run on the steel of our swords

On nothing but our blades do they meet

their end "

Two carved, painted and partially gilded pine friezes have successively appeared on sale. Both come from the same Almohad palatial collection in Spain. The use of pine rather than cedar clearly leads us back to al-Andalus. The preserved parts, 6.26 metres long, are decorated with an inscription in *tawīl* meters reproducing an ode of pre-Islamic Arabia. The equal lengths of the two parts, of over three metres, and the sequence they form, indicating how they would fit in a square room of just over 9 meter squared. One could link them to later constructions, such as the Tower of the Captive at the Alhambra, which was square, with a section of a *qasīda* inscribed on each wall.

The two friezes were placed on two perpendicular walls, probably at the base of the ceiling. Indeed, the two texts follow each other, contrary to the information that was given on the two successive sales. Panel B, which was sold first and presented here, follows panel A. They both belong therefore to a *qasīda* of the *jāhiliyya* poet Samaw'al ibn 'Adiya, who died in circa 560. The text differs in parts from the edited text of the  $d\bar{\imath}$  $v\bar{a}n$ ; notably, in the first hemistich of the last verse, the subject changes; the "I" becomes "we"; in one of the verses, the word *dhībāt* is substituted with suyūf (the swords); lastly, an entire distich has been displaced to later on in the text. However, as each distich constitutes a complete sense unit, this shift hardly affects the flow of the text.

The use of pre-Islamic poetry deserves to be highlighted: it indicates a particularly literate environment replete with memories of original Arab poetry. This sensitivity underscores once more Spain's role as the land of the preservation of classical Arab poetry. This in turn gave way, more

than a century later, to a dialogue between the most illustrious of poets, historians and viziers of Nasrid Spain, Lisan al-Din ibn al-Khatib (d. 1374), and the greatest historian of Islam, Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), on the preservation of the vestiges of the literary glory of the Arabs at the end of Arab Spain, whereas in the rest of the Arab world, where history is still being written, a technical and practical language has been born.

The inscription is couched in angular writing without any diacritic signs. The letters are reduced to a third of the available height on the base-line, strongly contrasting with the long downstrokes. The crossed *lām-alif* on panel A are characterized by a polylobate motif in the upper third. Lastly, the loop of the  $l\bar{a}m$  rises and curls around the downstroke. The size of the downstrokes rules out the possibility that the inscription belongs to the Almoravid period. Nonetheless, the contours of the torus and several epigraphic marks make it more similar to an undated Qur'anic inscription at the Batha museum in Fès or a prismatic stele in the same museum dated 580 H / 1184 CE. The form of the  $b\bar{a}$  (panel A), made with two embedded spherical triangles (or twisted  $h\bar{a}$ ) is a specific marker of this inscription; it was present in the East at the end of the eleventh century and is to be found on two funerary inscriptions in Badajoz dated respectively 539 H / 1144 CE and 556 H / 1160 CE. Equivalents can also be found in the Marinid and Nasrid inscriptions, however, it is the plant-like decoration, the simplicity of which contrasts with the Marinid woods, which suggests an assignment to a much earlier date, in the course of the twelfth century.





#### 56 Incense burner in form of a bird

Islamic Mediterranean, probably Sicily, 11th-12th century
Bronze
17 x 25.5 cm
AKM 00603
Published: AKTC 2007a, pp. 30 and 122-1

Published: AKTC 2007a, pp. 30 and 122–123 (no. 42); AKTC 2008b, no. 6; AKTC 2009a, p. 102; AKTC 2009b, p. 102

Incense was used in the Islamic world to scent people and air alike with a fragrant mix of aloes (wood), frankincense and ambergris. According to the historian al-Mas 'udi, guests of the ninthcentury caliph al-Ma'mun (r. 813-33) were offered an incense burner to perfume themselves before meeting with him (Bloom and Blair 1997, p. 120). Metalwork incense burners were made in a variety of shapes, including animal forms such as lions and birds, which were associated with paradise and good fortune. The head and neck of this piece are hinged to facilitate the placement of the incense, which when burned would emit fragrant smoke through the body's pierced decoration. A masterpiece of medieval bronze casting, this in-

cense burner is a representation of a variety of pigeon called "scandaroon", a distortion of the name of the Turkish town Iskenderun, itself derived from the name Iskandar (Alexander the Great). This species originated in Iraq and spread westward across the Mediterranean. While the present object is close in shape to contemporary Khurasan-style bird incense burners, its casting is heavier and more sculptural, the pierce-work holes are larger, and the colour and patination are different. It has been suggested that this bird incense burner may have been produced in Sicily in the late eleventh or early twelfth century under its Arab and Norman governors, although further research may yet indicate a different source. AF



#### 57 Bowl with bird

North Africa, ca. 11th –12th century Fritware, painted and glazed Ø 23.8 cm AKM 00579 Published: Fehérvári 2000, p. 75; AKTC 2007a, p. 82 (no. 52); AKTC 2007b, p. 80 (no. 52); AKTC 2009a, p. 103; AKTC 2009b, p. 103 The peacock is associated with Paradise and royalty; it is depicted on a wide range of Islamic objects, from ceramic bowls to textiles, metalwork and book arts. Some believe that the peacock was ejected from Paradise with Adam and Eve, explaining its mournful cries. The peacock is a very popular motif for the decoration of ceramic bowls throughout the Islamic world, from North Africa

to Central Asia, over a long span of time. The bird's shape fits neatly within the cavetto and the tail feathers are often curved back toward its head. The decorative motifs, technique, and palette of this bowl are typical of North African ceramic production: a large bird with incised details is painted in green, yellow, and manganese against a dark yellow ground. AF



#### 58 Rectangular cut-glass box

Probably Italy (Sicily) or Spain (al-Andalus), 10th –11th century

Glass; free-blown and cut; bronze hinges and clasp L 11.3 cm

AKM 00652

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 104; AKTC 2009b, p. 104

The technique of cut glass in the Islamic world became most popular in the ninth and tenth centuries, appearing in a variety of forms, including relief patterns created from wheels made of stone, metal, or wood, and drills for incision made of stone or diamond points (Carboni 2001, p. 71). This rectangular box, revealing some polychrome iridescence, consists of two parts joined together, both free-blown and wheel-cut; the top includes a design of two circles containing lozenge motifs and the bottom includes one of two kite-shaped motifs. The bronze hinges and clasp each end in a pair of rams' horns.

The wheel-cutting technique predates the Islamic period as it was used widely by the Romans and the Sasanians. Around the fourth or fifth century, the practice appears to have declined throughout the Mediterranean; it then resurfaced in the eighth and ninth centuries in the eastern Islamic world, particularly in Iran and Iraq (Car-

boni and Whitehouse 2001, p. 155). While the technique is associated more closely with the eastern Islamic lands, the form of this object is reminiscent of caskets produced in Islamic Spain and Sicily (see, for example, Dodds 1992, p. 192 [no. 2], or von Folsach 2001, p. 255 [no. 407]). A taste for the Middle East had already existed since the earliest Umayyads of Spain experienced nostalgia for their homeland in Syria and the eastern Mediterranean region, which had been lost to the Abbasids who overthrew them. However, it is possible that the arrival of a certain Ziryab – a freedman of the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi (r. 775-785) who is credited with introducing Abbasid court traditions of music, dress, food, and proper etiquette to the Umayyads of Spain (Dodds 1992, p. 42) - may also have inspired the transmission of artistic tastes and techniques that spread throughout the rest of the western Islamic world. LA



#### 59 Marble funerary stele

North Africa, dated 377 H / 987 CE Carved marble H 59.7 cm AKM 00662 Published: AKTC 2007a, pp. 72–73 (no. 42); AKTC 2007b, pp. 68–69 (no. 42); AKTC 2009a, pp. 104–105; AKTC 2009b, pp. 104–105 There is a long tradition of inscribed marble funerary steles in the Islamic world. This stele is a dignified example of North African production, typically Tunisian, during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The fifteen-line Kufic inscription includes the name of someone who was possibly a leather merchant (*jallād*, although this could also imply the profession of a torturer, according to Abdullah Ghouchani). Mid-Sha ban 376 H / 29 December 986 CE is the date given for his death and for the collection of his body by his brother from the city in which he died. The date inscribed for his burial in another city, most likely his home-

town, is mid-Jumada II 377 H / 15 October 987 CE, which means he was interred some ten months after he died. The city of death has been read as Cairo (Misr) but also as  $Mans\bar{u}f$ .

The stele was not made from a 'new' piece of marble, but fom a Roman baluster with large scrolling acanthus leaves carved in deep intaglio. It probably dates back to around 300 CE and must have lain unused with architectural debris for seven hundred years before being turned into a funerary stele. Such examples of reuse of precious materials point to the scarcity of materials in areas such as North Africa.







## g-images, Werner Forman

### Egypt and Syria

Ladan Akbarnia

After the 750 rebellion of the Abbasids against the first Islamic dynasty, the Umayyads, the core of the Islamic world moved from Damascus to Baghdad. The Abbasids' success was fuelled by the assistance of slave soldiers called mamluks (Arabic for "slaves") who ultimately gained increasing power themselves and actually contributed to weakening Abbasid control in favour of independently ruling provincial dynasties who paid lip service to the Abbasid caliph for legitimacy. In the meantime, in North Africa, the Tulunids broke away from the Abbasid caliphate and established themselves as the first independent dynasty in Egypt (865-909). Egypt gained even more importance under the Fatimids, who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad's daughter, Fatima, and her husband 'Ali, Muhammad's first cousin. The Fatimids entered Egypt in 969, created the capital of Cairo, near the old city of Fustat along the Nile, and ruled most of North Africa, Sicily, the Yemen, the Hijaz, and parts of Syria at the height of their power.

The Fatimid dynasty fell in 1171 to Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, known to the West as Saladin. The Ayyubids were of Kurdish origin and had served the Turkic Zengids, descendants of a slave to Malik Shah (r. 1072–1092), the last Great Seljuq ruler of Iran. In the twelfth century, the Zengids took control of parts of Iraq and Syria and turned their sights on Egypt, where Salah al-Din claimed victory as an officer to Nur al-Din Zengi. Salah al-Din had greater plans, however; in 1169, he usurped control of Egypt from his master and, after Nur al-

Din's death in 1174, he conquered Syria as well. During its tenure from 1169 to 1250, the Ayyubid dynasty ruled over the Yemen, the Hijaz, and parts of Mesopotamia in addition to Egypt and Syria. The Ayyubids were eventually overtaken by members of the same *mamluk* slave soldiers who had once served the Abbasids and later served under the Buyids (934–1062) and Ayyubids. The Mamluks would go on to establish their own dynasty instead of serving other rulers in 1250 and rule until the Ottoman conquest of 1517.

Because of the several cultural and political currents that ran through Egypt and Syria between the tenth and sixteenth centuries, the art produced in these countries during that period exhibits a combination of artistic motifs, styles, and techniques that borrowed from Abbasid court culture but also reflected new developments under each new dynasty. Lustreware technology, for example, is believed to have been developed for glass decoration in eighth-ninth-century Egypt and Syria, translated to ceramics in ninth-tenthcentury Iraq, and then reintroduced for ceramic decoration in Egypt under the Fatimids (Bloom and Blair 1997, p. 251). At times, similarities in styles and techniques among the artworks produced under these dynasties makes it difficult to attribute undated or untested objects specifically to one court (see cat. no. 66). Nevertheless, as the quality and prolific amounts of art and architecture produced in this region testify, this period contributed significantly to the visual culture of the Islamic world.

#### Two "Tell Minis" lustre bowls

#### 60 Bowl with a peacock

Syria, 12th century

Fritware, lustre painted over an opaque white glaze Ø 24.3 cm

AKM 00550

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 82 (no. 51); AKTC 2007b, p. 80 (no. 51); AKTC 2009a, p. 108; AKTC 2009b, p. 108

#### 61 Bowl with radiating design

Syria, 12th century

Fritware, lustre painted over an opaque white glaze  $\emptyset$  23.5 cm

Inscription (Arabic): (in central roundel) "Glory"; (exterior) *min san<sup>c</sup> Abī Mashhūr khāss* ("one of the works of Abi Mashhur, special [royal?] commission") AKM 00551

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 108; AKTC 2009b, p. 108

Given the central location of Syria along numerous routes of cultural exchange, it is no surprise that excavations of mediaeval kiln sites in this country have yielded ceramic wares produced in a variety of techniques and exhibiting diverse motifs and styles. As a result, the identification and classification of this material are particularly difficult (see discussion of Raqqa ware in cat. no. 62). The two lustre painted dishes shown here, however, can be grouped stylistically among the so-called "Tell Minis" wares, named after a village site near Ma'arrat al-Nu'man in western Syria and distinguished by their fine frit bodies and a unique lustre painting style. As Oya Pancaroğlu has noted, there is not enough evidence about the discovery of the "Tell Minis" hoard or the site itself to allow for a confident attribution of this location as a centre of production (Pancaroğlu 2007, p. 63). At the very least, works categorised as "Tell Minis" can be spotted by their inclusion of vegetal ornament composed of three- or five-lobed leaves with pointed tips, often surrounding a large central figural

motif, such as the peacock in cat. no. 60, or a nonfigural motif, such as the circular medallion with radiating spokes in cat. no. 61. These motifs can hold auspicious meanings; in the Greater Iranian world, for example, the peacock is associated with royalty and, on a mystical level, with paradise (as suggested by the Sufi poet Farid al-Din 'Attar (d. 1220) in his Mantiq al-tayr, or Conference of the Birds). Similar bowls are found in other collections, such as in the Harvey B. Plotnick Collection, Chicago. One bowl of that collection includes a central peacock like the one in cat. no. 60, while the other contains the auspicious Seal of Solomon in which the Arabic word for "blessing" (baraka) has been inscribed in a manner not unlike the word "glory" appearing in cat. no. 61. Furthermore like in the latter, both of the Chicago dishes have exterior Arabic inscriptions identifying the workshop or artist, followed by the word khāss, which can be translated to "special" or "prívate," perhaps meant to indicate royal or special commissions (see ibid., pp. 62-63 [nos. 20 and 21]). LA





#### 62 Tile with star-shaped central aperture

Syria (Raqqa ware), Ayyubid, early 13th century Fritware, moulded with a transparent turquoise glaze 36.5 cm square

AKM 00702

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 109; AKTC 2009b, p. 109

This moulded tile is decorated with split-palmette scrolls radiating from a central aperture in the form of an eight-pointed star, while a tri-lobed palmette motif marks each of its four corners; the entire decoration is framed within a border formed by a raised line. The tile has been covered with a transparent turquoise glaze and resembles other moulded wares made in the same technique and attributed to Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Connections may also be made to ceramics produced in the neighbouring Iranian world, as suggested by a moulded tile in the David Collection, Copenhagen, covered with turquoise glaze and including sixteen small, evenlyspaced, eight-pointed star-shaped apertures (von Folsach 2001, p. 167 [no. 208], inv. no. 5/1980).

So-called Raqqa ware – which, over time, has come to refer to a wide range of pottery, including certain kinds of lustreware, underglaze painted wares, monochrome-glazed wares, and Laqabi and "Tell Minis" wares (see cat. nos. 60–61) – has been the subject of several studies, especially in recent years. The city, located on the left bank of the Euphrates River in Syria, is one of the first archaeological sites for the excavation of Islamic ceramics. It was once assumed that wares resembling the ones found at Raqqa were produced in

that city and then travelled to other regions, such as Anatolia, Iran, and Egypt (for a summary of previous scholarship on Ragga ware, see Jenkins-Madina 2006, pp. 7-8). More recently, Oliver Watson suggested that a similar range of ceramic wares were produced at other sites throughout Syria and that there is strong evidence that Egypt was a centre of production for wares of equal or higher quality, with the exception of lustreware (Watson 1999 and Watson 2004, p. 289). The latest study of Ragga ceramics was conducted by Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, who examined a group of ceramics of this type found in Konya alongside the Ragga wares in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Jenkins-Madina concludes that these works were produced in the first three decades of the thirteenth century while the Ayyubid dynasty was in power (1169–1260), a period which corresponds specifically to the residence of the Ayyubid prince al-Malik al-Ashraf Musa in Ragga and his patronage of an extensive building program for the city (Jenkins-Madina 2006, pp. 186-187). Soon after this time, Ragga was occupied by the Rum Saljuqs and the Khwarazmshahs and it was eventually destroyed by the Ilkhanid Mongols in 1265. LA



#### 63 Carved beam with Qur'anic inscription

Syria, late 12th - early 13th century Carved wood; 11.2 x 122 cm Text: al-Bagara ("The Cow"), 2:255 AKM 00632

Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 118-119 (no. 39); AKTC 2008a, p. 73 (no. 17); AKTC 2009a. pp. 110-111; AKTC 2009b, pp. 110-111

for fasteners, extends a long cartouche with a raised inscription that stands out from the finely sculpted background consisting of plant foliage, punctuated by small whorls, bifid leaves or palmettes with a long, curved tip, fairly typical of the Syrian repertoire. This epigraphic carved wooden beam may have belonged to the small side of a cenotaph. The inscription contains part of verse 255 of al-Bagara (The Cow), the second chapter of the Our'an: "[His is what is in the heavens and what is in] the earth! Who is it that intercedes with Him save by His permission?" Known as the "Throne verse", this is one of the passages of the

Between the two smooth ends, which have holes

Qur'an most often used in a funerary context or for decorating mihrabs. The script is highly representative of the Avyubid naskh script, a form of cursive marked by its elegant simplicity and compact, dynamic nature. The same combination of a softly rounded letters standing out from slender foliage is found in some Syrian and Egyptian pieces. A fragment of an epigraphic frieze preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (David-Weill 1931, pp. 34-35, no. 2118, pl. 21), which was discovered in Imam al-Shafi 'i's mausoleum and certainly comes from a cenotaph, is very similar to this piece. CI

#### 64 Capital with mythical creatures

Eastern Syria or Mesopotamia, first half of the 13th century Marble H 33 cm AKM 00731 Published: AKTC 2009a, pp. 110 -111; AKTC 2009b, pp. 110-111

A scrolling vegetal design of palmette and splitpalmette motifs, surrounding a pair of addorsed birds and a pair of animals resembling a cross between a sphinx and a griffin (facing opposite directions), has been carved in shallow relief onto each of the four largest panels of this capital, which is composed of an octagonal base and a square top. The decoration, in low-relief, covers all four sides of the capital. The interstitial triangular panels contain a more abstract interlacing scroll design. Similar vegetal ornament appears on works of diverse media, including a cast bronze element for

suspension in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, London (Rogers 2008, p. 101 [no. 111]); a carved wooden storage chest in the David Collection, Copenhagen (von Folsach 2001, p. 266 [no. 428, inv. no. 3/1993]); and a candlestick in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (Allan 2002, pp. 42-43 [no. 8]). Similar animals embedded in scrolling ornament can be found on objects produced in the eastern Anatolian region, as suggested by sphinxes depicted in the roundels of a canteen in the Freer Gallery in Washington, D.C. (Atıl, Chase, and Jett 1985, рр. 124-136 [no. 17]). LA









## kg-images, Andrea Jemolo

## Egypt and Syria The Fatimids

Sheila Canby

By the late ninth century, the hegemony of the Abbasid Caliphate had weakened. Regional governors in Egypt and Iran exercised near-total control of their territories, paying lip-service to the caliph through the mention of his name in the Friday sermon (*khutba*) and in coinage and *tirāz* textiles produced at official manufactories. Some Islamic dynasties, such as the Umayyads of Spain, operated entirely outside the caliphate, while local leaders in parts of Syria and Arabia espoused Shiism.

In 267 H / 909 CE a new Shia leader, 'Abdallah al-Mahdi, conquered Tunisia and founded a new capital at Mahdiyya. He followed the Ismaili doctrine of Shiism which claimed a new era of history would be heralded by the arrival of the Mahdi (the messiah), who would be descended from 'Ali and Fatima through Isma'il ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq. 'Abdallah and his successors, the Fatimids, set themselves up as rivals to the Abbasids and within seven years of Imam al-Mahdi's conquest of Tunisia they had established a governor in Sicily.

In 969 an exceptional general, Jawhar, occupied Egypt, and in 973 the fourth Fatimid Imam-caliph, al-Mucizz, relocated the Fatimid capital to Cairo (al-Qahira, the Victorious), the new town he built on the Nile next to the pre-existing city of al-Fustat. Although the Fatimids maintained their capital at Cairo, they taught their vision of Islam by proselytizing through a broad regional organisation, the *dacwa*. At the height of their power in the late tenth century the Fatimids controlled Mecca and Madina, Yemen and parts of Palestine and Syria. Supported by an army of North African, Turkish and Sudanese sol-

diers, the Fatimids eventually suffered from internal dissensions that took both ideological and political forms. Exacerbating the power struggles within the military, drought led to economic woes in the 1060s and the inability of the Fatimid caliph to pay his army. In 1067, during the reign of al-Mustansir, the soldiers ransacked the Fatimid treasurv. While this was a disaster for the Fatimid ruler, it has proved to be a boon for historians of Fatimid art because of the descriptions by the historians, Ibn al-Zubayr and Magrizi, of the objects dispersed from the treasury. While the Fatimid dynasty survived until 1171, its territories in Sicily, Syria and Palestine fell to its rivals and finally Saladin delivered the coup de grâce with his conquest of Egypt.

The historical descriptions of the Fatimid treasury corroborate the tangible evidence of the luxury and refinement of this court. Carved rock crystal vessels designed to contain precious substances such as perfume, gossamer-thin textiles inscribed with the name and titles of the caliphs, and jewellery made of the finest filigree and enamel reflect the Fatimid court's opulence. Fatimid art shows a loose influence of Abbasid and Byzantine prototypes. While some elements of Fatimid lustreware pottery derive from Abbasid lustrewares, the iconography of large hares, figures engaged in sports such as cockfighting, and the combination of foliated epigraphy and geometric ornament are more typical of the Fatimids than the Abbasids. The descriptions of the Fatimid treasury call attention to how much was lost, but the few items that remain are witness to a period of great cultural wealth.

#### 65 Tulunid beam with Qur'anic inscription

Egypt, Tulunid, 9<sup>th</sup> century Carved wood; L 120 cm Text: Sura *al-Mulk* ("The Sovereignty"), 67:12–14 AKM 00701 Published: AKTC 2009a, pp. 114–115; AKTC 2009b, pp. 114–115 Islamic woodwork is known through surviving examples starting from the seventh century; its history has been traced most comprehensively in Egypt (Contadini 1998, pp. 111–112), where the woodworking tradition was first practiced among the Christian Copts and the Tulunids, the first independent Islamic dynasty in that country. It is believed that Fatimid woodwork developed out of the Coptic and Tulunid traditions (*ibid.*, p. 112). This square-sectioned beam contains mortice and tenon joints and bears a Kufic inscription containing verses from the sixty-seventh chapter of the Our'an:

"13 And whether ye hide your word or publish it, He certainly has (full) knowledge, of the secrets of (all) hearts. 14 Should He not know, – He that created? and He is the One that understands the finest mysteries (and) is well-acquainted (with them)". (... [i]jharū bihū innahū 'ālimun bi-dhāti

l-sud $\bar{u}r$ . A- $l\bar{a}$  ya lamu man khalaqa wa-huwa l-lat $[\bar{i}f]$  ...).

Only two other Tulunid beams with calligraphic decoration are known to have appeared on the market (see Sotheby's London, 24 October 2007, lot 56), one dated 898 and measuring 200 cm ("Art from the World of Islam, 8th – 18th Century," Louisiana Revy 27/3 [March 1987], p. 65, no. 10) and the other appearing in fragments. One of these fragments was exhibited at the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva in 1988-89 and is now housed in the David Collection, Copenhagen (Musée d'art et d'histoire 1988, pp. 52–53, pl. 1); other fragments can be found in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo. The present beam was previously in the collections of Baron Elie de Rothschild and Jean-Paul Croisier, the latter of whom lent it to the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris. LA





#### 66 Rock crystal support for inkpots

Egypt or Syria, 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century Rock crystal L 9.3 cm AKM 00653 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 92 (no. 60); AKTC 2007b, p. 90 (no. 60); AKTC 2008a, pp. 130–131 (no. 44); AKTC 2009a, p. 115; AKTC 2009b, p. 115

There exist numerous doubts with respect to the origin of these pieces, whose total number so far is in excess of 200. Most of the authors who have studied them agree that they are Egyptian in origin, and date them between the ninth and twelfth centuries. However, the theoretical possibility exists. at least for now, that some of them may have been produced somewhere in Iraq during the first Abbasid Period, following a Sasanian Persian artistic tradition. The main problem in assigning a date for objects of this kind of rock crystal rests in the fact that, with very few and insignificant exceptions, there is no archaeological context for them and they have been classified only by means of stylistic criteria, sometimes very questionable, or by basing their classification on historical precedents too closely related in time to their arrival in the places where they are currently deposited, which prevents attributing a post quem date to

Nearly every known example is characterized by being manufactured from raw materials of high quality and purity. A large number contain neither veins nor internal impurities of any kind. The geological form of rock crystal, which takes the shape of needles, confirms that a majority of these types of products may have been bottles or flasks, small receptacle of some kind or chess figures, although there are also some relatively large examples as well, which always tend to be cylindrical, elliptical or spherical in shape. Rectangular blocks, like the one presented in this catalogue, are rare.

The manufacturing process was complex and required great skill and patience. Carving was begun by grinding away the crystal with its own powder in order to hollow out the interior; the form and external decoration of the receptacle

were then carved by employing the same method. The object presented here, which was certainly an inkwell, is carved from a small block of transparent rock crystal. The quality of the raw material used is somewhat inferior to the known standard, presenting as it does brown spots in its interior. Its edges are damaged in some places, particularly in the alveoli. This seems to suggest that a handle was attached to it in order to pull something up and, as a result, that it was partially encased in a metallic casing, almost certainly made of gold or silver, which has completely disappeared. This would explain the damage produced when it was pulled out. The bottoms of the central wells are very smooth and contain very few scratches. They were perhaps also encased in metal.

An almost identical piece is housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum of London (No. Cat.: 330–1880), with the same hollows in the upper part. It seems it was acquired in Spain in 1880, although as is the case of all those from this country – 40 in all – it was not originally from there and must have been brought to the country by trade during the Islamic period, or perhaps by some anonymous pilgrim who had traveled to the Middle East. The majority of the objects crafted from rock crystal was acquired by cathedrals and churches and ended up being used as reliquaries. Their manufacture seems to have stopped after the Fatimid Caliph al-Mustansir (1036-1094) was forced by his Turkish guards to sell a large collection of them (1060/1062), which would have caused the collapse of the market.

Because of its external characters, and given the chronological uncertainty mentioned, the piece could be dated from between the late tenth century and the beginning of the twelfth. FV



#### 67 Jar with calligraphic decoration

Egypt or Syria, mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, displaying Fatimid influence

Fritware, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze H 29 cm

AKM 00548

Published: Riyadh 1985, pp. 134–135; AKTC 2007a, p. 90 (no. 56); AKTC 2007b, pp. 6 and 88 (no. 56); Makariou 2007, pp. 186–187 (no. 67); AKTC 2008a, pp. 128–129, no. 43; AKTC 2009a, pp. 116–117; AKTC 2009b, pp. 116–117 This type of jar, with an ovoid belly extending into a short, fairly wide neck and rolled mouth, is a well-known Fatimid style used into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Nevertheless, this is an exceptional piece because of the quality of the design and the excellent state of preservation. The technique used and the decorative style place it among the ceramics known as "Tell Minis", named after a village in northern Syria, close to Maj arrat al- Nu man, where a collection of some one hundred pieces were reportedly discovered in 1957. Some of these pieces were purchased by the David Collection in Copenhagen, in particular a cup decorated with an intertwined ribbon forming polylobe motifs punctuated by fine re-engraved spirals, very similar to the design on the present jar (Makariou 2007, p. 197, n. 29). This production, termed "Tell Minis" by Venetia Porter and Oliver Watson, includes siliceous clay wares finished with a metallic lustre or glazed after incision (Makariou 2007, p. 197, n. 30). The discovery of many similar pieces in different parts of Syria (Damascus, Hama) has corroborated the thesis of a Syrian production, very influenced by Fatimid Egypt, and possibly dating back to the middle of the twelfth century.

In fact, three fragments of a cup kept in the Benaki Museum, and a single fragment housed in

the Cairo Museum of Islamic Art, discovered in Fustat and subject to a similar technique, present the same type of epigraphy (ibid. nn. 31–32). It is a very special type of angular writing, whereby the long downstrokes have a sort of midway hook or elbow, while the split bevels at the ends are preceded by a double horizontal line. In the lower frieze, one in two downstrokes ends with a halfpalm leaf pattern. This type of writing style is extremely unusual. Apart from the above-mentioned fragments, this kind of downstroke with a crocheted projection can be seen on two fragments found in Fustat; one decorated with metallic lustre (ibid., n. 33), the other with glazed champlevé, and also on a cup published by Porter and Watson, as well as on the so-called "Fada" cenotaph in Homs, Syria, possibly dating back to the thirteenth century (ibid., nn. 34-36). These examples illustrate well the difficulty of unequivocally attributing this production to any one centre.

The inscriptions are a set of vows commonly found on objects. In the medallions are the words: baraka wa / kāmila wa / kāfiya bara[ka] / kāfiya wa ("blessing, perfect, complete, blessing, complete"). The same words can be found around the base, in a different sequence: baraka kāmila kāfiya kāfiya kāfiya kāfiya kāfiya kāfiya kāfiya kāfiya wa. I



#### 68-76 Nine gold Fatimid coins

North Africa and Egypt, 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century Gold; various dimensions AKM 00680 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 91 (no. 58); AKTC 2007b, pp. 88–89 (no. 58); AKTC 2009a, p. 118; AKTC 2009b, p. 118

Manufactured in state-run mints, the coins of the Fatimids were a means of visual communication to a vast public and a vehicle for enhancing the way people viewed the caliphate's power and prestige. Their high gold content and purity – sustained throughout the Fatimid period - testified to the economic and monetary wealth of the state. Inscribed with the names and titles of the Fatimid imam-caliphs, the coins are also usually dated. They serve as important historical documents, while the mint and place names they bear illustrate the geographical extent of Fatimid rule. These coins are known for their fine, elegant epigraphy, and the myriad stylistic variations of their design. One example of this is the unusual and distinctive design that appears on coins produced

in Palermo, Sicily (central item, third row). The central inscriptions on the reverse and obverse are arranged within segments so as to divide the surface into a star-like pattern.

The coins of the following Fatimid imam-caliphs are presented:

'Abd Allah al-Mahdi bi'llah (r. 909–934) Al-Qa'im bi'Amr Allah (r. 934–946) Al-Mansur bi'llah (r. 946–953) Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (r. 953–975) Al-'Aziz bi'llah (r. 975–996) Al-Hakim bi'Amr Allah (r. 996–1021) Al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah (r. 1021–1036) Al-Mustansir bi'llah (r. 1036–1094) (two coins).



#### Fatimid jewelry

#### 77-79 Three enamelled gold pendants

Egypt or Syria, 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century Gold and cloisonné enamel; L 3.2 cm, 2.9 cm, and 2.6 cm, respectively AKM 00594 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 91 (no. 63); AKTC 2007b, p. 91 (no. 63); AKTC 2008a, pp. 134–135 (no. 46); AKTC 2009a, p. 119; AKTC 2009b, p. 119 Precious objects such as this miniature Qur'an case (cat. no. 85) and jewellery, including necklaces of biconical and spherical beads, pendants, and a variety of rings, all made from gold filigree work and embellished with gold granulation, were produced in tenth- and eleventh-century Fatimid Egypt and Greater Syria. The objects in this group reflect the superb craftsmanship of the goldsmiths who made them. As the pendants suggest, the crescent (*hilāl*) shape was particularly popular. Semi-precious stones or pearls may have been suspended from the loops on each pendant, which was made using a typical Fatimid box construction featuring filigree and gold strips embellished with granulation. The rings and biconical bead exhibit typical Fatimid filigree arabesques

S-shapes with granulation. This filigree work was called *mushhabbak* (latticework) in twelfth-century trousseau lists from the Cairo Geniza documents, which are an important source for the study of medieval Mediterranean history (Jenkins-Madina 1997, pp. 419–20, citing Goitein 1967–83,

vol. 4, pp. 211-12).

The miniature Qur'an case is a beautiful example of Fatimid-style granulated filigree decoration, exposing the goldsmith's skill with different patterns on each side. The front has dense foliate scrollwork formed into a programme of circles and triangles around a central panel (with missing inset), while the reverse exhibits a geometric lattice based on interlocking hexagons. The case would have contained a miniature Qur'an and hung around the wearer's neck, suspended by two loops (one is missing here). The wrought amulet case (cat. no. 84) must have been worn in a similar way. The notched band in the middle and the style of the Kufic inscription are characteristic of Egyptian-Fatimid metalwork. The inscription reads al-mulk li-llāh ("The Dominion is of God"). The influence of the Fatimid goldsmiths' work extended far and wide; the goldsmiths' decorative vocabulary was adapted later by the Mamluks (1250-1517) and in Spain by the Nasrids (1230-1492). AF



#### 80-82 Three gold filigree rings

Egypt, 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century Gold H 3.4 cm, 2.5 cm, 3.1 cm, respectively AKM 00596; AKM 00595; AKM 00597

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 95 (no. 65); AKTC 2007b, p. 92 (no. 65); AKTC 2008a, pp. 136–37 (no. 48); AKTC 2009a, p. 120; AKTC 2009b, p. 120

#### 83 Biconical gold bead

Egypt or Syria, 11<sup>th</sup> century Gold H 2.9 cm; L 7.2 cm; weight 18 grams AKM 00618 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 95 (no. 64); AKTC 2007b, p. 92 (no. 64); AKTC 2008a, pp. 136–137 (no. 47); AKTC 2009a, p. 121;

84 Gold amulet box

AKTC 2009b, p. 121

Egypt, 11th-12th century Gold 4,2 x 3,7 cm AKM 000599

#### 85 Miniature Qur'an case

Egypt, 11<sup>th</sup> century Gold L 4.7 cm AKM 00598 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 95 (no. 65); AKTC 2007b, pp. 92 – 93 (no. 66); AKTC 2009a, p. 121; AKTC 2009b, p. 121











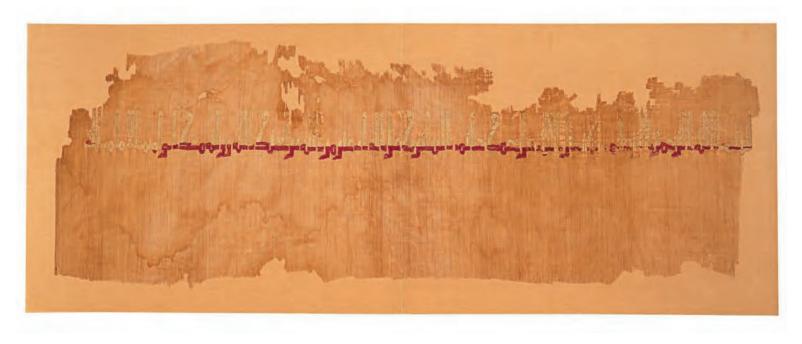


#### 86 Tiraz textile

Egypt, late 10<sup>th</sup> – early 11<sup>th</sup> century Linen, tapestry woven silk 151 x 51 cm AKM 00670 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 93 (no. 62); AKTC 2007b, p. 91 (no. 62); AKTC 2009a, pp. 122–123; AKTC 2009b, pp. 122–123 *Tirāz* refers to inscribed textiles, such as the robes of honour distributed by a ruler. It may also refer to the band of inscription on the textiles as well as the state workshops where they were produced (*dār al-tirāz*). The importance of clothing in Fatimid ceremonies created a constant demand for complete new wardrobes. The caliph regularly outfitted his entire court with lavish new clothing for religious, civil, and military ceremonies. Egyptian weavers were kept busy making *tirāz* robes for both Fatimid and Abbasid caliphs at the same time. Few complete inscribed garments survive and the fragmentary nature of extant *tirāz* like this

one makes it difficult to identify their specific context or function. The foliated Kufic inscription of this textile fragment includes blessings to the Prophet Muhammad and the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mucizz li-Din Allah (r. 952–75).

The Arabic inscription on the textile reads: "In the name of God the Beneficent, the Merciful; may God's blessing be upon Muhammad, Seal of the Prophets, and his family... from God... for the servant of God and His believer, Ma'ad Abu Tamim, the Imam al-Mu['izz]" (trans. Abdullah Ghouchani). AF



### 87 Silk-embroidered linen panel with birds, human faces, and hares

Egypt, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century Linen, dyed with indigo and embroidered with silk, and silk wrapped in gold thread 43 x 62 cm AKM 00671 Published: AKTC 2008a, pp. 132–133 (no. 45); AKTC 2009a, p. 123; AKTC 2009b, p. 123 This silk-embroidered textile fragment blurs the typical stylistic, chronological, and geographical boundaries in the study of Islamic art. The ground fabric, woven in an indigo-dyed linen, is embroidered in silk and gold thread (wrapped around a silk core) with decorative elements comprised of confronting pairs of birds flanking a human face, small running hares, and ornamental rosettes. The use of silk thread wrapped in gold recalls the luxurious nasīj (an abbreviated form of the Arabic nasīj al-dhahab al-harīr, "cloth of gold and silk"), from the Arabic textiles woven in Iran and Central Asia before and during the medieval period, after the Mongol invasions. It is possible that the

practice of weaving in silk and gold might be related to the cross-cultural exchanges resulting from trade (and sometimes war) between Egypt, the Near East and Central Asia during this time. The appearance of animals on a medieval Egyptian textile is also not uncommon; confronting and addorsed animal pairs, in particular, have a rich history in the Ancient Near East. The inclusion of a human face without a body, however, is unusual. On a technical level, given the linen ground of the fabric and even its figural decoration, this skilfully woven panel relates to Fatimid and Coptic textiles produced in Egypt during the tenth and eleventh centuries. LA





## akg-images, Andrea Jemolo

## Egypt and Syria The Mamluks

Ladan Akbarnia

After Salah al-Din's death in 1193, disputes over who should ascend the throne ensued among his descendants, resulting in divided rule throughout Egypt and Syria. Ironically, the Avyubids' ultimate demise came at the hands of one of their own elite military caste of slaves, a Mamluk (Arabic for "slave") bowkeeper named Baybars. The Mamluk's rule of Egypt and Syria, which lasted from 1250 until 1517, was divided between the reign of two ethnic groups: the Bahri Mamluks ("Mamluks of the Sea"), who were mostly Kipchak Turks (1250-1390), and the Burji Mamluks ("Mamluks of the Citadel"), who were of Circassian origin (1382-1517). One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Mamluks is that they never became a dvnasty in the true sense of the word, as ruler succession depended not on family ties but on the requirement that one had to have been born a slave. This ruled out the freeborn offspring of Mamluk sultans, although in practice there were some exceptions. For the most part, however, this non-dynastic system contributed to an art and architectural style reflecting the individualized tastes of various Mamluks and their legacies.

Initially, Mamluk style paralleled that of the Ayyubids, which itself borrowed aspects of Fatimid artistic and architectural styles. The Mamluks came to be known by the great charitable foundations and complexes they commissioned, which allowed them to propagate orthodox Sunni Islam in a land once dominated by the heterodox Shiism of the Fatimids. It also prevented the possible confiscation of properties they had collected over their lifetimes by passing on much of their acquired wealth through endowments naming their descendants as trustees. The largest structures built during this period were domed mausoleums, which attested to the secular power of the Mamluks and glorified the individuality of each ruler. The monumental size of these buildings, which boasted massive domes and minarets, also reflected inspiration from the Mamluks' rivals to the east in Iran and Central Asia, the Ilkhanid Mongols (1256–1353), and their successors, the Timurids (1370-1526). Complexes were additionally endowed with Qur'ans as well as mosque lamps, candlesticks and other objects. Objects often reflected the rank and status of their patrons, with epigraphic emblems identifying sultans and blazons representing amirs, or generals (cat. nos. 89 and 90). Cairo became the capital of the Mamluks and a destination for artists and craftsmen fleeing the Mongols from Mosul and other parts of Iraq and the Iranian world. Mamluk art therefore includes features shared with the arts of Iran. In addition, it reflects inspiration from China, with whom it also enjoyed maritime trade relations, as suggested by the blue-and-white tile panel depicting an architectural structure (cat. no. 91), as well as an awareness of European tastes for the exotic east, as evidenced by albarelli made for the European market (cat. nos. 95-97).

#### 88 Candlestick

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk, early 14th century Brass, incised and inlaid with silver and niello H 35 cm; maximum Ø 31.5 cm Inscription (Arabic):

Around the socket: "The High Authority, the Lordly, the Possessor, the Diligent, the Leader, the Holy Warrior, [an officer of] al-Malik al-Nasir"
Around the shoulder: "The Honourable Authority, the High, the Lordly, the Possessor, the Learned, the Diligent, the Just, the Conqueror, the Holy Warrior, the Defender, [an officer of] al-Malik al-Nasir"

Around the body: "The Honourable Authority, the High, the Lordly, the Possessor, the Learned, the Diligent, the Holy Warrior, [an officer of] al-Malik al-Nasir"

Interior: (later Ottoman ownership inscription incised in *tughra*) "For the needy Ahmad ibn al-Sarim in the year 961 [1553–1554 CE]" AKM 00736

Published: AKTC 2009a, pp. 126-127; AKTC 2009b, pp. 126-127 Thanks to the active patronage of Mamluk sultans and amirs, the art of Mamluk metalwork between the late thirteenth and the mid-fourteenth centuries reached its apex, distinguished by a flourishing of the figural style and the development of an epigraphic one (Atıl 1981, p. 51). This period falls under the relatively long reign of Sultan al-Nasir al-Din Muhammad (r. 1293-1341, with interruptions), a particularly enthusiastic patron of art and architecture. The present candlestick may have been made for one of al-Nasir's amirs, as suggested by the inscriptions around the socket, shoulder, and neck; the predominance of the bold and monumental *thuluth*, the preferred script under the Mamluks, represents the epigraphic style that evolved during this period. The truncated conical socket includes a band of inscription interrupted by whirling eight-petalled rosettes. Although the whirling rosette motif was not a blazon, it does

appear to have held associations with some Mamluks, including al-Nasir al-Din Muhammad. The motif is repeated six times in a six-petalled form on the neck, enclosed within and between three large roundels filled with foliate scrolls and bordered by an abstract design of stylised overlapping leaves. The largest inscription appears on the body against a dense background of foliage composed of spiralling leaf scrolls and bordered by raised ridges above and below. A tughra inscribed on the object's interior indicates that it was later in the possession of another individual, perhaps an Ottoman official, in the mid-fifteenth century, when Egypt and Syria came under Ottoman control. Similar candlesticks may be found in the collection of the Musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. no. AO 5005), as well as in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (inv. nos. 4043 and 3982). LA



#### 89 Bowl with calligraphic decoration

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk, first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Brass, inlaid with silver

Ø 18 cm

AKM 00610

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 182 (no. 158); AKTC 2007b, p. 185 (no. 158); Makariou 2007, pp. 188–189 (no. 68); AKTC 2008a, pp. 292–293 (no. 117); AKTC 2009a, p. 128; AKTC 2009b, p. 128 The inlaid silver inscription on this Mamluk brass bowl reads, "For the High Excellency, the Lordly, the Great Amir, the Learned, the Just, the Valiant, the Supporter, the Succour, the Sparkling, the Help, the Orderly, the Responsible, the [officer] of al-Malik al-Nasir." This is a typical formulaic inscription, meant to bring glory and prosperity to the owner, and it is seen on a variety of artistic media, from ceramic bowls to enamelled glass

mosque lamps, during the Mamluk period (1250–1517). Mamluk society thrived on emblems and symbols. The interior of the brass bowl is decorated with a sun disc and six fish. When the bowl was filled with water, the fish and sun would appear to shimmer. The image of the sun may be seen as symbolising the ruler as well as wealth and the source of life. AF



#### 90 Star-shaped panel with a coat of arms

Egypt, Mamluk, 1470s Ivory, wood, and metal; carved and mosaic technique Ø 22 cm

Inscription (Arabic): centre: al-sultān al-malik al-ashraf ("the Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf"); above and below central panel, with top inscription upside-down: 'azza nasruhū ("May his victory be glorious")

AKM 00703

Published: AKTC 2008b, no. 9; AKTC 2009a, p. 129; AKTC 2009b, p. 129

The use of coats of arms in the Islamic world is unique to the Mamluks (1250–1517), whose status in society could not be inherited. Pictorial blazons representing recognized images, such as a stemmed cup or napkin, identified the rank of an amir that served as cupbearer or master of robes. Epigraphic heraldic emblems, such as the one in this wood and ivory panel, were destined to monarchs or rulers, although other composite panels were not uncommon (see Meinecke 1974; Mayer 1933). While several Mamluk sultans used the epithet al-malik al-ashraf, it is likely that the inscription carved into the tripartite blazon on this panel refers to Sultan Qaytbay (r. 1468–1496), a ruler who brought about the revitalisation of the arts in Cairo. The form and style of the star-shaped ar-

chitectural element bear resemblance to other carved ivory door panels produced during this sultan's reign, one of which is housed in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, and is inscribed with his name (Atıl 1981, p. 210 [no. 105, inv. no. 2334]). That panel has been attributed to around 1470, around the time Qaytbay's funerary complex was under construction in Cairo's Northern Cemetery (1472–79).

The sultan's epigraphic blazon appears throughout the structure, and it is possible that these ivory and wood panels were meant for this building or another structure commissioned by him. The present panel once belonged to the collection of Ernst and Marthe Kofler-Truniger in Lucerne (inv. no. K 493 H / 1 CE). LA



#### 91 Decorative architectural tile

Syria or Egypt, 15<sup>th</sup> century
Fritware, blue underglaze painting
20 x 20 cm
AKM 00570
Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 88, 92–93 (no. 29);
AKTC 2009a. p. 130: AKTC 2009b. p. 130

The blue and white decoration of this tile is characteristic of ceramic production at the end of the Mamluk period which drew inspiration from Chinese porcelain. Some pieces are faithful reproductions of Chinese models but others, like this one, present more original and charming compositions.

The decoration is symmetrical without being rigid. The central two-level edifice, surmounted by a bulbous dome and the two small pavilions (or gates) flanking it, stand against a landscape of sinuous bushes ending in broad leaves. The variations in proportion, the leaning horizontals and wavy lines suggest that this drawing was done freehand, spontaneously, lending a sort of naive but extremely lively touch to the composition. Could it be a religious building, mosque or mausoleum - the Gothic arch shapes of the two small structures recall the form of certain tombstones or a palace, a pleasure pavilion in the middle of a garden? It conjures up images of luxuriant orchards of the Ghuta in Damascus and architectural landscapes of the mosaics of the Great Mosque of the Umavvads.

Two tiles housed at the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo, of unknown origin, present the same tripartite architecture with soaring domes surrounded by vegetation. One of them seems to have been

cut to be embedded into a set of hexagonal tiles. The other one is also quadrangular and of very similar dimensions. There are other common elements, such as the diagonal band strangely covering the facade of the central edifice, the dome framed by two triangular leaves, and the grilled windows reminiscent of the mashrabivva windows. Another decorative architectural tile can be found embedded in the stonework of the minaret of the al-Qalci Mosque, in Damascus, dated about 1470. Placed very high and difficult to observe, it seems to represent a mosque (a building with a dome topped with a crescent and flanked by a minaret). One rediscovers the theme designed on this tile on a blue-and-white-decorated bottle, linked to Iznik production at the end of the fifteenth century - an absolutely unique work that boasts a design of pavilions set against a landscape. However, the two pieces differ in the architectural and plant-decoration details.

Finally, a connection can be established with a small group of gilded enamel glasses decorated architecturally. A bottle from this small group can be dated back to the Ayyubid domination, but the entire set of objects is more closely related to the production from the second half of the thirteenth century or beginning of the fourteenth century.



#### 92 Hexagonal tile with floral motif

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk, 15th century Fritware, underglaze painted in cobalt blue, black, and aubergine 19.4 x 17 cm AKM 00581 Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 131; AKTC 2009b, p. 131

Under the Mamluks (1250-1517), the major centres of ceramic production were Damascus and Cairo. Perhaps because they were produced under a single authority, the wares produced in these regions are still difficult to distinguish from each other, although underglaze painting seems to have been practiced more widely in Syria (Fehérvári 2000, p. 246). However, it appears that some new styles and techniques were introduced to both of these regions between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. One of the most noticeable changes in the aesthetics of Mamluk ceramic production was the addition of a Chinese-inspired aesthetic apparent in blue-and-white colour schemes and celadon glazes meant to imitate Chinese porcelains and celadon wares, as well as the use of Chinese motifs such as lotuses or peonies. The taste for the Far East may have arrived directly through contacts between the Mamluks and China and/or through an Iranian "filter" overland; the khitā'ī

("Cathayan") idiom was prevalent in Iran, particularly from the Ilkhanid Mongol period (1256-1353) forward. The present tile depicts a central stylised lotus-like flower with five cobaltblue floral sprays radiating towards an aubergine scalloped frame bordered by a black line. Hexagonal tiles of comparable dimensions with similar and varied motifs appear in other collections, including the Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait (Fehérvári 2000, pp. 250–251 [no. 311, CER1728TSR]) and the David Collection in Copenhagen (von Folsach 2001, p. 165 [no. 203]). However, the tiles in these collections display a colour palette of cobalt blue, black, and turquoise in contrast to the cobalt blue, black, and aubergine of the present tile. Géza Fehérvári has attributed these tiles to the fifteenth century but reiterates John Carswell's conclusion that a place of production for these works remains uncertain (Fehérvári 2000, p. 251; and Carswell 1972, p. 75). LA



#### 93 A blood-letting device

AKM 00011

Folio from an illustrated manuscript of al-Jazari's Kitāb fī ma°rifat al-hiyal al-handasiyya ("Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices", also known as "The Automata")
Scribe: Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Izmiri
Egypt, Mamluk, dated Safar 755 H / February – March 1354 CE
Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper 39.3 x 27.2 cm

Published: Blochet 1929, pl. 36; Welch 1972a, pp. 28–32; Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 24–26 (no. 3); AKTC 2008a, pp. 198–99 (no. 75); AKTC 2009a, pp. 132–133; AKTC 2009b, pp. 132–133

In the year 1206, Badi al-Zaman ibn al-Razzaz al-Jazari wrote his treatise on mechanical devices for the Artugid sultan Nasir al-Din Muhammad (reigned 1201-1222), who had a great fascination for such devices. The resulting book, which was often copied and widely distributed throughout the entire Middle East, contains descriptions and illustrations of machines developed by al-Jazari. In the third chapter of his work, he describes various devices that are meant to measure the amount of blood loss during bloodletting. The inventor thus perceived himself to be a scholar in the tradition of the Greek mechanopoioi ("machine constructors"), as these were developed based on antique traditions of mechanics (Müller-Wiener, in preparation). This page displays the seventh picture of the corresponding section (Jazari 1974, pp. 143-145; Sezgin 2003, p. 35). It is the "Measuring Bowl for a Phlebotomist", a brass contraption shown in the picture in gold. On the approximately handbreadth-high base rests a bowl that contains a closable aperture at its deepest point. A channel that points towards the bottom left directs the liquid into a cylinder containing a float which is tied to a counterweight attached outside the cylinder. Incoming liquid lifts the float, which causes the counterweight to sink and thereby indicates the amount of blood that has been drawn. The thread that connects the float and weight winds into coils in the upper part of the machine. Two "Recorders" sit on a square platform that is decorated with red battlements and which rests on four pillars. The left recorder holds a brass bar that is flattened at the top and resembles a writing tablet. The bar is fed through one of the pillars and connected to the float so that it rises with the

rising level of blood and indicates the amount of blood loss on the tablet in 10-dirham (about one ounce) increments up to the maximum of 120 dirhams. The second recorder sits exactly in the middle of a large red spool that turns on its axis in synchronicity with the rising level of liquid. The pole in his hand also records the amount of drained liquid on a scale. The largest illustrated "Recorder" sits in the middle of semicircular merlon-decorated alcove. With his left hand, he strokes his beard. As soon as 10 dirhams of blood have flowed into the bowl, he raises his right arm and props it up on the ledge of his perch. This occurs every time ten dirhams flow into the bowl, and with each unit, he raises another finger. VD

This folio comes from an Egyptian copy dated February-March 1354, made for the Mamluk amir Nasir al-Din Muhammad ibn Tulak al-Hasani al-Malik al-Salih at the time of Sultan Hasan's second reign (r. 1354-1361). The Arabic description at the top of the page reads: "And I am showing an illustration of the shape of the basin, the stand, and the cylinders") (transl. Abdullah Ghouchani). While most of the extant folios from this codex, including its colophon, are in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul (Aya Sofya 3606), a number of the original illustrated pages remain dispersed. Anthony Welch has alluded to the humour that may have been intended to accompany some of these illustrations (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 26). Perhaps this followed in the footsteps of al-Hariri's (d. 1122) witty Magāmāt, or Assemblies, illustrated copies of which were circulated widely in the thirteenth century. LA



#### 94 Mosaic arches

Egypt, 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century (?)

Marble and coloured-stone mosaic; L 2.235 m

AKM 00571

Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 94–95 (no. 30):

Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 94–95 (no. 30); AKTC 2009a, p. 133; AKTC 2009b, p. 133 This type of mosaic or inlaid stonework seems to have appeared for the first time in the decoration of the mausoleum of Sultan Oala un, built in 1284-5 in Cairo. Throughout the Mamluk period, it was used in religious buildings, such as the Mosque of Altunbugha al-Maridani (1339) or the Mausoleum of Sultan Barsbay (1432), as well as in private residences. It would again become widespread under Ottoman rule in Egypt. Consequently, this panel and a fountain decoration, which was sold in 1993, supposedly come from a palace dating back to Qaitbay's reign (1468-1496). This triple-arch architectural design can be seen in a number of monuments from the end of the Mamluk period. As of the fifteenth century, it would be often used for the loggia or the internal mural design of the mag<sup>c</sup>ad – the reception room of wealthy Cairo residences. However, the small number of decorations which we have got, with constant recurring geometric designs, offer little in terms of establishing precise dates.

The geometric bands knotted at the corners recur in the decoration of a number of buildings,

such as the Maridani mosque or that of Emir Husayn ibn Haydarbak al-Rumi (1319–1320) in Cairo. The star-within-a-hexagon motif was fairly common and is therefore not a very reliable criterion for affirming specific dates. As for the pointed rectangular elements around the edges of the Gothic arches, they can be observed on a fountain basin which still exists in the reception room  $(q\bar{a}^*a)$  'Uthman Katkhuda, in Cairo, dateable from the fifteenth century, as well as on other later designs, such as the one housed at the Victoria and Albert Museum attributed to seventeenth-century Syria, or those to be found at the Manzil Suhaymi in Cairo. One finds on that last example the same geometric bands knotted at the corners.

This type of highly elaborate and costly design with alluring colour variations had become indispensable in reception halls, for the use of the urban elite. Important people would meet there for parties, lulled by the swish of water fountains and the chanting of musicians.  $\mbox{\em G}$ 





#### 95-97 Three albarelli

Syria, 15th century

Fritware, underglaze painted in blue and black; H (a) 31.7 cm; (b) 30.7 cm; (c) 30.7 cm AKM 00567 (a), AKM 00568 (b), and AKM 00569 (c) Published (a): AKTC 2007a, p. 133 (no. 101); AKTC 2007b, p. 136 (no. 101); Makariou 2007, pp. 190–191 (no. 69); AKTC 2008a, pp. 204–205 (no. 78); AKTC 2009a, pp. 134–135; AKTC 2009b, pp. 134–135

Published (b): AKTC 2007a, p. 133 (no. 101a); AKTC 2007b, p. 136 (no. 101a); Makariou 2007, pp. 26–27 (no. 2); AKTC 2009a, pp. 134–135; AKTC 2009b, pp. 134–135

Published (c): AKTC 2007a, p. 133 (no. 101b); AKTC 2007b, p. 136 (no. 101b); Makariou 2007, pp. 26-27 (no. 2); AKTC 2009a, pp. 134-135; AKTC 2009b, pp. 134-135







Two albarelli from this group obviously come from the same workshop; they have the same size, similar concave cylindrical belly, horizontal shoulder and wide truncated neck, ending in a thick mouth and with very similar designs painted in cobalt blue under transparent glaze. Registers of foliage, separated by horizontal double lines, cover the two vases in their entirety, mixing rosettes, lotus flowers and small bent or dentate leaves. On the central, wider register are crests with a fleurde-lys alternating with large rolled stems, punctuated with florets and leaves, shielding a large centre flower on one of the vases, and a crane in flight on the other. The third vase, however, has large inscriptions painted in black and blue and written in thuluth style with very slender downstrokes against a background of fine, rolled stems with foliage sparser than that found on the albarelli mentioned above.

This type of high, narrow cylindrical vase seems to have appeared in Iran in the eleventh or twelfth century before spreading around the Near East. This elegant hourglass-shape profile was readily adopted by the end of the twelfth-century in Syria. It is generally thought that these albarelli were used to store pharmaceutical substances or perfumes and could be exported – especially to Europe – with their contents. Various French, Spanish and Italian inventories of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries mention ceramic items "from Damascus". Indeed, the Medicis archives indicate the presence of albaregli damaschini in Florence.

These three vases were recently rediscovered in Italy and two other similar albarelli, bearing the same crest, were recently sold in London. A piece comparable to the calligraphic vase is known and housed at the National Ceramic Museum in Sèvres. It is an albarello with a thicker shape, decorated in blue and white only and presenting the same kind of writing stretched in length adapted to the vertical form of the base. The inscription was deciphered by L. Kalus who suggested that it was a text relating to impotence and erection, no doubt in connection with the pharmaceutical content of the vase. It might be that the inscription – unread – on this albarello was also related to the substance which it contained.

Another albarello, housed among the collections of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, presents a very similar design to cat. no. 94 and cat. no. 95, blending coats of arms with fleur-delys and cranes in flight. These five blazon-decorated vases thus form a highly coherent set. The particular design of the fleur-de-lys, with its two flowery outgrowths in the upper corners, has been associated with the coat of arms of the city of Florence. It is tempting to make this attribution, but it is not entirely convincing. One could certainly imagine an "adapted" version, based on the Florentine coat-of-arms model, made by the Eastern potter, which was more in keeping with his ornamental repertoire. Italian merchants - and those from Florence, in particular - were present in Cairo, Damascus and Beirut and it is possible that one of them could have ordered these vases for a Florentine apothecary.

The *fleur-de-lys* nonetheless did form part of the Islamic repertoire as a symbolic crest. Several

Mamluk sultans and emirs used it until the fifteenth century. It is to be noted that, on monuments at least, the motif appeared essentially within a Syrian context. A version that is surprisingly close to our vases (but without the flowery outgrowths) can be discerned on the marble decoration of the Maristan Nuri hospital in Damascus. This is due to the embellishments effected in 1283 by the sultan Qala'un (who used the *fleur-de-lys* as a blazon) after he had been cared for in that institution. This distinctive design can be seen on gourds with moulded designs found in Syria and probably dating back to the end of the thirteenth or fourteenth century. It would be tempting to assume that there is a link between these albarelli and the highly respected Nuri hospital, which was still very reputable in the fifteenth century. A jar bearing a blazon with a *fleur-de-lys* design, though a very different design, possibly of the fourteenth century, bears an inscription which indicated that it had been made by the same Maristan Nuri and supposedly contained a waterlily-based preparation.

However, the shield-like shape of the blazon is not frequently found among the coats of arms of the Mamluks who used a medallion that was either circular or almond-shaped. It could be seen, however, on Mamluk incrusted metal objects intended for the European market, sometimes left white for the purchaser to later engrave his own coat of arms thereon. Moreover, these albarelli were part of a blue and white design production, with borrowed Chinese references, which developed in Syria, but also in Egypt, probably from the end of the fourteenth century on, under the influence of mostly imported Yuan porcelain. The Syrian production is exemplified in a small blue and white plantdecorated bowl, kept in the Louvre museum, which bears on its underside "Made in Damascus". Fragments with plant motifs that are fairly comparable to the decoration on these two vases were found in that same city, near Bab Sharqi, where potters' workshops were located in medieval times. The Fustat excavations also unearthed a significant number of blue and white fragments, sometimes with the addition of black, often bearing signatures of potters. This sort of blue and white Chinesetype decoration is also often seen on wall tiles in Syria, Egypt and Anatolia, taken from monuments dated between 1425 and the end of the fifteenth century, which help to establish a date for this work.

It should be noted, however, that the calligraphic albarello exhibits a colour scheme that includes black in addition to the blue and white present on the other two albarelli. Ceramic wares decorated in these colours have a history of production in Iran during the Ilkhanid period (1256-1353). While also almost certainly inspired by Chinese blue and white porcelain wares, the use of black appears to be an Iranian addition to the decorative scheme, found on numerous ceramics as well as in the architectural decoration of some Ilkhanid tombs in Yazd. With the close contact existing between the Mamluks and the Ilkhanids in both times of war and diplomacy, it would not be far-fetched to suggest the additional possibility of Chinese inspiration through an Ilkhanid filter. CJ/LA





# kg-images, Gérard Degeorge

### Anatolia and the Ottomans

Sheila Canby

The works in this section mostly date from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the period of large, powerful empires which dominated the Middle East, North Africa, and India. Known as the Gunpowder Empires, the Ottomans (r. 1299-1924), Safavids (r. 1501-1722), and the Mughals (r. 1526-1858) ruled in an age of increasing global trade, not only between Europe and Asia but also with Africa and the Americas. With the wealth gleaned from trade and conquest, the sultans and shahs of these dynasties were directly involved in forging distinct artistic styles of architecture, ornament and painting through which they broadcast their imperial message.

In the sixteenth century, following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the sultans supported the formation of an imperial Ottoman style in the arts. In textiles and ceramics a penchant for non-figurative decoration manifested itself in designs based on floral and vegetal forms (see cat. nos. 101-106). Unlike Iran, where poetic and epic texts were most often chosen for illustration,

the Ottomans preferred to illustrate historical manuscripts either chronicling their own history or that of the prophets. Foreign trade and the extent of the Ottoman empire, which included Arabia, the Levant, parts of Eastern Europe and Egypt, led to stylistic changes in painting, architecture and ceramics. Nonetheless, in all the lands under Ottoman control, distinct artistic and architectural forms reinforced their presence.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the Ottomans extended their version of 'branding' to portraiture. Ottoman portraits (cat. nos. 98–100) depict the sultan dominating his surroundings and accompanied by attributes specific to himself. Series of portraits of the Ottoman sultans were produced for albums where their sheer numbers placed them in marked contrast to the Safavids, Mongols and Uzbeks, all dynasties that came to power in the sixteenth century. Although distinct artistic styles developed at different Muslim courts, the aim of using art to present the ruler as regal, cultured and powerful was common to all of them.

#### 98 Portrait of Sultan Selim II

Attributed to Haydar Reis, called Nigari Turkey, Istanbul, *ca.* 1570 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; 44.2 x 31.2 cm

Later inscription in window panes: "sultān" (right); "[yā] kabikakh" (left) (an invocation against bookworms)

AKM 00219

Published: Canby 1998, pp. 97–99 (no. 70); Carboni 2006, pp. 142 and 297; Carboni 2007, pp. 142 and 297; AKTC 2007a, pp. 98–99 (no. 68); AKTC 2007b, pp. 94 and 96 (no. 68); AKTC 2008a, pp. 138, 140–141 (no. 50); AKTC 2009a, p. 138; AKTC 2009b, p. 138 This large album portrait of Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–1574) reveals much about his reign. It was Selim's father, Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566), who solidified the geographical borders of the Ottoman Empire and refined the central administration of his government, allowing his son and successor to pursue more sedentary pleasures such as literature, art and winedrinking. Nicknamed "Selim the Sot" for his affection for wine, the sultan was nonetheless a great bibliophile and patron of architecture, music,

and the arts of the book. The painter, poet, and naval commander Haydar Reis depicted Selim II as larger than life; the robust sultan in his luxurious fur-lined and brocaded gold garment dwarfs both the page boy and the interior in which he sits in a cross-legged position on a carpet. This composition was one of a number of conventions for Ottoman royal portraiture developed in 1570s and is similar to portraits in Loqman's *Kiyafetii'l Insaniye fi Şemailu'l-Osmaniye*, a study to record the physiognomy of the Ottoman sultans. AF

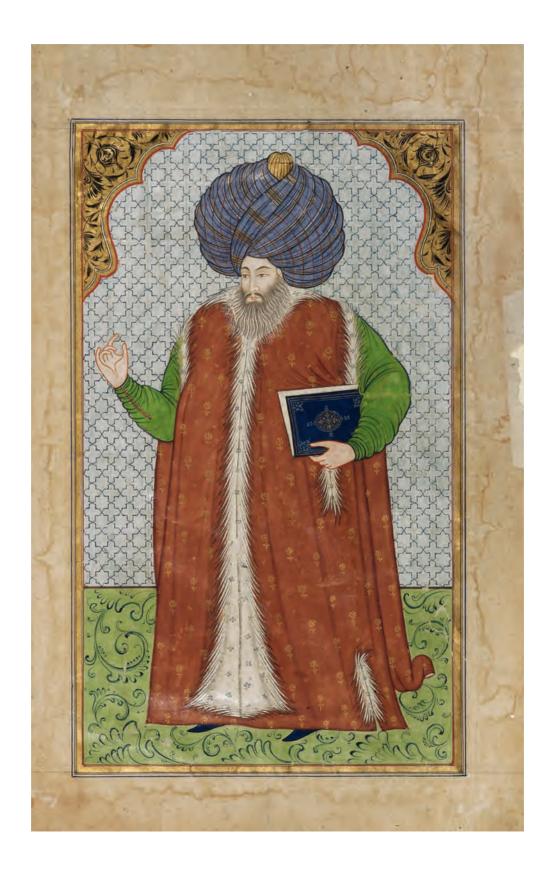


#### 99 An Ottoman official

Turkey, Istanbul, *ca.* 1650 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper Folio 29 x 17.9 cm; image 22.3 x 13 cm AKM 00217

Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 36–38 (no. 8); AKTC 2009a, p. 139; AKTC 2009b, p. 139 This portrait depicts a large, grey-bearded gentleman wearing a lilac bulbous-shaped Ottoman turban and a fur-lined, gold-embroidered burnt orange robe. He carries a blue tooled and gilded leather-bound manuscript, perhaps a *dīvān*, under his left arm. His grand stance, stern expression,

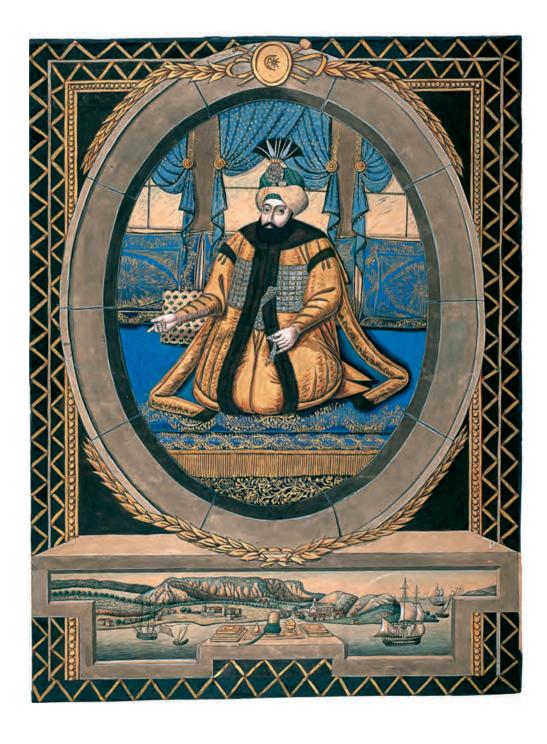
and right hand (which is raised in a pontificating gesture), all suggest this figure is a person of high standing, perhaps a court official. The portrait was once mounted in an album and may date to the reign of the Ottoman sultan Mehmet IV (r. 1648–1687).



#### 100 Portrait of Sultan Selim III

Turkey, Istanbul, *ca.* 1805 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper 54.1 x 40.5 cm AKM 00220 Published: Canby, 1998, p. 103 (no. 75); AKTC 2007a, p. 99 (no. 69); AKTC 2007b, pp. 96–97 (no. 69); AKTC 2008a, pp. 144–145 (no. 52); AKTC 2009a, pp. 140–141; AKTC 2009b, pp. 140–141 Royal portrait series bound into albums provided an important way for Ottoman sultans to record their lineage and statecraft. The portraits of Selim II (cat. no. 98) and Selim III (r. 1789–1807) are examples of this venerable tradition. This image of Selim III represents a different format for Ottoman royal portraiture. It demonstrates the profound effect of European painting, particularly French, on Ottoman art by the nineteenth century. Of note is the attention to shading and a grisaille, blue, and gold palette, as well as the painting's presentation as an oval window set on an allegory of the Sultan's reign, framed on a black

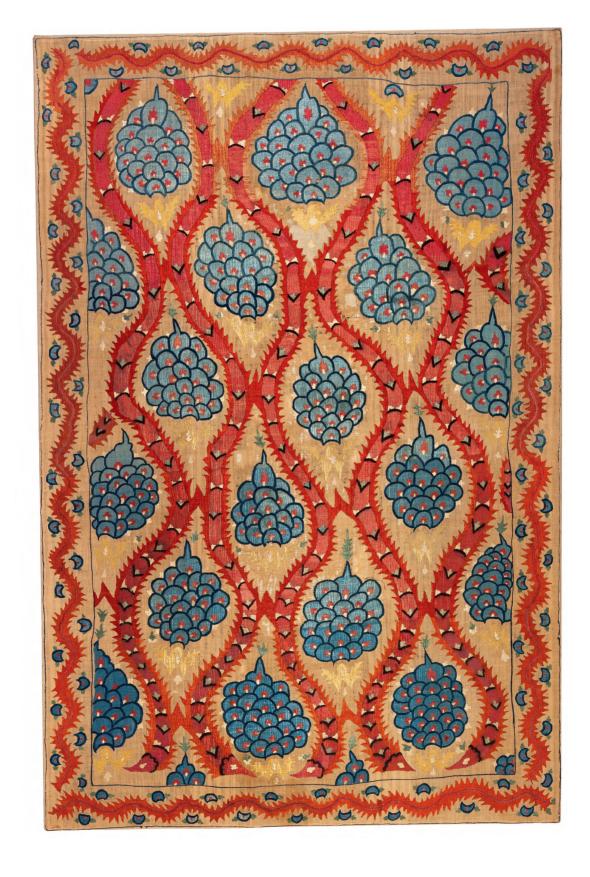
ground highlighted with gold details. Canby suggests that the buildings in the distance may be the new army barracks built by Selim III at Haydarpasha in Istanbul or restorations of Mevlevi complexes. In either case, this depiction reflects the Ottoman interest in topographical representations and maps. Continuing this story of cross-cultural influence, the series to which this portrait belongs subsequently provided the inspiration for a London printed version of Ottoman Sultan portraits published in 1815 by John Young, *A Series of Portraits of the Emperors of Turkey: Engraved from Pictures Painted at Constantinople*. AF



# 101 Yorgan yüzü (quilt cover)

Turkey, Ottoman, late 17th century Silk; 209 x 137 cm AKM 00706 Published: AKTC 2008b, no. 7; AKTC 2009a, pp. 144–145; AKTC 2009b, pp. 144–145 The pattern on this *yorgan yüzü* (quilt cover) recalls typical seventeenth-century Ottoman designs on silk and velvet textiles. Whereas earlier patterns include lattice designs enclosing floral motifs, later ones such as this panel show wavy paral-

lel stems or vines, some of which form ogival frames around grape clusters or tulips. The designs may also reflect Florentine tastes resulting from cultural exchanges with Italy. LA



# **Iznik** pottery

# 102 Dish with a lion

Turkey, Iznik, second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Fritware, polychrome underglaze painted on an opaque white glaze

Ø 36.5 cm

AKM 00811

Related pieces, see Ribeiro 1996, 248–249, no. 88 (Gulbenkian Museum no. 853); Hitzel – Jacotin 2005, 282, no. 417 (Musée National de la Renaissance, Paris); Atasoy – Raby 1989, 257, nos. 543 and 545 (ceramic in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, and Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York)

# 103 Dish with central flower

Turkey, Iznik, ca. 1575–1580 Fritware, polychrome underglaze painted on an opaque white glaze

Ø 29.2 cm

AKM 00586

Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 204–205; Falk 1985, pp. 244–245 (no. 248); AKTC 2008a, pp. 142–143 (no. 51); AKTC 2009a, p. 142; AKTC 2009b, p. 142

# 104 Dish with red roses

Turkey, Iznik, ca. 1575–1580 Fritware, polychrome underglaze painted on an opaque white glaze; Ø 28.5 cm AKM 00686

Kindly lent by Princess Catherine Aga Khan Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 202–203; AKTC 2007a, p. 76 (no. 45); AKTC 2007b, p. 72 (no. 45); AKTC 2009a, p. 142; AKTC 2009b, p. 142

# 105 Dish with a representation of a garden

Turkey, Iznik, *circa* 1575–1580
Fritware, polychrome underglaze painted on an opaque white glaze
Ø 29.8 cm
AKM 00737

Kindly lent by Princess Catherine Aga Khan Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 208; AKTC 2009a, p. 143; AKTC 2009b, p. 143

# 106 Dish with tulips and roses

Turkey, Iznik, ca. 1575–1580 Fritware, polychrome underglaze painted on an opaque white glaze Ø 34.3 cm

AKM 00687

Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 204–205; Falk 1985, pp. 244–245 (no. 248); AKTC 2007a, p. 97 (no. 67); AKTC 2007b, pp. 96 and 206 (no. 67); AKTC 2009a, p. 143; AKTC 2009b, p. 143

Ottoman visual culture reached its apex under the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566). Like his predecessors, Süleyman used art and architecture to legitimize his power and authority; unlike them, however, he initiated the creation of a royal aesthetic that would become understood as uniquely Ottoman. In addition to continuing the practice of royal portraiture, which could be transported via medals and albums throughout the empire and to foreign lands, the court's design atelier, or nakkashane, developed an imperial style that visually unified the Ottoman realm and distinguished it from neighbours and rivals. Before the 1550s, the Ottoman court had relied on an eclectic court culture that drew from both the Iranians to the east and the Europeans to the west. By the mid-sixteenth century, however, these foreign artistic models were synthesized into a classical Ottoman style, which coincided with the replacement of Persian with Ottoman Turkish as the official language of the court.

This new artistic vocabulary was immediately recognisable in the medium of ceramics, where a selection of floral, vegetal, geometric and Chinese-inspired elements (arriving via the Timurids in fifteenth-century Iran) were painted under a trans-

parent glaze onto a white, frit body. The tulips, rosettes, carnations, *saz* leaves, grape designs, and wave patterns on the dishes in this group comprise some of the aspects of this distinctive new genre, which was canonized through architectural decoration. What is unusual, however, is the depiction of a lion on a deep plate with black-bordered cobalt blue, viridian green and pastose red underglaze painting. The animal is surrounded by tulips and hyacinths and an abstract spiral pattern adorns the flat rim (cat. no. 102).

The dating of these beautifully painted dishes is based on sources that attest to a move of ceramic production from Istanbul (where the ceramic industry was declining in the shadow of a growing textile industry of kemba, or silk brocade) to Iznik, where potteries thrived from their close proximity to wood and other materials needed for kilns and ceramic production. The symmetrical organisation of geometric and floral ornament seen on many of these wares has been compared to other ceramics produced during the reign of Sultan Murad III (r. 1574-1595) and attributed to his patronage based on stylistic and technical comparison to datable architectural tiles from this period (Atasov and Raby 1989, pp. 246-249; AKTC 2007b, p. 96). LA







# The Path of the Travellers

From Baghdad to Delhi



# orenz Korn, Bamberg

# The Persianised East and the Royal Tradition

**Michael Barry** 

Although dimly perceived by Spanish and North African Muslims (for whom "Islamic" has almost always been equated with "Arabic"), the rise or rather resurrection of the Persian language, by the mid-eleventh century, to equal cultural if not liturgical status with Arabic throughout the Eastern Islamic world, was no historical accident.

The Persian-speaking lands constituted, not some remote eastern frontier, but the demographic core of the early Arab empire, which through a civil war shifted its capital from Damascus to Baghdad by the middle of the eighth century precisely in stark political recognition of young Islamic civilization's now inescapably Iranian centre of gravity.

The Muslim Arab conquerors of the seventh century swept across large portions of the Christianized Roman or "Byzantine" Empire, but overran the totality of its erstwhile rival, the former Zoroastrian Persian Empire of the Sasanian dynasty. Thus, for a few generations, before inevitable dynastic break-ups, the twin military road networks of both far-flung domains, were combined into a single politically united territorial band running from the Tagus to the Indus.

While the caliphs adopted artistic and other cultural aspects from Byzantium (including the legacy of Greek science and philosophy), they also borrowed the old Persian system of administration: to such extent that the caliphate as ruled from Baghdad, with its many converted Iranian ministers, scribes and officers, almost appears as an Islamicized metamorphosis of the ancient empire of the Sasanian Persians. Imperial Islamic culture's underlying Persian heritage was clearly perceived by Muslim authors in eighth and ninth century caliphal Iraq, often of Iranian origin themselves although they now expressed their thoughts in Classical Arabic. Prestigious Iranian authors in Iraq (meaning as far west as Spain) transcribed into Arabic the chronicles of the ancient Persian kings and even their favourite animal fables, as models of political conduct for the caliphs.

The towering Islamic scholar Tabari (832-923), composer of the most authoritative of all glosses on the Our'an, deliberately intertwined the histories of the ancient Persian emperors with the traditions of the Prophet-Kings of the monotheistic Scriptures in his Tārīkh or "World Chronicle" so that the gradual convergence of their twin lines by the will of God until Muhammad's birth in Arabia (570) should coincide, precisely, with the rule in neighbouring Iran and Iraq of Khusraw I the Just, the model Sasanian Persian monarch by virtue of his wise laws and humane administration. Through the influence of scribes like Tabari, the caliphs of Baghdad, and all Muslim princes who either owed them allegiance or politically vied with them, became ideally perceived, or at any rate praised, as legitimate heirs to both combined lines: symbolic successors at once to Khusraw and the other heroic kings of ancient Persian lore, and to Solomon son of David from among the Prophet-Kings.

Christian writers had in fact long argued a similar God-willed convergence between the reigning lines of Rome and Judah, with Christ born by Divine choice under the just worldrule of Caesar Augustus: hence both lines should merge through Emperor Constantine's conversion in 313 CE and all succeeding Christian monarchs be regarded as combined successors to both Rome and Judah (like Charlemagne crowned as an "Augustus" and anointed as a "David"). Byzantine Christian precedent probably influenced, and in any case illuminates, the similar retroactive justification and hence "Islamicization" of ancient Persian imperial history, with decisive effect on the representation of the Iraqi caliphs and all subsequent Muslim rulers in medieval Islamic literature and art.

The tenth-century Samanid emirs of Bukhara in Central Asia, Sunni princes of Iranian stock, professed vassals to the caliph but autonomous in their own domains, restored the Persian language (now written in Arabic script) to full administrative parity with Arabic as their *darī*, or "royal", tongue. By no accident, the first book they chose for transcription into neo-Persian prose was Tabari's "World Chronicle". The next and even higher literary stage of the Persian renaissance was attained under Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (r. 998–1030), ruler in what is now southeastern Afghanistan.

Mahmud, a Central Asian Turkish military adventurer who became the first Muslim prince to sport the title *sultān* (literally, "power"), overthrew the rule of his Samanid overlords to establish his own widespread West Asian empire, using plundering raids deep into India to finance his ambitions to conquer Baghdad itself. But Mahmud most importantly sponsored the poet Firdawsi, who put the entire epic record of ancient Persia into majestic neo-Persian verse as the *Shāhnāma*, or "Book of Kings", composed as a heroic model for the perceived Muslim successor to the world-rule of the Sasanian emperors – that is, Sultan Mahmud himself.

Sultan Mahmud may have poorly rewarded his epic poet financially, but the cultural impact of his patronage of Firdawsi cannot be overemphasized. Mahmud's fellow Turks. the Seljugs, outfought his successors and entered Baghdad themselves as de facto lords and protectors over the now politically helpless caliphs in 1055, launching almost nine centuries of Turkish political supremacy in the Near East. But the Seljugs followed Mahmud's precedent both imperial and cultural: the defence and spread of Islam through military conquest; and the promotion of the Persian language and the Persian epic at court - much like, say, twelfth century Crusading Norman kings and knights spread the use of French from England to Sicily to the Holy Land. Nor was nationalism, either Norman or Seljug, in any modern sense involved: rather, the Seljuq Turks laid claim to the imperial inheritance of ancient Persian worldrule as legitimized by Islam and sung by the poet Firdawsi. Again, this parallels the way their Norman contemporaries portrayed themselves as heirs to Roman world-rule as sung by the poet Virgil, read in a Christianized light.

This dominant cultural pattern – Islam defended by Turkic dynasts portrayed in literature and art as heirs to the ancient Persian cosmocrators – remained unbroken throughout the subsequent history of the Near East and notably also in Islamicized northern India (ever since its initial conquest by Sultan

Mahmud), from the eleventh-century down to the collapse of the traditional Islamic state-systems in the course of the nineteenth. Even the thirteenth-century Mongol conquerors of Iran and Iraq, upon converting to Islam in 1295, intermarried with local Turkish aristocrats, adopted Persian as their court language, and sponsored an especially famous manuscript of the Shāhnāma in which newly fashionable Chinese aesthetic models in the depiction of dragons, clouds, trees and rushing streams were permanently assimilated into the region's Byzantine-inspired techniques of illumination and incorporated into the traditional allegorical code of Persian royal representation.

Imperial houses between the Bosphorus and Bengal commissioned costly illuminated manuscripts of Firdawsi's epic - the most splendid was illustrated for Iran's Shah Tahmasp in the 1520s and 1530s – as part of their royal regalia. Political rivalry fanned by sectarian tension may have pitted against each other in wars the three great sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Islamic empires – that is, the Sunni Ottomans in the Near East, the Shiite Safavids in Iran, and the (more tepid) Sunni Mughals in India – but all three states (equally founded by Turkish princes) defended similar pretensions to world-rule: based on the same Islamicized Persian cultural heritage symbolized by Firdawsi's epic Book of Kings.

For all the evolution of successive historical styles under changing dynasties, the Persian royal key still unlocks the meaning of much of Islamic figurative art, beginning with stylized representations on metal or ceramic discs of the Baghdad caliphs and then their Seljuq lords protectors, and even in the elaborately carved ivories of the tenth- and eleventh-century rival Fatimid and so-called Spanish Umayyad caliphs in Cairo and Cordoba.

Drawing on ancient Iranian (and ultimately even ancient Mesopotamian) precedents, artists until the middle of the nineteenth century normally depicted the traditional Muslim ruler curbing or racing his horse as a mighty hunter and the dominant conquering lord over a dominated vigorous animal, slaughtering wild beasts as both protector and food-provider of his people, and shooting arrows that symbolized the shafts of light of his solar power. Otherwise the Muslim ruler was shown enthroned, cross-legged and in majestic, rigid frontal

position (although the Mughals in sixteenthand seventeenth-century India preferred their portraits in three-quarter view or profile), and adorned with all, or some, of the following emblems:

a) A halo shining around the head. This was the ancient Persian *farr* or light of royal glory. the sign of a just and legitimate ruler. The Romans actually adopted this emblem of imperial portraiture from the Sasanian Persians in the fourth century CE, and only in the fifth century began transferring it to depictions of Christ and the saints. According to Firdawsi and other authors of the Persian epic, the farr fades away from around the head of a tyrant, which is one reason why Islamic royal portraiture insisted on showing this farr in the ninth to eleventh centuries. Twelfth century art sometimes used the halo for purely decorative effect, and it dropped from artistic fashion in the fifteenth century, but the farr was deliberately revived as a royal emblem in the art of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Mughal Emperors in India.

b) A stylized crown derived from the Sasanian royal headdress bedecked with designs of the outstretched wings of the mythical vāragna sunbird (a variant of the sīmurgh sunbird), a crescent moon, and the morning star, proclaiming the Sasanian Persian King as brother to the sun, moon and stars. Iraqi caliphal art of the eighth to eleventh centuries persists to show recognizably Sasanian-type crowns, albeit increasingly simplified ones. Later medieval Islamic stylization further reduced its design to the familiar starand-crescent motif that became the Imperial Ottoman standard.

c) A cup held tight in the right fist against the heart. This symbolized the magic cup of the mythical Persian King Jamshid, in which this cosmocrator was supposed to have miraclously beheld as in a mirror the seven climes of the world he ruled. Medieval Eastern Islamic tradition assimilated King Jamshid to King Solomon, and attributed to both monarchs an identical magic cup. Actually the cup represents the monarch's own heart and in some depictions can even be omitted, with the ruler simply shown pointing, rather significantly, to his own breast. Seventeenthcentury Mughal Indian art added the Emperor's contemplation of his own signet-ring, another Solomonic emblem signifying the gem-sealed ring of the monarch's heart and a further sign of his world-rule.

d) A kerchief grasped tight in the left fist,

almost certainly derived from the ancient Roman mappa, or white cloth brandished by the consuls to signal the opening of the circus games, and still shown clutched by Byzantine officials and even emperors as late as the twelfth century as an emblem of their legal power. This symbolic strip of cloth also endured tenaciously in Islamic art, still seen not only dangling from princely left fists in late twelfth-century Iraqi manuscript paintings or tucked into the royal sash in fifteenth-century Herati illuminations, but as a visible attribute of all Ottoman rulers from Mehmed the Conqueror of Byzantium in the fifteenth century to Selim II in the sixteenth and even Selim III (who holds one stitched with jewels in this exhibition) at the outset of the nine-

e) A throne upheld by twin monstrous beasts, normally lions but sometimes griffins or dragons. The mythological reference here was to the throne of the fifth-century Sasanian Persian King Bahram, who according to Iranian legend won his crown by ordeal as the only prince of the blood royal, among various pretenders, that dared snatch the regalia from between two unchained lions whom he heroically overpowered. From Sasanian royal art, depictions of such a ruler sitting in glory upon a twin-lion throne passed into Islamic heraldry and appear as far west as early eleventh-century caliphal Spain. Explicit reference by the twelfth-century Sicilian Muslim writer Ibn Zafar, in his Sulwān al-Mutā<sup>c</sup> ("Nectar for Princes"), of which a rare fourteenth-century Iraqi illumination appears in this exhibition), further testifies to the legend's popularity even in the farthest Arabic-speaking Occident: man akhadha l-tāja wa-l-zaynata min bayna l-asadayn, fa-huwa bi-l-mulki awlā ("He who seizes the Crown and Regalia from between the twin lions, he is of Kingship the most worthv!").

The late twelfth-century Seljuq Persian poet Nizami of Azerbaijan, in his *Haft Paykar*, or "Book of the Seven Icons", beloved by generations of medieval Iranian, Central Asian, Indo-Muslim and also Ottoman princely readers, richly embroidered upon this symbolism: his heroic King Bahram's Solomonic intellect overpowers the twin lions signifying lust and wrath, and Bahram's crown itself is the moonlike pearl of eternal life, set between these same twin beasts as if between the twin dragon jaws of the constellation Draco: *tāj-i zar dar miyān-i* 

shīr-i siyāh/chun bi-kām-i ū azhdahā durr-i māh ("The golden crown between these lions sable/Like the moon's pearl, within twin dragons' maw"). Nizami tapped here into the deepest universal mythological motif of the twin heraldic beasts, mirroring the dual nature of the magic monster who protects the divine treasure from the unworthy, but bestows it upon the conquering and deserving

spiritual hero – like King Bahram himself, one of the many solar dragon-slaying princely warriors of the Iranian epic. In symbolic equivalence to King Bahram's twin throne-lions, twin heraldic dragons frame holy verses in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Iranian military standards for the king's armies as well as ornamented bowls meant for dervishes begging included in this exhibition.

# Mesopotamia

Ladan Akbarnia

Under the Umayvads (661–750), the Islamic world grew to a territory stretching from Spain and North Africa to the borders of China and India, with Damascus as its centre of government. In 750, however, the Umayyads were overthrown by the Abbasids, who transferred the capital to Baghdad on the river Tigris. The heart of the Islamic world was now situated in the "cradle of civilisation", the land known as Mesopotamia (Greek for "land between the rivers"). This region is comprised of the land around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in modern Iraq as well as parts of northeastern Syria, southeastern Turkey, and southwestern Iran. Baghdad was situated only 56 kilometres away from Ctesiphon, the old capital of the Sasanian dynasty (224-651), which controlled an empire that once encompassed Mesopotamia, Armenia, Iran, Central Asia, and even parts of the Arabian Peninsula. In 836, increasing tensions between mamluks, the slave soldiers who served the Abbasids, and the citizens of Baghdad resulted in the creation of a new capital, Samarra, which became a major centre of court culture and inspired motifs such as the "bevelled" style in the art and architecture of the Islamic world.

It is well known that Graeco-Byzantine and Sasanian cultures contributed to the development of Islamic art and architecture, but in Mesopotamia, the influence of ancient Near Eastern culture was understandably more apparent, whether in visual motifs, vessel shapes, or artistic mediums or techniques. The art of this region includes metalwork, a craft partly inherited from the Sasanians (gold, silver, copper, mercury, lead, and iron were mined in Mesopotamia and the Iranian lands) [cat. no. 108]). Ceramics were produced from porous earthenware and covered in alkaline glaze to render them impermeable (Blair – Bloom 1997, pp. 104–105); their surface decoration ranged from inscriptions of blessings or aphorisms in the Kufic Arabic script prevalent in the Abbasid period to blue-and-white or vibrant and colourful splash-decorated works inspired by Chinese porcelain and ceramic wares (cat. no. 109). The Abbasids' taste for the "exotic" was encouraged by cultural exchanges with the east; Chinese artists are even known to have been present in Baghdad in the eighth century. Book production also flourished, as seen in extant manuscripts of scientific treatises such as Dioscorides' Materia Medica, translated from Greek to Arabic in manuscripts with illustrations based on classical models (cat. nos. 112-115), as well as belles lettres literature and mirrors for princes, which often consisted of fables or tales embedded with lessons that served as handbooks for rulers-in-training (cat. no. 117).

# **107 Ewer**

Iran or Mesopotamia, 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century Earthenware, moulded, impressed, and covered in a monochrome mustard or light brown transparent glaze; H 33 cm AKM 00539

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.154; AKTC 2009b, p.154

This ewer exhibits a bulbous body, the bottom portion of which appears to have been made from a mould containing an overall pattern of spiral circle, rosette, and heart motifs. Teardrop shaped leaf forms pointed in alternating vertical directions and framing five-lobed foliate motifs have been impressed onto the upper portion. Most of the flared portion of the neck, which ends in the object's mouth, is missing, but the applied handle is still intact. Multi-petalled rosettes are also applied throughout. The variations in colour created by the arbitrary spreading of the glaze in thinner and thicker portions around the body create a polychrome effect similar to that of Tang Chinese splashed wares, but the decoration here was formed from a single colour. Iranian artists would certainly have been aware of Chinese designs due to cross-cultural exchanges between these regions, which date to at least the first millennium BCE. A discovery in 1997 of a Tang period shipwreck

off the coast of the Indonesian island of Belitung the first archaeological evidence of an Arab or Indian ship found in Asia and the first to found with a complete cargo - has yielded additional information about these connections during the late antique period. One bowl found on the ship is said to be inscribed with a date equivalent to 826 CE, a date confirmed (to the century) by Carbon 14 analysis (Wade 2003, p. 20). When more information about this cargo comes to light, it may lead to new conclusions about artistic transmission between the Near and Far East. In the meantime, the body on the present example also bears resemblance to numerous Islamic metal wares made in Iran or Iraq in the eighth to ninth century, wares that, in fact, reflected a continuation of forms used during the Sasanian period (226-651). The ewer may therefore be given a similar attribution. LA



# 108 Ewer with inscribed blessings

Iran or Iraq, Abbasid, 9th century
Brass, engraved and punched; H 32.8 cm
Inscription (Arabic): baraka wa-[yumn wa-...] sa ʿāda wa-salāma wa-ghibta wa-ni ʿma wa-rahma wa-...
Ii-sāhibihī wa-... ("Blessing and [good fortune and... (restored)] happiness and well-being and felicity and [God's] grace and mercy and... to its owner and...")

AKM 00718

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.154; AKTC 2009b, p.154

The earliest datable metalwork from the Islamic world consists of ewers made in a variety of shapes, sometimes including spouts and sometimes without. The present example has an ovoid body, a narrow, raised foot, a narrow and short tubular spout, a wide shoulder decorated with scrolling palmettes, and a round, trumpet-shaped mouth, the latter framed almost entirely by two bodiless eagle or falcon heads. The birds' heads appear to grow out of the join between the ewer's mouth and a long, serpentine handle. The tail of the handle ends at the top of the bottle in a palmetteshaped thumb-rest similar to extant examples datable to the eighth or ninth century and attributed to Iraq or Iran (for examples, see Atıl, Chase, and Jett 1985, p. 14, fig. 4 and p. 63, fig. 23). An inscription invoking blessings upon the owner appears in Kufic Arabic script just below the shoulder and above a pair of ten-petalled rosette medallions engraved on opposite sides of the lower body.

Several metal ewers from the early Islamic period reveal shapes and decorative programmes used in the pre-Islamic Iranian world. The ones with pearshaped bodies, no spouts, and handles ending in a palmette motif are considered to be the earliest metal wares and are believed to have been produced in Khurasan and Transoxiana in the eastern Iranian (including modern Afghanistan and Uzbekistan) world (ibid., pp. 62-63). Their shapes and designs, which sometimes display engraved, carved, or repoussé real and mythical animals, reflect a close relationship to the artistic idiom seen in Sasanian metalwork, which even includes representations of single-handed pear-shaped ewers in some silver gilt plates (*ibid.*, p. 63, figs. 23 – 24). This ewer, which contains a somewhat varied shape with a more angular mouth, may have been produced in the Greater Iranian world or Mesopotamia at a slightly later period. LA



# 109 Dish with variation on "splashed" decoration

Iran or Iraq, Abbasid, 9th century
Earthenware with a white slip and controlled
"splashes" of brown, yellow, green, and manganese
in a transparent glaze; Ø 37 cm
AKM 00734

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 156; AKTC 2009b, p. 156

This large, shallow dish has been decorated using a variation on the "splashed" technique, an effect achieved when pigments added to the surface of a ceramic object run when fired under a lead glaze. Splashed wares, which can include splashed decoration only or additional incised (sgraffiato) designs, have been the subject of much debate among scholars. It was first assumed that the technique was inspired by Tang period (618–907) Chinese ceramic splashed wares, but this theory was questioned as no verified Chinese originals for the Near Eastern objects were identified and the funerary function of the Tang wares made it unlikely that they would have travelled outside of China. However, certain Chinese splashed wares were later found in Samarra, in modern Iraq.

These are believed to be the so-called *sancai* wares produced specifically for export; these, perhaps, may have provided points of creative departure for their Near Eastern counterparts (see Rawson, Tite and Hughes 1987–88; Fehérvári 2000, p. 47; and Watson 2004, p. 199). The present dish was tested using thermoluminescence analysis, which provided a date of last firing consistent with a ninth century date of manufacture; this is also consistent with the absence of incised or sgraffiato decoration, which first appeared in the tenth century (Watson 2004, p. 201). However, a carefully painted abstract design in manganese evoking the image of a blossoming flower with a large scalloped rim distinguishes this dish from straightforward "splashed" wares. LA



# 110 Socrates and Aristophanes Illustrated manuscript of the judgements of the Greek philosophers

Style of Baghdad (Iraq) or Damascus (Syria), 13th–14th century, with 19th–century additions Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; 20.6 x 15 cm

AKM 00283

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 129 (no. 99);

AKTC 2007b, p. 133 (no. 99); AKTC 2009a, p.158;

AKTC 2009b, p.158

The two turbaned figures are labelled *Suqrat* and *Aristajanis* in this folio from an Arabic manuscript based on the judgements of Greek philosophers. The figures may be identified as the Greek philosopher Socrates (469–399 BCE) and the contemporary Greek playwright Aristophanes (*ca.* 

450–386 BCE). Their depiction is similar to what one finds in illustrations of Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica* and other Greek manuscripts produced under the medieval Baghdad or Damascus schools of painting. AF



# 111 Manuscript of the fifth book of the Qānūn fī l-tibb ("Canon of Medicine") of Ibn Sina

Iran or Mesopotamia, dated 444 H / 1052 CE Ink and watercolour on paper; 21.2 x 16.4 cm AKM 00510

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 128 (no. 96); AKTC 2007b, pp. 122 and 131 (no. 96); AKTC 2008a, pp. 194–95 (no. 73); AKTC 2009a, p.158; AKTC 2009b, p.158 Ibn Sina's Qānūn fī l-tibb ("Canon of Medicine") is the most important encyclopaedic corpus of medieval medical knowledge in the Islamic world. With the transfer of knowledge to the Latin west in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it became the most used of all medieval references in the medical schools of Europe, almost until the beginning of modern times. The *Qanūn* is organised into five books. The present manuscript is a copy of the fifth book, on compound drugs and pharmacopoeia. Copied only fifteen years after the death of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), it is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, manuscript of this work. The other books cover topics including anatomy, the humours, the temperament, the effects of environment on health and disease, materia medica, specific pathology and diseases of various parts of

the body, general pathology, fevers, leprosy, surgery, dislocations, and fractures. Born near Bukhara in 980 to a Samanid government official, Ibn Sina received a proper education and was, at age 18, a talented physician who had mastered all the sciences and made a great number of medical discoveries and observations that remain relevant today. The page shown here is the title page, which announces in large thuluth script that the manuscript contains the fifth book of the *Qanūn*, also known as al-Angarābādhīn. It is followed immediately by Ibn Sina's name, al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs Abī 'Alī Sīnā, written in naskh. Names of previous owners of the codex appear in naskh and nasta<sup>c</sup>līq scripts around the page (trans. Abdullah Ghouchani). AF



# Four folios from a manuscript of the Khawāss al-ashjār (De Materia Medica) of Dioscorides

Iraq, ca. 1200 Ink and opaque watercolour on paper Published: Welch 1972a, p. 21; Falk 1985, p. 40 (AKM 00001); AKTC 2007a, pp. 130–131 (no. 100) (AKM 00001, 00002); AKTC 2007b, pp. 134–135 (no. 100); AKTC 2008a, pp. 202–203 (no. 77) (AKM 00004); AKTC 2008b, no. 12; AKTC 2009a,

# 112 Bittercress (Barbarea)

p. 160; AKTC 2009b, p. 160

24,8 x 16,8 cm AKM 00004

# 113 Doronicum plant

Inscription: darwanj 25 x 17,2 cm AKM 00002

# 114 Onion (Allium cepa) and sea onion (Drimia maritima)

Inscription: basal and basal al- ansal 24,9 x 16,8 cm
AKM 00003

# 115 "Plant for the treatment of ulcers, pustules and itching"

24 x 16,8 cm AKM 00001

One of the earliest scientific manuscripts to be translated from Greek to Arabic was Dioscorides' De Materia Medica, as it is called in Latin. Pedanius Dioscorides, a Greek physician, wrote his treatise on medicinal plants in the first century CE. The manuscript was initially translated into Syriac, and then into Arabic in Baghdad in the ninth century (Guesdon and Nouri 2001, p. 118). It became the foundation for Islamic pharmacology and was copied widely. The four present folios belong to a rare dispersed thirteenth-century Arabic copy of the text and depict various medicinal herbs and roots with an accuracy characteristic of Arab scientific texts produced during this period. The illustrations follow the Greek model closely. Although the paintings do not lack artistic sensibility, they are very accurate. Each specimen is depicted in its entirety from tip to root against the plain paper ground.

The first page (verso) shows a plant "that grows on river banks" and belongs to the Bittercress genus (*Barbarea*) (cat. no. 112). The leaves of the yellow-blossomed plant function as an appetite stimulator, blood purifier, and diuretic. On

the second illustrated page (verso), two different plants from the Doronicum plant are depicted, also with their roots included (cat. no. 113). The upper plant with the red roots has spade-shaped leaves, and two pedicels emerge from the foliage. The lower plant is annotated with the caption "this is a species of Doronicum (darwani)". Two further plants, including their bulbs, are shown on the third page (recto). The plant on the right has long, narrow leaves, and out of the bulb sprouts a long stem that is studded with dark-gray buds. The caption reads "bulb" (basal). The left plant, with the caption "another type of sea onion" (nau' akhar min basal al-cansal), consists of five lancetshaped yellow leaves and belongs to the hyacinth family. Its bulb is used to treat cardiac insufficiency (cat. no. 114). The fourth page (verso) shows a plant sprouting from a light red tuber. This plant has five large leaves, out of which protrudes a sturdy-looking stem that supports a large, red flower with pointed petals. The two-lined caption labels this as a "plant for the treatment of ulcers, pustules, and itching" (cat. no. 115). AF/VD









# 116 Basin

Mesopotamia or Iran, 13<sup>th</sup> century
Cast white bronze, engraved decoration; Ø: 55 cm
AKM 00607

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 138-139 (fig. 45a); AKTC 2007a, p. 172 (no. 144); AKTC 2007b, pp. 172 (no. 144); Makariou 2007, pp. 184-185 (no. 66); AKTC 2009a, p. 162; AKTC 2009b, p. 162

This exceptionally large, almost hemispherical bowl bears on its outer face an engraved decoration, split into three superimposed registers. The upper border displays an alternation of passing animals against a flourish backdrop and cursive script inscriptions. Below, a wider banner is marked out by the relief of a twisted ribbon which knits together circular medallions, filled with geometric patterns each different from the other. Between the medallions, epigraphic cartouches display an alternation of cursive and animated (that is, topped by human heads) Kufic scripts. In addition, the downstrokes of the Kufic inscriptions form interlacing bows. The lower register shows medallions containing the 12 signs of the zodiac. Between these medallions, the ribbon knits together small diamonds and complex bows from which seem to be escaping floweret-covered stems.

The twelfth and thirteenth-century production of Iranian white bronzes is not linked to a specific centre. The examples preserved in Iran's National Museum in Tehran were the subject of a fairly recent publication. Among them, a small bowl is reminiscent of this piece with its horizontal register decorations showing an epigraphic border over passing animals against a flourish backdrop and, more importantly, a wide central register with a very similar pattern of medallions containing the signs of the zodiac, separated by small diamonds from which coiled stems are escaping. Whilst the technique used to mat the background of the decorations is different from the one used on this bowl (small slanted lines instead of dots),

the same bevelled engraving can be sharply distinguished on the inscriptions of both pieces. However, the signs of the zodiac are represented differently. Of particular significance here is the Capricorn, represented in its most ancient form: the goat fish, a feature rarely found on the many Khorassan astrological iconography metals, though related forms can be observed in Jezireh.

It is also interesting to compare the decoration on our bowl with contemporary pieces from Khorassan (northeastern Iran/Afghanistan): for instance, with a bucket with an inlaid decoration belonging to the Keir collection, displaying the same type of circular medallions shaped by interwoven ribbons and containing the signs of the zodiac. In the interstices separating the medallions, the oval bows shaped by the ribbons are framed by identical symmetrical floweret-covered stems.

On the upper register, the inscription in animated script reads: al-'izz al- $d\bar{a}$ 'im al- $iqb\bar{a}l$  al- $z\bar{a}$ 'id al-dawla al- $b\bar{a}qiya$  al-sal $\bar{a}m$  al-' $al\bar{a}$  al-fal $\bar{a}$  al-fal $\bar{a}$  al-fal $\bar{a}$  al-sal $\bar{a}m$  al-' $al\bar{a}$  al-sal $\bar{a}m$  al-'everlasting glory, growing prosperity, enduring wealth, ultimate peace, sustained fortune, perfect peace, enduring wealth, peace"). On the middle register, in cursive script, the inscriptions reads: al-'izz al- $d\bar{a}$ 'im al- $iqb\bar{a}l$  al- $z\bar{a}$ 'id al-dawla al- $b\bar{a}qiya$  al-sal $\bar{a}m$  ("everlasting glory, growing prosperity, enduring wealth, peace"). And, on the middle register, an inscription in Kufic script reads: al-'izz al- $d\bar{a}$ 'im al-'umr al-s $\bar{a}lim$  wa-l- $iqb\bar{a}l$  al- $z\bar{a}$ 'id ("everlasting glory, long life and growing prosperity").



# 117 Three young hunters Frontispiece from the Sulwān al-mutā° fī 'udwān al-atbā' of Ibn Zafar al-Siqilli (d. 1170)

Mosul (Iraq), ca. 1330 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; page: 24.7 x 16.9; image: 13.7 x 11.2 cm AKM 00012

Published: Falk 1985, p. 41 (no. 11); AKTC 2007a, p. 147 (no. 114); AKTC 2007b, p. 151 (no. 114); AKTC 2009a, p.163; AKTC 2009b, p.163 Three young men dressed in sumptuous garments embellished with gold *tirāz* bands (see cat. no. 86) on their arms and turbans are ready for a hunt. One has a bow in a brown case and arrows (left); the central figure carries a brown and white hawk; and the figure on the right holds a blue longnecked bird. This painting is the right side of a double frontispiece from a manuscript of the *Sulwān al-mutā* fī 'udwān al-atbā' ("Comfort of Rulers when Faced with the Hostility of their Followers"). The work uses Qur'anic verses, sayings and traditions of the Prophet (*hadīth*), animal fables, and princely characters from ancient Persian history to advise princes on conduct and the preser-

vation of power and leadership. A. S. Melikian-Chirvani's facsimile publication and discussion of the manuscript demonstrates its value as a sharp commentary on "injustice, social exploitation and political oppression", as well as the manuscript's importance for the history of Arab painting (Melikian-Chirvani 1985). The text was composed in 1159 by Ibn Zafar al-Siqilli ("the Sicilian," d. 1170), an Arab philosopher and prolific author who travelled extensively and was probably born in Norman-ruled Sicily in 1104. The frontispiece belongs to a copy of the manuscript in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. AF





# g-images, Gérard Degeorge

# Iran in the Middle Ages

Ladan Akbarnia

The Islamic conquest of Iran was sealed in 651 with the assassination of Yazdigird III, the last ruler of the Sasanian empire (224-651). Greater Iran – which at various times included modern Iran, Iraq, Armenia, as well as parts of Turkey, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, some Central Asian countries, and even some coastal regions of the Arabian peninsula – became part of the Abbasid caliphate, which in turn inherited much of Iran's rich legacy of kingship and courtly culture alongside that of the Byzantines. Among the enduring pre-Islamic Iranian artistic and cultural traditions were glass production, metalwork, stucco wall painting, and a thriving silk industry. Ancient Near Eastern motifs such as paired parrots or griffins, lions, and pearl borders would also be translated into the Islamic visual repertoire. One of the most significant artistic contributions, however, came from the literary legacy of pre-Islamic Iran, best represented in the Shāhnāma ("Book of Kings"), the national epic recounting the legends of Iran's ancient kings and heroes. The Shāhnāma's stories would be illustrated profusely in the art of later Islamic dynasties in Iran, India, and the Ottoman empire.

Although rooted in oral tradition, the Shāhnāma was put to verse around 1010 by the poet Firdawsi (d. ca. 1020) as a commission for a ruler of the Samanid dynasty (819–1005), which rose to power as Abbasid control over the Islamic world weakened. Based in Khurasan and Transoxiana, the Samanids were responsible for some of the finest ceramics produced in Greater Iran, in particular black and white slip-painted epigraphic wares containing blessings and aphorisms (cat. nos. 122-124). As an indigenous Iranian dynasty, the Samanids were admired by later foreign rulers of Iran, including three important Turkic dynasties: the Ghaznavids (975–1187); the Great Seljugs (1038–1194); and the Rum Seljugs (1077-1307), a branch of the Great Seljuqs that settled in Anatolia in the eleventh century. In the twelfth century, Seljug ceramic production witnessed a significant transformation with the development of fritware, a technique involving the addition of powdered quartz to the clay body and requiring a higher firing temperature. The result was a finer, white body (in contrast to the buff colour of earthenware) that facilitated surface decoration and contributed to the imitation of Chinese blue and white porcelains as well as to a proliferation of figural imagery based on the illustration of courtly pastimes and specific episodes from the Shāhnāma.

Fritware was also lustre painted in medieval Iran under the Seljugs and the Ilkhanid Mongols, who overthrew the Abbasid caliphate in 1258 and ruled Greater Iran from 1256 to 1353 (cat. nos. 140-144). The Ilkhanids' close connections with their Mongol counterparts in Yuan China contributed to the development of the *khitā'ī* idiom, which became more standardised under the Timurids (1370-1506) and Safavids (1502-1736) (Akbarnia 2007); it featured significantly in the development of the arts of the book. which flourished from the Ilkhanid through the Safavid periods in Iran. This Chinese-inspired aesthetic was apparent in certain motifs such as the lotus or peony and the dragon or phoenix, as well as in techniques that were translated into different media once they reached the Iranian context, such as Chinese lacquer carving and Ilkhanid and Timurid woodcarving and manuscript illustration. By the Safavid period, the fascinating combination of pre-Islamic, Islamic, and far eastern inspired artistic traditions in the art of early and mediaeval Iran had become fully synthesized into a highly refined artistic idiom that would eventually incorporate European elements as well.

# A group of glass vessels decorated in various techniques

# 118 Cut-glass beaker with handle

Iran, 10<sup>th</sup> century Glass; free blown, tooled, and linear cut, handle applied; H 11 cm, Ø 12.2 cm AKM 00650

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.167; AKTC 2009b, p.167

Islamic glassmaking grew out of a tradition begun in the first century BCE in the Syro-Palestinian region, where molten glass was inflated with a blowpipe and manipulated into desired forms with special tools. Craftsmen had discovered how to create glass through the transformation of raw materials prior to this period, as early as the third millennium BCE; however, until about 50 BCE, they were forming glass around a removable core or using casting moulds, which required much time and labour and thus resulted in less overall production. The bottles in this group represent some of the various techniques used to decorate Iranian glass in the centuries after Islam. The handled ewer (cat. no. 118), made of a flattened globular body with a low circular foot, a slightly flared cylindrical neck, and a fan-shaped thumb-rest, recalls similarly shaped pitchers attributed to Iran or Central Asia in the tenth or eleventh century and believed to have been used as measuring vessels (see, for example, Carboni 2001, pp. 148-149, no. 36b). The object also exhibits a wheel cut design of waves and chevron patterns around the neck and body bordered with double lines

Glass cutting began in Iran under the Sasanians (226–651) and continued uninterrupted until at least the eleventh century. Most of the time, objects were decorated using the *intaglio* technique, where the glass surface is incised beneath the surface, or through relief cutting, where the surface is ground away around the desired pattern in relief (*ibid.*, p. 71). The ewer exhibits a shallow linear relief cut pattern while the cylindrical turquoise bottle with a narrow flared neck (cat. no. 120) and another cylindrical clear glass bottle with a long tubular neck (cat. no. 122) display designs engraved in higher relief. Cat. no. 120 may be attributed to the Iranian region in the ninth or tenth century based on stylistic comparison with works

of similar shape and decoration (see *ibid.*, p. 95, no. 25a, and p. 154, no. 3.5c). Cat. no. 122 may be given a similar attribution based on comparisons to other glass bottles of cylindrical form with arcade cut and faceted decoration (*ibid.*, pp. 93–95, nos. 23a & 25a [around the neck]). The inverted teardrop motifs on this object's shoulder resemble the upper row of a two-tiered teardrop pattern on a bottle in the al-Sabah Collection in Kuwait, which has been compared to the "Style C" ornament type identified at Samarra (Iraq) and suggests the cross-cultural connections between Iran and Mesopotamia during this period.

The remaining bottle in this group represents the mould blown glass technique, to which threads of glass are applied and trailed (cat. no. 121). The technique of blowing glass in a mould is known to have been popular in the eastern Mediterranean region under the Roman Empire by the first or second century CE (see cat. no. 123). The object has a compressed globular form with a moulded pattern created in a dip mould (see Carboni and Whitehouse 2001, pp. 81-85, nos. 10-11 and 121). Cat. no. 121 contains a trellis pattern of concentric rounded rhomboids. Its neck has been embellished with three bands of trailed glass threads, while two tiers of trails resembling those applied on seventh-eighth-century Syrian cage flasks have been applied to the shoulder (see ibid., pp. 112-113, nos. 29-32). Globular-shaped long-necked bottles became a standard for glass production in early and medieval Iran and probably inspired parallel forms produced in the ceramic medium under the Seljugs (Carboni 2001, p. 237 and no. 66). Coloured and mould blown glass has generally been attributed to northeastern Iran between the twelve and fourteenth centuries (Carboni and Whitehouse 2001, pp. 98–99, nos. 25–26; and Carboni 2001, pp. 236-237, no. 66). LA



# 119 Glass bottle

Syrian region or Greater Iran, 8th–9th century Inscription (Arabic): "the work of Abu Ja 'far" Glass, free blown, applied, and impressed; Ø: 22.5 cm AKM 00644

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.166; AKTC 2009b, p.166

Glass vessels designed for everyday use did not normally include surface decoration; at most, they might receive handles or suspension loops, as in the present example. This bottle is particularly interesting; while it appears to exhibit a rather simple aesthetic, it provides a good example of the great difficulties involved with the attribution of early Islamic glass. The vessel has a globular shape with a narrow neck and lipped rim, with three loops applied at even intervals around the body, each impressed at the base with a circular medallion containing a three-line Kufic inscription identifying the artist as Abu Ja far. Vessel stamps with Kufic inscriptions exist in other collections, such as the al-Sabah Collection in the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait (Carboni 2001, p. 282, nos. 3.49a-c); one, like the medallions on the present bottle, bears an inscription identifying "the work of" a different artist (ibid., no. 3.49b). Stefano Carboni has attributed these stamps to the Syrian region in the eighth or ninth century. The globular shape of this bottle supports an early Islamic date and an attribution to

the Syrian region, as examples of this shape can be found in late Roman glass produced in the eastern Mediterranean (coasts of modern Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt) before the Umayyad period (661-750) (Carboni 2001, pp. 15-16, 26-27, and 39-42). However, the practice of stamping vessels may have been a continuation of a Sasanian tradition in the Iranian lands. It is difficult to determine whether this bottle, which combines aspects of the two major pre-Islamic traditions in the Islamic lands with the most original feature of Islamic art – the Arabic script – was produced in Greater Iran by an artist from the Syrian region; if an Iranian artist may have imitated a work exported to Iran from the Syrian or Mesopotamian region; or if it were made in Syria by an artist familiar with and interested in incorporating some elements of the Iranian artistic tradition into his work. Regardless of where, when, and by whom it was made, this bottle is important because of its great condition and for the questions it continues to raise. LA



# 120 Turquoise bottle

Iran, 9th-10th century Glass; free blown, tooled, and relief cut; H 14.1 cm AKM 00657

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.167; AKTC 2009b, p. 167

# 121 Turquoise bottle with applied and trailed decoration

Iran, 12th century Glass; mould blown, applied, and trailed; H 23 cm AKM 00661

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.167; AKTC 2009b, p. 167

# 122 Long-necked botel with relief cut decoration

Probably Iran, late 9th-10th century Glass; free blown, tooled, and facet cut; H 19.1 cm AKM 00646

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.167; AKTC 2009b, p. 167



120





121

# 123 Bottle

Greater Iran, 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century Glass; mould blown and applied; H 28 cm AKM 00648 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 93 (no. 61); AKTC 2007b, pp. 86 and 90 (no. 61); AKTC 2009a, p.169; AKTC 2009b, p.169

This unusual honey-yellowish coloured mouldblown glass bottle has two main panels of decoration featuring an omphalos pattern, palmettes, and concentric heart or chevron-shaped forms. There are two small loop handles applied to the shoulder. Mould blowing was a Roman technique that was later adapted by glassmakers across the mediaeval Islamic world. The steps involved in the production of mould blown glass begin with the creation of a mould (in bronze, terracotta, or clay) with the final object's decoration in reverse on the interior of the mould. Next, the glassmaker introduces a glass gob (parison) on the blowpipe into the mould and inflates the glass until it reaches the recesses of the mould's pattern. Once taken from the mould, the object is re-blown (so-called optic blowing), manipulated, transferred to the pontil, and finished. Thus, although mould blowing has been described as a cost-effective, simple procedure in comparison to cut decoration, it was actually an involved process that required skill

and creativity (see Carboni 2001, p. 197 for complete discussion of this technique).

No full-size metal moulds for Islamic ceramics are known to exist from the mediaeval period, but two metal dip moulds do survive and were exhibited in 2001 to 2002 (Carboni and Whitehouse 2001, pp. 84–85, nos. 10–11). The present bottle was probably produced using a two-part mould that would have been initially fastened together and then reopened after the glassmaker blew the parison inside the mould to impress the mould's pattern; then the design would be finalised outside the mould. In shape, this object bears a small amount of resemblance to a series of much smaller one-handled pear-shaped bottles attributed to the Mesopotamian region in the ninth century. The omphalos and leaf patterns, on the other hand, can be found on glass bottles of varying colours that have been attributed to the Iranian lands between the tenth and twelfth centuries (see Carboni 2001, pp. 210–229, nos. 53a, 59, and 62). AF/LA



# Three epigraphic ceramic wares

# 124 Vase

Eastern Iranian world, Khurasan (Nishapur, Iran) or Transoxiana (Samarqand, Uzbekistan), late 9th-early 10th century

Inscription (Arabic): baraka li-sāhibihī ("Blessing to its owner")

Earthenware, white slip with black slip decoration under a transparent glaze; H 19.8 cm

AKM 00544

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 174 (no. 148); AKTC 2007b, p. 174 (no. 148); AKTC 2008a, pp. 274–275 (no. 107); AKTC 2009a, p.170; AKTC 2009b, p.170

# 125 Dish

Tashkent, 9"-10" century
Inscription (Arabic): (in dark brown) al-jūd min
akhlāq ahl al-janna ("generosity is the disposition
of the dwellers of Paradise");
(in red) al-salā[ma] ("good health")

(in red) ai-saia[ma] ("good neaith")
Earthenware, white slip with black and red slip
decoration under a transparent glaze; Ø 34.9 cm
AKM 00546

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 174 (no. 149); AKTC 2007b, p. 175 (no. 149); Makariou 2007, pp. 176–177 (no. 62); AKTC 2009a, p.171; AKTC 2009b, p.171; Ilyasova – Imamberdyev 2005, 93 fig. 4

# 126 Dish

Eastern Iranian world (Khurasan or Transoxiana), 9th–10th century

Inscription (Arabic): iyyāka wa-l-ahmaq lā tuʿāshiruhū wa-l-tāʾih al-muʿjab lā tujāwiruhū / bi-l-baraka ("Be aware of the fool, do not associate with him, and do not trust the bewildered admirer; with blessing")

Earthenware, black slip with white slip decoration under a transparent glaze;  $\varnothing$  33.5 cm AKM 00545

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 174 (no. 150); AKTC 2007b, p. 175 (no. 150); Makariou 2007, pp. 178–179 (no. 63); AKTC 2009a, p.171; AKTC 2009b, p.171 The vase and two bowls in this group represent fine examples of ceramic wares produced in the workshops of Khurasan and Transoxiana during the ninth and tenth centuries, the period during which Samarqand, Nishapur, and Bukhara enioved economic and cultural prosperity under the Persian Samanid rulers (819–1005) (Makariou 2007, p. 197, n. 1). The Samanids oversaw a wide variety of ceramic production. Epigraphic slipwares such as the ones shown here have been ascribed to centres of production such as Nishapur and Afrasiyab (old Samargand) and were for local consumption; they are not found in excavations west of central Iran or at Rayy. In the case of cat. nos. 124 and 125, a white slip formed from semifluid coloured clay was used to cover the ceramic body and create a blank surface on which the ornamental inscription could be written. Calligraphy, traditionally thought of as the highest Islamic art form because of its power to transmit the word of God, provides the sole adornment for these

vessels. While most of the ceramic wares attributed to the workshops of this region in the ninth and tenth centuries display white slips with dark brown calligraphy, examples such as cat. no. 126, which show the inverse form of this decoration (white inscription on a dark slip-covered ground) also exist (Makariou 2007, p. 197, n. 6). Added to the sobriety and sophistication of the epigraphic ornament, the colour contrast heightens the beauty of these vessels.

Samanid artists excelled in the mastery of the void in an era when surface decoration on objects exhibited a wide variety of ornament (*ibid.*, n. 7). Simple, functional wares were turned into stunning works of austere beauty meant for a distinguished clientele. The inscriptions on these objects are typically pious aphorisms addressed to the owner and give a glimpse into a genre of Arabic literature that does not survive in manuscript form from this period. The shapes of the wares may derive from contemporary Iranian silverware.







# Three slipware ceramic dishes

# 127 Dish

Eastern Iranian world, *ca.* 10<sup>th</sup> century
Earthenware, polychrome slip decoration under a transparent glaze; Ø 28 cm
AKM 00543
Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 139 (no. 106);
AKTC 2007b, p. 141 (no. 106); AKTC 2009a, p.172;

AKTC 2009b, p.172; Ilyasov 2008, 7 Fig. 3

### 128 Dish

Eastern Iranian world, ca. 10<sup>th</sup> century Inscription (Arabic): al-jūd min akhlāq ahl al-janna ("Generosity is the disposition of the dwellers of Paradise")

Earthenware, polychrome slip decoration under a transparent glaze; Ø 32.8 cm

AKM 00541

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 174 (no. 147); AKTC 2007b, pp. 170, 173 (no. 147); AKTC 2009a, p.172; AKTC 2009b, p.172; Ilyasov 2008, 7 Fig. 4

# 129 Bowl

Northeastern Iran, *ca.* 10<sup>th</sup> century
Earthenware, polychrome slip decoration under a transparent glaze; H 11.5 cm; Ø 31 cm
AKM 00542

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.172; AKTC 2009b, p.172

Similar to the monochrome and bichrome specimens, the polychrome slipware of the 10th and 11th centuries is of extraordinary quality. This Central Asian ceramic group is characterized by its brown or various grey-tone backgrounds, upon which figurative, epigraphic, and abstract motifs produce a dense and colour-rich pattern. The dominant shades are yellow, brown, and red. Another characteristic element is the white (see cat. no. 127), red, or olive-green dots (see cat. no. 128) on a contrasting background as well as areas and patterns kept completely in white. While animals seldom occur, and humans never occur on Samanid monoand bichrome wares (cat. nos. 124-126), in this polychrome group, animal representations are found most frequently, followed closely by epigraphic patterns. The unique fragment depicting a lute player from the al-Sabah Collection probably also belongs to this group (Watson 2004, pp. 240-241). Central Asia, perhaps in the area around Maymana in North Afghanistan, is thought to be the group's place of origin (Watson 2004, p. 223). Archeological discoveries from Budrach in southeast Uzbekistan, however, could undermine these presumptions (Ilyasov 2008, p. 7); a plate from the excavation exhibits the same black border pattern with white pseudo-Kufic script as the plate with the large stylized peacock (cat. no. 127). The Archeological Museum in Termez has a pitcher that also originated in the province of Surkhandarya in southeast Uzbekistan, and which has in commen

with the AKM peacock not only the border in pseudo-Kufic script but also the portrayal of a similar bird (Ilvasov 2008, p. 8, figs. 10 and 11). The main motif of the calligraphy-adorned dish (cat. no. 128) forms an epigraph on the sides of the dish that is concentrically arranged with an abstract knotted pattern on the inside bottom. In this case too, a similarity to the dish from Budrach - especially because of the script - can be determined. It may have been produced in Chaghanivan, the capital of the eponymous region south of Samarqand which the Muhtajids ruled as governors for the Samanids in the tenth century and for the Ghaznavids in the early eleventh century, during which time they fostered a substantial economic and cultural boom (Ilyasov 2008, p. 9). The last piece from this group (cat. no. 129) is related to the richly-ornamented, three-colored Samanid wares of the tenth century (c.f. Watson 2004, p. 225 cat. Gb.8). The flattened conical dish with the narrow circular base is covered with white slip and painted over with motifs in green, dark orange, and dark brown. The decoration consists of four ornamented palm leaves that alternate on the inner flare of the bowl with abstract Kufic script (which probably reads "good luck"), as well as a circular braid with abstract spiraling tendril motifs on the inside bottom. Stylized leaves and pear shaped motifs fill in the remaining space, while a border of evenly-spaced semi-circles completes the decoration around the rim.  $_{\mbox{\scriptsize VD}}$ 







# 130 Beam with Kufic inscription

Northwest of Iran, 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century Inscription (Arabic): *I-iI-malik* ("for the ruler") and *Ii-I-mulk* ("for the kingdom") or *aI-mulk* ("sovereignty"), repeated Carved wood; 239 x 20.8 cm AKM 00630 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 189 (cat. F); AKTC 2007b, p. 191 (cat. F); AKTC 2008b, no. 14; AKTC 2009a, p.174; AKTC 2009b, p.174 This beam recalls similar carved wooden panels that formed architectural elements for mosque *minbars* (pulpits) or mihrabs in the Seljuq Iranian world. In such cases, the inscription usually reads "sovereignty belongs to God". Foliated Kufic inscriptions containing Qur'anic verses or praising

the ruler were carved into a vegetal background of palmette and split-palmette leaves, often in the bevelled style associated with Samarra in modern Iraq. Many examples were also signed by the artist. IA

# 131 Mongol robe

Iran or Central Asia, Mongol period, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century Silk brocade or lampas; H 140 cm AKM 00677

Published: AKTC 2007a, pp. 186–187 (cat. B); AKTC 2007b, frontispiece and p. 190 (cat. B); Makariou 2007, pp. 48–49 (no. 13); AKTC 2009a, pp. 174–175; AKTC 2009b, pp. 174–175 This robe, with its fitted waist, flared hips, and tiny-button closure is a remarkable example of luxury clothing of the mid-Islamic period. Its long sleeves and right-hand fastening evoke numerous comparisons with drawings on the scattered pages of Mongolian manuscripts. The sleeves extend beyond the length of the arms and, thus, were worn pleated. This detail invariably appears on the pages of Ilkhanid manuscripts, whether from the pages of the great Mongolian Shāhnāma, now dismembered, or from the "Albums Diez", or illustrations from the "Universal History" by Rashid al-Din, among others. This long-sleeved robe is an undergarment, always worn beneath a coat with sleeves covering the shoulders only, knotted on the right with ribbons. The model is likely to have its roots in China. It appears in Yuan works (Yuan was an older, allied dynasty of the Ilkhans), especially on a mandala done on a kesi (silk tapestry) on which Emperor Yuan Togha Temur (1328-1332) and his brother Khoshila were represented (Makariou 2007, p. 55, n. 75). Very rarely was the robe depicted without an overcoat, and indeed, this is how it features in mourning scenes as well as on a page of the great Mongolian Shāhnāma housed in the Louvre (ibid., nn. 76-77).

Undoubtedly this is a ceremonial garment (*ibid.*, n. 78). The complex weave of the fabric – seemingly a lampas – assigns this piece to a set (which is in turn subdivided into several subsets) that medieval European inventories refer to as

panni tartarici. These luxurious fabrics were documented between 1295 (St. Paul's Cathedral, London) and 1380 (inventory of Charles V). Unfortunately, the inventories are sparing in details, so that assigning a piece to a specific manufacturing centre proves difficult nonetheless. This robe fits into the medallion decoration group. These textiles, which exhibit panels of repeated geometric patterns, appear in inventories between 1311 (inventory of Pope Clement V) and 1361 (inventory of the Vatican). However, it differs on a number of points. First of all, the usual figurative decoration is missing in this set; secondly, there is a pseudo-inscription around the large lobed circles. A six-petal rosette is woven into the centre of these wheels in a contrasting greyish-green thread. The pseudo-inscription could indicate an origin from the Iranian coast or Islamic Central Asia, which would have to be confirmed with a technical analy-

The *panni tartarici* count among the treasures of Western churches, but this is the only model which has retained its original cut. A short coat was discovered in Urumqi (Xinjiang) in 1960 (*ibid.*, n. 79). The arrival of these fabrics among civil and religious treasures had an impact on Italian Gothic silk designs (*ibid.*, n. 80).

Thus, this garment tells the tale of Chinese influence on the Islamic world and, in turn, the significant influence of the latter on the beginnings of luxury fabric manufacture in Europe, particularly in Lucca. SM







# Two Bamiyan ceramics

# 132 Moulded bowl decorated with a star

Eastern Iranian world, 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century Fritware, with moulded decoration and blue and purple under a transparent glaze, Ø 25 cm AKM 00553

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.176; AKTC 2009b, p.176

# 133 Moulded bowl decorated with a medaillion

Eastern Iranian world, 12th-13th century
Fritware, with moulded decoration and blue and
purple under a transparent glaze; Ø 18.8 cm
AKM 00563

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.176; AKTC 2009b, p.176

These objects belong to a distinct group of ceramics known as "Bamiyan" wares. Their ceramic make-up is characterised by a particularly fragile frit fabric that results in several cracks during firing, and their decoration tends to include moulded linear designs and inscriptions in low relief under a transparent coloured or colourless glaze, sometimes with the addition of coloured accents (Watson 2004, p. 327). Both bowls contain geometric central designs, one displaying an interlacing, radiating star (cat. no. 132), and the other exhibiting a woven pattern in the form of a medallion (cat. no. 133). Splashes of cobalt blue and manganese have been applied at regular intervals around

the rims of both wares to provide pleasing accents to the moulded white background. A band of cursive script, also part of the mould, fills the walls of cat. no. 132 (perhaps containing poetic Persian verses), while a row of abstract leaf motifs spans most of the walls of cat. no. 133 underneath vegetal frieze. The three interior spur marks on cat. no. 132 are a common feature in Bamiyan wares, evidence that they were stacked using tripods. Numerous intact Bamiyan wares have appeared on the international art market in recent years and a large collection may also be found in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, London. LA





# 134 Moulded ceramic bottle with horsemen

Iran, 12th century

Siliceous ceramic ware, glazed moulded design with running glaze; H 35.5 cm AKM 00552

Published: Tokyo 1980, no. 221; AKTC 2007a, p. 149 (no. 117); AKTC 2007b, p. 152 (no. 117); Makariou 2007, pp. 64–65 (no. 18); AKTC 2008a, pp. 234–235 (no. 91); AKTC 2009a, p. 177; AKTC 2009b, p. 177 This round-bellied bottle, with narrow, elongated neck ending in a dome shape, presents an extraordinary embossed design. The fine, white siliceous clay, which appeared in Iran at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, was covered with transparent glaze and later topped with cobalt blue and turquoise running glaze.

On the belly is a dense decoration depicting a lion hunt scene. Several horsemen form a frieze, while footmen are struggling with wild animals. The design is completed with birds and plant motifs scattered among the various groups. The lion hunt theme – a princely hunt, par excellence – is to be found on a cup recently acquired by the Louvre Museum and on another similar one housed in the Reza Abbasi museum in Tehran (Makariou 2007, p. 87, nn. 9–10). Both pieces are contemporary to this

bottle and were subject to the same technique but display an even more sophisticated design. Here, the thick glaze reduces certain spectacular effects of the decoration.

The tip of the neck, treated as a polylobe dome decorated with embossed faces, can be observed on several Iranian pieces of the pre-Mongolian period (*ibid.*, n. 11). The faces motif is reminiscent of embossed representations of crowned personalities, such as the small, glazed ceramic figurines sculpted in high relief, or moulded, unglazed low relief figurines, such as those that were found in the Shushan excavations (*ibid.*, nn. 12–13).

The beautiful, lively vigour of the decoration makes this vase a remarkable milestone in pre-Mongolian ceramics, although the narrative content of this hunting episode is unknown to us today.



# 135 Monumental jar

Central Iran, 13th century
Fritware, decorated with a turquoise glaze;
H 71 cm
AKM 00566
Published: AKTC 2007a, pp. 78–79 (no. 48);
AKTC 2007b, pp. 76–77 (no. 48); AKTC 2008a, pp. 114–115 (no. 37); AKTC 2009a, p. 178;
AKTC 2009b, p. 178

This large jar demonstrates the technical expertise of Iranian potters and belongs to a small group of comparable pieces, all distinguished by their great size, plain opaque turquoise glaze, and combination of moulded and incised decoration. The decoration of the jar is organised into horizontal regis-

ters and includes benedictory wishes in a moulded band of Arabic *naskh* script around the neck and a moulded frieze of running animals on a vine scroll ground around the shoulder. Incised bands of bevelled motifs and scale-like motifs complete the exterior decoration. AF



# Inkwell and pen box with gold and silver inlay

#### 136 Gold and silver inlaid pen box

Northwest Iran or Anatolia, ca. 1300 Bronze, inlaid with gold and silver; 9.4 x 4.5 cm AKM 00609

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 124 (no. 90); AKTC 2007b, p. 127 (no. 90); Makariou 2007, pp. 166–167 (no. 59); AKTC 2008a, pp. 188 (no. 69); AKTC 2009a, p. 179; AKTC 2009b, p. 179

### 137 Gold and silver inlaid inkwell

Iran, Khurasan, second half of 12<sup>th</sup> century Moulded copper alloy, chased decoration inlaid with silver; H 8.5 cm; Ø 10.4 cm AKM 00604

Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 162–163 (no. 57); AKTC 2008a, pp. 188–189 (no. 70); AKTC 2009a, p. 179; AKTC 2009b, p. 179 Elaborately decorated metalwork pen boxes and inkwells are amongst the finest objects associated with writing from the medieval Islamic world. Pen boxes held both practical and symbolic functions at Islamic courts. They served as compact and often beautifully decorated containers for scribes' tools, but they they were also used to represent specific court offices or, more generally, the power of kingship. Profusely decorated with precious gold and silver inlay and engraved geometric, floral and vegetal designs, this luxury pen box would have been carried by a high-ranking individual and perhaps even a ruler.

Along with the reed pen, the inkstand, called dawāt (Baer 1981, pp. 203–204) or mihbara, is the quintessential tool of the scribe and calligrapher. Here, form and function are in harmony, as writing (khatt) is also the main decorative theme of this object. The edge and top of the lid are decorated with an inscription in Kufic script and an inscription in a cursive form expressing various blessings in Arabic. On the edge of the lid can be read, twice, al-yumm wa-l-baraka ("good fortune

and divine grace") and on the flat part: al-'izz wa-liqbāl wa-l-dawla wa-l-sa'āda wa-l-salāma wa-l-'ināya ("glory and prosperity and good fortune and happiness and salvation and divine grace"). On the body of the object, the composition is arraved on three superposed levels: votive formulas in cursive Arabic, interrupted by hanging rings. surround a frieze with figures. The blessings are repeated twice according to the following formula, similar to the one cited above: al 'izz wa-l-iqbāl wa*l-dawla wa-l-sa<sup>c</sup>āda* ("glory and prosperity and / good fortune and happiness"). The receptacle contained a glass bottle for the ink, with black ink being the colour most often-used. Three main types of black ink were made in the medieval Islamic world, which have been identified thanks to texts written by calligraphers or copyists, who gave the recipes. The first type of ink had a carbon base, the second, a base of oak galls and metal, and the third, a mixture of the other two (Déroche 2000, p. 120 ff.). Traditionally, inks of the first type were called *midad* and of the second type, *hibr* (*ibid.*, p. 121). AC





## 138 Incense burner

Iran, 11th century
Bronze, inlaid with copper
H 28 cm
AKM 00602
Published: AKTC 2007a, pp. 84–85 (no. 54);
AKTC 2007b, pp. 82–83 (no. 54)

Just like the pigeon-shaped incense burner from Sicily (cat. no. 56), this bronze Khorasan-style coquerel served the purpose of perfuming rooms with incense smoke. The eyes of this typical fighting cockerel are inlaid with small turquoise beads. Turquoise was thought to protect the owner against bad luck and ensure his protection.

The object is curious in that it has a second head in lattice-work on its tail, perhaps an indication of strength. The burner is technically innovative: the incense cup is a hemispherical bowl suspended under the bird's belly, allowing the bowl to be filled but remaining concealed when the bird is set standing. AF



# 139 Goblet with globular body and vocative inscription

Yahya ibn Yusuf

Greater Iran, 14<sup>th</sup> century (?)
Inscriptions (Arabic): (upper band) al-cizza ad-dācima wa-l-iqbāl al-cizza ad-dācima wa-d-dācima ... wa-d-dācima ("eternal glory and prosperity, and eternal, eternal, eternal glory..."); (central band) al-baraka al-kāmila an-nicma al-shāmila wa-l-cizza ad-dācima ("complete benediction, total favour, and eternal glory"); (lower band) al-baraka al-kāmila an-nicma al-shāmila wa-l-cizz ("complete benediction, total favour, and glory");

(on base) Yahyā ibn Y $\bar{u}$ suf al-[...] ("Yahya ibn Yusuf the [?]")

Brass, cast, hammered, and engraved with niello; H 14.5 cm; Ø 10 cm

AKM 00735

Published: Geneva 1985, p. 284 (no. 295) (published as Nasrid Spain, 14th century); AKTC 2009a, p. 180; AKTC 2009b, p. 180

This small brass jug or goblet is made of a compressed globular body, octagonal flared neck, and a hexagonal faceted foot. Two bands of Arabic inscriptions in naskh script border a series of palmette motifs around the neck, while the body displays a diagonal fluted mould with alternating bands decorated with spiral and split-palmette ornamentation. Vegetal design also embellishes each facet on the foot, the base of which contains a six-pointed interlacing star recalling the Seal of Solomon. The base is incised with the artist's name, Yahya ibn Yusuf. A blank inverted teardrop form has been engraved on opposite sides of the neck, perhaps meant to decorate the points of attachment for handles that may never have been applied.

The ewer was previously attributed to Nasrid Spain in the fourteenth century, a calculation based on the calligraphic style of the inscription as well as on the form of the half-palmette motif used to decorate its surface (Geneva 1985, p. 284). However, extant Nasrid metalwork is rare, and no comparable objects are known to exist that would confidently support this attribution. Instead the jug seems to have more features in common with Greater Iranian metalwork from the mediaeval period, most strikingly in terms of its form; and yet, even here, it is difficult to locate any close parallels. From the eleventh century, Iranian metal wares reflect a composite form that continued to be refined in the centuries that followed; decoration seems to have gradually evolved from sparse to denser epigraphic and ornamental programmes in mediaeval and pre-modern times. A partially gilt and nielloed silver jug in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, exhibits a relative overall proportion similar to the AKM ewer, including a wide, flared neck, but does not share its angular and fluted characteristics; this work has been attributed to Iran in the twelfth century (Atıl, Chase, and Jett 1985, p. 85, fig. 32). Fluted and faceted bodies were also not unusual in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the Greater Iranian (especially northwestern Iran, including modern Iraq) and Syrian regions (Baer 1983, p. 291). They appear in metal ewers (Atıl, Chase, and Jett 1985, pp. 120-121, figs. 46 and 49 [with a faceted foot]), and certainly in thirteenthcentury Iranian candlestick bases (ibid., p. 113, figs. 42-44; and von Folsach, p. 319, no. 509). Elements of the surface decoration can also be found in the decorative programme of certain wares from northeastern Iran in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, where a couple bands of inscription appear on the neck and (near) shoulder region, and medallions or repeated floral or vegetal motifs are engraved around different parts of the body, with some nielloed background but mostly left blank (see, for example, a jug in the Muzim-i Rawza, Ghazni, Afghanistan, in Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 65, no. 2). While most of the features present in this jug appear in medieval Iranian metalwork, the combination of features that are individually but never collectively found in works of different periods and regions makes attributing the work to an exact time and place particularly challenging. More research must be conducted on the identity of this object's maker, as results might yield information about the cultural context in which this very interesting work, once in the collection of Jean-Paul Croisier in Geneva, was made. LA



#### Lusterware ceramics

#### 140 Lusterware bowl with riders and camels

Iran, late 12th - early 13th century

Fritware, lustre painted on an opaque white glaze; Ø 17 cm

AKM 00557

Published: AKTC 2008a, pp. 232-233 (no. 90); AKTC 2009a, p.182; AKTC 2009b, p.182

#### 141 Lusterware bowl with riders

Iran, ca. 1170–1200 Fritware, lustre painted on an opaque white glaze; Ø 17 cm AKM 00558

#### 142 Lusterware dish with enthronment scene

Iran, Kashan style, late 12<sup>th</sup> – early 13<sup>th</sup> century Fritware, lustre painted on an opaque white glaze; Ø 17 cm

AKM 00559

Published: AKTC 2007a, 182 (no. 159); AKTC 2007b, 186 (no. 159); Makariou 2007, 66-67 (no. 19)

# 143 Lusterware mince dish with seven hollows

Iran, late 12th – early 13th century Fritware, lustre painted on an opaque white glaze; Ø 31.1 cm AKM 00739

Kindly lent by Princess Catherine Aga Khan Published: Welch, Vol II p. 128; ; AKTC 2009a, p.182; AKTC 2009b, p.182

## 144 Lusterware bottle

Iran, late 12th – early 13th century Fritware, lustre painted on an opaque white glaze; H 21.5 cm

AKM 00560

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.182; AKTC 2009b, p.182

Beginning in the twelfth century, ceramics in Iran were produced with a frit body that provided a clean, light surface for painting. In addition to the many transparent and opaque coloured glazes, an impressive metallic sheen could be achieved by adding lustre to the ceramic decoration, painting over the glaze after firing, and then firing a second time. Most of the stunning works in this group belong to a larger group of pre-Mongol lustre wares with decoration that can be classified as illustrative or pictorial (see Lentz and Lowry 1989, ch. 2) and exhibit the "miniature" and "monumental" styles of Persian lustreware coined by Oliver Watson (Watson 2004). The "miniature" wares include two bowls in the AKM collection (cat. nos. 140 and 141), one with a central figure riding a horse at the base and with a caravan of camels following another figure around the wall below the rim; the other depicting horses and riders moving in a circle framing a central mounted rider. Another dish (cat. no. 142) represents the more "monumental" style identified by the larger scale of the subject matter, which is in this case a seated royal figure, shown at centre in a robe with uninscribed tirāz bands; he is flanked by two attendants or officials, their lower status suggested by their depiction on a smaller scale. As usual, all three people are depicted with halos. Corresponding with the tradition of classic Kashan luster style, the figures fill the entire surface of the plate. They are painted in negative on a dense background of coiled tendrils. The artist masterfully bestowed the vestments with extensive floral decoration, which is especially apparent on the knees of the middle figure. The decoration on these objects resembles manuscript illustrations

containing stock figures and compositions that could either depict genre scenes or refer to a specific text. Given their concave surface, however, different conventions were used to fill the background of a figural scene on bowls and deep dishes. In the bowl depicting camels, for example (cat. no. 140), the horse and rider in appear against a background of curving stems, dotted on either side to suggest the presence of leaves. A band of vine scrolls borders the base image and is topped by the carayan frieze, where chequered trees add pauses to the steady rhythm created by the moving camels. These types of wares may be compared to the highly figural mīnā'ī or haft-rangī ("seven-colour") wares, also attributed to pre-Mongol Iran, a period that witnessed an intensive proliferation of figural art (often depicting royal pastimes), especially in the production of ceramics. While not as figural in their design, the sevenpart dish and the bottle (cat. nos. 143-144) nevertheless share characteristics of the "miniature" and later Kashan styles in Persian lusterware. The bottle is decorated with bands of panels filled with foliate forms and lozenges alternating with bands of pseudo-calligraphic and calligraphic inscriptions, and the background or negative space on the surfaces of both wares is filled in the same comprehensive manner as the other objects in this group. The seven hollows in the dish (cat. no. 143) suggest that this piece may have been used to hold seven fruits or the seven items that begin with the letter 's' of the traditional sofra-yi haft sīn (literally, "seven-'s' spread") at Nowruz, the Persian New Year that begins with the spring equi-











#### A group of architectural elements

#### 145 Architectural tile

Central Asia, late 14<sup>th</sup> – early 15<sup>th</sup> century Carved and glazed terracotta Panel: 56 x 39 cm AKM 00572 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 176 (no. 152a); AKTC 2007b, p. 176 (no. 152a); AKTC 2008a, pp. 278–279 (no. 110); AKTC 2009a, p. 185; AKTC 2009b, p. 185

#### 146 Mugarnas

Greater Iran (Central Asia),  $14^{th}$ – $15^{th}$  century Carved and glazed terracotta;  $30 \times 18.5$  cm AKM 00574

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 177 (no. 152c); AKTC 2007b, pp. 176–177 (no. 152c); Makariou 2007, pp. 96–97 (no. 31); AKTC 2009a, p. 185; AKTC 2009b, p. 185

#### 147 Muqarnas

Greater Iran (Central Asia), 14th –15th century Carved and glazed terracotta; 31.5 x 23.5 cm AKM 00573

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 177 (no. 152b); AKTC 2007b, pp. 176–177 (no. 152b); AKTC 2009a, p. 185; AKTC 2009b, p. 185 These ceramic pieces aptly illustrate the mutations of architectural vocabulary in the Islamic world, the models for which were initially inherited from the classical and ancient Near Eastern (Sasanian) worlds. The builders, whether they worked in the east or west of the vast territories of the Islamic lands, conceived and diffused original solutions for ceramic coating and the transition from squared based vaults to circular ones. To do so, they invented the mugarnas, an architectural element whose genesis has been a topic of academic debate. Attributed to Egypt in the Fatimid period as well as to the Iranian Seljuqs, the mugarnas have also evolved from an essential architectural module used for transition areas, with an important role in construction, to a purely decorative element. The mugarnas was then used in groups, so that the repeated figures formed a stalactitelike architecture element; the most brilliant examples are found in the sixteenth century in the vaults of the Alhambra (that is, the Hall of the Two Sisters and the Hall of Abencerrajes) and in

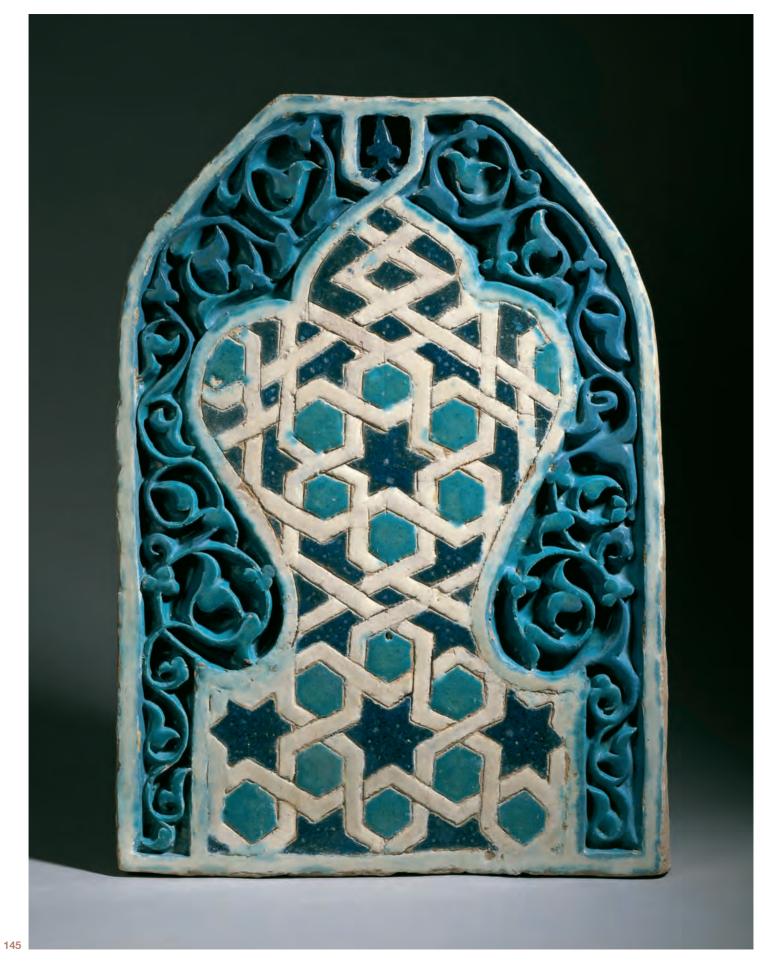
Central Asia in the tomb of Ahmad Yasavi (located in Yasi, corresponding to modern Turkestan in Kazakhstan). Two of the architectural elements in this group (cat. nos. 146 and 147) are units that might have once belonged to a mugarnas vault. Along with the third (cat. no. 145), these pieces could have once been affixed to the exterior façade of a mosque or mausoleum, a large group of which can be found in the Shah-i Zinda complex at Samarqand, one of the great Timurid capitals. Timur (r. 1370-1405), a Barlas Turk who founded the Timurid dynasty, was a fierce ruler, but he and his successors were also grand patrons of the arts. The brilliant turquoise vaults and elaborately patterned façades of Timurid buildings are a familiar site in cities such as Samarqand. Along with the use of mugarnas, builders used a range of other techniques such as bannā'ī (glazed brick patterns), carved and glazed terracotta, tile mosaic, cuerda seca (dry cord), underglaze painted relief moulding, and even lustre, all of which reveal the virtuoso talents of these craftsmen. AF/SM





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### 148 Carved wood panel with verses by Hafiz

Iran, 15th-16th century (?) Carved wood; 52 x 138 cm AKM 00635

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 159 (no. 129); AKTC 2007b, p. 160 (no. 129); Makariou 2007, pp. 194–195 (no. 71); AKTC 2008a, pp. 250–251 (no. 98); AKTC 2009a, p.186–187; AKTC 2009b, p.186–187 This two-tiered wooden panel, divided into six sections, closely resembles carved thuluth inscriptions from Mazandaran, a northern province of Iran. Two published examples bear the signatures of two sons of the master carpenter, Ustad Ahmad-i Sari. One is dated 1468 and signed by Husayn, son of Ustad Ahmad (Welch 1979, pp. 130-131); the other is dated 1494 CE and signed by Shams al-Din, son of Ustad Ahmad (Bivar and Yarshater 1978, pl. 65). Even if this panel is not the work of one of these woodcarvers, the examples share the manner in which vertical letters rise and intersect letters above the text line and words within each panel are written on upper and lower levels. Unlike the comparative examples, however, this panel contains verses by the celebrated Persian poet Hafiz (d. 1389-90):

First register:

"In the eyes and brows of my beloved I confided heart and soul

Come, come contemplate the arch and the window! Say to the guardian of paradise: the dust of this meeting place [...]"

Second register:

" [...] do not falter in your task, pour the wine into the cup!

Beyond your hedonism, your love for moon-faced beings.

Amongst the tasks that you accomplish, recite the poem of Hafiz!"

(trans. C.-H. de Fouchécour 2006, pp. 971–972).



As the panel is fragmentary, it may have been part of a frieze that ran around the walls of a room. Because classic Persian poetry allows for both secular and religious interpretations, it can be assumed that this inscription panel probably dates back to one of the many wood-decorated holy sites in Mazandaran. AF



# 149 Pair of Timurid carved doors with geometric and floral motifs

Iran, Mazandaran (?), Timurid, 892 H / 1487 CE Inscription (Persian): amal-i Ustād bin Hājjī Najjār bā [...] Darvīsh 'Alā' uddīn, kār dar sana-yi 892 ("the work of Ustad ... bin Ustad Hajji Najjar with the ... of Darvish Ala' uddin, work [completed] in the year 892")

Carved wood; 189 x 106 cm

AKM 00707

Published: AKTC 2008b, no. 16; AKTC 2009a,

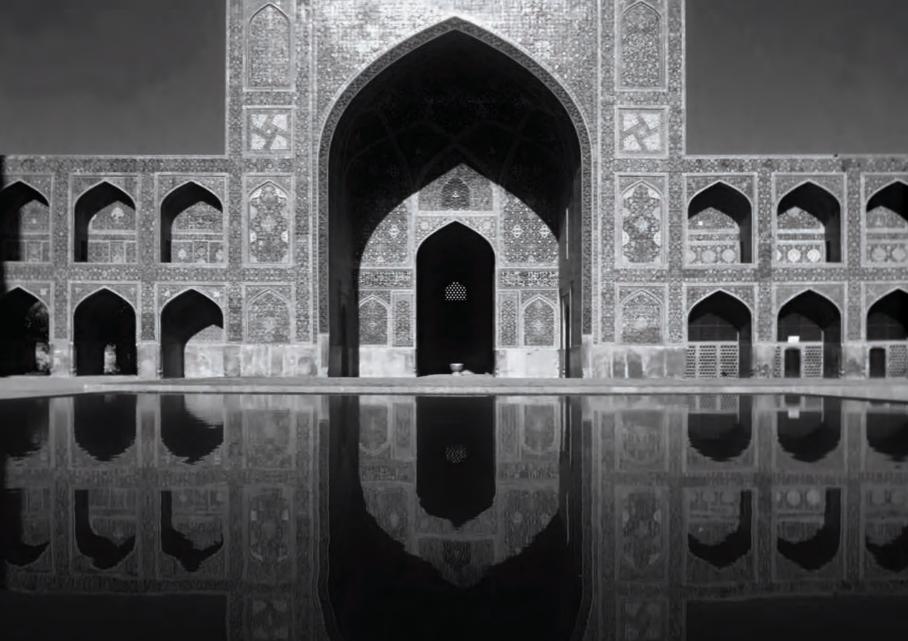
p.188; AKTC 2009b, p.188

One of the finest examples of its kind, this object bears the characteristic features of Timurid carved wooden doors: deep, intricately carved floral designs inherited from the preceding Ilkhanid period and reminiscent of Chinese lacquer wares; geometric patterns formed by the tongue-and-groove technique; plaited borders; and panels inscribed with prayers as well as information about patrons, craftsmen, and dates of production. Mazandaran, located in northern Iran, is known for its dense forests and sweetly scented *khalanj* wood; several examples of fourteenth- and fif-

teenth-century woodcarvings have been found in that region (Bronstein 1938, p. 2622). The doors share design elements with other doors from this period surviving in public and private collections: a cenotaph in the Khalili Collection, signed by Shams al-Din Sari and dated 902 H / 1496 CE (London 2001, pp. 218–219); and pairs of doors in the Art and History Trust Collection, Houston, (Soudavar 1992, p. 94, no. 34), and in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran, signed and dated 846 H / 1442 CE (London 1976, p. 292, no. 458). LA







# Iran and Central Asia The Safavids

Sheila Canby

The Safavid shahs of Iran were not only the first native Iranian dynasty to unite the country for nearly a millennium, but they also introduced Shia Islam as the state religion. The impact of this institutionalized faith was wide-reaching. It instilled Iranians with an intensified sense of religious and national identity that set them from apart from their Sunni rivals, the Ottomans and Uzbeks.

While Safavid painters of the early sixteenth century synthesised the styles they had inherited from the Turkman court at Tabriz and the Timurids at Herat, the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a new emphasis on single-page paintings made for inclusion in albums. New styles in metalwork included openwork steel plaques (cat. nos. 151 and 152) and small objects, while Safavid

potters relied on Chinese prototypes for their inspiration. Indeed, foreign influences had an impact on the all the arts of the Islamic world in this period.

An interest in portraiture intensified in the seventeenth century in Turkey, Iran, and India, in part reflecting the increased importation of European prints including portraits of kings and other notable people. Different conventions for royal portraiture developed at different courts. The Safavid shahs of Iran were portrayed at official gatherings greeting foreign diplomats in works on paper and on the walls of the Chihil Sutun, a royal palace built in the 1640s in Isfahan. These scenes emphasise the shah's supremacy and magnanimity.

#### 150 Standard (calam)

Iran, late 16<sup>th</sup> century Pierced steel plate with moulded iron adjuncts H 81.5 cm; W 32.5 cm AKM 00679

Published: Thompson and Canby 2003, p. 222; AKTC 2007a, pp. 178–179 (no. 154a); AKTC 2007b, pp. 180-181 (no. 154a); Makariou 2007, pp. 148–149 (no. 52); AKTC 2008a, pp. 282–283 (no. 112); AKTC 2009a, p. 192; AKTC 2009b, p. 192

> vocative particles  $y\bar{a}$  are joined to form a muzzle. Several related elements are nailed to this openwork sheet of metal, ornately decorated with stylised dragon heads. This animal motif is repeat-

> Although steel, which is an alloy of iron and carbon, is a metal essentially used for the production

of weapons and armour, in the Safavid period it

was often used as a raw material for etching plates

(cat. nos. 151 and 152) and openwork standards.

This standard from the Aga Khan Museum was

made from a pear-shaped sheet of steel ending in

two divergent outgrowths alluding to the two tips

of the dhū'l-fiqār sword. The largest openworked

area presents a mirror inscription which can thus

be read from different angles. The inscription is

peated symmetrically along a central axis. The fol-

engraved on a stylised foliated background re-

lowing text can be read from top to bottom:  $y\bar{a}$  Allāh,  $y\bar{a}$  Muhammad,  $y\bar{a}$  'Alī ("Oh God, Oh Mu-

hammad, Oh 'Ali"). The two invocations of 'Ali

meet on the axis to form a stylised face, perhaps

that of a lion, to which the first imam is often

compared because of his courage and strength.

the 'ayn (the name of the letter but which also

The  $l\bar{a}m$  and the  $v\bar{a}$  of "Ali" outline the contours.

means "eye" in Arabic) form the eyes, and the two

ed three times: at the end of the two curved extensions at the base of the standard: at the end of the two pieces of metal which are set in the pearshaped part of the standard and are affixed to it in several places; on either side of the top element of which the middle axis is made of two symmetrical. separated sheets of metal between which another element could be inserted and attached. The dragon motif, the meaning of which could here be protective, was highly appreciated in the Islamic world and often used on metal objects. During the Safavid period and in Mughal India, it would decorate the stern and prow of boat-shaped bowls or kashkūls. Pear-shaped standards with dragon heads often appeared in Safavid miniatures where they were associated with battle scenes or represented inside sanctuaries, attesting to both their warlike and religious functions at the time (Makariou 2007, pp. 158–59, n. 14). The still current practice of taking out these standards during processions associated with Shia religious calendar celebrations was confirmed by European travellers since the seventeenth century, but it does not seem to have been represented in the sixteenth century manuscripts (ibid., p. 159, n. 15). cm

#### Two steel plaques

#### 151 Multi-lobed steel plaque

Iran, second half of 17th century Incised iron alloy; H 34.8 cm AKM 00617 Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 152–153 (no. 54); AKTC 2008a, pp. 66–67 (no. 13); AKTC 2009a, p. 193; AKTC 2009b, p. 193

### 152 Oblong steel plaque

Iran, late 17th century
Openwork iron alloy; L 22 cm
AKM 00616
Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 154–155 (no. 55);
AKTC 2008a, pp. 68–69 (no. 14); AKTC 2009a,
p. 193; AKTC 2009b, p. 193

These steel plagues were most likely created as part of larger assemblies of plates that would together form a composition around a central cartouche with openwork decoration. One is shaped like a multi-lobed almond and bears the Shia profession of faith, lā ilāha illā llāh wa-Muhammadun rasūlu llāh wa-'Alīyun walīyu llāh ("There is no God but God and Muhammad is His prophet and 'Ali is His companion"). The surface is done in openwork, with the exception of the plain plate that outlines the shape of the sconce. The threeline inscription is written in Arabic thuluth script that stands out from a background of delicate spirals of foliage. These twining plants have bifid leaves and stylised florets in a flowing and dynamic design. Their precision and fineness are reminiscent of the meticulous work of illumination. The sconce's shape also evokes book art from the Safavid era: multi-lobed mandorlas at the centre of the binding plates and medallions inscribed on the heart of the initial carpet pages of Qur'ans or literary works. This plaque belongs to a group of other such multi-lobed plates based on shape, design, and calligraphic style; in the absence of definite clues about the circumstances of their creation, it is difficult to assert that they were produced at the same time for the same usage. However, it seems well established that they were made as decoration for a door, and three of the

plates in this group tell us something about how they might originally have been assembled (two additional plates from a private collection have recently been published in Melikian-Chirvani 2007, pp. 260–261, cat. nos. 61 and 62).

The second plate, executed almost entirely in openwork and with Arabic thuluth inscription standing out against a background of three spiralling scrolls bearing stylised plant elements, is similar to the first in general design. It differs, however, in its oblong shape and a few ornamental details, such as the more developed design of plant elements: symmetrical and more complex florets and leaves with two, three, and four lobes. The general effect evokes the multi-lobed medallions common in illuminated decoration and that contain the title of a work or its subdivisions. Here, the inscription is limited to the name of Fatima, the Prophet Muhammad's only daughter and the wife of 'Ali, followed by the distinctive epithet al-zahrā' ("the brilliant one"). While its provenance is unknown, this object can be related to a set of ornamental plaques that are comparable in design, though longer (between 38 and 39 cm). Each of these invokes one or more of the Fourteen Immaculate Ones (chahārdah ma'sūmīn) revered by the Twelver Shia: the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, and the twelve Imams. CM







### 153 A manuscript of the Khamsa ("Quintet") of Nizami (d. 1209)

Scribe: Pir Husayn ibn Pir Hasan al-Katib al-Shirazi Artist: Qiyath al-Mudhahhib Iran, Shiraz, dated 20–30 Rabi <sup>c</sup> al-awwal 933 H / 25 December 1526–4 January 1527 CE Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; contemporary gilt leather binding Folios 33.5 x 20.2 cm; leather binding 33.4 x 21.5 x 5.5 cm; AKM 00270 Published: Welch 1978b (Ms. 15); Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 74–76 (no. 22; different folio);

AKTC 2009a, pp. 194-195; AKTC 2009b,

pp.194-195

The Khamsa ("Quintet") is a posthumous collection of five narrative poems composed by Nizami of Ganja (a city in present-day Azerbaijan) (d. 1209) and is one of the greatest romantic poets of Persian literature. The present copy of the text is composed of 401 folios with a four-column, goldruled text format containing 19 lines of nasta līq Persian script; headings appear in blue nasta līq against a gilded background of spiral scrolls and are embellished with orange, yellow, and green flowers. Twenty-seven miniatures illustrate selected episodes from each of the five poems, the final one signed by the artist, tasvīr-i Qīyāth al-Mudhahhib ("the reproduction of Qiyath the Gilder"). This painting appears on folio 382 verso of the manuscript as part of the fifth book, the Iskandarnāma ("Book of Alexander"). Although the colophon names a scribe, Pir Husayn ibn Pir Hasan al-Katib al-Shirazi, it does not identify a patron. Anthony Welch has suggested that this book may have been produced for a wealthy individual of high standing or perhaps for the governor of Shiraz, as no Safavid prince lived in Shiraz during the period of production for the manuscript (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 76). The dark leather gilded binding is contemporary with the codex and includes verses in praise of Nizami on its spine.

The present image depicts a scene from the story of *Khusraw u Shīrīn* ("Khusraw and Shi-

rin"), the first of the five narratives in the collection and composed by Nizami between 1171 and 1181. The text is composed of some 7,000 couplets relating the adventures of the Sasanian king Khusraw Parviz (r. 590-628) and his romance with the beautiful Shirin, an Armenian princess who later became his wife after the king subdued his rival, the sculptor Farhad, in the quest for Shirin's love. Khusraw first learns of Shirin from his companion, the painter Shapur. The king falls in love with the princess without ever having met her and asks for Shapur's aid in pursuing her and winning her hand in marriage. Shapur travels to Armenia, where he paints a picture of his king and posts it strategically in an outdoor setting frequented by Shirin and her companions. Shirin is struck by the image; intrigued by its subject, she finally demands to know who the portrait represents and how she may find the man depicted: this is the moment illustrated in the present painting. Shapur reveals the identity and love of his master to Shirin and instructs her to meet Khusraw halfway between Armenia and Iran. All of the illustrations in this manuscript of the Khamsa are believed to have been executed by the same painter, Qiyath al-Mudhahhib ("Qiyath the Gilder"), and build from a tradition of painting and calligraphy developed in Shiraz in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (ibid., p. 74). LA





### 154 An illustrated manuscript of the Anvār-i Suhaylī ("Lights of Canopus") of Husayn ibn 'Ali al-Wa'iz al-Kashifi (d. 1504)

Scribe: Na im Muhammad al-Husayni al-Tabrizi Artist: Sadiqi Beg

Iran, Qazvin, dated 13 Safar 1002 H / 8 November 1593 CE

Ink and opaque watercolour on paper; 30.1 x 20.3 cm AKM 00289  $\,$ 

Published: Welch 1976, pp. 125–144, figs. 42–55 (fols. 10r, 17r, 38r, 28v, 20v, 52r, 309r, 55v, 85r, 227v, 40v, 313r, 83v, and 22r); Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 100–105, cat. no. 32 (fols. 22r, 139v, and 198r); Canby 1998, pp. 70–72 (no. 43); AKTC 2007, p. 136r (no. 103); AKTC 2007, p. 138v (no. 103); Melikian-Chirvani 2007, pp. 446–447 (fol. 22v) ; AKTC 2009a, p.196; AKTC 2009b, p.196

The paintings in this manuscript depict stories from the *Anvār-i Suhaylī* ("Lights of Canopus"), a selection of fifteenth-century fables based on a twelfth-century version of the Kalīla wa-Dimna ("Kalila and Dimna") collection. The text's origins are thought to lie in the oral traditions of India and to have been first recorded in writing around 300 CE as the Panchatantra ("Five Occasions of Good Sense"), a book of five chapters on statecraft (arthasastra) (De Blois 1991, p. 10). Its stories are held together by the framework of an Indian king, Dabshalim (or Dabishlim), consulting his court philosopher Bidpai (or Pilpay, both corrupted versions of Bidnag and later, in Arabic, Bindna) about proper ruling conduct in a variety of situations. Bidpai responds to each question with a fable featuring animal protagonists, each fable in turn framing other stories and sub-stories and eventually returning to the king's conversation with Bidpai in order to lead to the next of the five main fables.

The present image refers to one of the five chapters on strategies of statecraft, "Of Crows and Owls." The tale involves a longstanding enmity between the owls and the crows, each group led by their respective king. The crows lived in a tree while the owls lived in cave, and the owl king made it a point to have any crow he ever saw leave the tree killed as a pre-emptive measure. Concerned about his shrinking flock, the crow king

consulted his advisors on how to retaliate and ultimately followed the counsel of the advisor who suggested finding out who the owl king's closest advisors were and turning them against each other through deceit and duplicity. Once they were divided through dissent, the crows could conquer their enemy. The history of the Panchatantra's transmission to the Islamic world is recalled in its various recensions into Persian and Arabic, as the story of Kalīla wa-Dimna was first translated into Pahlavi (Middle Persian) by the physician Burzoy in the sixth century; then into Arabic in the eighth century by Ibn al-Mugaffa; later into neo-Persian in the mid-twelfth century by Nasrallah Munshi. Husayn ibn 'Ali al-Wa'iz al-Kashifi (d. 1504), the court chaplain of Herat at the end of the fifteenth century, created a new, completely revised Persian translation at the suggestion of the court official Ahmad Suhayli. In his honor, he named his translation Anvār-i Suhavlī ("Lights of Canopus"), where the word "suhayl" is a pun on the court official's name and the Arabic name for Canopus, the second-brightest star in the southern sky. The stories enjoyed great popularity in the Persian-Indian region up until the beginning of modern times and were printed in their entirety for the first time in London in 1836. These texts were used to test British officials being sent to India on their knowledge of Persian. LA/VD







### 155 Manuscript of the Guy u Chawgān or Hālnāma ("Book of Ecstasy") of 'Arifi

Iran, ca. 1580

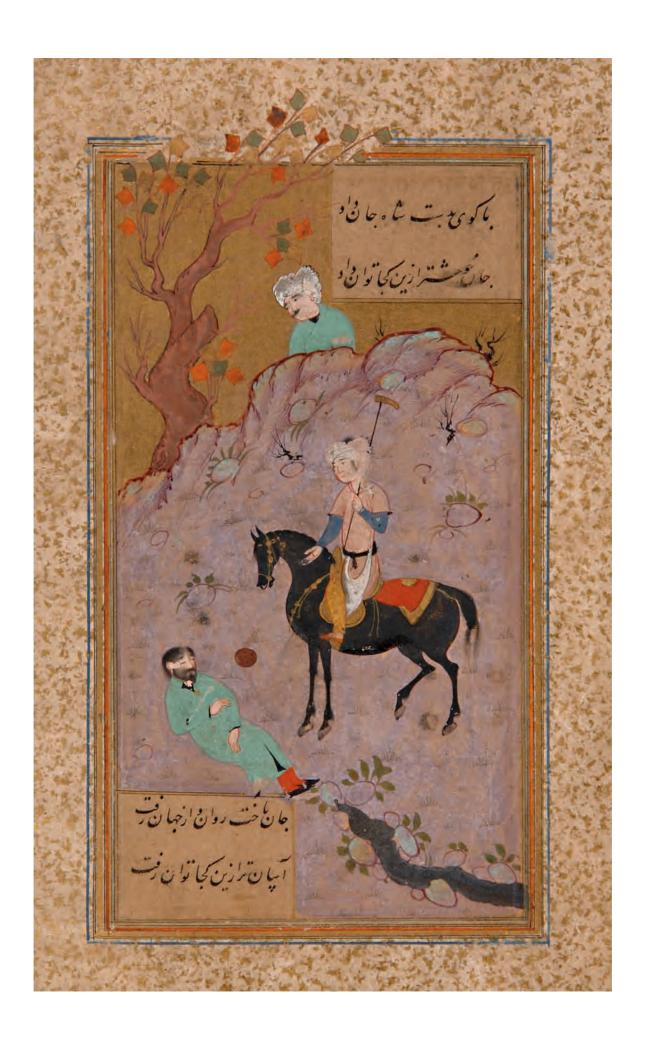
Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; 21.3 x 13.1 cm

AKM 00522

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 146 (no. 113); AKTC 2007b, p. 150 (no. 113); AKTC 2008a, pp. 228–229 (no. 87); AKTC 2009a, p.198; AKTC 2009b, p.198 This mystical poem by 'Arifi (d. ca. 1449) uses the concept of the polo ball and mallet as a metaphor for yearning for and being spurned by the beloved. Classic Persian poems allow for both secular as well as religious interpretations. Thus, the beloved acts as a metaphor for God, whom the pious man loves unconditionally and for whom he is consumed by longing because he cannot reach Him. At the same time the poem can refer to the profane love for a human. The polo mallet, curved at the end like a lock of hair, thus symbolizes the beloved's locks, which caress the lover's head, symbolized by the ball.

In the painting a dervish on the edge of a rocky horizon observes a princely polo player who is accompanied by an attendant carrying a mallet. The illustration is stylistically close to the work of 'Ali Asghar who worked in Qazvin in the 1570s and 1580s and joined the <code>kitābkhāna</code> of Shah Abbas I upon his accession in 1587. 'Ali Asghar illustrated two manuscripts of <code>Guy u Chawgān</code> and one of <code>Shāh u Darvīsh</code> of Hilali that all include polo-playing scenes (Robinson 1988, p. 126). The jutting rocks, sharply bent elbows and treatment of the hair of the dervish recall these equally small-scale works by 'Ali Asghar. <code>VD/AF</code>





#### 156 Lacquer book covers

Iran, late 16th century
Lacquer with powdered gold and mother-of-pearl;
27.7 x 16.7 cm
AKM 00637

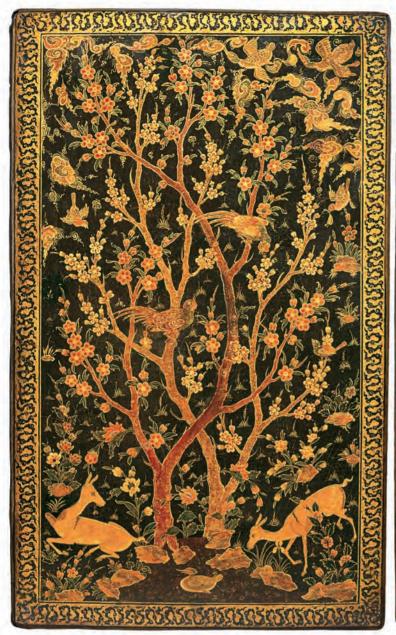
Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 74–75 (no. 43); AKTC 2007b, p. 70–71 (no. 43); Makariou 2007, p. 70–71 (no. 21); AKTC 2008a, pp. 106–107 (no. 32); AKTC 2009a, p. 200; AKTC 2009b, p. 200

The use of "lacquer" painting, which was made waterproof and very shiny by applying a varnish, for papier mâché binding boards may be traced to the last quarter of the fifteenth century. The development of this technique for binding manuscripts produced in Herat during the rule of Husavn Mirza (1470-1506), seems to have resulted from the importation of Chinese lacquered objects whose vitrified appearance and the rich contrast of golden decoration on a dark background inspired imitations. From the last years of the fifteenth century on, colour ranges became richer for the treatment of the background and decoration through the use of a deep red colour and pearl or shell dust, covered with red varnish to accentuate the coloured background.

Polychromy continued to evolve during the sixteenth century, whilst animal scenes, sometimes involving humans, could cover the entire outer board until they gradually came to resemble a miniature page. This style was reserved for binding boards used for poetic or literary works. This sample from the Aga Khan Museum shown here, which is decorated with an animal theme picture repeated on the two outer boards, reflects this development while maintaining a colour assortment restricted to yellow, orange, and red on a black background. These colours were emphasized with gold and pearl dust, and the contours outlined with a gold line that contrasts with the dark background. The undulating frieze framing the picture, achieved through the juxtaposition of 'chi' clouds painted in black on a gold background, could be seen on all the early lacquer bindings produced in Herat and continued to be frequently used as a border motif throughout the sixteenth century. Inside the central field, a primary register depicts a pond whose banks offer two deers,

seemingly undisturbed by the prospect of any predators, an opportunity for drink and play. Two flowering trees, which occupy most of the available surface area, spread their branches, overlapping each other. On their branches, a sparrow and two pheasants seem to be exchanging vehement words, while in the restricted space of the upper corners two ducks fly hastily amid swirling clouds. Between the branches, the dark background is punctuated by small tufts of grass and flowery grebes leaving space at the top to small spiralling clouds, suggesting the end of the earth. This piece of sky in the top part of the landscape is a common feature in Persian miniatures. Similarly, all the elements of the scene have their match in numerous pages of miniatures and marginal decorations. These are some of the recurring elements of an idealised nature which is characteristic of Iranian miniatures. Moreover, the principal elements of this landscape are presented in pairs (twin trees, two deer, and two pheasants); their doubling, like the replication of the same composition on each of the two boards, could represent the mirror and doubling theme that was so dear to mystic Persian poetry. The whole picture gives an impression of balance and serenity, which is not the most sought-after effect in the animal scenes of binding boards, which are usually divided into several dynamic sketches depicting animal fights and predators chasing their prey.

Related lacquer bindings of the mid-sixteenth century are found in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Mss. Or. Suppl. Pers. 1962 and 1171 and 129; see Stanley 2003, pp. 190–191; Richard 1997, pp. 169, 179, and Bernus-Taylor 1989, pp. 165–166) and in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Haldane 1983, no. 94). CM/AF





# The Shahnama of Firdawsi



**Abu 'I-Qasim Firdawsi**Detail from the *Shāhnāme* of Shah Tahmasp (fo. 7r; cat. no. 162)

The ("Book of Kings") is a Persian epic that the great poet Abu 'l-Qasim Firdawsi finished on exactly the 25th of February, 1010 (as Firdawsi writes, "on the Ard day of the Sefandarmed month, as five times eighty years had passed since the Hijra"). He had worked for over thirty years on this epic that tells the story of Iranian kings starting with the first ruler Gavumars and continuing to the last king Yazdigird. It bridges the time between myth and recorded history (of the Parthian and Sasanian dynasties, 247 BCE-651 CE). Fearful that Iran's history would be forgotten and overwhelmed by an Arab culture brought there in the 600s, Firdawsi set about composing an epic that also integrated existing written accounts and orally transmitted tales. The result was a work spanning many generations, organized according to the regnal cycles of fifty kings (*shāhs*). Valued in its time as a work of history and for its ethical content (as a mirror for princes), the major themes of the Shāhnāma include the full range of human traits evidenced by rulers, their wise and foolish actions, the inevitability of human destiny, and the endemic jealousy of peoples living beyond Iran's borders. Stories about each king's life and rule, of the dilemmas and challenges they confront, alternate with those of heroes, such as Rustam, who dedicate their service to the kings. The kings' reigns are assigned by God (Yazdān); so long as God's appointed king rules Iran, in theory at least, Iran's security and prosperity will be preserved

The earliest illustrated *Shāhnāmas* appear around 1300, and Firdawsi's epic – as well as epics composed by other poets – retained its cultural currency in royal and princely-sponsored bookmaking workshops from the 1300s through the 1440s. Three illustrated copies of Firdawsi's epic were produced for the Timurid princes Ibrahim Sultan, Baysunghur, and Muhammad Juki between 1430 and the 1440s. The text seems to have lost some of its appeal after then – with the exception of a *Shāhnāma* made for Sultan Mirza 'Ali Karkiya in 1493-4 at Gilan – as royal patrons and their artists shifted their attention to other literary works.

The salience of Firdawsi's *Shāhnāma* was renewed in the early 1500s under the Safavid dynasty, founded by Shah Isma'il (r. 1501–1524). Shah Isma'il frequently invoked characters from the *Shāhnāma* in his poetry, where he claimed a similarity to the likes of Faridun, Khusraw, Jamshid, and Zahhak, and issued challenges to these kings as a means of inciting passion and support from his followers, who were dubbed the *Qizil-bāsh* (lit. "redheads," after the color of the baton

inserted into their turbans). He also named his sons - Tahmasp, Bahram, and Sam - after characters from the epic and commissioned the poet Mirza Qasim Gunabadi to compose a versified account. The panegyric biography was titled Shāhnāma-i Ismā<sup>c</sup>īl. Such moves were probably motivated by a studied populism. Although interest in Firdawsi's Shāhnāma had dwindled at roval courts, the Shāhnāma retained its value in Safavid society, as reflected by the recitation of the epic by storytellers to their publics. A yet stronger indication of the status and utility of Firdawsi's Shāhnāma for the Safavids, however, was the commission and production of an illustrated copy initiated by Shah Isma 'il and continued by his son Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-1576). The completed book of 759 folios and 258 paintings was unprecedented in the history of making illustrated copies of Firdawsi's epic at the royal courts of Greater Iran. In scale of ambition and quality of execution, Shah Tahmasp's Shāhnāma bested all precedents and would not be surpassed in later epochs.

Making such a book required the talents of artists, calligraphers, illuminators, and others expert in ruling, gold sprinkling, and binding. As in earlier royal workshops (kitābkhānas), a director coordinated the effort by overseeing production, requisitioning materials, maintaining quality control, and presumably delivering progress reports to the patron. The Shāhnāma project held a monopoly over the material and human resources of the royal workshop in the Safavid capital city of Tabriz for almost twenty years, between approximately 1522 and 1540. As the Shāhnāma took form, the Safavid idiom of painting and art of the book – seen in Shah Tahmasp's later copy of the Khamsa of Nizami (1539–1543) – was steadily crystallized through a synthesis of local-cum-dynastic artistic traditions developed under the preceding Timurid and Turkman dynasties. Some artists involved in making the Shāhnāma, chiefly Kamal al-Din Bihzad (d. 1535-6), were already mature at its inception, while a younger generation of artists reached majority working on it.

Earlier illustrated copies of Firdawsi's *Shāhnāma*, as well as tales depicted from it in other media such as ceramics, had been used to give form to the political ideologies of ruling elites in Iran. This was true of the Mongol Ilkhanid and Timurid dynasties, which used the epic to lay claim to a land and a culture, and to link the present reality of their rule to a history of former rulers. Though external evidence is lacking, it seems that Safavid patrons chose Firdawsi's *Shāhnāma* not only as a historical work but also to suggest a comparable symmetry between kings, present and past. Par-

ticular ideological meanings are generally identified in manuscripts through the choice of stories for illustration or the increased emphasis given to an individual king's reign. The evidence of Shah Tahmasp's Shāhnāma, however, suggests that this conception was not operative across the whole book. What is striking about Shah Tahmasp's Shāhnāma is the preponderance of illustrations in the first 438 folios, where 201 paintings occur, with only 57 paintings illustrating the remaining 321 folios. Though one could account for this pattern as a specific repurposing, or inflection, of Firdawsi's epic in Safavid hands, one could also argue that Shah Tahmasp's Shāhnāma succumbed to the very burden of its conceptual and artistic ambition. As its makers embraced the opportunity to make a Shāhnāma that abrogated all past versions, its artists fully aware of the history of their art practices, their energies and capacities - and perhaps the patron's interest - may have dwindled over time. It was not possible to sustain an equal level of craft across the whole book.

Shah Tahmasp's *Shāhnāma* is one of the most remarkable Persian manuscripts which was started when Shah Tahmasp returned to Tabriz from Herat in 1522. Over a dozen painters, at least two calligraphers, two or more miniaturists, bookbinders, persons responsible for polishing, gold stippling and margin creation, with a whole team of assistants, pooled their talents in a kitābkhāna, or book workshop, to design the most sumptuous manuscript ever produced in Iran. In the twentieth century, the manuscript lost its colophon and a large part of the research work done by art historians focused then on the identification of the workshop chefs and painters. Before it was dismantled in the 1970s, the complete manuscript consisted of 380 folios, including 258 miniatures.

The manuscript bears two signatures – of both Mir Musavvir and Dust Muhammad – and a date:

934 H / 1527-8 CE. It is thought that these two paintings, done on thicker paper were added later, between 1535 and 1540, when the manuscript was close to completion (Welch 1979b, pp. 39 and 90). The paintings of this manuscript not only reflect the work of several major painters of the sixteenth century, but also plunge us into the daily Safavid court life. Indeed, although the Shāhnāma depicts the legendary and pre-Islamic history of Iran, the artists represented the characters in clothing from the period of Shah Tahmasp within their context. In some cases, architecturally decorated objects or elements represented in these miniatures have lasted to this day. The style of the miniatures was the subject of a major study (Dickson and Welch 1981), but the aspects of Safavid court life that these paintings reveal are also worthy of interest.

Despite what the book represented as an investment of talent and resources, Shah Tahmasp made a gift of his Shāhnāma to the Ottoman sultan, Selim II (see cat. no. 98), in 1568. The Shāhnāma still lay in the treasury of the Ottoman palace in the 1800s, when its illustrations were provided with Ottoman Turkish glosses. Baron Edmund de Rothschild purchased the Shāhnāma in 1903 and it was sold to Arthur A. Houghton in 1959. The manuscript was broken up for sale, beginning in the 1970s, its paintings distributed among a number of private and public collections and the textblock, with many paintings, returned to the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1996. Today, the two largest parts of the manuscript belong to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and to the Islamic Republic of Iran. The AKM collection, with nine pages of the highest quality, is deemed to be the third most important group. Isolated illustrations can be found in many private and public collections in Europe and North America. DR

### Five illustrations from different Shāhnāmas dating to the 13th to 17th centuries

#### 157 Shah Shapur besieges the fortress of the Arabian chieftain Ta<sup>3</sup>ir in Yemen

Folio from the dispersed "Second Small Shahnama" manuscript
Tabriz or Baghdad, Ilkhanid, *ca.* 1300
Opaque water colour, gold and ink on paper
26.5 X 18.9 cm
AKM 000017
Published: Welch 1972a, p. 49; Simpson 1979, p. 98; Canby 1998, p. 23

Boldly leading his troops, the youthful Shah Shapur of Iran rides out at dawn in black armour on a white horse, before the crenellated fortress in Yemen, where the Ghassanid Arab chieftain Ta'ir is besieged in retreat. Ta'ir and three courtiers watch with concern from the ramparts above. Ta'ir's beautiful daughter Malika and her nurse also look out from a fortress window: Malika is descended from Sasanian royalty, her mother having been abducted by Ta'ir from Ctesiphon years before. Here, the painter has indicated this Iranian bloodline by depicting Malika wearing a Sasanian-style crown. On seeing her cousin Shapur for the first time, the princess falls in love with him, and soon betrays her father (Davis 2006. 580-581).

The 'Small Shahnama' manuscripts are a group of four densely-illustrated copies of Firdawsi's *Shāhnāma* ("Book of Kings"). Without surviving colophons, no copy is dated, but three may be attributed to early fourteenth century Iran or Iraq, and the cultural orbit of the Mongol Ilkhanid dynasty. Although they are not necessarily royal commissions, they may indicate the Mongols' intended affiliations with Persian culture (Simpson 1979; Hillenbrand 2002, pp. 150–154; the fourth 'Small Shahnama' is in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and is attributed to Isfahan *ca.* 1330).

However fragmentary, these three are therefore the earliest known illustrated copies of Firdawsi's great epic poem. The detached folios of the so-called 'First' and 'Second' Small Shahnamas are dispersed in art collections around the world: this folio belongs to the latter manuscript. The codex and binding of the third is in the Freer Gallery, with many further folios also dispersed. The group has been closely analysed and studied by M.S. Simpson, where the original pagination and programme of illustration are carefully recon-

structed for all three manuscripts (Simpson 1979; Simpson in: Hillenbrand 2004, pp. 9–24).

According to Simpson, each manuscript follows an individual series of paintings, and are not duplicates of one another, in spite of their obvious similarities in format and style. For example, the equivalent painting of Shapur in the 'First Small Shahnama' depicts the hero riding an elephant instead of a white hores (Dublin Chester Beatty Library Per106.54: Simpson 1979, p. 44, fig. 1).

Although significant, the 'Small Shahnama group' is not the earliest known illustrated works of narrative literature in the Islamic Middle East - other texts such as Ayyuqi's Warqa wa-Gulshāh, Hariri's Magāmāt, and Ibn al-Muqaffa 's Kalīla wa-Dimna have survived in lively illustrated manuscripts from before 1300, as have other works of history and science, written in Arabic or Persian. The narrative complexity of Firdawsi's epic offered painters and patrons an unprecedented wealth of subject-matter, to which they responded with detailed illustrations of great panache. Stylistically, the 'Small Shahnama' paintings show an enduring pictorial tradition also related to late twelfth and thirteenth century paintings on ceramic, as well as the lively compositions and close horizontal formats of contemporary inlaid metalwork (Simpson 1985; Canby 1998, p. 22). Many features of the paintings are, however, definitely products of the new cultural environment of the Ilkhanids, such as the distinctive armour and helmets worn by Shapur and his forces.

Other folios from this dispersed manuscript are in the following museum collections: Aga Khan Trust for Culture (Geneva), British Museum (London), Brooklyn Museum of Art (New York), David Collection (Copenhagen), Freer Gallery (Washington DC), Cincinnati Art Museum, Museum of Fine Art (Montreal), McGill University Library (Montreal).



# 158 Shah Kay Kavus attempts to fly to heaven

Folio from one of the three Inju-Shāhnāmas Shiraz, Iran, 741 H / 1341 CE Opaque water colour, gold and ink on paper AKM 00030

Published: Welch 1972a, p. 72

Never a paragon of the perfect ruler, the gullible Shah Kay Kayus was tempted by a demon to pursue a preposterous and dangerous plan – to fly to heaven, and conquer the secrets of the celestial spheres. Having considered his options, the king proceeded as follows: he ordered his servants to collect live eagle chicks, and hand-rear them in the palace on fresh meat. Once fully grown, the tame eagles were formidable, "as strong as lions", and Kavus then ordered his servants to harness four of the birds to a specially-constructed throne, with slabs of raw meat suspended just above the eagles. Next, the foolish king sat into his contraption, and the straining eagles soon had him airborne, as they struggled to reach the dangling food. This is the moment depicted here: hoisted away by the giant birds, Kay Kavus points up in excitement towards the approaching heavens where the first sphere of the fixed stars or constellations may be seen, with the sun beyond. Eventually of course the birds grew tired, and the king's upward trajectory came to an end. The plummeting throne crashed to the ground, tipping out the royal passenger in a remote region. He survived the failed adventure, but was greatly humiliated by the contemptuous reproaches of his noblemen when they came to rescue him (Davis 2006, 184-186).

This painting belongs to a dispersed manuscript that was produced in 741 H / 1341 CE, and is one of three well-known and denselv-illustrated Shāhnāma manuscripts made for the court environment of Inju Shiraz, a governorship in the Iranian province of Fars (the other two are dated 1330 [Istanbul, Topkapi Palace Library, H.1479] and 1333 [St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Dorn329]). Like many a valuable manuscript handled by Western art dealers in the early twentieth century, this Shāhnāma codex was taken apart and sold page by page on the art market, thus scattering the folios to public and private collections around the world. After thorough study, the original pagination of 180 extant folios was reconstructed and 36 collections were identified which currently own folios (Simpson in: Hillenbrand 2000, pp. 217-247). Remarkably, among these farflung fragments, there survive not only the dedication pages from the front of the book (Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S1986.110v and S1986.111r), but also the final folio containing the colophon statement (AKTC IRM06Iv). This is how it was discovered that the manuscript was made for the Inju wazīr (minister) Hajji Qawam al-Dawla wa-l-Din Hasan, and the calligrapher was Hasan b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Husayni al-Mawsili, MC

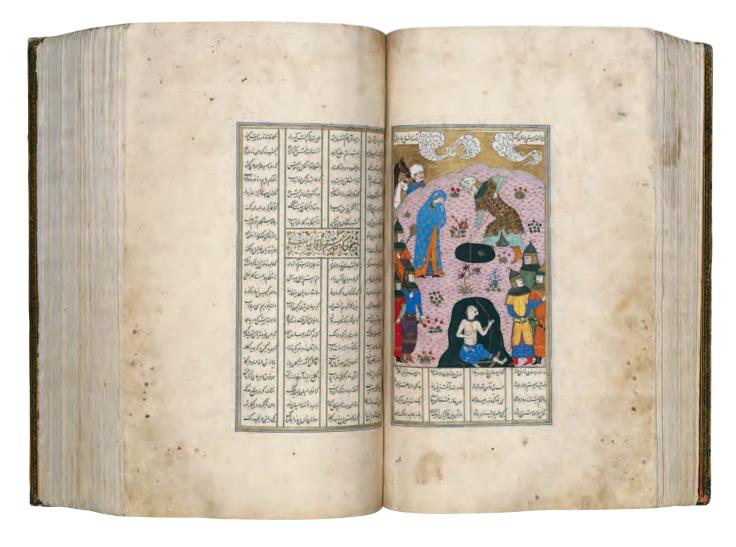


# 159 Rustam rescues Bizhan from the pit (fol. 218v)

Folio from the Na im al-Din Shāhnāma produced for Sultan Abu 'I-Nasr Qasim Khan Calligrapher: Na im al-Din "al-Katib al-Shirazi" (the scribe from Shiraz) Iran, Shiraz, 898 H / 1492-3 CE Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 19th-century lacquer binding AKM 000269 Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 23-31

This is one of the most famous episodes in the Book of Kings. The adventure begins when Bizhan, a young and brave noble at the Iranian court of Kay Khusraw, rides out to rid the kingdom of a marauding herd of wild boar, which have crossed into Iranian territory from neighbouring Turan. Wandering across the border, Bizhan meets Princess Manizha, the daughter of Iran's sworn enemy Afrasiyab (Davis 2006, 306-345). The couple fall in love, but are discovered: vengeful Afrasiyab has Bizhan enchained and imprisoned alive in a deep pit, and his wretched daughter is cast out of the palace for her familial disloyalty. Meanwhile, Kay Khusraw learns what has happened in Turan, and decides to send for Rustam, Iran's greatest hero. Rustam duly undertakes the rescue mission, and leads a group of warriors disguised as merchants into the enemy's territory, where they meet the destitute Manizha. At nightfall, she leads Iran's warriors to Bizhan's rescue. Only Rustam is strong enough to shift the great rock covering over the pit, and Bizhan is finally freed. This is the moment of triumph illustrated here: Rustam lowers a rope to the starving and shackled Bizhan, while weary Manizha hides her face with emotion and relief.

The quality of this manuscript's 43 paintings is typical of Turkman Shiraz style, an idiom refreshingly distinct from contemporary illustration in late Timurid Herat, at the court of Husayn Bayqara (Robinson 1979; Robinson 1991). Both Turkman and Timurid styles were to have a fundamental influence on Safavid painting of the sixteenth century. The calligrapher, Na'im al-Din Shirazi b. Sadr al-Din Mudhahhib, is known to have copied several other extant manuscripts, dating from the 1480s to 1500s, so this *Shāhnāma* comes midway in a long career. His patron's name is written in gold in the colophon statement at the end of the manuscript – Sultan Abu 'l-Nasr Qasim Khan – but he has not been identified further. MC



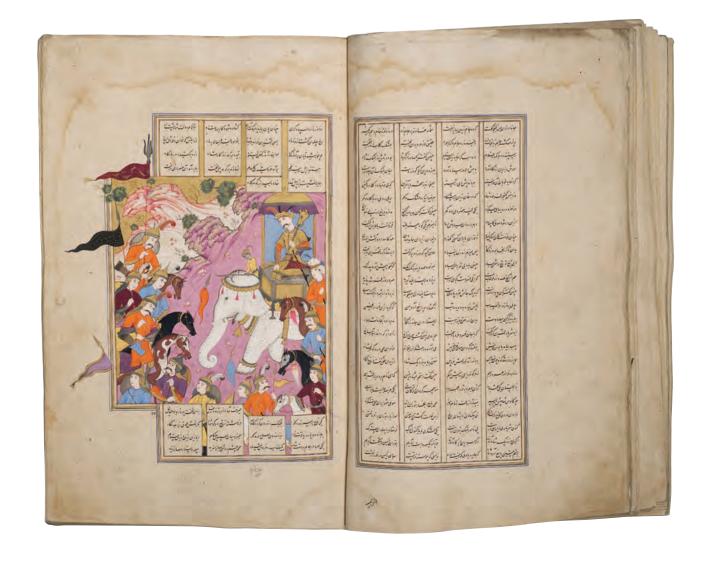
### 160 Kay Khusraw surveys his forces

Safavid Isfahan, Iran, dated 29<sup>th</sup> Jumada II 1064 H / 16<sup>th</sup> May 1654 Illustrator: Mu<sup>c</sup>in Musavvir Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper 37,9 x 23,5 cm AKM 00274 Once again, the mighty armies of Iran prepare for battle, against their perennial enemies, the neighbouring Turanians. King Kay Khusraw is enthroned upon a majestic white elephant, reviewing his troops. The Iranian champions on horseback bow their heads to their shah, with pennants fluttering gaily from their lances, ready for battle. The ox-headed mace held by Kay Khusraw is associated with Faridun, the shah's ancestor. Following many long years of warfare with the Turanian king Afrasiyab, Kay Khusraw is finally and conclusively victorious over his enemy, but this victory does not ultimately bring contentment: Kay Khusraw's great military successes cause him to withdraw from the world rather than embrace it. Depicted here at the height of his power, this ambitious king will eventually abandon worldly pursuits for spiritual concerns baffling the military heroes at his court.

Dated 1654, this fine codex is the first of a two-volume copy of Firdawsi's *Shāhnāma*, richly illustrated by Muʿin Musavvir, a prolific artist of the seventeenth century, active from the 1630s to 1690s. The second volume is dated 1066 H / 1655-6 CE, and is now in the collection of the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. Muʿin Musavvir had been trained by the painter Reza ʿAbbasi (d. 1635), who had dominated the Safavid visual

mode in the early seventeenth century, and although other Indian and European vogues were becoming current as the century progressed, unswervingly Mu'in continued to work in his teacher's – by now – traditional style (Soudavar 1992, 263–364).

A considerable corpus of Mucin's work survived, including single-page drawings and illustrated manuscripts (Farhad 1990, n. 10; Canby 1998, 82-89), and also lacquered pen-boxes (Khalili – Robinson – Stanley 1996, pp. 38–43). He had at least two Safavid courtiers as portraitsitters - 'Mirza Muhammad Bagir and his son Mirza Husayn' (AKM 00081), and 'The royal physician Hakim Shafa'i' (Collection of Princess Catherine Aga Khan IRM95; Canby 1998, pp. 87-88) - but yet there seems to be no evidence that he ever worked for the Safavid shahs, as he is not mentioned in the written sources. Almost in compensation for this, many of his drawings and paintings are signed and dated, and sometimes inscribed with yet further information regarding the precise location and circumstances of the work. For example, a series of drawings made in 1672 serve as record of a shocking event at the Safavid court when a diplomatic gift for the royal menagerie went out of control.



#### 161 Rustam slays the Turanian warrior Alkus

Folio from the *Shāhnāma* produced for Safavid Shah Isma <sup>c</sup>il II (r. 1576–1577) Iran, Qazvin, *ca.* 1576 AKM 000101 Reproduced: Welch 1978a, p. 89; Canby 1998, no 35 The enduring rivalry between Iran and neighbouring Turan is a major theme of the Book of Kings, and surfaces in this short episode. Along with some fellow Iranian chieftains, Rustam undertakes an impromptu hunting excursion into rival Turanian territory. Soon enough, the Turanian king Afrasivab rides out with his army to challenge the trespassers, and a skirmish ensues. Two Turanian champions, Alkus and Pilsam, are particularly formidable on the battlefield, at least until Rustam enters. Alkus is easily slain by the great Iranian warrior, while Pilsam escapes (Robinson 2002, p. 32). Recognisable in the throng, Rustam is dressed in his classic costume of a tigerskin doublet and snow leopard helmet, delivering a mortal blow to Alkus with an ox-headed mace.

This dispersed manuscript is associated with the third Safavid shah, Isma 'il II, whose brief reign lasted from June 1576 to November 1577 (Canby 1999, pp. 80–91). As the 49 extant paintings occur towards the first half of the text, it has been suggested that this manuscript is incomplete because of the unpopular shah's premature death by poisoning in 1577 (Robinson 1976a). The visu-

al arts in Iran had entered an uncertain period following the gradual disaffection of Shah Tahmasp (Isma 'il's father, r. 1522-1576) in the 1540s and 50s. This was to the certain benefit of other members of the royal family: unwanted, the painters filtered away to join more enthusiastic princely ateliers, such as that of Tahmasp's nephew Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, based mainly in Mashhad, and later recalled to Qazvin. By contrast, Isma'il II spent much of his father's reign incarcerated on Tahmasp's direct orders, so as to contain his unscrupulous ambitions for power. On Tahmasp's death in 1576, Isma 'il emerged to inherit the throne, and also the royal atelier of calligraphers and painters – for whom this manuscript may have been their first big commission for the new shah. Isma 'il II was paranoid for his new political supremacy, and ordered the executions of almost all his male relatives - including Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, who died in 1577. Many of the artists who had long served this exceptionally cultured patron and collector now found themselves working for Shah Isma 'il II. Before long, Isma 'il himself was also murdered, under mysterious circumstances. MC



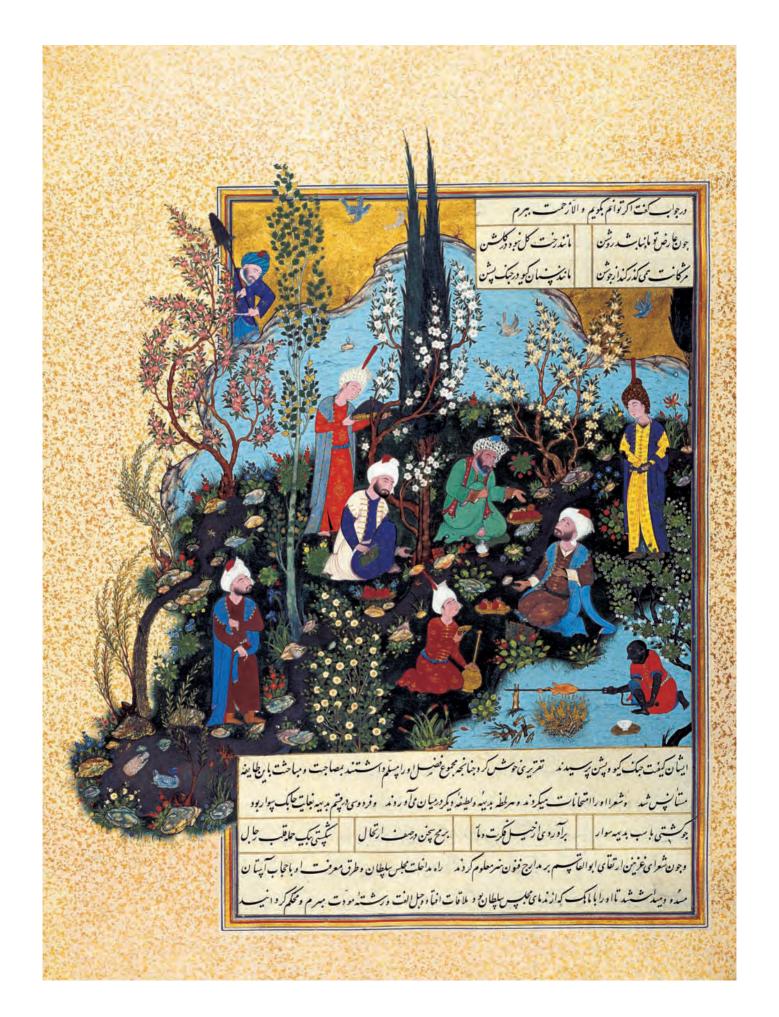
# Five illustrations from the *Shāhnāme* of Shah Tahmasp

# 162 Firdawsi and the three court poets of Ghazna (fol. 7r)

Attributed to Aga Mirak Iran, Tabriz, *ca.* 1532 Watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 47 x 31,8 cm; image: 26.7 x 23.2 cm AKM 00156

Published: Canby 1998, pp. 47–48 (no. 24) (with previous bibliography); AKTC 2007a, p. 157 (no. 126); AKTC 2007b, p. 159 (no. 126); Makariou 2007, pp. 73–75 (no. 22); AKTC 2009a, p. 202; AKTC 2009b, p. 202

The first illustration shows Firdawsi, the author of the text of the Shāhnāma, with the three poets of the court of Mahmud, the sultan of Ghazna, a city which is now in modern-day Afghanistan. Firdawsi left Tus, his native city, in northeastern of Iran, to seek out the patronage of the sultan for his *Shāhnāma*. Before meeting with the sultan, he was confronted by three poets of the court who cornered him before finally acknowledging his superior talent. In this picture, a small black servant roasts a bird on a spit while young fine-faced boys bring wine and delicacies to the three Ghazna poets, seated in the centre of the picture on the grassy bank of a stream of water. Firdawsi's isolation is emphasized by his position to the extreme left of the main group, just where the composition spills over into the margin. The role of the young man to the right of the picture, his head elegantly wrapped in a golden turban topped with the Safavid red 'tai', is not at once clear, but identifying him is key for the broader interpretation of this illustration and the role of Aqa Mirak in the production of the Shāhnāma. As a member of a distinguished sayyid family (recognised descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) of Isfahan, Aga Mirak was described by Dust Muhammad as being "unique in his time, the confidant of the Shah and unequalled as a painter and portraitist" (Binyon, Wilkinson and Grav 1933, p. 186). S. C. Welch has suggested that Shah Tahmasp might have granted his friend the honour of painting the first picture of the manuscript, which depicts Firdawsi, and the three poets of the court of Ghazna. Returning the compliment, Aqa Mirak might have included a portrait of the Shah, the young man in the golden turban in this illustration (Welch 1979b, p. 43). Basing his theory on Tahmasp's age at the time and the relative youth of Aga Mirak compared to Sultan Muhammad and Mir Musavvir, the first and second persons responsible for the Shāhnāma project, Welch dated the picture to around 1532, approximately ten years after work on the manuscript began. sc



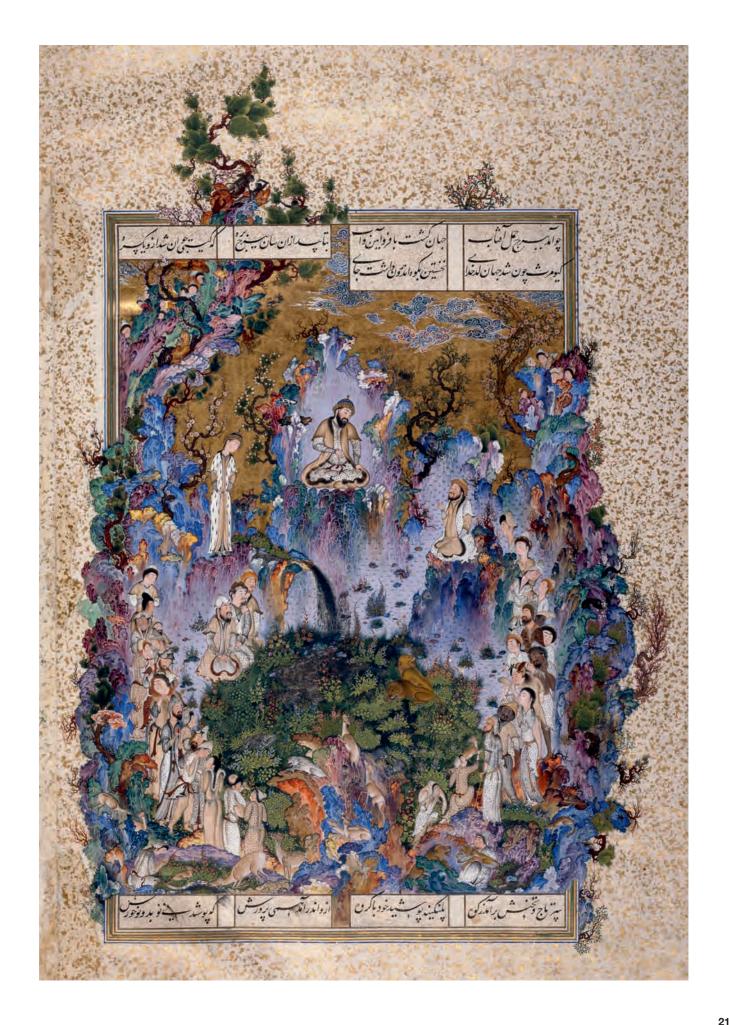
#### 163 The court of Gayumars

Attributed to Sultan Muhammad Iran, Tabriz, ca. 1522–1525 Opaque watercolor, gold, and ink on paper 47 x 31.8 cm AKM 00165 Published: Canby 1998, 48–49; Grabar 2009.

Published: Canby 1998, 48–49; Grabar 2009, 77; Melikian-Chirvani 2007; Welch 1976b, 36–39

This is the first painting to appear after the prefatory matter introducing Firdawsi's Shāhnāma. It depicts the first king, Gayumars, enthroned before his community – its members clad in leopard furs and skins - his son Siyamak seated to his left, and grandson Hushang standing to his right. Though the composition implies the just succession between father and son, signified by the spatial position between them (where left is favored), we know that this will never take place, emphasizing the inherent tragedy of the tale. The angel Surush informed Gayumars that the Black Div, son of the demon Ahriman, would murder Siyamak. Even at the beginning of human time, forces of good contend with forces of evil, inaugurating a struggle without end. This sense of loss is heightened by an idyllic landscape, where human beings gather alongside pacific animals of various species; even the rocky landscape is constructed to suggest the harmony between human and natural order.

Though the painting lacks a signature, it is one of very few mentioned by a contemporary. In his treatise on art history, written in 1544-1545, Dust Muhammad praises Sultan Muhammad for his creations, calling him "the rarity of the age", and singles out "The court of Gayumars" as a painting that humbles all artists who see it. It is easy to understand why. His painting combines an ingenious composition with a broad palette dominated by cool colors, each element minutely and precisely rendered in a technique that defies comprehension. Though the painting is large and even spills out into the gold-flecked margins, Sultan Muhammad populates the scene with countless figures, animals, and details of landscape, but in such a way that does not compromise legibility. The level of detail is so intense that the viewer is scarcely able to absorb everything, no matter how closely he looks. DR



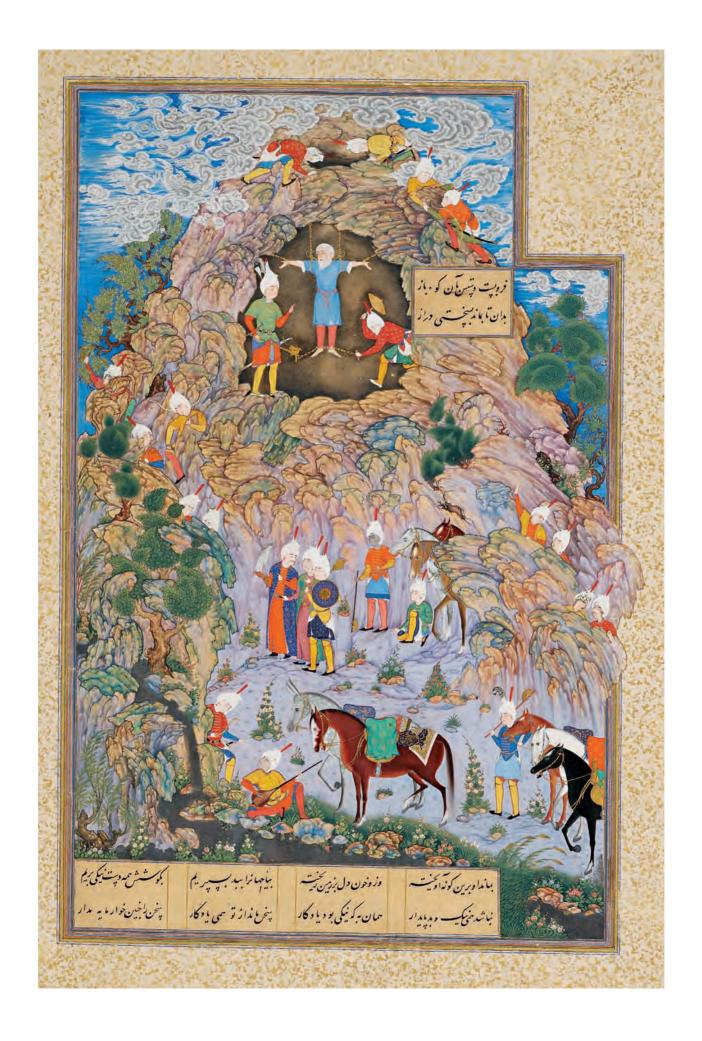
#### 164 The death of Zahhak

Attributed to Sultan Muhammad ca. 1535
Opaque watercolor, gold, and ink on paper 47 x 31.8 cm
AKM 00155
Published: Canby 1998, p. 50; Welch 1976b,

This painting concludes the cycle of King Zahhak, which is illustrated by a number of scenes. Zahhak gained his throne by making a pact with the devil, Iblis, who brought about the premature death of King Mardas, Zahhak's father. Early in Zahhak's reign. Iblis arrives at the court disguised as a cook. His dishes satisfy Zahhak so much that the king grants his cook anything that he would like. The cook asks if he might kiss Zahhak's shoulders. Two serpents sprout from the spots kissed by Iblis; thereafter, in order to maintain his own life, Zahhak is required daily to feed human brains to the serpents. A tyrannical rule ensues and the only hope for justice rests with Faridun, a hero entrusted in infancy to the cow Birmaya. Despite Zahhak's efforts, Faridun eludes capture, rises up against the king, and overthrows him. "The death of Zahhak" depicts the moment when Zahhak has been brought to Mt. Damavand and is suspended in a cave, per the advice of the angel Surush, where he will suffer until death.

Though one cannot fail to see the primary content – a frail, white-haired Zahhak chained to the

walls of the cave, a dark, terrifying hole - the pictorial narrative is treated with a complexity equal to other paintings in Shah Tahmasp's Shāhnāma. Firdawsi's Shāhnāma often involves enthronements, battles, and feasting, which yielded a recurring typology in illustrated versions. "The death of Zahhak", a story concerned with the execution of justice and the inauguration of Faridun's enlightened reign, is expanded into a scene of al fresco courtly life, highlighting some of the Iranian ruler's prerogatives. Faridun and his courtiers have dismounted from their horses and explore the landscape, as if taking a pause from hunting. The presence of a musician emphasizes the courtly ambience. The tranquility of the lower half of the painting is contrasted with the upper half, where one finds Zahhak imprisoned in the cave and swirling clouds, some assuming biomorphic forms as dragons, encircling the bare and rocky mountain. Again, landscape is used not simply as a setting but to heighten the drama of the event. DR



#### 165 Rustam hunts the onager Div

Assigned to Muzaffar <sup>c</sup>Ali Iran, Tabriz, *ca.* 1530–1535 Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper 47 x 31.8 cm AKM 00162 Published: Canby 1999, pp. 51–52 (no. 27): Di

Published: Canby 1999, pp. 51–52 (no. 27); Digard 2002, p. 233 (no. 198); Makariou 2007, pp. 80–81 (no. 25)

In response to the complaints of a herder whose horses had been attacked by a vicious onager, Kay Khusraw called on the hero Rustam for help in flushing out and killing the beast. According to the description, Kay Khusraw suspected the onager of being an avatar of the destructive dīv (demon), Akvan. Rustam mounted his gallant steed Rakhsh and departed post-haste to look for the onager. On the fourth day, a golden onager appeared, galloping across a plain; Rustam and Rakhsh took up the chase. But scarcely had Rustam touched the animal's neck with his snare when the dīv vanished in smoke. In this painting, Rustam is on the point of seizing the onager, which is turning its head to look back at its pursuer without slackening its speed. Horses are running in all directions, terrified by the *dīv*-onager.

This early work of Muzaffar 'Ali, the grandnephew of Bihzad, radiates exuberance. However, his style was never as simple and accurate as his great uncle's. Muzaffar 'Ali, one of the rare artists to have worked for Shah Tahmasp throughout his entire reign, was trained as a calligrapher and gilder as well as a painter. In addition to compiling a muraqqa<sup>c</sup> (album), he helped illustrate Nizami's Khamsa, executed between 1539 and 1543 and preserved in the British Library in London; Jami's Haft Awrang ("Seven Thrones") compiled between 1556 and 1565 for Shah Tahmasp's nephew; and Asadi's Garshaspnāma ("Book of Garshasp"), executed in 1573-74. He also produced murals for the royal palace in Qazvin, which was built between 1544 and 1562 to receive the shah in his new capital. sc



#### 166 The story of Haftvad and the worm

Signed by Dust Muhammad Iran, Tabriz, ca. 1540 Opaque watercolor, gold, and ink on paper 47 x 31.8 cm AKM 00164 Published: Canby 1998, pp. 52–54 In this tale, the daughter of Haftvad is spinning cotton with her female companions one day outside the village when she discovers a worm in her apple. She decides to keep the worm, regarding it as a lucky charm, and places it in her spindlecase for safekeeping. She asserts that the worm will help her to spin greater quantities of cotton than she ever has before, and to her friends' amazement her boast is realized. With each day, she spins greater quantities of cotton and nurtures the worm by feeding it pieces of apple. When her father, Haftvad, learns of this, he takes the worm to be a good omen and over time it grows to fill a custom-made chest, and then a stone cistern; after five years, it is as large as an elephant and has to be housed in a fortress. As the worm grows, so do Haftvad's fortunes. When King Ardashir learns of this, he becomes jealous and suspicious and plots to kill the worm. Eventually Ardashir succeeds in penetrating the fortress and kills the worm by pouring molten lead down its throat. The tale ends with the deaths of Haftvad and his sons, vanquished by Ardashir's army.

This painting, one of a few signed works in the

*Shāhnāma*, is among the last added to the book. A signature, reading savvarahū Dūst Muhammad ("Dust Muhammad painted it"), combined with written sources identifies the artist as Dust Muhammad Musavvir, or Dust-i Divana. Though the implications of the signature remain unclear - did he design the composition and/or execute the painting in whole or in part? - the painting is one of the strongest in Shah Tahmasp's Shāhnāma. The vignette of Haftvad's daughter spinning cotton at the lower left activates the pictorial narrative, but the remainder of the painting is conceived as evidence of Haftvad's good fortune. The village, an aggregate of many finely made buildings, bustles with the activities of daily life. A muezzin makes the call to prayer as two figures sit atop a building consulting books with the tools of a scribe set down beside them. Elsewhere in the village, figures transport bundles of wood gathered from the countryside and carry sacks of goods, while a butcher serves a customer. The painting is replete with many other details of the everyday and depicts the elements of its extra-urban landscape with equal depth and complexity. DR



#### 167 Safavid blue and white dish with flowers

Iran, 17th century

Fritware body with blue underglaze painting Ø: 46.6 cm

AKM 00588

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 101 (no. 71); AKTC 2007b, p. 100 (no. 71); Makariou 2007, pp. 20, 50-51 (no. 14); AKTC 2009a, p. 206; AKTC 2009b, p. 206 Since the ninth century, the Islamic world has observed and admired the production of Chinese potters. In its classification of different peoples, the mastery of the arts and various techniques was the domain of the Chinese. This is a model dating back to the beginning of the fifteenth century which has been faithfully copied. No fewer than 34 similar dishes are still to be found among the collections of the Ardebil sanctuary, the founding site of the Safavid dynasty (Makariou 2007, p. 55, n. 81). They present slight variations; with or without wings. However, the winged model, decorated with waves and rocks and cavettos with small bouquets of flowers, has two examples among the Ardebil collection (ibid., n. 82). It is unusual for an imitation to be so faithful to the original, yet this dish copies almost detail for detail the decoration of waves and rocks on the wings and the bouquets embellishing the cavetto. Nevertheless, the Safavid piece is bigger than the Chinese examples that have been preserved. Some of them bear the mark of Shah Abbas, which leads us to date the Safavid copy back to the first quarter of the seventeenth century. However, the Chinese model probably goes back to the beginning of the fifteenth century. This poses a problem for these objects' reception and the gap between their approximate date of fabrication and that of

their imitations. The Chinese model boasts a number of features which fit in perfectly with ornamentation in the Islamic world: the wave and rock design on the wing is static and the wavy writing less skittish, compared to fourteenth century dishes. On the Chinese original, the curly lines of the waves remain fluid, though repetitive. By contrast, on the Safavid model, the waves fold up into geometrically organized bands. It is here a different universe of transcription at play, dominated by a steadily maintained rhythm. The centre bouquet copies the Chinese model almost down to the minutest detail. However, these transcription details change the design, accentuating a simple contrast between the spindly lines and the excessive colour on the petals from which the monochromes have disappeared (ibid., n. 83). On the underside, the undulating foliage replete with flowers from the Chinese model has been simplified, or "ornamentalised". The thick, oily and shiny glaze spread over the piece lends warmth to the copy. The Ottoman world also liked Chinese ceramics; the Topkapı Palace holds one of the most extensive collections of Chinese ceramics outside of China. However, the Ottoman pastiches of Chinese ceramics most often elicited transcriptions more distanced from the model. SM



## 168 Emerald-green Safavid bottle with a lion tamer

Iran, early 17th century
Fritware, moulded under an opaque green glaze;
H 37 cm
AKM 00732

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 207; AKTC 2009b, p. 207

The Islamic world's fascination with China most likely reflects an interest in the Far East which has existed in the entire region, and in particular in Iran, since Antiquity. However, in the Islamic period a concerted effort was made to imitate Chinese blue-and-white porcelain and monochrome celadon wares. Artists and craftsmen from China are known to have worked in Kufa (Iraq) as early as the eighth century, during the Abbasid period, so that cultural transmission occurred through the movement of technicians as well as through trade and diplomacy. The present bottle is an excellent example of moulded monochrome glazed ware imitating Chinese celadon. Two images created by a mould appear on the body of the bottle: a winged bull and a Chinese qilin on one side, and the figure of a lion tamer and a lion on the other. A virtually identical bottle is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, suggesting that the two objects were produced from the same mould (Pope 1938, pls. 807B & 808A [inv. no. 1339-

1876]); also, a similar bottle can be found in the Gemeente Museum, The Hague (Pope 1938, pl. 808B). The pear shape seems to have been popular in the early seventeenth century, as several bottles with this form exist in other collections but with a different decorative programme (see, for example, bottles with a white body, black outlines, and leafy grounds depicting hunters and their prey, in the Brooklyn Museum, New York, and the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg).

The image of the lion tamer and lion also appears in drawings of the period; these probably served as models for ceramic decoration as well as for the surfaces of other media. This very scene is depicted by the well-known sixteenth-century Safavid artist Sadiqi Beg (see cat. no. 154), whose drawings sometimes reflect the influence of his contemporary, Reza 'Abbasi, known for his extraordinary "calligraphic" drawing style. LA



#### 169 Panel with irises

Iran (or India?), 17<sup>th</sup> century Earthenware with white glaze overpainted with coloured glazes and black lines; 47.8 x 24 cm AKM 00590

Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 42-43 (no. 10); AKTC 2009a, p. 208; AKTC 2009b, p. 208 The fragment highlights the stems darting off to the right. The bold shades of blue, turquoise, white and vellow create a strong colour contrast with the mustard-coloured background. A touch of green at the base of the irises adds richness to the array. Similarities with the most graphic tradition of European engraving are rapidly obvious. Plates of botanical books were, as already stressed, a likely source of inspiration for designs on ceramic pieces for pleasure pavilions in Iran and for Mughal residences in India. The work that was best received was "Hortus floridus" (1614) by Crispin de Passe (Makariou 2007, p. 55, n. 61). However, artists of the great modern Islamic empires made their selection recomposing from among this vast repertoire; the same theme was often transformed into an entity which was ornamentalised through repetition, as for instance unreal meadows storming over the brick walls of the Isfahan pavilions. The colour scheme could

conduce to assign these two tiles, fragments of a larger piece, to India. The technique, however, is rigorously similar to that applied to tiles still to be found in Isfahan. The terra cotta is entirely coated with a white opaque glaze; on this background a black line traces the contours; the composition is undetermined but the difference of mortar between the black line and the glaze ensures effective insulation between the layers of coloured glaze. The decoration is subsequently painted with coloured glaze which practically covers the underlying white glaze. The white petals, visible here, are therefore reserves. The black line restores the design element to the piece and allows a more finely rendering of the outpouring of the petals which are just about ready to fall off their petiole. The term 'naturalism' has been overused, but sensitivity to nature did nonetheless express a preoccupation of the literate elite of the time. SM



#### 170 Shepherds in a landscape

Signed by <sup>c</sup>Ali Quli Jabbadar Iran, *ca.* 1675

Watercolour on paper, image 12.2 x 16.9 cm AKM 00078

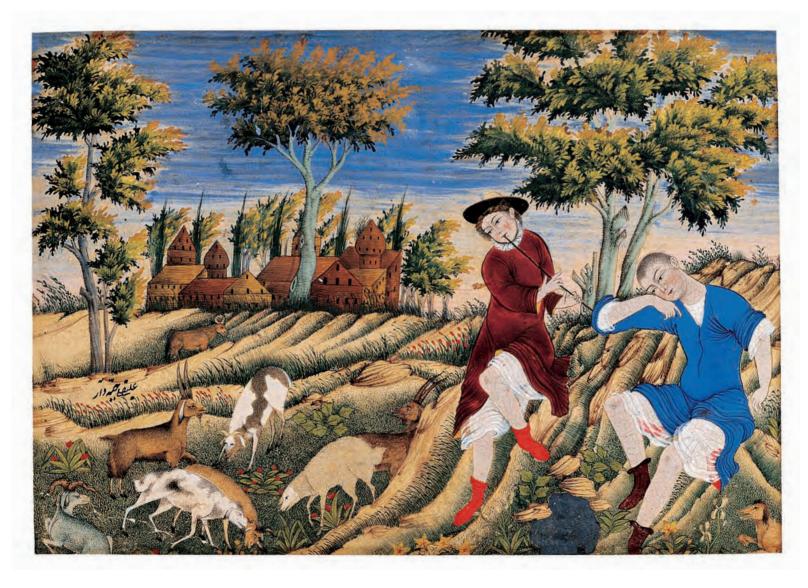
Published: Canby 1998, pp. 89–90 (no. 62) (with previous bibliography); Makariou 2007, pp. 38–39 (no. 8); AKTC 2009a, p. 209; AKTC 2009b, p. 209

Two wistful-looking shepherds loll on a hillock as their sheep and a goat graze at the left and their dog lies watchfully at the right. In the background a hamlet with onion-domed towers and low buildings set in a grove completes the composition. Not only do the hat of the piping shepherd, his contraposto pose and the transparent pantaloons of both figures give a decidedly un-Persian impression, but also the painterly treatment of foliage and the shading of the gullies in the middle ground indicate the presence of strong European influence.

By the 1670s European artists had been active in Isfahan for at least fifty years, and the europeanising, or 'farangi' style had been established since the middle of the century. According to the eighteenth century writer Lutf 'Ali Beg Adar, 'Ali Quli Jabbadar was a European convert to Islam. His name suggests that he had come to Iran to work as an official in the Safavid armoury (Maka-

riou 2007, p. 55, no. 51). Apparently he abandoned making armour in favour of painting, though his eclectic style, neither wholly European nor Persian, may indicate that he was never thoroughly trained in either mode. The painting of the shepherds is one with very few Persian elements and should be dated near the beginning of his career in the mid-1670s shortly after his earliest dated work of 1084 H /1673-4 CE (*ibid.*, no. 52).

'Ali Quli may have worked in several centres since one of his paintings is inscribed 'Qazvin' and another 'Isfahan'. Several paintings by him in an album in St Petersburg have Georgian inscriptions, prompting Soucek to propose that a Georgian official commissioned these portraits of Shah Sulayman (*ibid.*, no. 53). His career lasted until at least 1129 H / 1716-7 CE, the year of his latest dated work (*ibid.* no. 64), and his son, Muhammad 'Ali Beg, become head of the painters under Nadir Shah (*ibid.*, no. 54). sc



## 171 Safavid polychrome doors with Sufi inscription

Iran, 17th–18th century
Wood, carved and painted; 161 x 84.5 cm
Inscription: dar-i shādī bi-sāhib-i īn bāb /
bighushāy muffatih al-abwāb ("Doorman, open the
door of happiness for the owner of this door")

AKM 00704

Published: AKTC 2008a, pp. 148-149 (no. 53); AKTC 2009a, p. 210; AKTC 2009b, p. 210 These well-preserved polychrome painted doors are carved with floral and foliate motifs in high relief, enclosed within a strapwork design of oblong star-shaped frames and bordered by narrow and shallow-carved bands of vegetal scrolls and rosettes. Their floral ornamentation is typical of the dynamic vegetal designs of the Safavid period and probably originated in manuscript illustration and bookbinding. Two frames located above the star-shaped panels on each door include an inscription in Persian, carved against a background

painted in green and surrounded by a stylized vine scroll painted in red. The text, which speaks on behalf of the person who would stand on the outer side of the doors, appears to carry a more spiritual significance characteristic of Sufi-inspired Safavid culture: "Doorman, open the door of happiness for the owner of this door". While their original context remains unknown, these doors might have once opened into a Sufi hospice or a palatial retreat. LA





## Iran and Central Asia The Zand and the Qajars

Sheila Canby

The Qajar dynasty, which ruled Iran from 1779 to 1925, was descended from a Turkman tribe that rose to prominence under the Safavids (r. 1501–1722). In the second half of the eighteenth century Karim Khan Zand and his heirs controlled Fars province in southern Iran but could not bring the rest of the country to heel for any extended period of time. In this period the Oajar heir, Agha Muhammad, was kept under house arrest at the Zand court where he was castrated. A desire for revenge fuelled Agha Muhammad's eventual rebellion against the Zands and his consolidation of power. Upon his death in 1797, his nephew Fath 'Ali Khan, acceded to the throne.

Fath 'Ali Shah began his reign on shaky political ground and did not experience unqualified military success. Yet he masterminded the promotion of his imperial image to a far greater extent than earlier kings of Iran had done. His long black beard and narrow waist emphasised his manliness and made his image instantly recognizable (see cat. no. 173). In addition, Fath 'Ali devised a new Kayanian crown which stressed his royal connection with the ancient Achaemenid emperors of Iran. Numerous portraits of Fath 'Ali Shah were produced for wide dissemination; at the same time, court artists

produced lifesize portraits of him in oil on canvas for installation in palatial dwellings.

While Fath 'Ali Shah looked to the past to validate his reign, Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–1896) (see cat. nos. 186 and 187) embraced new artists and technological ideas from Europe. The shah developed an interest in photography, taking pictures himself of members of his household. Painting styles changed to reflect this new preoccupation

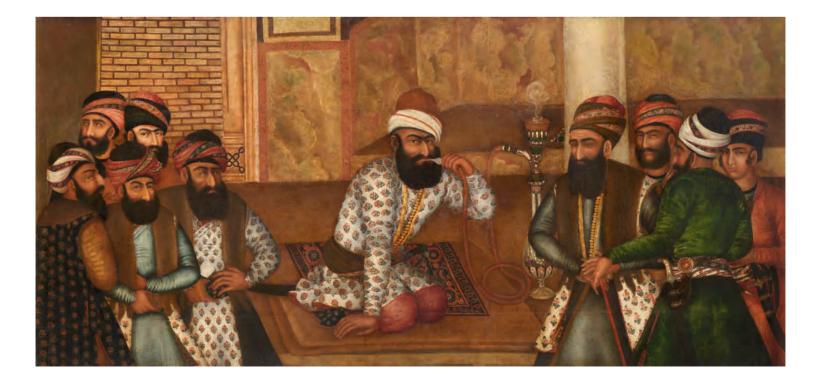
The Qajar period was also the heyday of Persian lacquerware, which had been used for pen boxes, book covers and caskets increasingly since the late fifteenth century (see cat. no. 186). Bird and flower motifs were especially popular on Qajar lacquers, though portraits and vignettes after European print sources also found their way onto them.

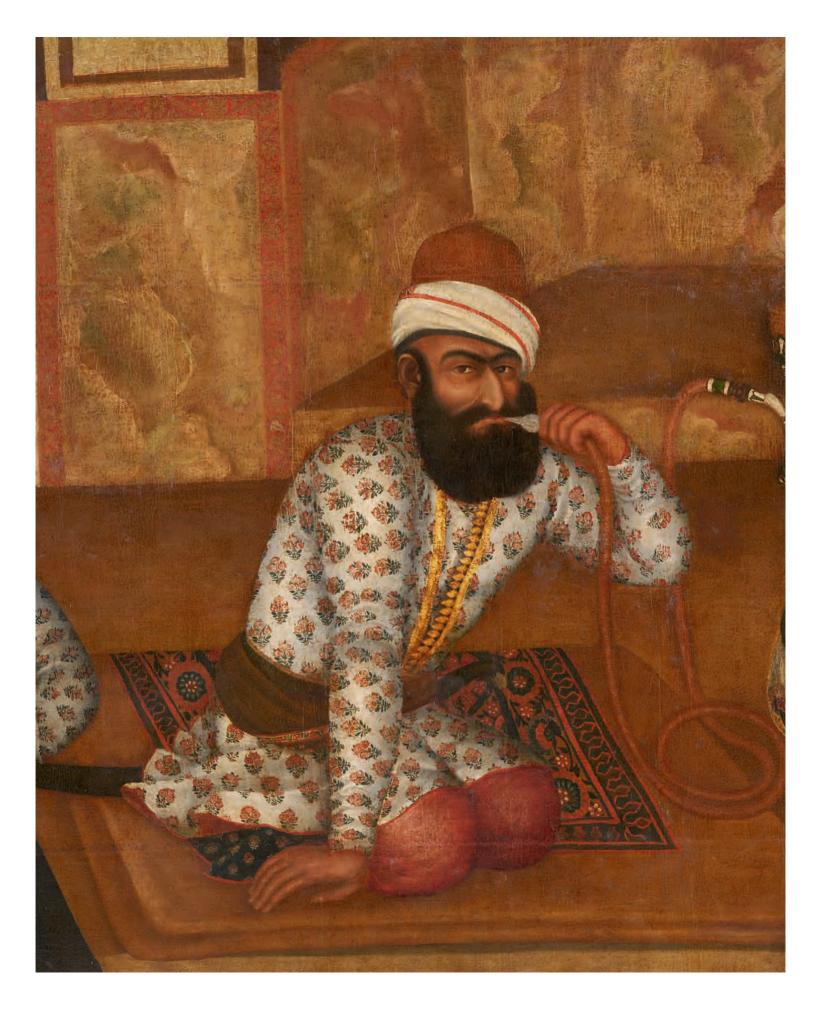
Politically the Qajars could not withstand the pressure to open markets to European countries; this monopolised lucrative industries and weakened the shahs' economic control of the country. Culturally, the Qajars encouraged traditional arts such as calligraphy while showing a curiosity about the outside world. This sometimes contradictory combination resulted in an immediately recognisable artistic style that frequently served the shahs' political purposes.

#### 172 Karim Khan Zand and his courtiers

Attributed to Muhammad Sadiq Iran, Shiraz, after 1779 Oil and metal leaf on canvas; 129.5 x 276.8 cm AKM 00501 Published: Diba 1998, pp. 152–153; AKTC 2007b, cat. D p. 188; AKTC 2009a, p. 215; AKTC 2009b, p. 215 In contrast to the Qajar imperial enthronement scenes of Nadir Shah (r. 1736–1747) and Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834; cat. no. 173) both of whom are decoratively depicted in full regalia, there are few indicators that this is an imperial image. Karim Khan, the Zand regent who ruled for one of the last Safavids, wears a Zand turban but no official regalia. The informality of this casual smoking portrait relates to the style of his rule. Karim Khan Zand's strong shoulders, the deferential posture of his courtiers, the monumentality of the columned porch and the sheer size of the painting itself convey the power of his rule and the stability

he brought to Iran. Diba has attributed the work to Muhammad Sadiq based on a portrait sketch of Karim Khan Zand signed by the artist as well as details such as the heavily shaded faces, turbans and small-scale floral patterns, all also found in the artist's signed portrait of Rustam Khan Zand. She has suggested that the present painting may have been a commemorative portrait commissioned after the ruler's death, based on her observation that the serious tone of the courtiers contradicts the reportedly coarse humour and jocularity of Zand's actual court (Diba 1998, pp. 152–153). AF





## 173 Fath 'Ali Shah seated on a throne decorated with precious stones

Miniature

Iran, Qajar, early 19th century

Watercolour and gold on paper; 33.2 x 21.1 cm  $\,$ 

AKM 00504

Published:; AKTC 2009a, p. 217;

AKTC 2009b, p. 217

In order to extensively distribute his portrait, Fath <sup>c</sup>Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834) had countless miniature pictures made of himself. All of these images show him either seated on a throne, cross-legged on a pedestal, or standing either clothed in armor or holding a large scepter (Diba 1998, pp. 173–188). This watercolor portrait is a work by Mir 'Ali. one of the greatest painters of the early Qajar period, who was known for his large-format portraits of Fath 'Ali Shah as well as for his introduction of iconographic innovations such as the throne in this painting (Raby 1999, p. 11). Fath 'Ali Shah sits in three-quarter view on his "Naderi" throne, which he designed himself and which is decorated with precious stones and pearls. His luxurious red robes, his crown, and his sword are richly adorned as well. He also designed his Achaemenid-inspired "Kayani" crown, which is decorated with heron feathers. The lack of an architectonic frame that is usually present in his portraits strengthens the picture's feeling of royal grandeur and almost iconic aloofness. The rigid and almost impassive posture of the subject parallels the position of authority and regal majesty that he seemingly wanted to project. The delicately painted facial features and the dainty hands and feet, however, still lend the picture a certain degree of elegance.

Standing in contrast to his sumptuous accoutrements, his slender figure, which is emphasized by his tailored robes, allows Fath 'Ali Shah to seem almost ascetic and demonstrates the self-discipline of a ruler who is still active in the militarily. Fath 'Ali Shah's name and title are on a medallion in the upper right corner of the picture. Under that, a six-sectioned gold frame contains a two-verse eulogy on the ruler. With the rigid and linear painting style of the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, a break with the naturalistic, soft modeled portraits of the Zand dynasty was deliberately executed (see cat. no. 172). Except for the size of royal portraits, European painting conventions were not utilized from then on. Instead, painters reverted back to old-Persian Achaemenid and Sassanid models found in the rock reliefs of Kermanshah or Persepolis. Stiff poses, frontal views, and lush colours and gold that contrast with the pale complexion of the subject dominate the stern compositions. The attributes of the new standard of beauty included the sharply contoured nose, almond-shaped eyes with highly accentuated eyebrows, henna-dyed nails and feet, and, as a sign of masculinity, a long, black, meticulously groomed beard (Diba 1998, 170) VD

## 174 Album (*muraqqa*°) of portraits and calligraphies

Iran, Tehran, early 18th – early 19th century Sixteen hinged folios; ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper, in a contemporary lacquer binding; 29.2 x 19.5 cm

AKM 00275

Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 98–119; Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 132–134 (no. 45); Diba 1998, pp. 176–178; AKTC 2007a, p. 110 (no. 76); AKTC 2007b, pp. 110–111 (no. 76); AKTC 2008a, pp. 162–163 (no. 59); AKTC 2009a, p. 217; AKTC 2009b, p. 217

This album (*muraqqa*°) opens in concertina-style format to reveal twelve Persian ruler-portraits and eighteen calligraphy specimens mounted onto decorated pages. The calligraphy pages are written in *shikasta*, *thuluth*, *naskh* and *nasta*°līq scripts, set within finely illuminated floral borders. The twelve portraits include three of the most important kings of the *Shāhnāma*, Jamshid, Kay Khusraw, and Kay Kavus. Portraits of Genghis Khan, Timur, and rulers from the Safavid, Zand, and Qajar dynasties also appear. A painting of Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834) in opulent imperial finery on the Sun Throne on fol. 3v contains a me-

dallion inscribed with his name and the date 1234 H / 1819 CE. The album may have been commissioned by Fath 'Ali Shah or presented to him by an attentive courtier. According to Robinson, the album is perhaps a "portable" version of the large oil paintings commissioned by Fath 'Ali Shah from the artist Mir 'Ali for the Imarat-i Naw palace in Isfahan (Ekhtiar in Diba 1998, p. 176). Like the life-size portraits of past and contemporary rulers, this album represents another way the Qajars used the visual arts to convey imperial power and dynastic legitimacy. AF





#### A group of Qajar gold coins and objects

#### 175-180 Six gold coins issued by Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar (r. 1794-1797)

Iran, Tehran, Qajar, 1210 and 1211 H / 1795 and 1796 CF

Gold; various dimensions, ranging from approximately 80 to 400 grams AKM 00621

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.218; AKTC 2009b, p.218

This eclectic group reflects the range of small-scale but high-quality objects that were made from the valuable medium of gold under the Qajars.

The six presentation coins provide the only exact dates of production, minted in either 1795 or 1796 under the reign of Agha Muhammad Shah (r. 1794–1797), the founder of the Oaiar dvnasty. Some of the coins, including one that is square-shaped, contain inscriptions with invocations to God, Muhammad, and 'Ali, the Prophet's cousin and the first Shia imam. Others exhibit figural images such as the peacock, a symbol associated with royalty in Iran but also with paradise, or the lion and sun, both well-recognised symbols of kingship and authority in Iran since pre-Islamic times. One of the coins contains a pearl border, a motif that also stems from pre-Islamic, in particular Sasanian, imagery. It is possible that the coins struck in 1210 AH celebrated the coronation of the king, while those struck in 1211 AH commemorated his first anniversary of rulership. These massive gold coins formed part of the indemnity of 10 kurur, or 5 million tomans, paid by Iran to the Russians under the Treaty of Turkmanchai, in 1928, following a disastrous war. Reports from the period state that about 1,600 mules were needed to transport the money (Raby 1999, p. 22). The treaty also ceded the Khanates of Erivan and Nakhichvan to Russia in perpetuity and also forbid Iran from having any armed vellels in the Caspian Sea.

The miniature Qur'an case and both amulets contain inscriptions of verses from the Our'an (cat. nos. 181 and 182). The amulets may have contained rolled pieces of paper with Qur'anic verses or even an entire Qur'an written in miniscule *ghubār* ("dust") script, so-called because the minute letters were thought to be as small, fragile, and transient as grains of powder. The Qur'an case might have once housed a miniature Qur'an or a section of a Our'an made in the same shape as the case. The amulet in cat. no. 182 also names the Shia ahl al-bayt, or "people of the house [of the Prophet]", which include Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn. The amulets and case were meant to be worn, their inscriptions and contents meant to invoke God's power and protection of the wearer. The Qur'an case also includes an Arabic quatrain in addition to excerpts from al-Bagara ("The Cow") and al-Qalam ("The Pen").

Objects made of gold not only reflected Islamic and pre-Islamic indigenous tastes, but also sometimes incorporated European designs and influences, as is demonstrated by the rare and beautiful enamelled gold compendium seen in cat. no. 183, which includes an equinoctial sun dial; this form of sundial was invented in England around 1600 and used in Europe into the nineteenth century. This object reflects the Qajar rulers' taste for personal luxury objects as well as their interest in scientific knowledge and trade with Europe. AF/LA



#### 181 Amulet

Iran, Qajar, 19th century Gold; L 8.3 cm

Text (Arabic): (amulet) al-Qalam ("The Pen"), 68:51–52; (roundels)  $y\bar{a}$  "Alī madad ("O  $^{\rm c}$ Ali, help")

AKM 00623

Published: AKTC 2009a, p.220; AKTC 2009b, p.220

#### 182 Miniature Qur'an case and amulet

Iran, Qajar, 19<sup>th</sup> century Gold; Ø of case 5.3 cm; L of amulet 8.5 cm Text (Arabic): (both Qur'an case and amulet) *al-Baqara* (The Cow), 2:255 AKM 00624

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 48 (no. 18); AKTC 2007b, p. 44 (no. 18); AKTC 2009a, p. 220; AKTC 2009b, p. 220

#### 183 Equinoctial sun dial Iran, Qajar, 19<sup>th</sup> century

AKTC 2009b, p. 221

Enamelled gold; Ø 9 cm AKM 00625 Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 111 (no. 77); AKTC 2007b, p. 112 (no. 77); AKTC 2008a, pp. 164–165 (no. 60) AKTC 2009a, p. 221;









## 184 Official letter from Crown Prince <sup>c</sup>Abbas Mirza to Napoleon I

Iran, dated 1808

lnk, opaque watercolour, and gold; 120 x 58 cm AKM 00251

Published: Falk 1985, pp. 193–194 (no. 182); AKTC 2007a, p. 113 (no. 80); AKTC 2007b, p. 114 (no. 80); AKTC 2009a, p. 222; AKTC 2009b, p. 222

Diplomatic relations between the Qajars and the West began to open up again during the reign of Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1798-1834). The period between 1805, when Napoleon inaugurated exchange with the Qajars, and 1808 - the date of this letter – saw a number of intense diplomatic exchanges and treaties between the Qajars and the French and British, as loyalties shifted in the context of the Perso-Russian wars. Crown Prince 'Abbas Mirza (1789–1833), son and heir apparent of Fath 'Ali Shah, was governor of Azerbaijan and based at Tabriz, where he organised military campaigns - with the latest French military technology and training – for the control of Georgia and Azerbaijan. This letter, which arrived in Paris on 17 February 1809 according to an inscription on its reverse ("Lettre du Prince 'Abbas Mirza à S. M. Impériale, écrite à la fin de l'année 1808, et arrivée à Paris le 17 février 1809") was written by nineteen-year-old Prince 'Abbas Mirza to the French emperor Napoleon I. The prince remarks upon the emperor's two-year silence, describes how the Russians have been breaking their treaty, and asks Napoleon what he plans to do about it, since the Prince's troops are ready for battle (see Layla Diba in Falk 1985, pp. 193-194, with further references). It was a British envoy, Sir John Kinneir Macdonald, who helped arrange the final treaty of Turkmanchai with Russia in 1828 and financially supported Prince 'Abbas Mirza after the loss of Tabriz to the Russians. AF



#### 185 Lacquer bow

Iran, Zand or Qajar, late 18th century
Wood, painted and varnished; L 92 cm
AKM 00641
Published: AKTC 2007a, pp. 144–145 (no. 110);
AKTC 2007b, pp. 25 and 148 (no. 110); AKTC 2008a, pp. 220, 222–223 (no. 84); AKTC 2009a, p. 222;
AKTC 2009b, p. 222

The archer's bow was a symbol of kingship as well as a tool of the hunt. This elaborate lacquer bow has been painted and covered by a clear sandarac-based varnish that protects the painting and imparts luminescence. Persian literary sources from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries refer to the varnish as rawghan-i kamān, or "bow gloss". This reference, coupled with the fascinating fact that the Timurid Sultan Husayn's keeper of books (kitābdār) and manager of manuscript production Mirak Nagqash (d. after 1507) produced bows and came from a family of Herati bow-makers, has led Stanley to suggest that the earliest lacquer book covers may have been produced by him using bow gloss (Stanley in Thompson and Canby 2003, p. 189). AF



#### 186 Lacquer pen box

Signed: Isma <sup>c</sup>il (Muhammad Isma <sup>c</sup>il) Iran, dated 1282 H / 1865 CE Papier-mâché, painted and lacquered; L 26.8 cm AKM 00643

Published: Robinson 1989, figs. 1 and 10; Karimzadeh Tabrizi 1990, vol. 1, p. 457; AKTC 2007a, p. 111 (no. 78); AKTC 2007b, p. 112 (no. 78); AKTC 2008a, pp. 166–167 (no. 61); in the nineteenth century and lacquer painting was a particular speciality (see cat. nos. 156 and 185 for examples of bookbinding and a bow). The scribe's humble pen box was often transformed into a work of beauty and this box is no exception: it is highly decorated with images of familiar political, legendary, literary, and mystical themes. It shows, in a central cartouche, the Qajar ruler Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–1896) holding court; legendary kings are crowned; poems of Sa'di and

The visual arts flourished under Qajar patronage

Nizami are illustrated; and there are six portraits of Sufi dervishes. This important pen box is signed by the Qajar painter laureate (naqqāsh bāshī), Muhammad Isma 'il, who was active in the mid-nineteenth century and famous for his lacquer paintings. On the inside of the drawer, it contains a miniature self-portrait of the artist wearing an Astrakhan hat, paintbrush in hand, in an oval cartouche. A couplet above and below identifies the artist's name, Isma 'il. AF

#### 187 Manuscript of Gulshan-i Rāz of Shabistari

Iran, Tehran, dated Shawwal - Dhu 'I-Qa da 1310 H / April-May 1893 CE

AKTC 2009a, p. 224; AKTC 2009b, p. 224

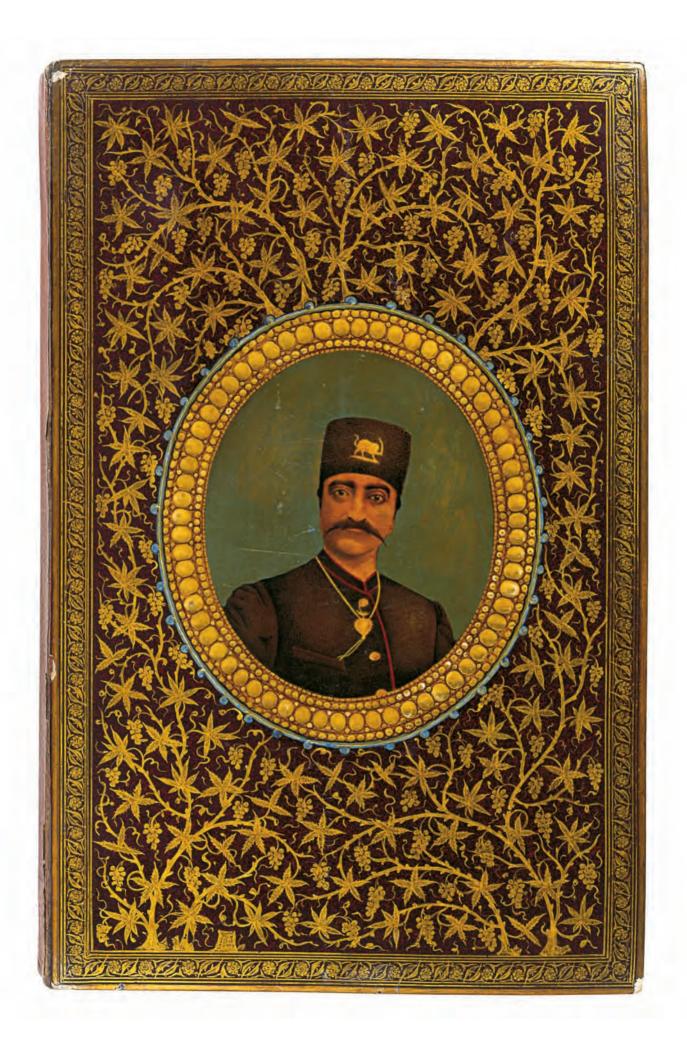
Painting and varnish on pasteboard; binding:  $18.5 \times 12 \times 2.2 \text{ cm}$ ; page:  $18.2 \times 11.4 \text{ cm}$ ; text:  $13.6 \times 7 \text{ cm}$  AKM 00276

Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 120–123; AKTC 2007a, pp. 114–115 (no. 81); AKTC 2007b, p. 115 (no. 81); AKTC 2009a, p. 224; AKTC 2009b, p. 224

The Qajar ruler Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–1896) appears in a central portrait medallion on this lacquer binding decorated with scrolling vine-plants in gold. The second half of the nineteenth century saw an increasing European influence and Nasir al-Din Shah responded with a combination of conservatism and modernity. The Dār al-Funūn, Iran's first polytechnic (1851), was modelled on western institutions. This lacquer binding likewise combines modernity with conservatism: a European-style portrait medallion of Nasir al-Din Shah is set within a more traditional vegetal composition

in gold on a dark ground. The roots of Qajar lacquer bookbinding are very deep and are found within the Timurid traditions of fifteenth century Herat, which then continued into the Safavid period (see cat. no. 156). The *Gulshan-i Rāz* ("Rose Garden of Secrets") is a Sufi poem composed in 1311 by Shaykh Sa'd al-Din Mahmud b. 'Abdul-Karim b. Yahya al-Shabistari (d. 1320–21), arranged in a format of fifteen rhetorical questions posed by Amir Husayni of Khurasan, with lengthy answers by the author. AF





#### 188 Calligraphic painting by Isma il Jalayir

Signed: Ismaʿil Jalayir written in red horizontally at the bottom (raqamaha al-haqir Ismāʿīl al-musavvir al-kātib sana ...)

Iran, ca. 1860–1870 Inscription (Arabic):

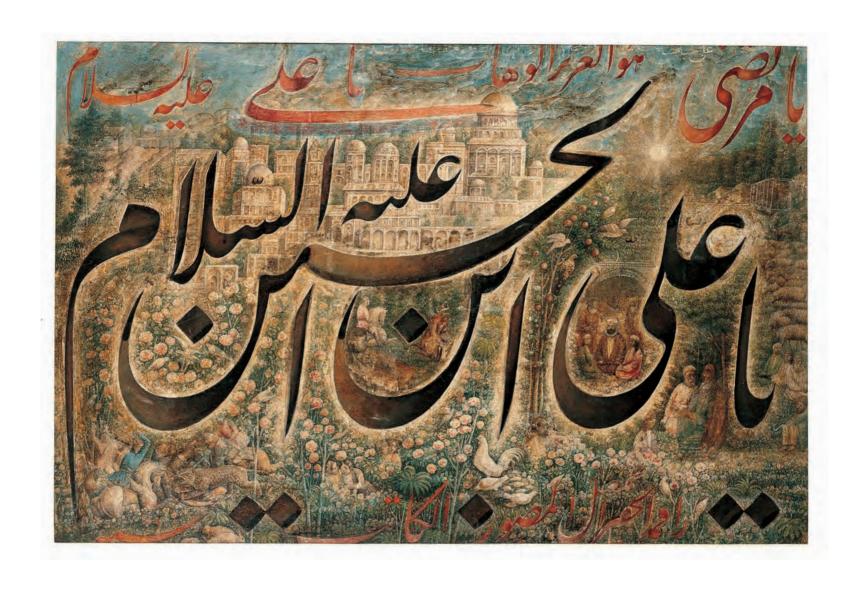
At top, in red: first line: huwa al-ʿazīz al-wahhāb Second line: yā murtadā yā ʿAlī ʿalayhī al-salām Centre of the page, starting from the bottom, in black: yā ʿAlī ibn al-Husayn ʿalayhi al-salām Ink and gouache on paper; 35 x 53 cm AKM 00534

Published: Falk 1985 (no. 177); Blair 2006, pp. 454–455; Makariou 2007, pp. 156–157 (no. 56); AKTC 2009a, p. 226; AKTC 2009b, p. 226

Seeming to emerge from a strange landscape bathed in ethereal light, the letters of an invocation to 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, better known as Zayn al- 'Abidin, the fourth Shiite imam, stand out. The  $h\bar{a}$  and the  $s\bar{i}n$  of his father's name, Husayn, the second Shiite imam, who was martyred in Karbala (Iraq) in 680, divide the page in two with their long diagonal. The "cuts" of the  $y\bar{a}$  of 'Ali and the final  $n\bar{u}n$  of ibn and Husayn form a perfect line alternating with three alifs. On the lower line, the dance of the pen tips – two and one and two again - marks the cadence of the writing. Unfortunately, the page has been trimmed slightly so that the date (on the bottom line to the left) is missing. This page could be likened to another calligraphy attributed to Isma 'il Jalayir based on the same model of an inscription in *nasta<sup>c</sup>līq* writing style on a blurred background, illustrated with a number of sketches.

At the top of the page is an almost unreal architecture that transmutes the models of classical Western architecture: columns, domes and porticos could conjure an ideal city or an earthly or heavenly palace. In the "cut" of the  $y\bar{a}$  of "cAli", nestled in an ovum, is 'Ali, facing front and carrying on his knees the Dhu 'l-fiqar sword given to him by the Prophet, flanked by his two sons,

Hasan and Husayn, the second and third Shiite imams. This "spiritual investiture" scene certainly throws light on other scenes: the two sufis to the right of the word 'Ali, the hunting and beat scenes which could also depict a symbolic pursuit. In the timeless and vaporous landscape, a sun rises directly above the letter *lām* of 'Ali. The letters appear to be basking in the glow of that light. Jalayir's style is vaporous, impalpable, with delicate superimpositions, as photographic images. He was trained in the Dar al-Funun, in Tehran, and learned calligraphy from Master Mirza Ghulam Riza. The mark of this progressive institution is clearly felt here: photography, proudly adopted by the sovereign Qajars, was taught as of 1860, along with lithography. The signature of this hearth of new technologies and styles which was Dar al-Funūn, is visible in Jalayir's work through the skilful mix of calligraphy - archetypal Islamic art - and painstakingly precise miniature painting, to the extent that its vaporous appearance resembles contemporary photographs developed on albumin paper. On the other side, one can see the floating image of a bearded man wearing an Astrakhan hat, painted with light strokes in grey monochrome, recalling the lithography that became fashionable under the Qajars. SM





# g-images, Bildarchiv Monheim

# India and the Moghuls

Sheila Canby

The first Mughal emperor of India, Babur, was born in Central Asia, the descendant of Timur (Tamerlane) and Chinghiz (Genghis) Khan. Despite his pedigree, he failed to realise his ambition of conquering Samarqand, and from 1514 until 1526 he turned his energies to Afghanistan and then to India. In 1526, Babur defeated the Lodi Sultan of Delhi at the Battle of Panipat and thus began to rule northern India. Following Babur's death in 1530, his son and heir, Humayun, struggled to hold onto power in India. After a period of exile in Iran and delay in Afghanistan, however, he regained Delhi and Agra in 1555. Humayun brought artists with him from the Safavid court of Iran, whom he had invited to work in his library. His untimely death in 1556 meant that his son, Akbar, benefited from these émigrés far more than his father did. Chosen because of their more naturalistic painting style, the Persian artists at the court of Akbar worked on numerous, ambitious illustrated manuscripts alongside native Hindu and Muslim painters as well as some from Central Asia.

Akbar's policy of engaging with all the populations of India and welcoming Europe-

ans at his court resulted in an emphasis on realism and the adoption of illusionistic techniques in painting. This tendency was heightened during the reign of Jahangir (r. 1605-1627). Portraiture gained in importance while paintings of the flora and fauna of India were produced, a subject of profound interest to Jahangir. Like his father, Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658, see cat. no. 191) commissioned many portraits of members of the Mughal dynasty and lavish illustrations to the history of his reign, the Padshahnama. One of Shah Jahan's sons, Dara Shikuh, demonstrated a broadminded interest in art and mysticism. However, his brother, Awrangzeb, proved to be militarily more powerful and not only had Dara Shikuh murdered but also deposed Shah Jahan.

In his long reign, from 1658 to 1707, Awrangzeb pushed the Mughal conquest of India southward but abandoned the tolerant attitudes of his predecessors. The wars and rigid attitudes of Awrangzeb ultimately weakened the Mughal empire so that the eighteenth century saw a long decline and a nostalgia for the heyday of the dynasty under Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan.

#### 189 Four-sided standard (calam)

Iran or Deccan, 17th-18th centuries
Cast, welded and riveted iron; cut-out decoration;
H 102 cm
AKM 00620

Published: Makariou 2007, pp. 150-151 (no. 53); AKTC 2009a, p. 230; AKTC 2009b, p. 230 This 'alam (standard), imposing in appearance and size, is one of the most sophisticated standards in the James Allan classification. This fourbranched type, in the shape of successive almonds of increasing dimensions, with inscriptions on an extensive arabesque openwork background, is reportedly of Safavid Iranian origin, particularly from Isfahan. In his study, Allan lists a few, only two of which are dated: one, 1069 H / 1658-9 CE and the other, 1117 H / 1705 CE. The 'alam from the Aga Khan Museum could be from South India, from one of the Shiite kingdoms of the Deccan which were established following the weakening of the Bahmanid dynasty (1347–1527) between the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century. Indeed, the detailed nature of the openworked metal, mixing arabesque and calligraphic designs, is an indication of the close links these kingdoms maintained with Shiite Safavid Iran. Many artists, men of letters and religious personalities from the Iranian world settled in that part of India. Only an in-depth study of the different inscriptions on this standard, which seem to be in thuluth style could perhaps confirm the origin of this piece. Mark Zebrowski highlights certain features of the thuluth style which are particular to that region, as well as the absence of the nasta<sup>c</sup>līq, widely used in Safavid Iran, and some examples of which are known in northern India.

A standard identified by Allan blends these two writing styles. The 'alams are represented on a ceramic mosaic piece, dated 1611, in the royal Shia tomb, the Badshahi 'āshurkhāna, built between 1593 and 1596 by Muhammad Quli in Hyderabad. No standard of this type seems to have appeared during that period, so the standard presented here might date back to the second half of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century, like those mentioned by Allan.

The commemoration of the martyrdom of Husayn, son of 'Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, who died in the Battle of Karbala, on 10 Muharram 680, was a major milestone for Shiism and brought about several important events. In the Deccan, since the end of the sixteenth century, during the month of Muharram, poems in honour of the Shia martyrs, marsiyas, were recited in assemblies that met at specific venues called 'āshurkhānas. Unused standards were also stored here. During the processions, they were carried with a representation of Husayn's cenotaph  $(t\bar{a}b\bar{u}t)$  as well as an image of Buraq, the white, winged mount of the Prophet, and a candelabrum of incense. At the end of the procession, the  $t\bar{a}b\bar{u}t$ was buried or immersed in a river, according to Hindu tradition where the image of the goddess Durga was thrown into a river. MB



## 190 Pictorial genealogy of the descendants of Jahangir

India, Agra, ca. 1623–1627 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; page: 36.2 x 24.2 cm AKM 00151

Published: Canby 1998, pp. 145–147 (no. 108); AKTC 2007a, p. 117 (no 83); AKTC 2007b, p. 118 (no. 83); AKTC 2009a, p. 232; AKTC 2009b, p. 232 Genealogical portraits and histories were used by the Islamic dynasties, particularly the Mughals and Ottomans, to reinforce their legitimacy and power (see cat nos. 98 and 100). In this album page, the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) is located at the top of his "family tree." He is linked to four of his sons (from left, Khusraw, Jahandar, Shahriyar, and Sultan Parviz) and their sons. His Timurid ancestors are pictured beneath him in a reversal of genealogical order. The genealogies were rearranged

and recomposed at some point. This is not unusual considering Jahangir's other refurbishments of historical paintings, such as the *Princes of the House of Timur* (British Museum), which was probably a painting of a garden party of the Mughal emperor Humayun (r. 1530–1556, with interruption) and his friends before Jahangir's artists refashioned it into a Timurid-Mughal dynastic portrait. AF



## 191 Portrait of Shah Jahan and his three sons

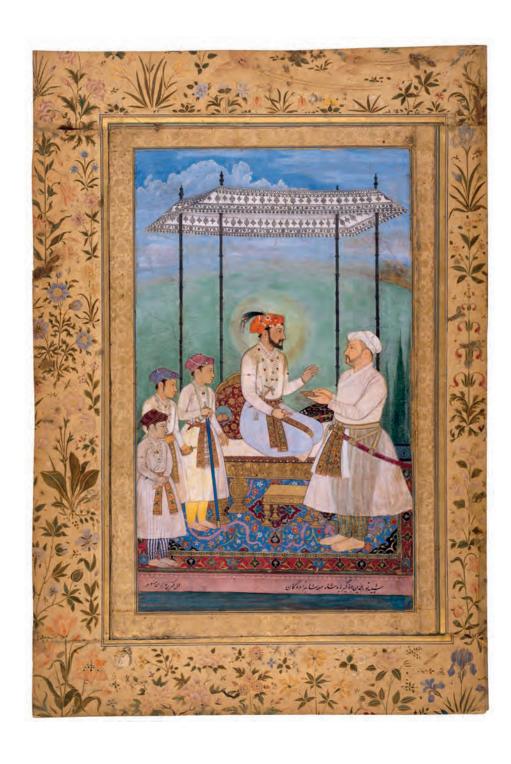
India, ca. 1628 or later

Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; page: 35.8 x 24.2 cm; image: 24.8 x 14.7 cm Inscribed (Persian): "Work of the most humble of the house born, Manohar";

"Portrait of Nur al-Din Jahangir and his sons" AKM 00124

Published: Canby 1998, pp. 147–148 (no. 119); AKTC 2007a, p. 119 (no. 85); AKTC 2007b, pp. 116 and 129 (no. 85); AKTC 2009a, p. 233; AKTC 2009b, p. 233 The emperor sits in haloed profile upon a gold-footed throne under a high white canopy, flanked by his three young princes who stand on the left. All are resplendent with opulently bejewelled turbans, necklaces, *qatar* daggers, and sashes (*patkas*) against a rounded backdrop of turquoise, perhaps suggesting a globe, as golden light appears on the right. The inscription on this Mughal painting identifies it as a portrait of Emperor Jahangir and his three sons, but what we see today are the faces of Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1657) and *bis* three eldest sons – Dara Shikuh (1615–1659), Shah Shuja (1616–1659) and Awrangzeb (1618–1707) – and

their maternal grandfather, Asaf Khan, on the right. It was not unusual for the Mughals to refurbish earlier works (see cat. no. 190) for propaganda reasons. The inscription at bottom left reads, "Work of the most humble of the house born, Manohar." Sheila Canby notes that the painting is characteristic of Manohar's style from about 1615 except for the refurbished faces, and that the composition follows the conventions of intimate royal portraits from Akbar's reign, which, under Jahangir and Shah Jahan in the 1610s–1620s, developed to include a more psychological focus.



## 192 Portraits of Jahangir and Shah Jahan

Portrait of Jahangir: signed by Balchand Portrait of Shah Jahan: signed and dated by Abu'l-Hasan India, Mughal, 1628 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper;

 $55.1 \times 34.5$  cm; Jahangir portrait within borders:  $5 \times 4.1$  cm; Shah Jahan portrait within

borders: 18.2 x 13.9 cm

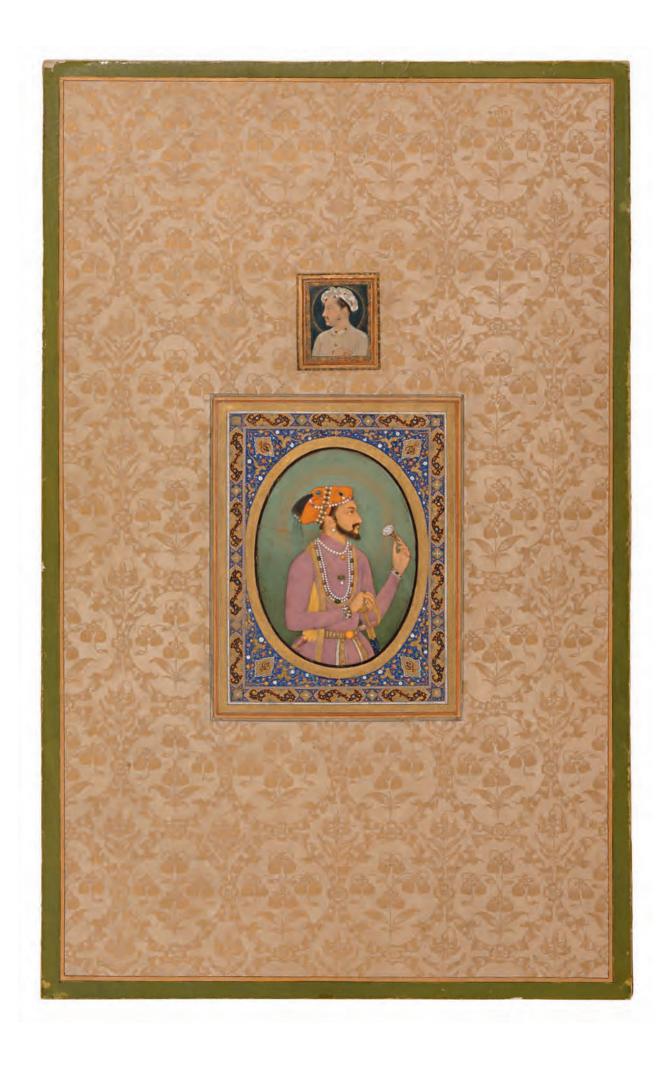
AKM 00135

Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 215–216 (no. 71); Falk 1985, p. 165 (no. 143); Goswamy and Fischer 1987, pp. 96–97 (no. 43); Canby 1998, pp. 142–144 (no. 106); AKTC 2008a, pp. 170 and 172–173 (no. 65); AKTC 2009a, p. 235; AKTC 2009b, p. 235

Framed within elaborately painted and illuminated borders and mounted on an album page filled with vegetal design in gold, these portraits of two of the greatest Mughal emperors illustrate the contrast in the artistic conventions under each of their reigns. The painted bust of Jahangir (r. 1605-1627), the fourth ruler of the dynasty and the son of Akbar (r. 1556-1605), represents the miniature portraits that became fashionable for important figures to wear during this emperor's reign. The trend began after 1615, when miniature portraits were introduced to India from England by Sir Thomas Roe (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 215; Canby 1998, p. 143). The artistic style under Jahangir is well represented by the artist Balchand, known for his ability to capture the more emotional and "human" qualities of subjects in his paintings (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 215). Balchand identifies himself through a Persian inscription on Jahangir's left shoulder: rasm-i Balchand ("the drawing of Balchand").

The portrait of Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1658), Jahangir's son and successor, provides a stark contrast to the image of his father. While both sitters are shown in profile view and are illuminated by the golden halo around their heads, the standard convention for representing Mughal emperors, Shah Jahan's larger, oval-shaped portrait commands a more public viewing audience. The illustration of the later emperor's torso allows the artist to show Shah Jahan holding attributes that symbolize his power, such as his sword and the official seal in his hand. The seal inscription, deliberately made legible (in reverse mirror image) for the viewer, lists the emperor's titles:  $Ab\bar{u}$  'l-

Muzaffar Muhammad Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh Jahān Pādshāh-i Ghāzī Sāhib Qirān-i Thānī. Sheila Canby has suggested that the last title, Sāhib Oirān-i Thānī ("the Second Lord of the Astral conjunction"), refers to Timur (r. 1370-1405), the founder of the Timurid dynasty from which the Mughals were descended (Canby 1998, p. 143). This connection to the greatest Timurid ruler would have helped Shah Jahan legitimise his right to the throne following his father's death. The iconic, idealized courtly style of Shah Jahan's era is already apparent at the start of his reign; the painting is signed and dated in the first year of the emperor's rule to the left of the portrait by Nadir al-Zaman, known as Abu 'l-Hasan: "It was painted at the beginning of the blessed ascension / Presented for the appraisal of the most pure / The work of the humblest of servants, Nadir al-Zaman." The emperor is shown in strict profile, staring blankly ahead while covered in precious, easily identified jewels. In contrast to the naturalistic rendering of his father, whose facial features are carefully modelled and suggest a three-dimensional appearance, Shah Jahan's image has become iconic and creates a greater distance between the viewer and the sitter. These disparities demonstrate the varying uses of art by Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the latter of which was known for his active involvement in the conception of artistic and architectural projects (Koch 1997). Using the painted portrait in different ways, one ruler preserves his royal status while evoking his human character, while the other dehumanizes himself by creating an iconic image that will emphasize his power and authority and render awe in his subjects. LA



#### 193 Humayun defeats his rebellious brother Kamran at Kabul

Folio from a dispersed copy of the *Akbarnāma* Abu 'l-Fazl 'Allami (d. 1602)

Inscribed: "Painting by Mahish, principal faces by Padarath":

(later annotation on the bottom left margin): razm nimūdan-i hazrat-i jannat-ustānī [bādshāh-i] Jahāngīr ("the fight of His Majesty [the emperor] Jahangir, whose province is paradise") (transl: Stephan Popp)

(top right margin) "5" India, Agra, ca. 1597

Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; 37 x 25 2 cm

AKM 00133

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 236; AKTC 2009b, p. 236

During the earlier years of his reign, manuscripts commissioned by the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) included adventure texts, such as the Tūtīnāma or Hamzanāma, or literary narratives, such as the Anvār-i Suhaylī ("Lights of Canopus"); in the 1580s, however, royal commissions shifted to historical texts. Some of the historical manuscripts produced under Akbar include the Tarīkh-i Alfī, a history of the first thousand years of Islam; the Tīmūrnāma, a history of Timur, the founder of the Timurid dynasty from which the Mughals descended; and the Akbarnāma, a history of Akbar (Beach 1987, p. 83). The emperor commissioned his close friend and advisor Abu 'l-Fazl 'Allami (d. 1602) to write the Akbarnāma, an official account of his reign, in 1590-1. The first volume, which was completed in 1596, covered the years up to 1592 and also recounted the founding of the Mughal empire as well as its loss under Babur (r. 1526-1530) and Humayun (r. 1530-1539 and 1555-1556); the remainder was finished in 1598 (ibid., p. 112). This painting illustrates a scene from the first volume. It refers to the reign of Humayun, who encountered much resistance from his rival brothers, especially Kamran, the governor of Kabul and Qandahar in modern Afghanistan. Although Humayun had distributed the various provinces of the empire he had inherited to each of his four brothers, soon Kamran had banded together with another brother, Askari, and seized control of the Punjab from Humayun. Humayun was exiled between 1539 and 1555, during which time he sought refuge at the Safavid court of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576). With Tahmasp's support, Humayun led a Mughal-Persian force into Qandahar and Kabul, where he entered an eight-year war with Kamran until he finally seized Kabul in 1553; that moment is depicted here. Kamran was taken captive and punished by blinding (Richards 1993, pp. 9-11). Most of the pages from the earliest manuscript of the Akbarnāma (including 116 miniatures) are housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Folios from the other well-known copy of this manuscript are divided between the British Museum, London (39 illustrations of vol. 1), and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (66 illustrations from vols. 2 and 3). Some recently discovered additional Akbarnāma folios appear related to the Victoria and Albert copy of the text (Leach 2004); the AKM painting likewise seems to belong to the same manuscript as the folios in the Victoria and Albert Museum. LA



## 194 The Emperor Jahangir at the jharoka window of the Agra fort

Folio from a dispersed copy of the Jahāngīrnāma ("Memoirs of Jahangir")

Attrubuted to Nadir al-Zaman (Abu'l-Hasan) India, Mughal, ca. 1620

Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; page 56 x 35.2 cm; image 31.4 x 20.4 cm AKM 00136

Published: Delhi 1912, p. 92 (cat. No. 508, pl. XXVIII [a]); Martin 1912, vol. 2, pl. 216 left; Beach 1978, pp. 64 and 91; Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 212–215 (no. 70); Welch 1985, pp. 185–186 (no. 116); Goswamy and Fischer 1987, pp. 86–87 (no. 37); Canby 1998, pp. 141–142 (no. 105); AKTC 2009a, p. 238; AKTC 2009b, p. 238

Jharoka scenes such as the one shown in the present example are common in Mughal painting, illustrating the importance of the darbar ceremony, where rulers give public audiences. Such audiences regularly followed another ceremony known as darshan, which emphasized the idea of the divinely illuminated ruler through ritual performance. Akbar (r. 1556–1605) initiated this ritual during his reign; the emperor would appear before his subjects each morning before sunrise, so he could see and be seen by them, as suggested by the name darshan (Sanskrit for "sight" and "beholding") (Necipoğlu 1993, p. 314). As Abu 'l-Fazl, Akbar's close friend, advisor, and biographer, described:

Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe.... Modern language calls this light *farr-i īzadī* (the divine light), and the tongue of antiquity called it *kayān khurra* (the sublime halo). It is communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of anyone, and men, in the presence of it, bend the forehead of praise towards the ground of submission (Abu l-Fazl 1977, 1:3).

The darshan ceremony took place at the jharoka-i darshan, or the "balcony for viewing," pictured here at top right, where Akbar's son, the emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) appears in profile view, and the darbar would follow just after. The structure in which the *iharoka* window appears resembles and is probably meant to represent the Shah Burj (Royal Tower), which was an octagonal tower with a white marble pavilion located at the Agra Fort. Sheila Canby notes that such scenes became popular under the reign of Jahangir and even more so under Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658), when court rituals became even more codified (Canby 1998, p. 141). In this image, numerous figures have been identified by inscriptions appearing on their skirts; Nadir al-Zaman (Abu 'l-Hasan), the artist to which the painting is ascribed, appears below the sage. Whether the audience illustrated in this painting actually occurred or not, the significance of the ceremony and the role it played for both ruler and subject is certain: "As the emperor stood framed by the *jharoka-i darshan* that overlooked the river, his gaze emanating from above assured the multitudes gathered below of his continuing existence, without which they feared the universe might collapse, while their upward gaze convinced him of the adoring devotion of his subjects" (Necipoğlu, p. 314). LA



#### Music in India

#### 195 Tambura, or tampura

India, Rajasthan, ca. 1800
Teak wood, a calabash,
metal and bone; L 126 cm
AKM 00700
Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 165 (no. 138);
AKTC 2007b, p. 166 (no. 138); AKTC 2008a,
pp. 256–257 (no. 16); AKTC 2008b, no. 23;
AKTC 2009a, p. 240; AKTC 2009b, p. 240

The rise of the Mughal Empire (1526–1858) called for the subjugation of numerous small states that had existed in India before the sixteenth century. Some of these principalities were already Muslim, while others, like those ruled by the warrior Raiput caste in northern India, belonged to a native Hindu heritage. Situated at the foothills of the Himalayas, the Rajputs' were known for their military might, but even they, like many other indigenous groups in India, eventually faced Mughal domination. The Rajputs came to an agreement with the Mughal conquerors; the Mughals would allow them to rule their individual territories in exchange for their participation in Mughal military campaigns and their sending of an important member of their family to be raised at the Mughal court.

In spite of their military talents, the Rajputs also cultivated the arts, producing distinctive painting styles, one of which included a bright vellow colour (made from the urine of mango-fed cows) and a stylised, flat quality, seen in this painting with two figures seated on a tilted carpet against a plain, bright yellow backdrop. This may have corresponded to the fact that Rajput paintings sought to illustrate an ideal world (Cummins 2006, p. 93). One of the most popular subjects in Rajput painting was the depiction of ragas, or musical modes, indigenous to the northern Indian region. These modes eventually became described through a new genre of writing and, later, through illustration, gathered into what came to be called ragamalas, or "garlands of ragas." The paintings, one of which is featured here (cat. no. 197) were meant to evoke the multilayered quality of the musical modes through visual representation and sought to create a similarly complex sensory experience for the viewer. Ragas were classified into family groups, headed by the *raga* or patriarch, and followed by his wives (raginis), sons (ragaputras), and (occasionally) daughters (ragaputris) (ibid., pp. 95-96). This image, in which a man and woman are seated facing each other, each with a bird delicately perched on their hand, is an expression of the Kausa ragaputra, which belongs to the Malakausika raga family, performed after midnight; the man in the painting is understood as the personification of the raga (Canby 1998, p. 167). Both people in the picture are nobly dressed and wear precious jewelry. The woman is especially lavishly adorned with pearl necklaces. Judging by the décor, this scene could portray a pair of Rajasthan aristocrats who had just sat down on a valuable carpet. It is an example of a ragamala illustration that is romantic in nature, inspired by the amorous side of Rajput culture (when not at war) and belonging to other such paintings that express the diversity of love, whether joyful or heartbreaking (Cummins 2006, p. 99).

It is believed that *ragamala* illustration existed before the Mughal period. The Mughals, however,

did not seem to adopt this form of painting, perhaps because of their greater interest in Persian music coming from Iran and Central Asia (*ibid.*, p. 96). Nevertheless, *ragamala* illustrations exhibiting a Mughal aesthetic suggest that some paintings might have been produced by Mughal artists for non-Mughal clients, or by non-Mughal artists who integrated Mughal tastes with indigenous subjects. The painting of ascetics in a landscape (cat. no. 196) provides an example of the latter. Mughal shading and modelling techniques as well as the subject of dervishes or ascetics gathering in a landscape are combined with indigenous Bundi elements, such as the bright orange sky and the inclusion of indigenous birds and flowers.

The yogis' master sits in front of the modest cabin in which the group is staying. He is playing a veena and has covered his face with ashes in the customary practice used to emulate Shiva, the Ascetic God. The two figures in patched robes are Hindu yogis, who frame the group of four ascetics. On the right, a male yogi is identifiable because his hair is up in a bun, and, on the left, a vogini (a female ascetic) has her hair braided, as was common for women. The woman is conversing with a dervish, who is identifiable as such because his long hair is down. As a sign of their connection to the spiritual world, all of the people have a "third eye" (tilak) on their foreheads in the form of a red dot or stripe. The dervish also has a tilak, which means that the picture must have been intended for a Hindu audience because it would have been inappropriate for a dervish to wear a symbol of Hindu spirituality in a Muslim context. Yogi gatherings with dervishes are also objects of ragamala paintings, which do not, however, portray a raga and his raginis as equals. The members of the yogi-dervish group in this Bundi picture, however, appear to be informally interacting as equals (Canby 1998, p. 172). While the picture of the Kausa ragaputras (cat. no. 197) portrays an allegory of the ragaputra, the apparent situation in the picture of the four ascetics (cat. no. 196) is that a particular raga (possibly bhairavi, a raga of the morning) is being played.

The instrument played by the yogi musician in cat. no. 196 is most likely a *veena*, a Southern Indian string instrument comprised of a pair of gourd resonators connected by a vertical wooden shaft. It consists of four main and three subsidiary drone strings. The *tambura* in cat. no. 195 is another example of an Indian plucked drone lute, but it requires four strings instead of three. The *tambura* is traditional to both northern and southern India but the present object demonstrates the northern variety. Such instruments resemble the *sitar* (lit., "three strings" in Persian), another plucked string instrument common to India and Iran and played in a similar manner. LA/SP



### 196 Ascetics in a landscape

India, Rajastan, Bundi, third quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century or later Ink and opaque watercolour on paper; page 45.8 x 33.9 cm; image 21.4 x 14.2 cm AKM00175
Published: Canby 1998, p. 172 (no. 131); AKTC 2009a, p. 243; AKTC 2009b, p. 243

#### 197 Kausa Ragaputra: music for after midnight

Folio from a dispersed *ragamala* series India, Punjab Hills, Mankot, Rajput, *ca.* 1700 Opaque watercolour on paper; borders cut down; glued to card 14.8 x 16.5 cm AKM 00194 Published: Canby 1998, pp. 166–167 (no. 125); AKTC 2008a, pp. 264–265 (no. 104); AKTC 2009a, p. 243; AKTC 2009b, p. 243





#### 198 Portrait of an Ottoman with a book

India, Mughal, *ca.* 1610 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold paper; 8.5 x 9.5 cm AKM 00733 Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 245; AKTC 2009b, p. 245 Like his father Akbar (r. 1556–1605) before him, the Mughal emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) showed an interest in portraiture, continuing his father's portrait albums and encouraging court artists to capture the psychology of their subjects in their portraits (Welch 1985, p. 226). This portrait of an Ottoman holding a book demonstrates that subjects were not limited to Mughals and Indians alone, but also included foreigners who were in frequent contact with the royal court. It was not unusual for court artists to record meetings between the emperor and his visitors in

painting (see, for example, a portrait study of Shah 'Abbas by Jahangir's court artist Bishn Das, in the British Museum, in Canby 2009, p. 38, no. 1). The painting is identified on the reverse as a gift given by a certain Baha' al-Din on 6 Urdibihisht [regnal] year 5, which is equal to 26 April 1610 and falls under Jahangir's reign. Persian and Mughal seal impressions from later periods also appear on the back of the page, as well as notes about when the work entered the Mewar Royal Library along with that library's stamp and the royal inventory number of 20/220. LA



#### 199 Pair of mother-of-pearl doors

India, Gujarat, Ahmedabad, 18<sup>th</sup> century Wood and mother-of-pearl; 187 x 49.5 cm AKM 00705 Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 246; AKTC 2009b, p. 246

The combination of mother-of-pearl and wood as well as the form and design of this beautiful pair of doors indicate the native work of craftsmen from Gujarat, recognized in the sixteenth century as the centre of mother-of-pearl production. Smaller, portable objects also display a similar design composed as a puzzle of individual pierced pieces of mother-of-pearl. The doors may have once adorned a wealthy home or public structure, such as a temple or tomb. The chain suspended from the top of the right door suggests the door would have been situated in an interior, attaching to a hook within the doorframe to keep the door closed; a door with access to the exterior, on the other hand, would have received a stronger lock for greater security. LA



#### 200 Jade and agate Cups with dragons

AKM 00813

Cups: Mughal Empire, mid to late 16th century Brass setting and marble base: early 19th century Cups: H 4.3 cm; L 16.4 cm; W 9.6 cm Bronze setting: max. H 18 cm; max. W 28 cm Marble base: L 16.5 cm; W 8.2 cm The Jade cup was carved from a piece of pale green jade and adorned with a gold vegetable motif in which stems are interlaced with golden rosettes and palm leafs. The agate cup is unadorned. They were acquired by Baron Lionel de Rothschild (1808–1897) and have been in his family's possession since that time.

On one side of the Jade cup, the application exhibits the Kingdom of Navarre's coat of arms, the so-called Chains of Navarre. The coat of arms of the Bourbons and of the French royal family, on the other side, helps to provide historical context for the object, or at least for a part of it, given that the gilt-bronze mounts appear to be attributable to the nineteenth-century English artisan Benjamin Vulliamy (1780–1854).

The elaboration of jade was very highly prized during the period of the Mughal Empire. The emperor Jahangir (1605–1627) possessed an extensive collection, part of which had previously belonged to his Timurid ancestors, and he sponsored the production of these types of luxury items. Many of them mimic the forms of older examples. During the seventeenth century it was common for vessels carved from stone to be adorned with gold filigrees and precious stones in the form of vegetable motifs. Some of these decorations recall Western prototypes due to the presence of European lapidaries working for the Mughal court.

It is likely that this piece was created for someone in Europe. It is easy to conclude, given the presence of the coat of arms, that it was intended for the King of France himself, and it may have been commissioned directly by one of his representatives. It is also possible that it was a gift of state presented to the king by an ambassador.

The piece bears a striking resemblance to several others from the so-called Tesoro del Delfín. which is divided between the Louvre Museum in Paris and the Prado in Madrid. The Spanish part of this collection belonged to the Dauphin of France, hence the name Louis, the heir of Louis XIV (1638-1715). Upon his death it became the property of Philip of Anjou, who ruled Spain as Philip V from 1683 to 1746. The items were brought to Madrid in 1716 and 1776, and were deposited in the Gabinete de Historia Natural. In 1813 Napoleon's troops abandoned Madrid, taking it as part of a rich art booty, which upon reaching France was deposited first in Orleans and later in Paris. In 1815 the French government signed an agreement with Spain and returned most of the objects, though some pieces were lost in the uneven process of restitution that followed.

Given the dates on which Baron Lionel de Rothschild obtained the piece, it is not unlikely that this was one of the pieces of the Madrid collection lost in the course of the looting and subsequent removal to France. The marble base and bronze dragon were not part of the original object and were added later, although the former could have been created in imitation of the original, now lost. Similar dragons form the mounts of vessels found in the Tesoro del Delfín housed in the Museum of Prado. FV



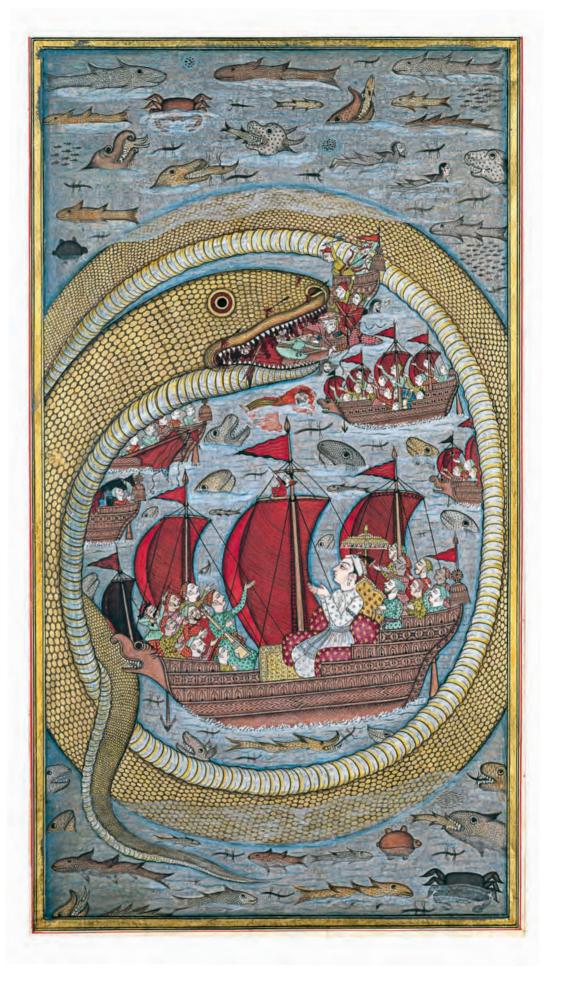
#### 201 A sea-serpent swallows the Royal Fleet

Folio from the *Gulshan-i °Ishq* of Nusrati India, Deccan, *ca.* 1670 Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 39 x 23.5 cm

AKM 00167

Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 229–231 (no. 77); Falk 1985, p. 174 (no. 154); AKTC 2007a, p. 137 (no. 104); AKTC 2007b, p. 139 (no. 104); AKTC 2008a, pp. 212–213 (no. 80); AKTC 2009a, p. 247; AKTC 2009b, p. 247

A giant sea serpent constricts its gold coils around a royal fleet, its full mouth leaving no doubt as to its intentions toward the remaining vessels. As if the carnivorous serpent were not enough, the alternative is a scary sea filled with demon-headed fish, giant crabs, and turtles, as well as a mermaid and merman. Most of the sailors appear to pray with upturned hands for deliverance from this nightmare. The painting has been identified as an illustration from the Gulshan-i 'Ishq ("Rose Garden of Love") a heroic epic written in Deccani Urdu by the court poet Nusrati for Sultan 'Ali II ibn Muhammad <sup>c</sup>Adil Shahi (r. 1656–1672) (Falk 1985, p. 174). The 'Adil-Shahis were great patrons of the arts and ruled Deccani Bijapur as an independent Shia kingdom from 1489 until it became part of the Mughal Empire in 1689. It has been suggested that this painting was produced for an aristocrat at the end of Sultan 'Ali's reign or during the reign of his successor, Sikandar 'Ali Shah (r. 1672-1686) (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 229). The theme of disaster at sea in this painting may be compared with similar episodes in the Hamzanāma as part of the picaresque genre of adventure-romances, featuring heroes who travel through strange lands and meet with danger on land and sea. AF



## Four album folios with samples of calligraphy

## 202 Page from an album made for Shah Jahan

Calligraphy signed by Mir  $\,^{\rm c}\!$  Ali; margins signed by Daulat Khan

Calligraphy: Iran, Herat, ca. 1520 Margins: India, Mughal, ca. 1640 Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 39.2 x 25.4 cm

AKM 00145

Published: Falk 1985, p. 65, no. 36; AKTC 2007a, p. 173 (no. 146v); AKTC 2007b, p. 173 (no. 146v); AKTC 2008a, pp. 270–271 (no. 106); AKTC 2009a, p.248; AKTC 2009b, p.248

## 203 Calligraphy signed by Mir <sup>c</sup>Ali (d. ca. 1544)

Signed (at top right and bottom left): *li-kātib... al-faqīr ʿAlī al-kātib...* ("written/composed by the poor ʿAli the writer [Mir ʿAlī]...")
Calligraphy: Iran, Safavid, 16<sup>th</sup> century
Margins: India, Mughal, *ca.* 1640
Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper page 37.9 x 25.6 cm; text 18.3 x 10.1 cm
AKM 00255

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 250; AKTC 2009b, p. 250

#### 204 Calligraphy by Prince Dara Shikuh

India, Burhanpur

Calligraphy dated 1041 H / 1631-2 CE

Margins: 18th century

Ink, opaque watercolour, gold on paper; page 42.3 x 28.8 cm; text 21.9 x 6.3 cm AKM 00249

Published: Falk 1985, p. 167 (no. 145); AKTC 2007a, p. 124 (no. 89); AKTC 2007b, p. 126 (no. 89); AKTC 2009a, p. 250; AKTC 2009b, p. 250

# 205 Sample of calligraphy from an album made for Shah Jahan

Signed by Mir <sup>c</sup>Ali

Calligraphy: Iran, Herat, Safavid *ca.* 1520 Margins: India, Mughal, *ca.* 1640 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold paper; page 36.9 x 25.2 cm; text 27.2 x 14.1 cm AKM 00351

Published: Falk 1985, p. 65 (no. 36); AKTC 2007a, p. 173 (no. 146); AKTC 2007b, p. 173 (no. 146); AKTC 2009a, p. 250; AKTC 2009b, p. 250 The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed a growing interest in art and the art of collecting in the three "gunpowder" empires, beginning with the Safavids in Iran and followed by the Ottomans and Mughals. Not only did more artists exhibit a hitherto rare sense of self-awareness by increasingly signing their works, but the royal and wealthy patrons who compiled or commissioned the albums had the chance to express their own taste and connoisseurship through their collecting. These extraordinary codices were filled with specimens of calligraphy, painting and drawing, including single-page, finished compositions as well as elements of illustrated manuscripts and calligraphy exercises (for a Qajar example, see cat. no. 174). Artists' and calligraphers' works were recognized within the albums for their individual talents and styles, sometimes by glosses added by the patron himself.

The four album folios in this group contain writing samples both by Persian masters as well as Mughal princes whose royal training would have included learning the art of calligraphy. Three of the examples (cat. nos. 202, 202 and 205) are signed by one of the greatest masters of the nasta' līg script, Mir 'Ali (d. ca. 1544), who served in Herat and Bukhara at the Timurid, Uzbek, and Safavid courts and was extolled by Qadi Ahmad in his sixteenth-century treatise on calligraphers and painters (Qadi Ahmad in Minorsky 1959, p. 131). In cat. no. 202, the calligrapher has signed two couplets of poetry in the lower left corner of the innermost rectangle on the page, using the Arabic formula, katabahū Mīr 'Alī ("Mir 'Ali wrote it"). The verses, calligraphed in black but outlined in red, are written in Persian:

"My God, if the entire universe should be blown by wind Let not the light of fortune be extinguished And if the entire universe should become flooded with water

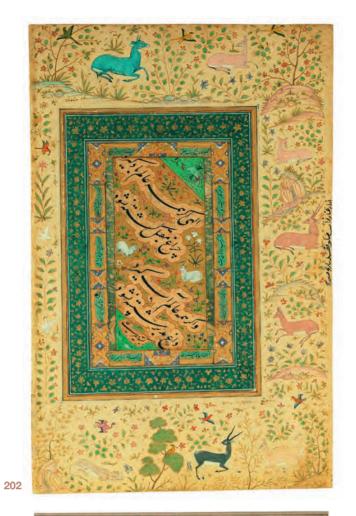
Let not the mark of the unfortunate be washed away!"

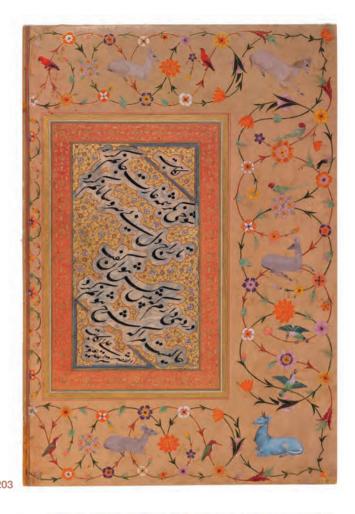
More verses in Persian border the main text, set within ten rectangular cartouches alternating with small panels containing colourful floral and vegetal scrolls; they also frame two strips of green, marbled paper on the right and left, drawing attention to the fact that the entire composition of text, image, and border has been created from

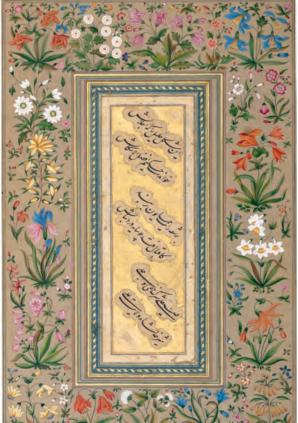
various cut pieces of paper. A green and gold border of vegetal ornament provides the largest frame around the calligraphy and sets it off from the margins of the folio on which it is mounted. These margins have been treated as a painting surface, on which several different species of flora and fauna appear.

The subject matter, painting style and signature - 'amal-i Daulat Khān ("the work of Daulat Khan") – on the outer margins of this page have led to its identification as part of an album made for the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1658). The careful rendering of the plants, in particular, is typical of the Mughal style, influenced by European plant manuals that reached India via Jesuit missionaries. While the text might be attributed to the early sixteenth century, the album was probably assembled around 1640, at which point the same artist responsible for the margins might have also painted the flowers and cows in the interstices of Mir <sup>c</sup>Ali's text. Cat. nos. 203 and 205 contain similar formats, with calligraphic samples by Mir 'Ali pasted onto two other pages of the Shah Jahan album. Like cat. no. 202, the text in cat. no. 203 has been pasted onto an album page with borders depicting flora and fauna, here including seated deer, kingfishers, parrots, and other birds; the margins of cat. nos. 204 and 205, on the other hand, are devoted to botanically accurate representations of flowers.

It is possible the Mughals admired Mir 'Ali not only for his talent but also because of the praise he gave to Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, in one of his poems (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 220). By the time Shah Jahan's album was compiled, however, Persian poets had been emigrating to the Mughal courts in Agra and Lahore, and the influence once coming from Iran to India now began to move from east to west, initiating the sabk-i hindī, or Indian style, in Iran (Welch 1976, p. 9). These poets and calligraphers must have exercised great influence on the education of princes in the royal household as well. The Persian verses in cat. no. 204 were signed by Shah Jahan's preferred son, Muhammad Dara Shikuh (1615-1659) and dated 1041 H / 1631-2 CE at Burhanpur in the Deccan; they were probably written while the Mughals were campaigning in that region. This sample was later mounted into an eighteenth-century album, another presumed page of which was copied in Burhanpur in 1631 and now belongs to the British Museum. LA









## 206 Landscape with villagers, travellers, and animals

India, Oudh, Lucknow, ca. 1800 Ink and watercolour on paper; 28.7 x 41.4 cm AKM 00461

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 252; AKTC 2009b, p. 252

In this illustration, a typical north Indian landscape from the Ganges Basin around Lucknow can be seen. This area is greener and richer in water than the area further west around Delhi, but dryer than the eastern-lying Bengal.

From the horizon, where a charming village with a north Indian style Hindu temple is situated, a sunken road winds into the foreground of the illustration. Villagers, travelers, and animals are moving around in the wide, rolling landscape that is dotted with vegetation typical of the region, including date trees and a mango tree. The flora and fauna are also typical of the area around Lucknow. A herd of blackbucks, a popular game animal from the time, graze at the bottom left. An entire herd of cows can be seen in the background on the right; foxes, wild boars, and a lion are also visible in the picture. Travellers in two ox-drawn carriages are being escorted by soldiers dressed in Indian attire. Of the two people on horseback. one is also accompanied by soldiers. Traveling salesmen transport their wares on camels. In the right foreground, Indian farmers have stopped along the way. They are dressed simply but they do not appear to be poor: their lightweight clothes can be explained by the time of year represented in the picture. The landscape is green and the ponds are full, which means that it must be shortly after the rainy season in October. Two people are sitting on the edge of the path and conversing. Near them, a farmer lifts his hand to greet another person who is sitting in a hut, and a couple passes by on a mule.

This picture does not contain any symbolism or allegory and is therefore a departure from earlier, traditional Mughal paintings. Even the lion, which is usually a symbol of royalty, lacks any symbolic function here. Instead, this landscape simply depicts the area around Lucknow. The concept of landscape paintings was taken from European painting style and completely negates the symbolism of traditional Indian painting. The way the path tapers off at the horizon and the way the village's details are discernable yet portrayed in faded colors means that the picture contains a

further aspect that was unknown in traditional paintings: perspective. Nevertheless, the landscape is not a realistic depiction, but rather shows an idealized, prosperous region. The village is rich; the houses are built of brick or stone, and some even have two stories. The Hindu temple is also built of stone and is relatively large. No specific place is depicted, but rather "any" village; this is to display that prosperity prevailed even in the simplest of places. The cows are wellfed and graze on green pasture. True luxury is asserted through the portrayal of broad stretches of pastureland that would otherwise surely have been converted into farmland because of population density. The street is safe and even the wild animals are thriving. This landscape is supposed to depict the kind of affluence that the Nawabs from Lucknow brought not only to the capital, but also to the entire country.

Lucknow was ruled by Nawabs (literally, "deputy of the ruler of the Mughals") and was one of the states that formed in the early eighteenth century after the fall of the Mughal Empire. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Mughals had already been weakened and their resources depleted by their heavy invasions of the Deccan Plateau. After Awrangzeb's death in 1707, the power of the Mughal emperor rapidly dwindled as a result of royal infighting about disputes with the governors of provinces and domestic enemies like the Maratha from the south, whom Awrangzeb had fought for 30 years to no avail. The richest governors declared themselves independent and just paid lip service to the Mughal Emperor in Delhi, as did, starting from 1732, the Nawabs from Lucknow. They profited from the prosperity of the Ganges Basin but increasingly came under influence of the British in the bordering Bengal. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Lucknow's leaders were already vassals to the British until the latter were removed from power in 1856. The increasing political power of the British in India paved the way for European artistic influences such as the perspective shown in landscape paintings. VD/SP



#### 207 Palace at Delhi

India, Mughal, Delhi, *ca.* 1820–1830 Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; 29.3 x 21 cm AKM 00464

Published: AKTC 2009a, p. 252; AKTC 2009b, p. 252

This painting depicts the palace of Begum Somru, which is also illustrated in Reminiscences of Imperial Delhi, an album of 89 folios and around 130 paintings of Delhi monuments from the pre-Mughal and Mughal periods, compiled by and accompanied by the text of Sir Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe (1795–1853), the Governor-General's Agent at the imperial court. Metcalfe describes Begum Somru as the widow of a certain "Walter Reinihard, born of obscure parents", who entered the French Service under the name of "Summer." Due to his dark complexion, he was given the sobriquet "Sombre," subsequently corrupted into Sumroo, by which name "Her Highness was generally known, though she always styled herself the Begum Sombre" (Reminiscences of Imperial Delhi, The Sir Thomas Metcalfe Album, The British Library, London). Metcalfe also comments on the doubtful origins of the Begum, who was either believed to come from a noble Mughal family or to have been a native Kashmiri who was sold to Somru as a slave. In either case, Begum Somru inherited her husband's principality upon his death and remained active as an independent ruler until her death in 1837. LA

The colonial-style palace is shown from the south side. The strong symmetry of the gardens may still correspond to the design principles of

Mughal gardens. The entire complex and its architectonic details, like gables, Corinthian pillars, and the symmetrical design of the outside staircase, are nevertheless taken from the European Baroque style.

There is a striking contrast between the strict symmetry displayed in the architecture and the park and the people, who seem to be moving around the grounds freely and casually without any official purpose. By contrast, in the *darbar* scene (see cat. no. 194), which portrays a similarly large group of people in front of a palace, every person in the crowd has a strictly defined position that is determined by class. In traditional Mughal paintings, a casual portrayal of a scene without any clear occasion, as is such in this painting, would have been unthinkable. The cheerful hustle and bustle would have been interpreted as chaos and a sign of the deterioration of sovereign authority.

The influence of European painting makes itself felt in this picture, not only because of the Colonial architecture, but also in the choice and presentation of its subject. The painter, who was most certainly schooled in traditional painting, was probably presented with the print of a European Baroque marketplace that he in turn adapted to his Indian environment, VD/SP



#### 208 Multan tile arch

Pakistan, Multan (?), 16th century or later Earthenware, painted with white slip under cobalt blue and turquoise glazes; 124 x 226 cm AKM 00582

Published: AKTC 2007a, p. 185 (cat. A); AKTC 2007b, half-title page and p. 190 (cat. A); AKTC 2009a, p. 254; AKTC 2009b, p. 254 These tiles form the spandrel of an arch from an unknown building. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century funerary monuments in Multan, Punjab, were decorated on the exterior with tile panels such as this. The sixteenth-century tomb of Sultan 'Ali Akbar, for example, is clad with spandrels that closely parallel the AKM panel. Each of the eight sides of that mausoleum includes spandrels above blind

arches. The palette of turquoise, white, and blue underglaze reflects the strong influence of Timurid Central Asia on northern Indian craftsman potters and their designs. Used here as a central point around which stylised leaves rotate, this motif is also commonly found on tilework from Multan and Sind in southern Pakistan from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. AF





### **Transcription Table**

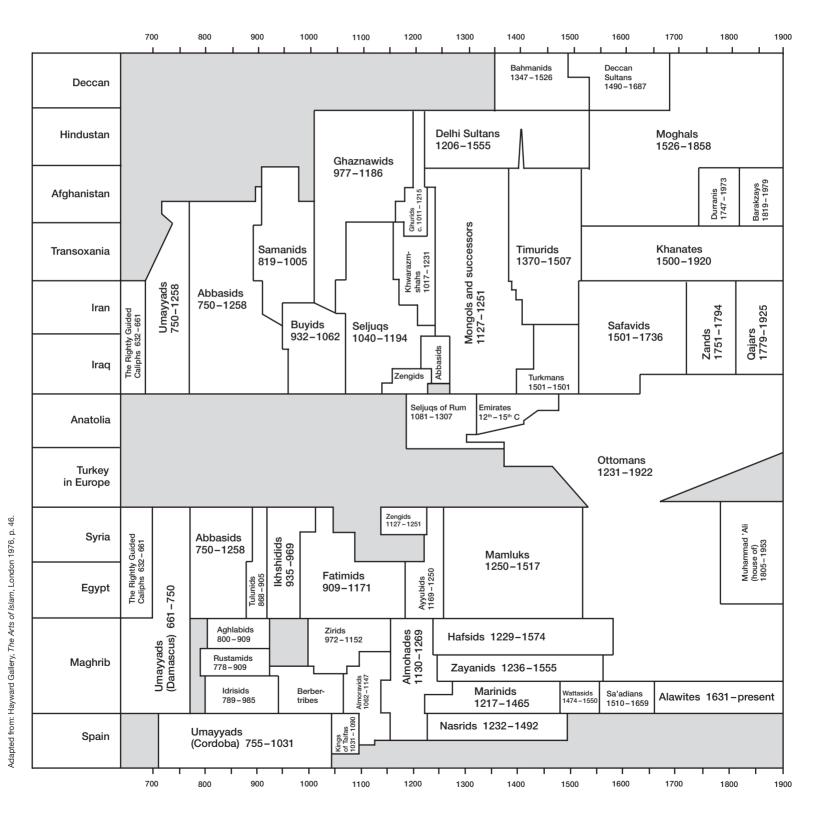
Arabic, Persian and Turkish terms and names as well as book titles and quotations appear in the catalogue according to a system of simplified transcription recorded in the table below. For names that have entered English such as "Hijaz" and "Abbasids" diacritics were avoided.

Dates are written in the Hijra calendar system, denoted by H, which starts in the year 622 CE (emigration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mekka to Medina), are written and followed by the CE year. In the case that only one year is given, it is always given in CE

	Arabic	Persian	Turkish	Pronunciation
ع	c			'ain': sound made from the throat without an English equivalen
۶	5			'hamza': glottal stop as in the English expression 'uh-oh!'
€		ch	ç	'cha': 'ch'
ذ	dh			'dhal': 'th' as in 'the'
ض	d	Z		'dhad': emphatic 'd'
گ		g		'ga': hard 'g' as in 'go'
گ ج غ	j			ʻjim': ʻj'
غ	gh			'ghayn': soft 'gh'
			ğ	soft guttural 'r', lengthens the preceding vowel
7	h			'ha': hard 'h' from the throat
ح پ ق	kh			'kha': 'kh' from the throat, as at the end of the German Bach
پ		p		'pa': 'p'
ق	q			'qaf': guttural 'k'
J	r			'r': hard or rolling 'r'
m	S			'sin': voiceless 's'
ش	sh		ş	'shin': 'sh'
ص	S			'sad': emphatic 's'
ط	t			'ta': emphatic 't'
ث	th	S		'tha': 'th' as in 'thing'
ز	Z			'zay': 'z'
ظ ژ	Z			'zha': emphatic 'z'
ژ		zh		'zha': the French 'j' as in jour
			1	close back unrounded vowel sound
١	ā			'alif': long 'a'
و	ū/w	ū/v		'waw': long 'u'
ي	ī / y	ī / i		'ya': long 'i'

### The Islamic Dynasties

This schematic chart does not give more than a very simplified picture of the political complexities of certain periods. Large parts of Central Asia, China, South-east Asia and Africa have been omitted.



### Chronology

- **ca. 570** Birth of the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca
- **595** Muhammad marries Khadija
- **610** Muhammad receives the first revelation; beginning of the Prophetic mission
- 619 Death of Khadija
- **622** The *Hijra*: emigration of Prophet Muhammad to Medina Starting point of the Muslim lunar Calendar
- **624** Starting point of the Muslim lunar Calendar Expedition of Badr The direction of prayer is changed from Jerusalem to Medina
- **625** Marriage of Fatima and 'Ali
- **630** Bloodless conquest of Mecca
- **632** Event of Ghadir Khumm Death of Prophet Muhammad in Medina
- **632–634** Abu Bakr, proclaimed first caliph
- 634-644 'Umar, proclaimed second caliph
- **635** Construction of the Basra Mosque (Iraq)
- **637** Conquest of Ctesiphon, capital of the Sassanid Empire
- **638** Foundation of Kufa (Iraq) and of its Great Mosque
- **639 or 641–642** First Mosque in Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem
- **640–641** Foundation of 'Amr Mosque in Cairo (Egypt)

- **644–656** 'Uthman proclaimed third caliph Construction of the *Qubbat al-Khadrā*' ("Green Dome"), the Caliph's palace in Damascus (Syria)
- **650–651** Conquest of Nishapur and construction of the first Great Mosque
- 656-661 Caliphate of 'Ali
- **661** Murder of Imam 'Ali
- **670** Foundation of Kairouan (Tunisia) and its Great Mosque
- **680** Death of Imam Husayn at Karbala (Iraq)
- **691** Construction of the mosque (Dome of the Rock) in Jerusalem by Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik
- **ca. 696** Monetary reform; replacement of Sasanian and Byzantine coinages by coins with purely Arabic inscriptions
- **707–715** Construction of the Great Mosque in Damascus
- 711 Muslim conquest of Iberian Peninsula
- **712–715** Construction of the bath house of Qusayr 'Amra (Jordan)
- **712** Construction of the Great Mosque in Samarqand
- **713** Construction of the Great Mosque in Bukhara
- **714–716** Completion of Muslim conquest of the Western regions of the Iberian Peninsula and of part of southwest France
- **715** Foundation of Ramallah (Palestine) and its Great Mosque

- **718** Great Mosque of Zaragosa was designed
- **724–727** Construction of the Umayyad palace of Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi ("Qasr al-Hayr West", Syria)
- **728–729** Construction of the Umayyad palace of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi ("Qasr al-Hayr East", Syria)
- **732** Battle of Poitiers
- **744** Construction of the Umayyad palace of Mshatta (Jordan)
- **748** Construction of the Dār al-Imāra, of Abu Muslim, in Merv (modern Turkmenistan)
- **ca. 750** Translation of classical medical and philosophical works into Arabic begins
- **754** Construction of the Great Mosque of Nishapur (Iran)
- **756** 'Abd al-Rahman [I] al-Dakhil builds the palace of Rusafa, near Cordoba
- **762** Baghdad founded as capital city of the Abbasids
- **765** Death of Imam Jacfar al-Sadiq
- **772** Al-Mansur builds the city and Great Mosque of al-Raqqa/al-Rafiqa (Syria)
- **776** Probable construction of Ukhaidir (Iraq)
- **784–786** First phase of the construction of the Great Mosque of Cordoba
- **790** Construction of the Great Mosque of Tlemcen (Algeria)

- **793–794** Erection of the first minaret of the Great Mosque of Cordoba (Spain)
- 794 First paper mill established in Baghdad
- **797–806** Construction of the first alcazaba in Toledo (Spain)
- Harun al-Rashid orders the construction of Hiraqla, outside Raqqa (Syria)
- Foundation of Fez (Morocco)
- Construction of the Ribat of Suss (Tunisia)
- **822–842** Probable foundation of Madrid by emir 'Abd al-Rahman II
- **822–852** Muhammad I orders the construction of the "Puerta de San Esteban" in the Great Mosque of Cordoba
- Construction of the Great Mosque of Seville
- Establishment of the Bayt al-Hikma ("House of Knowledge") in Baghdad
- **833–844** First extension of the Great Mosque of Cordoba
- 835 Construction of the alcazaba of Merida
- Al-Mu'tasim establishes Samarra (Iraq)
- Exchange of embassies between Cordoba and Byzantium
- Construction of Great Mosque of Samarra (Iraq)
- **ca. 850** Translation into Arabic of the medical works of Hippocrates and Galen
- Death of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, founder of the Hanbali school of law

- Foundation of the al-Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez (Morocco)
- **860–861** Foundation of the Alamut Fortress (Iran)
- Construction of Qubbat al-Sulaybiya in Samarra (Iraq)
- **ca. 866** Death of the philosopher and scientist al-Kindi
- Death of al-Jahiz, litterateur and master of Arabic prose
- Death of al-Bukhari, author of a respected canonical collection of hadith
- Death of Hunayn ibn Ishaq, translator of medical, scientific and philosophical works from Greek into Arabic
- Construction of the Mosque of the Three Doors, in Kairouan (Tunisia) Foundation of Badajoz (Spain)
- Completion of the Mosque of Ibn Tulun in Fustat (Cairo, Egypt)
- Establishment of the Fatimids in North Africa
- Death of the mystic Mansur al-Hallaj
- Death of al-Tabari, author of important texts on early Islamic history
- Death of the physician and philosopher, Abu Bakr al-Razi (Rhazes)
- Death of the astronomer, al-Battani (Albatenius)
- Death of the Andalusian philosopher and mystic Ibn Masarra

- Death of Abu 'l-Hasan al-Ash 'ari, founder of Ash 'ari school of law
- Foundation of the palace city of Madinat al-Zahra, near Cordoba
- Death of the Abbasid vizier and calligrapher Ibn Muqla
- **ca. 947** Ibn Hawqal visits al-Andalus and the Maghreb
- 950 Death of the philosopher al-Farabi
- Great minaret of the Great Mosque of Cordoba
- **953** Fatimid coin of al-Mu<sup>c</sup>izz (cat. no. 68–76, first coin middle row)
- Death of al-Mas cudi, author of an encyclopaedia on history, geography and sciences
- Al-Hakam II extends the Great Mosque of Cordoba
- **969–970** Fatimid conquest of Egypt and foundation of new capital city, Cairo (al-Qahira)
- **979–981** Construction of the Madinat al-Zahra
- Marble funerary stele (cat. no. 59)
- Last extension of the Great Mosque of Cordoba
- **988–989** Foundation of Al-Azhar University in Cairo (Egypt)
- **999–1000** Construction of the Bab al-Mardum Mosque, in Toledo (Spain)
- Death of al-Muqaddasi, world-traveller and geographer

- Foundation of the Dār al-Hikma ("House of Wisdom") in Cairo
- **1006 1007** Construction of the tower-mausoleum of Gunbad-i Qabus, built near Gurgan
- Death of Maslama al-Majriti, Andalusian mathematician and Astronomer
- Firdawsi completes the epic of the *Shāhnāma*
- Death of the calligrapher Ibn al-Bawwab
- 1030 al-Biruni completes his work on India
  Death of the philosopher and historian
  Miskawayh
  Death of the Andalusian poet
  Ibn Darraj
- Death of Ibn al-Samh, Andalusian author of works on geometry and astronomical tables
- Death of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), influential philosopher and physician
- Death of Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen), astronomer and physicist
- **1049–1083** Construction of the Aljaferia Palace in Zaragoza (Spain)
- Manuscript of the *Qānūn fī 'l-tibb* ("Canon of medicine") of Ibn Sina, fifth book (cat. no. 111)
- Death of Ibn Hazm, Andalusian philosopher and theologian
- Foundation of the Nizamiyya madrasa in Baghdad
- **1068–1069** Destruction of Fatimid libraries

- Death of Ibn Zaydun famous Andalusian poet
- Death of al-Baji, distinguished Andalusian theologian and literary figure
- Death of Ibn 'Ammar, Andalusian poet and vizier of the king of Seville (Spain)
- Ismaili state established in the fortress of Alamut (Iran)
- Death of al-Ghazali, jurist and theologian
- Death of al-Hariri, master of the literary genre of the *maqāmāt* (prose poem)
- Death of Ibn Abdun, Andalusian poet and writer
- Death of Ibn Bajja (Avempace), Andalusian philosopher, poet and musician
- First translation of the Qur'an into Medieval Latin by Robert of Ketton
- Death of Ibn Bassam, Andalusian poet and anthologist
- **ca.** 1150 Translations of Ibn Sina (Avicenna) into Latin
- Al-Idrisi completes his universal geography at the court of Roger II of Sicily Construction of the Nur al-Din hospital in Damascus
- Death of Ibn Quzman, famous Andalusian poet
- Death of Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoar), Andalusian physician
- **1170–1180** Construction of the Almohad Great Mosque of Seville with its minaret, now called Giralda

- Death of Ibn Khayr al-Ishbili, philologian and traditionist of Seville
- Death of Ibn Tufayl, celebrated Andalusian physician and philosopher
- Farid al-Din 'Attar writes the allegorical verse epic, *Mantiq al-tayr* ("Conference of the Birds")
- Death of Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Andalusian philosopher and physician, author of important commentaries on the works of Aristotle
- **ca. 1200** Manuscript of the *Khawāss* al-ashjār ("De Materia Medica") of Dioscorides (cat. nos. 112-115)
- Death of Ibn Maymun (Maimonides), Jewish philosopher and theologian
- Death of Nizami, Persian poet author of romantic verse epics
- Death of the Andalusian traveller Ibn Jubayr, author of the Rihla
- Death of Ibn al-Athir, author of a monumental world history
- Manuscript of *Mi'a layla wa-layla* ("One Hundred and One Nights") of Al-Zuhri (cat. no. 46)
- Construction of the Alhambra by the Nasrid ruler Muhammad I
- Death of Ibn al- Arabi, Andalusian philosopher and mystic
- Death of Ibn al-Baytar, Andalusian botanist and pharmacologist
- Destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols

- **1259** Construction of the observatory at Maragha (Iran) begins
- **1273** Death of Jalal al-Din Rumi, author of mystical poems
- **1274** Death of Nasir al-Din Tusi, eminent philosopher and astronomer
- **1284** Construction of al-Mansuri hospital in Cairo
- **1286** Death of Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>id al-Maghribi, Andalusian poet, historian and geographer
- **1292** Death of Sa di, Persian poet, master of lyrical and ethical-didactic poetry
- **1294** Death of the musician Safi al-Din
- **ca. 1300** Gold and silver inlaid pen box (cat. no. 136)
- 1310 Death of the playwright Ibn Daniyal
- **1333–1354** Expansion of the Alhambra
- **1349** Creation of the al-Qarawiyyin library in Fez (Morocco)
- **1354** *Kitāb fī ma<sup>c</sup>rifa al-hiyal al-handasiyya* ("Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices"); see folio "A blood-letting device" (cat. no. 93)
- 1368 Death of the traveller Ibn Battuta
- **1375** Death of Ibn al-Khatib, historian of Granada
- **1390** Death of the Persian poet Hafiz
- **1398** Death of the calligrapher Yaqut al-Musta simi
- **1406** Death of Ibn Khaldun, philosopher of history

- **ca. 1420** Foundation of the observatory at Samarqand
- **1453** Conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans
- **1492** Conquest of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada by the Castilians End of Muslim rule in Spain
- **1498** Vasco da Gama arrives in India via the Cape of Good Hope and the Indian Ocean
- **ca. 1520** Album made for Shah Jahan (cat. no. 202)
- **1520–1540** The *Shāhnāma* of Shah Tahmasp; five illustrations (cat. nos. 162–166)
- **1536** Death of the painter Bihzad
- **1537 1538** First edition of the Qur'an printed by Paganino and Alessandro Paganini
- **1544** Death of Mir 'Ali Haravi poet and calligrapher.
- **1550–1557** Construction of the Suleyman the Magnificent Mosque complex in Istanbul
- **ca. 1570** Portrait of Sultan Selim II (cat. no. 98)
- **1588** Death of Sinan, architect of Suleyman the Magnificent
- **1593** Manuscript of the *Anvār-i Suhaylī* ("Lights of Canopus") of Husayn Ibn 'Ali al-Wa'iz al-Kashifi (cat. no. 154)
- **1602** Manuscript of poet Rumi's *Masnavī* (cat. no. 37)

- **1628** Portraits of Jahangir and Shah Jahan (cat. no. 192)
- **1631-2** Calligraphy by Prince Dara Shikuh (cat. no. 204)
- **1632–1654** Construction of the Taj Mahal at Agra by the Mughal ruler Shah Jahan
- **1640** Death of Mulla Sadra, theologian and philosopher
- **1658** Death of Hajji Khalifa, Turkish cosmographer and encyclopaedist
- **1718–1720** Qur'an on cloth (cat. no. 25)
- **1727** Ibrahim Muteferriqa sets up first Ottoman printing press
- **1798–1801** French expedition under Napoleon to Egypt
- *ca.* **1805** Portrait of Sultan Selim III (cat. no. 100)
- **1808** Letter from Crown Prince <sup>c</sup>Abbas Mirza to Napoleon I (cat. no. 184)
- **1813** Publication of James Murphy's *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain*
- **1821** Setting up of the Bulaq printing press in Cairo
- **1828** Appearance of the first Arabic newspaper
- **1836–1837** Publication of Girault de Prangey's *Souvenirs de Grenade et de l'Albambra*
- **1839** Publication of Girault de Prangey's *Monuments arabes et moresques de Cordoue, Séville et Grenade*

- **1842–1845** Publication of Owen Jones' Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra
- Chao Jin Tu Ji by Ma Fuchu (cat. no. 30)
- Lacquer pen box (cat. no. 186)
- Opening of the Suez Canal
- Exhibition of Persian art at the South Kensington Museum in London
- Exhibition of Persian and Arab art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London
- **1893** Exposition d'Art Musulman at the Palais de l'Industrie in Paris Manuscript of Shabistari's *Gulshan-i Rāz* (cat. no. 187)
- Exposition des Arts Musulman at the Pavilion de Marsan in Paris
- Exposition d'Art Musulman in Algiers
- Exhibition on Islamic art (Meisterwerke Muhammedanischer Kunst) in Munich
- Excavations initiated at Madinat al-Zahra' by Ricardo Velásquez Bosco
- Exposition d'Art Persan at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris
- Death of the novelist Jurji Zaydan
- Aligarh College (India) upgraded to the status of University
- Exhibition of Persian Art at Burlington House in London
- Exhibition of Persian art at the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad (St Petersburg)

- Death of Muhammad Iqbal, poet and philosopher
- Death of the writer Taha Husayn
- Exhibition on the Arts of Islam at the Hayward Gallery in London
- Establishment of The Aga Khan Award for Architecture
- Abdus Salam awarded Nobel Prize in Physics Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (AKPIA) established at Harvard-MIT
- **1980** Al Qal<sup>c</sup>a of Beni Hammad in Algeria added to World Heritage List
- Medina of Fez (Morocco), and the Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore (Pakistan) added to World Heritage List
- Old Walled City of Shibam in Yemen added to World Heritage List
- Agra Fort and Taj Mahal in India added to World Heritage List
- Alhambra in Granada and the historic centre of Cordoba added to the World Heritage List
- Historic mosque city of Bagerhat in Bangladesh, Qusayr Amra in Jordan, the Great Mosque and Hospital of Divrigi in Turkey, and the Medina of Marrakesh in Morocco added to World Heritage List
- Fatehpur Sikri in India, and the Old City of Sana'a' in Yemen added to World Heritage List
- Death of the dramatist Tawfiq al-Hakim

- 1988 Timbuktu and Old Towns of Djenne in Mali, and Kairouan in Tunisia added to World Heritage List Foundation of The Aga Khan Trust for Culture Naguib Mahfouz awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature
- Death of the architect Hassan Fathy
- Itchan Kala in Uzbekistan added to World Heritage List
- Humayun's Tomb and the Qutb Minar complex in Delhi (India), the Historic Town of Zabid (Yemen), and the Historic Centre of Bukhara (Uzbekistan) added to World Heritage List
- Ancient *Ksour* of Ouadane, Chinguetti, Tichitt and Oulata (Mauritania), and the Historic city of Meknes (Morocco) added to World Heritage List
- Qila Rohtas in Pakistan added to World Heritage List Death of the musician Nusrat Fateh 'Ali Khan
- Ahmed Zewail awarded Nobel Prize in Chemistry
- Historic Town of Zabid (Yemen), and the Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore (Pakistan) added to List of World Heritage
- Stone Town of Zanzibar, and the Historic Centre of Shahr-i Sab (Uzbekistan) added to World Heritage List • Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia (AKMICA) established
- Lamu Old Town (Kenya), and Samarqand (Uzbekistan) added to World Heritage List
- Minaret and archaeological remains of Jam (Afghanistan) added to List of World Heritage ArchNet, online library on architecture, launched

 Shirin Ebadi awarded Nobel Peace Prize • Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi (Kazakhstan) added to World Heritage List

Tomb of Askia in Mali added to World Heritage List

Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Kunya-Urgench (Turkmenistan), and the Mausoleum of Oljaytu in Soltaniyeh (Iran) added to World Heritage List • Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park, Cairo

Orhan Pamuk awarded Nobel Prize in Literature • Muhammad Yunus awarded Nobel Peace Prize • Death of the writer Naguib Mahfouz • Death of the singermusician Ali Ibrahim Toure

Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Samarra Archaeological City (Iraq) and Red Fort Complex (India) added to World Heritage List • Samarra Archaeological City added to List of World Heritage

Archeological sites Al-Hijr (Mada'in Salih, Saudi Arabia) become UNESCO World Cultural Heritage sites. • Death of the Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish (b. 1941)

The Burj Khalifa in Dubai reaches a maximum height of 828 meters and is the tallest building in the world • US-President Barak Obama's address to the Islamic world at the University of Cairo

### **Glossary**

**Abbasids** Dynasty that founded the city of Baghdad and ruled large parts of the central Islamic lands from 750 to 1258.

**abjad** Alphanumeric system in which each letter of the Arabic alphabet is assigned a numerical value.

**Almohads** Berber dynasty that ruled North Africa and southern Spain from 1130 to 1269.

**Almoravids** Berber dynasty that ruled North Africa and southern Spain from 1062 to 1147.

**āyah** A verse from the Qur'an.

**Ayyubids** Founded by Salah al-Din (Saladin), dynasty that ruled Egypt and Syria from 1169 to 1260.

**basmala** The invocation *bism Allāh* al-rahmān al-rahīm, meaning "In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful", which appears at the beginning of most chapters of the Qur'an.

**bihārī** Stately cursive script used exclusively in India with thick round bowls for endings and wide spaces between words.

**dhikr** Form of prayer, which consists in the constant repetition of a name or formula, performed either in solitude or collectively.

**dīvān** Anthology of poetry.

**Fatimids** Dynasty that ruled large parts of North Africa and the Middle East from 909 to 1171, and founded the city of Cairo.

**Ghaznavids** Turkic dynasty that ruled parts of Iran, Afghanistan and India from 977 to 1186.

**ghubārī** Miniscule script said to have received its name because it resembled motes of dust and to have been invented to write messages carried by pigeon post.

**hadīth** Report of the sayings of the Prophet, and in Shia Islam, for the traditions of the Imams.

Hajj Annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

**Ilkhanids** Established by Hulegu, dynasty that ruled Iran from 1256 to 1353.

**Imam** In general, a leader of prayers or religious leader; used by the Shia to denote the spiritual leaders descended from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and the Prophet's daughter, Fatima.

**Jazira** The area that spans northeast Syria, northwest Iraq, and souteast Turkey between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

juz' A thirtieth part of the Qur'an.

**Ka**°ba Cubic building in Mecca, and the focus of the hajj.

**khāngāh** Lodge or hospice for Sufis.

**khutba** Sermon delivered in a mosque during Friday prayers.

**Kufic** Angular script with defined vertical and horizontal lines.

**Madrasa** College or educational institution, especially for religious studies.

**Maghreb** Western part of the Islamic world; includes modern Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Mauritania.

*maghribī* Distinctive round style script used in North Africa and in Spain.

**Mamluks** Turkic dynasty that ruled from 1250 to 1517, with Cairo as the capital.

**maqsūra** "Imperial Box" in the form of a separate section of the Mosque, usually beside the *minbar*.

*mihrāb* Niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of prayer.

**minbar** Elevated pulpit in a mosque from which the Friday sermon is delivered.

**Mughals** Founded by Babur, a descendant of Timur, dynasty that ruled the Indian subcontinent from 1526 to 1858.

**muhaqqaq** Monumental cursive script with well-balanced ascending and horizontal strokes.

**muqarnas** Decorative vaulting system composed of tiers of small niche-like elements resembling stalactites or honeycombs.

**muraqqa**<sup>c</sup> Album with a collection of samples of calligraphy and paintings.

**naskh** Cursive script used to transcribe texts, and the basis for modern typography.

**Nasrids** Dynasty that ruled southern Spain from 1230 to 1492.

**nasta** '**līq** Elegant 'hanging' script characterized by short ascending strokes and sweeping elongated diagonal strokes. Developed to save paper; because one writes slanting down, the next word can start above the previous one.

**Ottomans** Dynasty that came to power in Anatolia during the early 14th century, and ruled Turkey, the Balkans, North Africa, Egypt and the Middle East for over 400 years until 1924.

*pīr* Spiritual guide qualified to lead disciples on the mystical path.

**Qajars** Dynasty that ruled Iran from 1779 to 1925.

**qibla** The relative direction of Muslim prayer towards Mecca.

*qilin* The unicorn from Chinese mythology. Personification of goodness, purity, and peacefulness.

**rihān** Round script, which is the smaller counterpart to *muhaqqaq* and notable for its smooth line, even spacing and balance.

**riqa** <sup>c</sup> Script *par excellence* for administrative decrees and official letters.

**Safavids** Dynasty that ruled Iran from 1501 to 1722 and established Shiism as the official state religion.

**Samanids** Dynasty that ruled from 819 to 1005 in Central Asia and Transoxania.

**saz** Type of vegetal decoration common in Ottoman art of the 16th century.

**Seljuqs** Turkic dynasty that ruled parts of Iran and Iraq from 1040 to 1194, as well as Anatolia from 1081 to 1307.

**shahāda** The Muslim profession of faith.

**sharī'a** Standard term used for the body of rules guiding the life of a Muslim.

**shikasta** Dense script in which letters and words that should be detached are sometimes joined allowing the calligrapher to complete each word in a single penstroke.

**Simurgh** Gigantic mythical Persian bird.

Sura Chapter of the Qur'an.

**tauqī**<sup>c</sup> Script usually used for administrative documents, the larger counterpart to *riga*<sup>c</sup>.

**tawhīd** The Oneness of God or belief in Divine Unity, one of the fundamental tenets of Islam.

**thuluth** Elegant monumental cursive script often used for inscriptions, the larger counterpart to *naskh*.

**Timurids** Dynasty founded by Timur that ruled in Central Asia and Afghanistan from 1370 to 1507.

*tirāz* Textile with woven, embroidered or painted inscriptions.

**tughra** Distinctive and intricately executed monogram of the Ottoman sultan.

"ulamā" Religious and legal scholars.

**Umayyads** Dynasty that ruled the central Islamic lands from 661 to 750 with Damascus as the capital, and also the Iberian Peninsula from 756 to 1031, with Cordoba as the capital.

**waqf** Pious endowment or trust stipulated for a charitable purpose.

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