



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI L'ORIENTALE
DIPARTIMENTO ASIA, AFRICA E MEDITERRANEO
Series Maior XV

ISLAMIC METALWORK FROM AFGHANISTAN (9th-13th CENTURY)

THE DOCUMENTATION OF THE ISMEO
ITALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION

Valentina Laviola



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Valentina Laviola

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(9TH-13TH CENTURY)

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ISMEO

ROMA 2020

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The Documentation of the IsMEO Italian Archaeological Mission



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*To my beloved ones,
who taught me to look farer
and made it possible for me to do so*

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FOREWORD

The first goal of this catalogue is to publish a huge documentation neglected for decades in order to contribute to the study of Eastern Iranian metalwork. It focuses on Islamic metalwork documented in various ways by the IsMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan (1957-1978), and especially items dating back to a chronological framework ranging between the 9th and 13th century, namely from the spread of Islam in the region to the Mongol invasion (about 1221). The area of provenance of these items, traditionally referred to as the Eastern Iranian lands, corresponds with the regions of Khurasan and Sistan, where Islamic medieval metalwork majorly developed, and particularly with the city of Ghazni, where the Italian Mission had focused its activities since the very early years of the IsMEO presence in Afghanistan.

Thanks to his prestige as an internationally renowned orientalist, Giuseppe Tucci, President of IsMEO (Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente) and founder of the IsMEO Italian Archaeological Mission, obtained in the 1950s the permission to undertake an excavation campaign in Ghazni. In 1956, Alessio Bombaci (an Italian leading Turcologist) and Giuseppe Tucci led the first survey in order to identify the excavation area; one year later, the Mission started its effective activities, which continued until 1978 under the supervision of three subsequent scholars: Alessio Bombaci, Umberto Scerrato and Dinu Adamesteanu.

Between 1957 and 1978, the Italian Mission gathered a remarkable documentation about Islamic metalwork, the majority of whose artefacts dated back to the medieval period. Most of the metalworks presented in this catalogue have disappeared, thus the Autor's observations are based on the analysis of the photographic documentation, notes left by Mission members and comparison with similar objects still preserved.

At the end of the 1970s, political upheaval in Afghanistan abruptly forced the IsMEO Mission to abandon the country, leaving much of their ongoing research unfinished. Maurizio Taddei – Director of the IsMEO Italian Mission from 1967 until his death in 2000 (when its official name was IsIAO Italian Mission due to the embodiment of IsMEO into IsIAO) – went back to Ghazni in 1999 for a brief visit during which he reported on the conditions of the cultural heritage and the Italian excavations in an official paper deposited at the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In 2002 a new *équipe* of scholars reconstituting the Italian Mission, under the direction of Giovanni Verardi, and later Anna Filigenzi, performed brief surveys, but the security conditions in Afghanistan, and especially in Ghazni, were still dramatic. Anyhow, some members of the Mission had the chance to reach the Kabul Museum, and to visit the sites' remains in Ghazni along with the local storeroom between 2002 and 2013.

In 2004 a special project under the direction of Roberta Giunta, *IsIAO Archaeological Project Islamic Ghazni*, was established on the proposal of Prof. Gherardo Gnoli, Maria Vittoria Fontana and the Board and since then many activities have been carried out in Italy on the documentation gathered in Afghanistan: in particular, the reorganization of the paper archives housed in the IsIAO "Centro Scavi" (and partly transferred to the University of Naples "L'Orientale" after the IsIAO dismissal in 2011-2012), of the photographic negatives preserved in the former Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "G. Tucci" (now embodied into the Museo delle Civiltà, Rome), and new studies on the finds either on exhibition or preserved in the Museum's storages.

That a catalogue of the Islamic bronzes from Ghazni was in preparation had been announced in 1959 by Scerrato (1959b, 98), to be printed (in collaboration with Alessio Bombaci) in the IsMEO series *Reports and Memoirs*; but that project was never accomplished. Therefore, even if many of the items had been published in different forms, the majority of metalwork

documented in Afghanistan by IsMEO scholars (three hundred and thirty-seven items out of four hundred and thirty-nine) remained unpublished for long time.

The study underlying the present catalogue is also meant as a reconstruction of the history of the IsMEO documentation on the matter, in order to finally shed light on the prevailing documentary chaos. This is the reason why multiple sources of documentation have been taken into account, so that all the puzzle pieces can be accounted for. In particular, Scerrato left some notes containing items measurements, states of preservation and sketched descriptions, which he probably wrote for the above-mentioned volume that was never published. These have been included in the catalogue even when they are without an accompanying picture, as long as information from workbooks written by Maurizio Taddei, wherein were recorded metalworks coming from excavation and those purchased in Ghazni. Without the dedication of these two brilliant Italian archaeologists, a lot of information would have been lost forever, and there are no words to express the deep gratitude of ISMEO and the international scientific community to these great scholars.

Laviola's personal contribution is made even more precious by her opportunity to have worked directly on the forty-seven objects preserved in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale/Museo delle Civiltà in Rome. The measurements of several items are unknown, with the exception of artefacts from excavation and artefacts already published by other scholars, mainly Scerrato and Melikian-Chirvani, who had the chance to see the artefacts before their disappearance. Black and white pictures of a generally good quality compose the documentation: some objects are portrayed in many shots, with visible details; some others are taken in a single shot. These cases are underlined in the catalogue specifying the source of the information. The few still-surviving objects appear in both black and white pictures, taken by the IsMEO Mission, and modern colour ones, taken in recent years.

What has been said so far brings to light how important has been the role of scholars operating under the aegis of the IsMEO (1957-1995), then of IsIAO (1995-2012), and finally of the re-established ISMEO (2012-) in the study of Afghan metalworks from the early centuries of Islam. In the most recent period, starting in 2012, the assignment to the Museo delle Civiltà of all materials of archaeological interest of the Mission (both those of IsIAO on display at the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "G. Tucci", and those directly owned by the latter) created the conditions for a global scientific reconsideration to which this study (and other similar ones) will certainly provide significant contributions. This is the area of collaboration in view of which a formal agreement has been signed between ISMEO, that I have the honour of presiding over, and the Museo delle Civiltà, and also the reason why a specific budget line of the five-year MIUR Project "Studies and research on the cultures of Asia and Africa: tradition and continuity, revitalization and dissemination" is devoted to the reordering of the IsIAO archives.

A final word on the close collaboration between IsMEO/IsIAO/ISMEO and the University of Naples "L'Orientale", a collaboration started in the early 1930s, when Giuseppe Tucci was appointed full professor of Chinese Language at "L'Orientale" and IsMEO was established in Rome under the direction of himself and Giovanni Gentile; and it is not by chance that the Directors of the Italian Mission mentioned in this work were or are all teaching at L'Orientale.

The present monograph, with its double title page (L'Orientale and ISMEO) and double editorial series (Series Maior, no. XV and Serie Orientale Roma, no. 24) should represent a material symbol of this persisting scientific communion. I sincerely hope that "L'Orientale" University, ISMEO and the Museo delle Civiltà will continue – on the model of the work that is presented here – a collaboration designed to make available to the international community the immense riches, material and intangible, that the Italian research has been able to harvest over time.

Adriano Rossi
President of ISMEO

FOREWORD

Over the last fifty years, the destiny of the Afghan cultural heritage has been closely associated with the dramatic history of the country. Monuments and artefacts have been in many cases destroyed, have disappeared, or have gone the way of the clandestine market. Despite the efforts to promote researches on the region, most scholarly works during this period have been produced outside Afghanistan, and especially in western countries, creating a sort of virtual school of research. Attempts to investigate evidence of a wide artistic production can be undertaken only through photographic reproductions and studying the items brought abroad before the Russian invasion.

Notwithstanding the obstacles, attempts to return to Afghanistan were made by Maurizio Taddei since 1999, in 2002 by Giovanni Verardi and later on by Anna Filigenzi (current director of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan) and Roberta Giunta (in charge of the Islamic section) to monitor the status of the buildings together with the finding and artefacts preserved in local collections. The further deterioration of the political situation in the area impeded systematic work on the field.

Italy is among the countries preserving the highest number of documents and archaeological remains from Afghanistan thanks to the surveys led by Giuseppe Tucci and the IsMEO as early as 1956, and later carried on by Alessio Bombaci and Umberto Scerrato until the fateful 1979, when almost all western activities in Afghanistan were interrupted.

Unlike the current situation, this book is devoted to an era of splendour: the Ghaznavid and Ghurid periods (9th-13th centuries) that represent from a historical point of view the apex of Eastern Islamic civilisation. They created a specific cultural milieu, manifested in the impressive growth of Persian literature, together with the development of Islamic sciences and last but not least the birth of a new artistic and architectural taste, the protection of which appears to be today a real cultural emergency.

Aside from the monumental remains, the presence of a wide metalwork production during this period must be considered first of all as historical evidence. Giving precedence to these materials represents a measure to preserve documents attesting the social and intellectual life of this very important milieu. This was certainly the guiding principle of the Italian Mission at the time of Bombaci and Scerrato's expeditions in the area. Consequently, the considerable efforts to document – through photographs, casts and written descriptions – all the archaeological and artistic evidence in Ghazni, Mazar-i Sharif, Maimana, Kandahar, and Kabul, today represent a real treasure for the scholar even though these materials were preserved in chaotic conditions after the untimely death of Umberto Scerrato in 2004.

In addition, some artefacts were preserved in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale of Rome, recently became part of the Museo delle Civiltà in the same town. These consist of metalworks donated by members of the Italian Mission. Chemical analyses performed on some items have contributed to the understanding of lost artefacts documented in Afghanistan during the same years.

The present volume, by Valentina Laviola, represents the most recent of a long series of studies following the pioneering writings of Bombaci and Scerrato, to which scholars from two generations have contributed. The main institutions where such studies have been carried out are the Sapienza University of Rome and the University of Naples "L'Orientale", together with the constant and generous support of the former IsMEO and IsIAO. In Rome, Maria Vittoria Fontana has been among the main promoters of this field: she has understood the value of the Afghan materials, editing various publications, and finally three impressive volumes with the unedited materials and opera minora of Umberto Scerrato in 2014. She also tutored the PhD

research by Agnese Fusaro (*Studio del corpus ceramico di età islamica dagli scavi italiani a Ghazni, Afghanistan (X-XIII secolo): contributo alla ricostruzione storica del palazzo sultaniale e della 'Casa dei Lustrari'*, Rome 2014).

In Naples, the work of Anna Filigenzi and Roberta Giunta has obtained the support of the Gerda Henkel Stiftung, today concretized in the excellent multidisciplinary digital archive *Buddhist and Islamic Archaeological Data from Ghazni, Afghanistan* (<https://ghazni.bradypus.net/>). As pioneering research on the Ghaznavid and Ghurid periods, the volume by Roberta Giunta (*Les inscriptions funéraires de Ġaznī (IVe-IXe/Xe-XVe siècle)*, Naples 2003), started a series of publications devoted to epigraphy, which culminated in the recent double volume dedicated to the Persian inscriptions in Ghazni by Viola Allegranzi (*Aux sources de la poésie ghaznavide. Les inscriptions persanes de Ghazni*, Paris 2019). The latter work is based on her PhD thesis defended in Paris in 2017, as is the present work by Valentina Laviola (whose thesis *Metalli islamici dai territori iranici orientali (IX-XIII sec.). La documentazione della Missione Archeologica Italiana in Afghanistan* was defended in Venice in 2016). To them we can add the thesis of Martina Massullo (PhD *Les tombeaux et les épitaphes de Ghazni (Afghanistan) entre le XVe et le XVIIIe siècle*, defended in Aix-en-Provence in 2017). All these studies represent a research programme involving different institutions in Italy and abroad. In this framework, we can welcome this book as the most recent result of extensive researches on the Ghaznavid and Ghurid periods. Meanwhile it is the product of a deep and accurate study certainly useful for the scholars in the future.

It is not secondary to remember here, that with this volume, no. XV of *Series Maior*, a new season of this prestigious series begins thanks to the tireless work of the series's director Bruno Genito.

Born in the late 1970s, within the editorial proposals of the then Department of Asian Studies, the series was markedly distinguished from the *Series Minor* (still existing) by a bigger size. *Series Maior* has so far seen the publication of 14 volumes (from 1979 to 2015), all of an orientalist character and, in particular, with an archaeological, philological and literary background.

Since, in 2012, the three cultural sectors relating to Asia, Africa and Mediterranean merged in a unified Department, the intent of this new editorial proposal is to become a reference point for archaeology in a broad sense, expanding its geographical scope.

Michele Bernardini
 Director of the Department Asia, Africa and Mediterranean
 University of Naples "L'Orientale"

FOREWORD

One of the frustrations of studying the art of the central Islamic lands is not only the tiny number of excavations undertaken at major sites, but the failure of western archaeologists to published what they have excavated. Thus, for example, in the case of Iran the metalwork found in excavations in Rayy, Susa and Siraf all await publication. In the case of Afghanistan, this situation has been further exacerbated by the upheavals caused by the Russian invasion of the country in 1978, and the internal confusion which has been the long term legacy of their departure. Among the casualties have been not only large numbers of objects in museums or private collections, but also the documentation of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, which covered the period 1957-78, and included the records of the Italian excavations at Ghazni. It also included records of objects then in museums in Afghanistan, including those in the Maimana hoard, and records of others donated by private individuals. In its totality this archive would have provided an immensely rich source of information on the metalworking industry of Afghanistan in the early Islamic period. However, the archive had to be evacuated from Ghazni to Kabul, and from there to Rome or to Naples, and, sadly, in the process, parts of the archive were muddled up, and other parts of the archive were lost.

Some of the metalwork was published by Umberto Scerrato in a series of papers between 1959 and 1983, and in Rice and Rowlands' *Art in Afghanistan*, and I myself gratefully used such material as was already in print while working on my own doctoral thesis. Scerrato had planned to write a catalogue of the Islamic bronzes from Ghazni in collaboration with Alessio Bombaci, but sadly this remained unfinished. As a result, our knowledge of the Islamic metalwork of pre-Mongol Afghanistan is frustratingly restricted.

The aim of Valentina Laviola's work is to publish the surviving records of metalwork contained in the Italian Archaeological Mission's archives, and to make them available to scholars and students – an aim which I heartily applaud. Towards the end of her publication, she has also used the opportunity to gather together and discuss the most important aspects of the metal objects catalogued here, under the headings morphology, decoration, epigraphy and chronology. Given the partial nature of the archival material, her prime objective has all sorts of problems attached to it. But here is someone who is willing to give her energies to making what she can out of the hopes and failures of the past, and to placing at our disposal a very important body of metal objects. Her labours will greatly help to fill out the picture of the metalworking industry of early Islamic Afghanistan, and I am delighted to use this Foreword to pay tribute to her energy and her skill in undertaking and completing this challenge.

James Allan
Emeritus Professor
St Cross College, Oxford

ABSTRACT

خلاصه

برای بار نخست در قالب این مجموعه اسناد آثار صنعت فلز دوره اسلامی توسط ماموریت باستانشناسی ایتالیا در افغانستان گردآوری گردیده است (1957 - 1978). منشاء آثار متعدد از ولایت غزنی بوده، جاییکه فعالیت های ماموریت متذکره در آن متمرکز می باشد. سایر آثار مشمول آثار کابل، میمنه، مزار شریف و قندهار می باشند.

ساحه اصلی آن متعلق به حوزه تاریخی خراسان و سیستان می باشد که در آن آثار صنعت فلز دوره اسلامی قرون وسطایی بگونه گسترده انکشاف یافته است. میزان تمرکز آن از لحاظ زمانی به قرن های نهم و دهم بر میگردد که عمدتاً متعلق به گسترش اسلام الی تهاجم مغول ها در حوزه متذکره می باشد.

بیشتر از چهارصد آثار و قطعات مربوطه آن در چهارده صنف متعدد ارائه گردیده اند. ظروف این دروه از گروه های متعدد نماینده گی مینمایند، اما مشعل ها و صراحی های دوره متذکره از ویژه گی ها و دلچسپی خاص برخوردار اند. به صورت عموم مدل های متعدد مورفولوژیک و نمونه های زینتی را نیز میتوان در آن مشاهده نمود، که توام با اظهارات سخاوتمندان و امضاء های برخی از هنرمندان می باشد. یک فصل مشخص برای آثار صنعت فلز که در ساحه باستان شناسی ولایت غزنی استخراج گردیده اند، اختصاص داده شده است، که از آنجمله میتوان از دو عدد صراحی فوق العاده سالم یاد آوری نمود. اینگونه صنعت فلز شاهد این می باشد که یک محصول به مقیاس بزرگ برای افراد متمول تهیه گردیده است تا آثار زینتی و زیبا را وقتاً فوقتاً خریداری نمایند، که از یک ویژه گی اشتیاق بر انگیز اما منحصر به خود برخوردار است. شهر غزنی به عنوان یک مرکز احتمالی تولیدی اخذ موقع نموده است.

از آنجاییکه مجموعه ارائه شده در اینجا از نظر پنهان باقی مانده است، نخستین هدف این کار عبارت از این می باشد تا آرشیف را به دست نشر بسپاریم که برای چندین دهه به فراموشی سپرده شده است و آنرا به دسترس دانشمندان و مردم افغانستان قرار دهیم. این مستندسازی خلاء فرهنگ مواد را در سرزمین شرقی ایران پر نموده و سطح دانش ما را پیرامون تولید صنایع و آثار فلزی در جریان دوره قرون وسطایی گسترش میبخشد.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, and foremost, I wish to express my gratitude to my mentors, Maria Vittoria Fontana and Roberta Giunta. They played different but equally fundamental roles. The former for being generous as always with precious suggestions and pushing me tirelessly to complete this volume, even hosting me for long hours in her home. The latter I would like to thank for entrusting me with such challenging work, giving me full access to the documentation collected by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, and providing punctual corrections and collaborative advises, as well as moral support in every stage of this study.

An acknowledgment is due to Cristina Tonghini, who oversaw this nascent study supervising my PhD research, completed in February 2016 at Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

I wish to thank Mr. Omara Khan Massoudi, the former Director of the Kabul National Museum, who granted me the chance to study the metalwork collection preserved in Kabul during my mission in 2013.

I would also like to thank Filippo Maria Gambari, Director of the Museo delle Civiltà, which the Museo d'arte orientale (formerly Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "G. Tucci") is now part of. A particular thank to Gabriella Di Flumeri Vatielli, former Curator of the Islamic Department, for allowing me to examine and photograph the artefacts housed in the Museum, and for providing the analyses performed on some objects.

Special thanks goes to Armando Tagliacozzo, for the generous chance to visit his famous metalwork collection and sharing with me his opinions.

A warm thank is due to Carlotta Passaro, whose work made this volume far better by drawing profiles and decorative patterns of the metalwork, improving the quality of pictures and curating the graphic aspects.

Thanks also to Hannah Gilb who polished my English, and the Team of Freelance Translation Interpretation Services in Kabul for the Dari abstract.

Last but not least, thank to my colleagues and friends, members of the *Archaeological Project Islamic Ghazni*, for the exciting ups and frustrating downs that characterised the last years of work I had the pleasure to share with.

When I started this adventure, I looked at the studies by James Allan as a guiding light; I thus consider it a privilege to have a foreword authored by him.

At the beginning of my studies in Islamic Art and Archaeology, a great part of the documentation collected by the IsMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan had been neglected. During the last ten years, I have witnessed, and to some extent participated in, many achievements; treasures have come out since then. Part of the finds are currently available online in a digital database; a number of theses, PhD researches and post-doc studies have been carried out.

Besides gratitude for the opportunity of studying the Afghan metalwork collections, I feel the regret for what Afghanistan irreparably lost, impoverishing its heritage. From the very beginning of this study, I had clear in my mind that one of the first targets should be to make this documentation available for scholars and the Afghan people as well.

NOTE TO THE READER

Transliteration

The transliteration system follows the one adopted in the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

ا	a/ā	ض	ḍ
ب	b	ط	ṭ
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	th	ع	‘
ج	j	غ	gh
ح	ḥ	ف	f
خ	kh	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	dh	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	و	w/ū
ص	ṣ	ي	y/ī

Geographical names are spelled according to their English common use. Arabic personal names are transliterated according to the system above; common names are transliterated as well, with the exception of largely known ones (i.e. bazaar, ivan, etc.).

Translations of Arabic inscriptions are by the author if not otherwise specified. Texts erased or unreadable due to the preservation status of the object or the quality of pictures are supplied or replaced by suspension points in square brackets [...], while any omission by the artisan appears in round brackets (); what is unreadable due to a lack in the photographic documentation is in braces{ }. Isolated letters appearing in inscriptions are transliterated in capital letters.

Dates are given according to the Christian era; the *hijrī* date is also expressed whenever it comes from epigraphical evidence or ancient sources.

Photographic Credits

Black and white photos taken between 1957 and 1978 by members of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan belonged to the Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (IsMEO); negatives were preserved in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "Giuseppe Tucci", nowadays Museo delle Civiltà in Rome. Negatives' numbers are reported in figures' captions. Digital photos taken since 2002 by members of the Italian Mission have belonged to the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (IsIAO) until its closure in 2011, from then on to the University of Naples "L'Orientale". In these photos' captions appear the acronym MAIA (Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan), the name of the author and the date.

Other images included in the text are properly credited.

Guide to Images

Catalogue plates including pictures, drawings and casts' pictures of the presented metalwork are in black and white, while some colour figures appear in the text and in Catalogue's comments. If not otherwise specified, the drawings are by Carlotta Passaro.

PREFACE

In 2012, I started a PhD research on the metalwork documented by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan (Laviola 2016), reopening long-abandoned records and photographs that had been left unstudied, and were still unavailable to international scholars. This volume represents the major outcome of that research.

A large number of catalogues and scholarly studies on Islamic metalwork has been published throughout the last century. It is worthy of mention the chapter devoted by Kühnel to Islamic metalwork exhibited for the first time in Munich in 1910.¹ One of the first studies involving Islamic metalwork appeared in 1932 by Gaston Wiet. Being an epigraphist, he focused on the inscriptions of metalwork housed in the Arab Museum of Cairo (today Museum of Islamic Art) without describing the artefacts in detail.² One year before, he had already selected the materials, among which there were metalwork as well, for an important exposition of Persian art, whose catalogue was published in 1933 including black and white pictures of artefacts.

Islamic metalwork in the British Museum was first presented by Douglas Barrett, in 1949, with black and white pictures and short captions giving basic information but no description nor epigraphy. Yet the importance of such artefacts is clear in the words of Basil Gray, keeper of Oriental Antiquities at that time, who, in his preface to Barrett's volume, writes "Metalwork provides the most continuous and best-documented material for the history of Islamic art".³ He likely meant that the large amount of specimens preserved attests a continuous production across the centuries, which experienced changes and innovations but never stopped.

We owe to Richard Ettinghausen the publication of pivotal metalworks, such as the Bobrinsky bucket (1943) and the Wade Cup (1957, 1958), which are still considered landmarks in terms of style and chronological reference.

During the 1950s, David Storm Rice published a series of papers entitled "Studies on Islamic Metal Work", which focused mainly on metalworks from the Jazira.⁴

Between 1959 and 1983, Umberto Scerrato devoted many papers to single specimens or groups of metalwork, the main target of which was to publish the discoveries made by the Italian Mission in Afghanistan along with metalworks housed in Afghan museums and in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale in Rome.⁵ In that period, objects of certain Afghan origin were rare in western collections, and scholars knew just a little about them. To a lesser extent, the same was done by Rice and Rowland's *Art in Afghanistan: Objects from the Kabul Museum* (1971).

Early in 1959, Scerrato announced that a catalogue of the Islamic bronzes from Ghazni was in preparation, in collaboration with Alessio Bombaci.⁶ That study was never accomplished. Therefore, the majority of metalwork documented in Afghanistan by the Italians (three hundred and thirty-seven items out of four hundred and thirty-nine) remained unpublished for long time. The importance of the Italian documentation is easily testified by the numerous references and

¹ Kühnel 1912, pls. 122-161.

² Wiet was the director of the Arab Museum of Cairo from 1926 to 1951.

³ Barrett 1949, iii.

⁴ See Rice 1951, 1952, 1953a-c, 1955a,b, 1958.

⁵ See Scerrato 1959b, 1961, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1971a,b, 1972a-c, 1973, 1974, 1980, 1981, 1983, 1995. All the papers by Scerrato are gathered in Fontana 2014.

⁶ Scerrato 1959b, 98.

comparisons called for by other scholars, in particular James Allan and Assadoullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, who focused mostly on the Eastern Iranian production.

Allan and Melikian-Chirvani stand out among other scholars because of their long career into the world of metalwork. Allan's work, from his 1976 doctoral dissertation onward, has represented a fundamental starting point for metalwork classification as well as for the comprehension of technical aspects and metalwork production.⁷ His volume on metalwork unearthed in Nishapur (1982a) provides useful comparisons, especially for metalwork excavated in Ghazni and the ewers retrieved in Maimana. Subsequent catalogues were devoted to distinguished private collections. He presented the Nuhad Es-Said Collection (1982c) in twenty-seven substantial entries, including beautiful pictures and the reading of inscriptions, mostly profiling mostly richly inlaid tableware and inkwells (with the addition of Ka'ba keys), mainly dating to the 13th-14th century Khurasan and Jazira, plus few pieces from outside these regions. In 1986, a wider volume (more a kind of study) appeared, devoted to metalwork of the Aron Collection. It deals with specific themes such as areas of production (the Mediterranean, Yemen, Cairo-Damascus-Venice with regard to Mamluk metalwork) and kinds of objects (incense-burners and *phialae*). This way, objects presented in the catalogue – forty-four entries with inscriptions reading and pictures of detail – can already be placed within the general framework of Islamic metalwork. The chronological range as well as the geographical span are incredibly broad, ranging from the 9th-10th to the 19th century, and from Afghanistan to Venice. The variety of objects and decorative techniques is high, as well.

The work by Melikian-Chirvani (1982a) on the Victoria and Albert Museum's metalwork still represents a milestone, thanks among other merits to the punctual reading of inscriptions and epigraphic and palaeographic analysis. This catalogue and dissertation are specifically focused on the Iranian world, organised according to a chronological basis and rich in comparative specimens, whose pictures appear in the text. Noteworthy are also the many papers and volumes published by the same author in the 1970s and '80s, which put metalwork in relation with poetry and literature, historical sources and social customs of the Iranian lands.⁸

The volume by Géza Fehérvári on the Keir Collection (1976) is called, in the preface by Edmund de Unger, owner of the collection, "probably the first comprehensive work on the subject",⁹ given the number of specimens dealt with, as they are ordered on a chronological and geographic basis about production areas. Catalogue entries, preceded by a dissertation, include the comparative material providing its bibliographical references. Black and white plates appear at the end of the volume, while a few colour pictures are inserted in the dissertation.

In 1983, Eva Baer published a general study on Islamic metalwork, presenting functional classes and a chapter on decoration (including epigraphy). Another chapter is devoted to the chronological developments undergone in the main areas of production from the early Islamic period until the 14th century. Some black and white pictures are inserted within discussion. In other publications, the scholar deals with decorative themes recurring on Islamic art from an iconographic point of view (1965, 1967, 1998, 1999) or analyses specific metalworks (1972, 1987).

In 1993, Rachel Ward proposed a manageable, almost didactic overview in her *Islamic Metalwork*, which included techniques, artisans and patrons, morphological continuity with the past and innovations, and poetic or political texts inscribed on metalwork. Within the chronological boundaries of 9th-15th century, each aspect is taken into account during the period of its major spread. Most of the mentioned specimens come from the British Museum.

⁷ See also Allan 1978, 1991; for technological aspects see in particular 1979 and 1992; about precious metalwork see in particular 1982b, 1986b.

⁸ See Melikian-Chirvani 1971, 1972a,b, 1973, 1974a,b, 1975a,b, 1976, 1977a,b, 1979a-d, 1982b,c, 1986a,b.

⁹ Fehérvári 1976, 10.

Studies and findings led in the area of the former Soviet Union, along with those issued from Iran, shed light on artefacts dating back to the period of transition from the late Sasanian to the early Islamic metalwork, when the shape and decorative style had not yet differentiated from the ancient one, as well as on artefacts originating from Central Asia and Iran.¹⁰

Western and eastern museums along with large private collections support our knowledge of Islamic metalwork thanks to the high number of preserved artefacts. The Nasser D. Khalili Collection covers the entire Islamic history from 700 to 2000, boasting about 28,000 items. Twenty-seven volumes, edited by prominent scholars, have been published so far. The Bumiller Collection, based in Bamberg, focuses on the 7th-13th century period; it counts about 6,000 objects, among which is included the largest collection of early Islamic bronzes originating mostly from the Iranian region. Numerous volumes devoted to the different functional classes have been released.

* * *

Scholars are usually invited to study existing collections to make them known, and also for the prestige of their owner. Private collections, even more so than Museums, usually gather beautiful works of art. The present case is somehow different. To make these collections known to the world is certainly a major target, but nothing is more motivating for such a job than the need to prevent, when possible, the loss of Afghan cultural heritage, at least in its memory if not in its artefacts. This is the first noticeable, striking difference with the metalwork here presented. This work, in fact, is devoted to already disappeared collections.

Metalwork documented in Afghanistan by the IsMEO Italian Mission shows a high variety of models, but certainly cannot compete with private collections with regard to richness and preciousness. With a few exceptions, the metalwork here presented lacks lavish decoration. On the other hand, these items have a mainly documentary value showing a lost heritage, which bears witness to a large-scale production made for people wealthy enough to buy decorated and occasionally inlaid metalwork, but not precious ones, revealing a sober but refined taste and a great demand for different shapes among the same functional class. Few humble specimens are also interesting because they are rarely seen in collections.

Since only a few specimens have been chemically analysed, information on the material is based on general knowledge and the handling of those metalworks housed in the Museo d'arte orientale (Museo delle Civiltà) in Rome that are part of the documentation. In any case, the definition of copper alloy has been preferred to those of bronze and brass; those of lead and high tin bronze, instead, have been applied relying on written notes and objects' peculiar features in terms of colour, manufacturing and broken margins.

To summarise the numerous difficult choices and disputable decisions we had to take in building this volume, the words of James Allan may be appropriate: «a catalogue can be a very restrictive type of publication».¹¹ This one is an attempt to turn restriction into coherence. Even if many of presented metalworks have unknown provenance, there is no reason to imagine them as imported from far away; they likely originate from the Eastern Iranian region, most probably within the borders of present-day Afghanistan. Excavated metalworks have been gathered within a specific section following the catalogue (see ch. 4). A chronological unity is respected, including only specimens that can be ascribed to a time span ranging from the 9th to the early 13th century; few later objects documented by the IsMEO Italian Mission have been omitted.

¹⁰ See for instance Ivanov 1970, 2003; Marshak 1971, 1986; Kiani 1981; Lakpour 1997.

¹¹ Allan 1986a, 13.

Dealing with about four hundred specimens can be challenging, not only for the scholar but, more important, for the reader. In order to make the present volume as readable as possible, metalworks are presented in functional classes. The morphological order has been prioritised over a chronological one, since dating is still a point of contention. Specific focuses are devoted to objects coming from an archaeological context as well as to those considered important because of a technical aspect, a unique or rare model, or an artisan signature. Other metalworks are called upon as comparisons.

Starting from the analysis of largely unknown collections, this catalogue seeks to contribute to the general framework of metalwork production in the Eastern Iranian area during the medieval period. Given the troubled history of the IsMEO Italian Mission in Afghanistan, this study is also meant to reconstruct the story of the documentation in order to finally shed light on the chaos. This is the reason why multiple sources of documentation have been included, so that all the puzzle pieces can be accounted for. In particular, Scerrato left some notes containing items measurements, states of preservation and sketched descriptions, which he probably wrote for the above-mentioned volume that was never published. These have been included in the catalogue even when they are without an accompanying picture, as well as information from workbooks written by Maurizio Taddei, wherein were recorded metalworks coming from excavation and those purchased in Ghazni (the latter indicated by the inventory number “Sp” for “Sporadica”).

INTRODUCTION

This catalogue focuses on Islamic metalwork documented by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan (1957-1978). Only items dating back to a chronological framework ranging between the 9th and 13th century, namely from the spread of Islam in the region to the Mongol invasion (about 1221), have been taken into account.¹² The area of provenance, traditionally referred to as the Eastern Iranian lands, corresponds with the regions of Khurasan and Sistan¹³ where Islamic medieval metalwork majorly developed. Regions bordering Iran proper and Transoxiana are involved as well, namely as sources of mutual artistic and historical influence. The city of Ghazni, where the Italian Archaeological Mission focused its activities, had a pivotal importance for the regional history. Many artefacts originate from this area and some interesting ones emerged from the excavation of its corresponding archaeological site.

The first goal of this work was to publish a documentation neglected for decades in order to contribute to the study of Eastern Iranian metalwork.

*The IsMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan*¹⁴

Until the mid-1950s, only a few monuments of Islamic Ghazni were known: the two minarets, bearing the names of the Ghaznavid sultans Mas'ūd III b. Ibrāhīm (1099-1115) and Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1117-ca. 1152), the marble tombs of Sebūktigin (977-997)¹⁵ and his son Maḥmūd (998-1030), as well as a few marble elements of architectural decoration from the Ghaznavid buildings.¹⁶

Thanks to his prestige as a world renowned Orientalist, Giuseppe Tucci – President (1947-1978) of the IsMEO (Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente)¹⁷ and founder of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan – obtained the permission to undertake an excavation campaign. He chose to investigate the ancient Ghazni.¹⁸

In 1956, Alessio Bombaci and Giuseppe Tucci led the first survey in order to identify the excavation area; one year later, the Italian Mission started its activities, which continued until 1978 under the supervision (in chronological order) of Alessio Bombaci, Umberto Scerrato and Dinu Adamesteanu.¹⁹ They pursued any trace of civil architecture, which was less known at the time than religious architecture.

Activities primarily focused on the Ghazni territory, encompassing topographic and urbanistic studies, surveys in the funerary areas, and monuments restoration in addition to excavation campaigns. Moreover, along with the many finds emerging in the city, they

¹² The study leaves out coins.

¹³ Nowadays the regions of Khurasan and Sistan are split among the Islamic Republics of Iran and Afghanistan, and the Republics of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

¹⁴ The acronym MAIA has been used only in tables, captions and catalogue entries for the sake of brevity.

¹⁵ The tomb of Sebūktigin has disappeared from its later mausoleum in Ghazni some years ago.

¹⁶ See Flury 1925.

¹⁷ In 1995 IsMEO was incorporated by an Italian Law with the former Italo-African Institute to form the IsIAO (Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente); in 2012 ISMEO - Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l'Oriente was established in Rome, continuing the ideal aims and academic goals of the former Institutes.

¹⁸ The Italian Mission investigated not only the Islamic period, but also the Buddhist period. For further information, see http://ghazni.bradypus.net/buddhist-buddhist_cat. Already in 1948, the Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA) led its first mission in Lashkari Bazar/Bust (see Schlumberger 1952).

¹⁹ See Bombaci 1959; Scerrato 1959a; Adamesteanu 1960.

documented the archaeological, historical, and artistic heritage kept in museums and by antiquarians throughout the country.²⁰

Two important buildings came to light in the course of excavations: a royal palace, ascribed to Mas'ūd III b. Ibrāhīm,²¹ was unearthed about 300 m to the east of the minaret of that sultan.²² About 200 m to the west of the tomb of Sebūktigin, in a site indicated by historical sources as a residential area of courtiers, an aristocratic dwelling (12th-13th century) was retrieved. The latter was nicknamed the “House of the Lustrewares” after the discovery of some intact and refined lustrewares inside a recess. The palace excavation produced a huge quantity of architectural decoration elements in marble, brick and stucco. From both sites came numerous fragments of pottery and glass, as well as some metalwork.

At the end of the 1970s, political upheaval in Afghanistan abruptly forced the Italian Mission to leave the country, likewise leaving much of their ongoing research unfinished.

In autumn 1999, Maurizio Taddei – director of the Italian Mission from 1967 until his death in 2000 – went back to Ghazni for a brief visit. Following this, in 2002, a new *équipe* of scholars reconstituting the Italian Mission, under the direction first of Giovanni Verardi, and later Anna Filigenzi, performed brief surveys, with the principal aim of ascertaining the state of preservation of sites investigated in the 1960s and the location of the numerous finds collected.²³ Unfortunately, security conditions in Afghanistan, and especially in Ghazni, are still dramatic: this has prevented fieldwork from resuming, with the exception of some archaeological surveys performed in the Buddhist site of Tapa Sardar in 2002-2003. Some members of the Italian Mission had the chance to reach the Kabul Museum, and visiting the sites' remains in Ghazni along with the local storeroom between 2002 and 2013. Since 2004, thanks to the constitution of the *Archaeological Project Islamic Ghazni*,²⁴ many activities have been carried out also in Italy, on the documentation gathered in Afghanistan: in particular, the paper documentation housed in the IsIAO “Centro Scavi”,²⁵ the photographic negatives preserved in the Museo delle Civiltà – Museo d'arte orientale (formerly Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale “G. Tucci”), and the finds either on exhibition or preserved in the Museum's storages. While studies on the materials had been intermittent during the fieldwork in Afghanistan and in the following years, they have been actively resumed since 2004.²⁶

²⁰ The Herat Museum collection is inexplicably missing.

²¹ Roberta Giunta has resumed studies on the royal palace chronology. A brief report of first results – “Le palais ghaznévide de Ghazni fouillé par la Mission Archéologique Italienne. Essai de reconstitution de ses phases de construction”, – was presented on the occasion of the international conference *The Architecture of the Iranian World 1000-1250*, held at the University of Saint Andrews (UK) in April 2016. See also Giunta forth.

²² Three buildings of civil architecture emerged in the site of Lashkari Bazar as well: the central one is ascribed to Maḥmūd b. Sebūktigin, thus it would be earlier than the Ghazni royal palace.

²³ See Giunta 2009, 100-101.

²⁴ The Project was established under the direction of Roberta Giunta after Umberto Scerrato passed away. For further information, see Giunta 2005; Fontana 2010, 37. Between 2004 and 2008 Roberta Giunta and Martina Rugiadi recorded all findings in a digital database. Marble items are available online since 2012; see http://ghazni.bradypus.net/islamic-islamic_cat#marbles_alabasters.

²⁵ The IsIAO closed in 2011; since then, registers, workbooks and notes of the Italian Mission have been transferred to the University of Naples “L'Orientale”. Partial copies, deposited in the Kabul National Museum in the late 1970s, went unfortunately destroyed in the early 1990s.

²⁶ For a complete list of the publications, see http://ghazni.bradypus.net/islamic_bibliography.

Chapter 1 – Metalwork in the IsMEO Italian Archaeological Mission Documentation

Between 1957 and 1978, the Italian Mission gathered in Afghanistan a remarkable documentation about Islamic metalwork, the majority of whose artefacts dated back to the medieval period. About forty of the documented objects, belonging to a later period or chronologically unclear because of their fragmentary status or due to the absence of specific features, have been left out of the present study in order to focus on a chronological coherence.

Most of the metalworks presented in this catalogue have disappeared, thus observations are based on the analysis of the photographic documentation, notes left by Mission members and comparison with similar objects still preserved. The present author had the opportunity to work directly on the forty-seven objects preserved in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale in Rome.

The measurements of items are often unknown, with the exception of artefacts from excavation and artefacts already published by other scholars, mainly Scerrato and Melikian-Chirvani, who had the chance to see these artefacts before their disappearance.

Black and white pictures of a generally good quality compose the documentation: some objects are portrayed in many shots, with visible details; some others are taken in a single shot. The above-mentioned scholars also provided useful details filling some gaps in the photographic documentation. These cases are underlined in the catalogue specifying the source of the information.

The few still-surviving objects appear in both black and white pictures, taken by the Italian Mission, and modern colour ones, taken in recent years.²⁷ Few metalworks, absent from the photographic documentation, are mentioned in publications and unpublished notes by members of the Italian Mission: their entries have no picture. Similarly, at least one metalwork belonging to the Rawza Museum collection published by Melikian-Chirvani in the 1970s does not appear in the Italian documentation for unknown reasons;²⁸ it has not been included in the catalogue.

The University of Naples "L'Orientale" also preserves six boxes of plaster casts, made by members of the Italian Mission, reproducing inscriptions of few metalwork that used to be housed in Kabul.²⁹

These archives nowadays represent an invaluable source for the knowledge of the Afghan material culture that has suffered such severe losses. The metalwork documentation was gathered between 1957 and 1978, in various stages and different circumstances. Let us recall this story in details (Fig. 1).

1.1 – Archaeological Excavations in Ghazni

Excavations in Ghazni from 1957 to 1966 focused on the royal palace and the House of the Lustrewares.³⁰ Metalworks can also be found among the large amount of finds emerging from both sites.³¹

²⁷ It is author's choice to present the catalogue plates in black and white.

²⁸ See Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, fig. 3.

²⁹ Coins' cast are preserved in Naples as well.

³⁰ From 1966 on, Mission activities moved to the Buddhist site of Tapa Sardar, already identified in 1959.

³¹ From Ghazni site came about 62,000 finds: architectural decoration elements in marble, alabaster, brick and stucco, pottery tiles, glass medallions, pottery and glass finds, metalwork, coins, semiprecious stones, and some marble tombstones. In 2002, when the new Mission returned to Afghanistan to conduct a census of the remaining finds, some of them were lost, having already left the country and entered into public and private collections. Many are still missing.

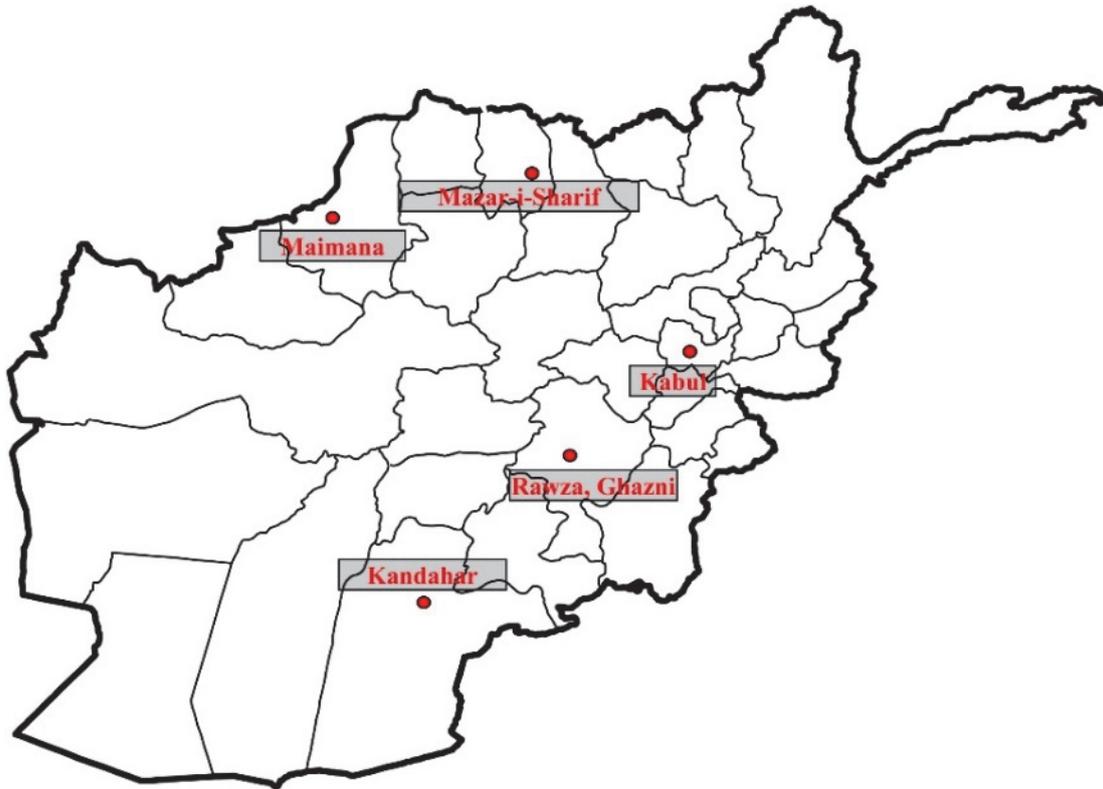


Fig. 1 – Places of documentation.

The Ghaznavid Royal Palace

The ruins of the royal palace revealed towered walls enclosing a peculiarly asymmetric perimeter. The building was designed according to a typical ancient Iranian plan: a central rectangular courtyard with four ivans opening onto it, and antechambers leading to the inner rooms that flanked them (see ch. 4, Fig. 78). A polychrome architectural decoration made of carved marble slabs and combined brick and stucco enriched the palace walls. It is also important to recall the long Persian poem running over the inner marble decoration.³²

The palace knew many transformations throughout its existence until it was reduced to a source of re-employment materials. The palace foundation has been ascribed to the Ghaznavid sultan Mas'ūd III b. Ibrāhīm (1099-1115) especially on the basis of a marble arch bearing his name as well as titles and a marble screen bearing the date of 505/1112.³³ Nowadays, the available data – maps, archaeological and epigraphical evidence, and digital reconstructions – have undergone close analysis, in order to ascertain when the palace foundation was established, the chronology of subsequent occupational phases and transformations occurring throughout this time. Recent studies place the main construction phase in the second half of the 11th-early 12th century.³⁴ Probably the building was not conceived from the beginning as a royal palace, but it might have

³² See Bombaci 1966; Allegranzi 2019.

³³ See the marble arch (MAIA Inv. no. C2952) at <http://ghazni.bradypus.net/islamic-arches>, and the marble screen (MAIA Inv. no. C2975) at http://ghazni.bradypus.net/islamic-transenna_type_4.

³⁴ See Giunta forth.

become one under the reign of Ibrāhīm b. Mas‘ūd I (r. 1049-1099).³⁵ His son Mas‘ūd III (r. 1099-1115) undertook a major restoration, adding the antechambers along the court and providing the marble wainscoting that decorated the palace inner walls. He likely also built the mosque. In fact, similarities detected in the above-mentioned marbles, bearing the name of Mas‘ūd III and the date of 505/1112, that possibly used to be part of a *minbar* coincide with those observed in the palace marble decoration, thus attesting their contemporaneity.

The two square entrance rooms should be dated to the Ghurid phase, when the building maintained its role as a royal palace, before being abandoned and then transformed in a funerary area.³⁶

Upon the arrival of Italian archaeologists in 1957, the situation was already quite complex from the archaeological point of view. Collapses, ransacking and clandestine excavations had compromised the field. The eastern side of the palace was in the worst condition, so the excavation focused in particular on the western side. The eastern side’s plan has been hypothetically reconstructed as specular to the other. This is among the reasons preventing the identification of a precise stratigraphy. The resulting obstacles have not been overcome yet; notwithstanding the progress made in identifying the chronological phases, it is still difficult to recognise the function of the rooms.

The House of the Lustrewares

In 1957, and to some extent during the following year, Italian archaeologists excavated a site near the royal palace, unearthing the ruins of an aristocratic dwelling nicknamed the House of the Lustrewares after the finding of some intact lustrewares. The house was composed by a series of rooms disposed around a square courtyard: as showed by a survey, the latter used to be paved with marble as the one in the royal palace was. A large vestibule on the southeastern side gave access to the court. Built of unbaked bricks on a stone perimeter, the building was at least two stories high and featured barrel-vaulted roofs. Unfortunately, its ruins have completely disappeared today.

On the basis of retrieved pottery, the House of the Lustrewares is likely to have been founded prior to the middle-12th century; the main occupational phase is attested between the second half of the 12th and the early 13th century.³⁷

1.2 – Fortuitous Findings

Maimana “Storage”

Maimana lies in north-western Afghanistan, an area historically known as the Afghan Turkestan and the subject of long dispute due to its position on the border with the stepped Central Asia (Fig. 1). As a crossroad of ancient commercial paths between Balkh and Merv, it was a flourishing centre, inhabited mostly by Jews during the medieval period.³⁸ From the 11th century onwards, many dynasties ruled the area: vassals of the Samanids, Ghaznavids, Seljuqs, Ghurids

³⁵ Scerrato (1959a, 26) already suggested that the palace could have been founded under the reign of Ibrāhīm b. Mas‘ūd I.

³⁶ For further information on funerary areas connected with the royal palace, see Giunta 2003; Massullo 2017.

³⁷ See Fusaro 2014, 260.

³⁸ The original name of the city was, in fact, al-Yahūdīya then changed in the 9th-10th century (see Scerrato 1964, 675).

and Khwarazmshahs. The city survived the Mongol invasion, but saw its role considerably reduced.³⁹

In 1953, while excavating a tomb in a cemetery that had grown around a *ziyāra* not far from Maimana, local authorities found about thirty-two metalwork (objects and fragments) inside a *ṭāq* (a niche inside the wall). The latter would later have become known as Maimana storage, since artefacts were believed to have been stored there in order to be saved from a sudden danger.

The retrieved metalwork composes a group of mostly intact objects, all related to the domestic context. Among the tableware can be found five ewers (nos. 100-101, 103, 121-122) and one bowl (no. 66), as well as three cauldrons (nos. 151, 152, 154), four basins (nos. 168-169), two lampstands provided with oil-lamps (nos. 278-279), one mortar with pestle (no. 411) and some fragmentary objects. Scerrato published these metalworks in 1964. All are cast or made from raised copper alloy (“bronze”, in Scerrato’s words), with the only exception being a lead small dish (no. 439).

Objects and fragments were sent from Maimana to the capital, to be exhibited in the Kabul National Museum, where they were cleaned from earthen encrustations. There, the members of the Italian Archaeological Mission had the chance to document them in 1958.

1.3 – Afghan Collections

Most of the metalwork previously preserved in Afghan collections had, with few exceptions, unknown provenance. This is not uncommon with metalwork after all. In the following paragraphs, the year or years when the metalwork collection was documented by the Italian Mission appear in brackets.

Kandahar “City Hall” (1957-1958)

Scerrato visited Kandahar twice, in 1957 and 1958, to see the antiquities exhibited in the City Hall,⁴⁰ and some others retrieved at Nawzad (north-east of Kandahar), which few years later disappeared. It has not been possible to find these metalworks in the Italian Mission documentation, with the only exception being a stirrup (no. 424), but Scerrato nevertheless documented them during his early years of activity in Afghanistan, which is clear when reading the paper he published in 1959.

The small collection included ten items dating back to the 12th-13th century, whose provenance was Kandahar itself, Gazab (a nearby village), and Ghazni. Seven additional artefacts dated to the modern period (18th-19th century).

Kabul National Museum (1958, 1964-1965)

The Kabul National Museum was established in 1931. Since then, it has survived severe events. Its current collection encompasses fifty thousand years of Afghan history; artefacts retrieved by many foreign archaeological missions (American, English, French, German, Italian and Japanese) have enriched it throughout time.

The metalwork collection recorded in 1958 by the Italian Mission counted about one hundred and fifteen items, almost all of which had an inventory number. The majority came from Ghazni,

³⁹ Scerrato 1964, 676.

⁴⁰ Scerrato (1959b, 99) writes that the metalworks were exhibited in the “Palazzo Municipale [City Hall]” of Kandahar.

but not from official excavations.⁴¹ As it was the bigger museum in the country, the Kabul National Museum used to gather objects originating from every Afghan area (see the above discussion of the Maimana storage).

The Italian Mission came back to the Museum in 1964-1965, recording three more objects.⁴² The collection also counted about ten metalworks dating to a period beyond the objects bound to the 13th century chosen for this study: most of these are chandeliers, teapots and coffeepots.

Mazar-i Sharif Museum (1964)

In 1964, during a visit to Mazar-i Sharif, the Italian Mission took photos of the few Islamic metalworks (nine items) housed in the local museum.⁴³ Seven of them are presented in this catalogue: three hemispherical cauldrons (nos. 148-150), three mortars (nos. 407, 409-410), and one cosmetic mortar (no. 376).

Two objects have been left out: a small human figure, cast in round, reminiscent of a charioteer and perhaps maybe dating to the Pre-Islamic period, and a richly decorated domed lid, which probably dates to the Mughal period.

Rawza Museum of Islamic Art, Ghazni (1976)

The Rawza Museum of Islamic Art was established by the Italian Mission, whose members required a place to store, preserve and exhibit the artefacts. They conceived of what would nowadays be called an archaeological itinerary, based on an ambitious and extremely modern concept, namely to preserve and value the local cultural heritage, so as to enhance the touristic development as well. The itinerary would have started from the two minarets,⁴⁴ passing through the ruins of the royal palace, and arriving on Rawza hill (about 5 km on the northeast of Ghazni). The latter is an extremely evocative place, since it is also the burial place of the Ghaznavid Maḥmūd b. Sebūktigin, but also because it offers a panoramic view of the whole city. According to this plan, it was a natural choice to restore a historical building in Rawza and transform it into a museum: the mausoleum of ‘Abd al-Razzāq b. Ulugh Beg (late 15th-early 16th century), an example of Timurid architecture, would have been the proper conclusion to such itinerary through the history of Ghazni.

In 1966, the building was returned to the local authorities (Fig. 2). Domenico Faccenna, then Director of the Museo Nazionale d’Arte Orientale in Rome, designed the Museum exhibition.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Scerrato 1959b, 98.

⁴² Nos. 120, 294, 413.

⁴³ At that time, the Museum was called Muzim-i Bākhtar.

⁴⁴ The minarets are a characteristic mark of Ghazni landscape, standing on the then called Dasht-i Manara. Today, these two towers are shorter than they used to be after the loss of the cylindrical upper section, which stood on the starred lower one. Early 19th century (and older) pictures show the still-complete minarets (see, among the others, Vigne 2004², 57). Both of them are constructed and decorated with baked bricks. Monumental inscriptions bear the names of Mas‘ūd III b. Ibrāhīm and his son Bahrām Shāh.

⁴⁵ Morganti 2009, 161.



Fig. 2 – Rawza Museum of Islamic Art, Ghazni 1966 (Neg. no. 1091/12-FB).

A complete documentation (graphic, photographic and notes) was put together in 1976.⁴⁶ At that time, the Rawza Museum housed the largest collection in the country, including about two hundred and thirty artefacts. These contained numerous finds coming from excavations, some artefacts purchased in Ghazni, and many metalworks that were housed in the Rawza *antiquarium* upon the arrival of Italians (Figs. 3-4). Many fragments were also included, mostly belonging to basins. About twenty-five items and fragments have been left out of this catalogue, both for chronological reasons and due to extremely poor states of preservation, which prevent their attribution.

The museum closed in the 1980s following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Afghan authorities pre-emptively removed all the artefacts, which were split in two groups.

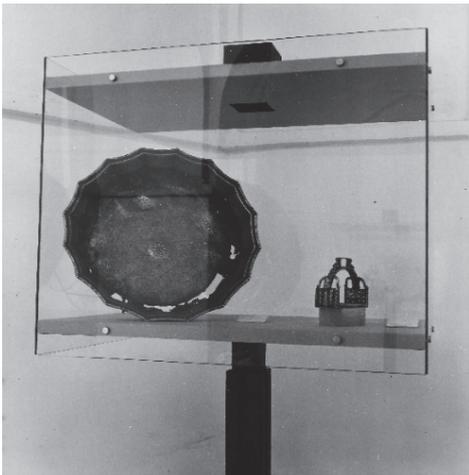


Fig. 3 – Basin no. 184 and stirrup no. 425 once on exhibition in the Rawza Museum (Neg. no. 1108/2-FB).

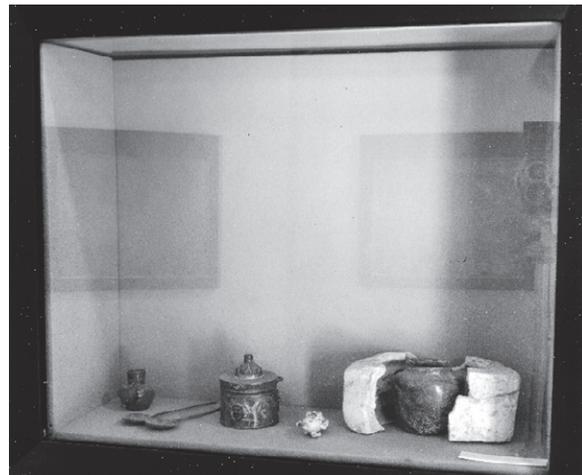


Fig. 4 – Inkwell no. 391 once on exhibition in the Rawza Museum (Neg. no. 1092/1-FB).

⁴⁶ Stirrups no. 426 instead were documented since 1966.

The first part was transferred to the Kabul National Museum. Metalworks were likely part of this group, but precise information on this regard is still unknown. The second group, instead, was stored in a modern building, erected in Shahr-i Naw, the modern-day area of Ghazni, by the Italian Mission in the second half of the 1970s. It should have become the Museum of pre-Islamic Art, hosting the numerous finds retrieved in the Buddhist site of Tapa Sardar. It instead turned into a storeroom for both Buddhist and Islamic finds.



Fig. 5 – Inkwell no. 390 on exhibition in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale (MAIA, photo by V. Laviola, 2016).

1.4 – From Afghanistan to Italy

Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "G. Tucci"

In 1957, when some finds started to arrive in Italy from the first archaeological missions in Asia, the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale⁴⁷ was established to preserve and display them properly with the aim of becoming the reference centre for Oriental art in Italy. Thus, a lucky coincidence allowed the history of the Museum in Rome and that of the IsMEO Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan to match. In 1966, the Afghan Education Ministry and the Italian government signed an agreement giving permission for about one third of the excavated finds to be brought to Italy. Finds were assigned to the IsMEO (Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente), and then lent to the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale (currently a section of the Museo delle Civiltà under the name Museo d'arte orientale "Giuseppe Tucci"). Still today, the Museum storage preserves about two thousand and five hundred finds. No other museum in the world, with the exception of the Afghan ones, can boast such a collection of Ghaznavid and Ghurid finds.

Among the metalwork, the most valuable object is by far one of the two inkwells (no. 390) excavated in the Ghazni royal palace (Fig. 5). Five of the eight spoons unearthed in the House of the Lustrewares and the royal palace (nos. 127-131) are also in the Museum. Between 2014 and 2017, the present author frequently examined the artefacts. Some of the smaller and miniscule ones coming from excavations are so oxidised that their original shape has become hardly comprehensible; some others are in fair condition, covered by a dark green patina. Some finds from Ghazni were never assigned a Museum inventory number, thus they are still identified through the number assigned on the field.

The majority of the metalwork collection coming from the Eastern Iranian lands is composed by the groups of artefacts purchased in Ghazni by members of the Italian Mission, and donated to the Museum in 1970-1971. Scerrato's donation includes twenty-eight metalworks dating within a large chronological span: an early perfume bottle (no. 357), a group of high tin bronze bowls (nos. 58, 64, 67), a colander (no. 147), a lampstand (no. 260), a small cauldron (no. 153) and a

⁴⁷ Only in 2010 the Museum was entitled to Giuseppe Tucci.

circular basin (no. 160). To this batch belongs an extremely valuable, finely decorated spoon-fork in gilded silver (no. 140). Faccenna's donation includes two rectangular repoussé trays (nos. 6, 15), a lampstand dish (no. 271), and three objects of later and modern period. Taddei's donation includes seven artefacts: an oil-lamp (no. 318), a buckler (no. 421), three trays (nos. 16-17, 24), an intact ewer (no. 110) and a fragmentary one (no. 113), an inkwell box (no. 393), a lampstand base (no. 225), a lampstand shaft (no. 261), a lampstand dish (no. 272), and a small vase belonging to the modern age.

Chemical Analyses

Chemical analyses have been performed on some artefacts preserved in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale. In 2002, X-ray fluorescence analyses were conducted on six of the purchased metalworks made of silver and high tin bronze by the Department of Energetics of Sapienza University of Rome.⁴⁸ When it came to complex items or items composed by different sections (for instance a handle or a lid), more than one point on the object was analysed. For a clearer comprehension, drawings of these items show the analysed points.⁴⁹

1) Bowl no. 57

Cu	Sn	Fe	Ni	Zn	As	Ag	Pb
76.1±0.4	23.5±0.6	0	traces	0.24±0.01	0.09±0.01	0.07±0.01	0

Bowl patch

Cu	Sn	Fe	Ni	Zn	As	Ag	Pb
99.1±0.4	traces	0	0.36±0.02	0.23±0.02	traces	traces	0

2) Bowl no. 58

Cu	Sn	Fe	Ni	Zn	As	Ag	Pb
75.7±0.5	23.9±0.5	0	0	0.26±0.01	0.10±0.01	0.06±0.01	0

3) Bowl no. 64

Cu	Sn	Fe	Ni	Zn	As	Ag	Pb
75.6±0.5	23.9±0.5	0	0.06±0.01	0.25±0.01	0.10±0.02	0.07±0.01	0

4) Bowl no. 67

Cu	Sn	Fe	Ni	Zn	As	Ag	Pb
75.1±0.8	24.2±0.7	traces	0.14±0.02	0.26±0.02	traces	0.08±0.01	0

5) Colander no. 147

Cu	Sn	Fe	Ni	Zn	As	Ag	Pb
75.0±0.3	24.5±0.3	0	0.06±0.01	0.24±0.01	0.11±0.01	0.07±0.01	traces

⁴⁸ Results of specimens nos. 57, 58, 64, 147 are taken from Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a.

⁴⁹ Carlotta Passaro elaborated the drawings starting from the objects' photos.

In 2007, the Department of Engineering of Sapienza University of Rome analysed eight of the excavated finds. Results confirm that the definition of bronze (an alloy of copper and tin),⁵⁰ largely applied to Islamic metalwork, is unprecise. Scientific evidence clarifies that the general definition of copper alloy fits better, since the chemical composition of these artefacts includes many metals in different proportions.

From inkwell no. 390, tiny portions of metals have been erased from hidden points of the object (the inner part of the lid, and a fixed loop in the inner box). The alloy is composed by a high percentage of lead (more than 24%) – in fact, the inkwell is quite heavy – with minimum presence of zinc and iron. On the scratched surface, a higher presence of zinc emerges from some points.

Copper and lead prevail in the composition of the kohl stick no. 384, while the minor tin and zinc percentages are higher in the stick than in its ornamental head. The same composition results for the toilet flask no. 386.

Copper and lead compose the bold oil-lamp ring-handle no. 320, whose thumb-rest in shape of a cockerel contains some zinc.

Miniature tray no. 438, as is clearly visible, is almost entirely made of lead. Spoon no. 129 is composed of copper, with a zinc quantity less than 10% and traces of other elements. Conversely, the base composition of the spoon-fork no. 140 is made of a copper, lead and silver alloy; gold and silver prevail in the decorated parts.

Among the jewels, the bracelet is entirely made of copper, while the finger-ring is made of copper and lead.

1) Spoon-fork no. 140 (Figs. 6-7)

Analysed points	Cu	Pb	Ag	Au	Hg
<i>a</i> (silver on back spoon-bowl)	22.10	1.63	72.01	0.96	1.55
<i>b</i> (gold on front spoon-bowl)	4.21	0.00	18.36	61.05	16.01
<i>c</i> (gold on front handle)	10.13	0.00	18.03	52.98	18.46
<i>d</i> (gold on front handle)	5.15	0.00	26.18	54.09	14.23
<i>e</i> (gold on front spoon-bowl)	3.99	0.00	15.78	63.96	15.75
<i>f</i> (niello on front handle)	32.08	16.36	49.96	0.84	0.00
<i>g</i> (niello on front spoon-bowl)	87.39	8.58	3.77	0.00	0.00



Figs. 6-7 – Back and front profile of spoon-fork no. 140.

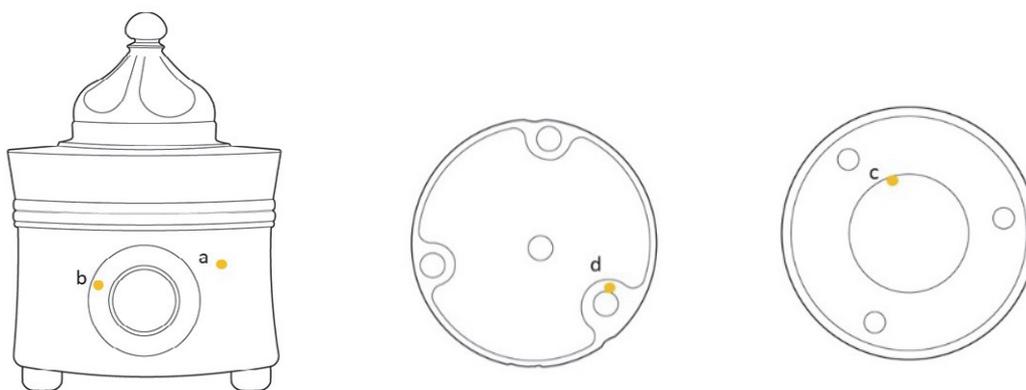
2) Spoon no. 129

Analysed points	Cu	Fe	Zn	Pb
front spoon-bowl	89.71±0.04	0.29±0.03	9.4±0.8	0.67±0.01
front spoon-bowl	89.94±0.04	0.35±0.04	9.0±0.9	0.67±0.01

⁵⁰ Tin was quite scarce in the Islamic lands after all, thus expensive.

3) Inkwell no. 390 (Figs. 8-10)

Analysed points	Cu	Fe	Zn	Pb	Ag	Au	Hg
<i>a</i> (black patina on the box)	69.11	1.75	4.31	24.43	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>b</i> (silver plate on the box)	13.48	0.54	1.21	0.00	81.98	2.35	0.43
<i>c</i> (loop inside the box)	76±1	0.29±0.04	12.0±0.3	11.0±0.1			
<i>d</i> (inner lid)	71±1	0.29±0.04	10.2±0.3	18.2±0.2			



Figs. 8-10 – Inkwell no. 390: complete item, the inner box and inner lid.

4) Kohl stick no. 384 (Fig. 11)

Analysed points	Cu	Sn	Fe	Zn	Pb
<i>a</i> (central head)	59±1	5.99±0.03	1.11±0.06	2.8±0.2	28.8±0.2
<i>b</i> (stick)	62.6±0.9	4.96±0.02	1.16±0.05	4.9±0.2	25.9±0.2

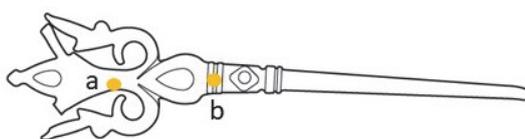
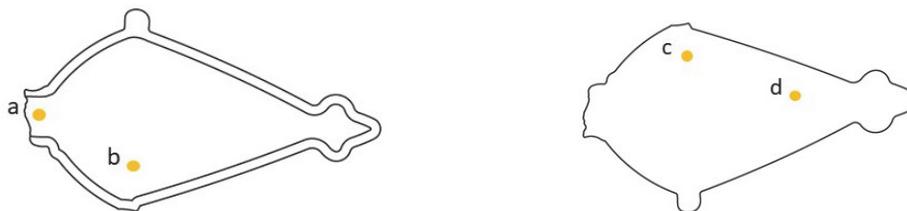


Fig. 11 – Kohl stick no. 384.

5) Toilet flask no. 386 (Figs. 12-13)

Analysed points	Cu	Sn	Fe	Zn	Pb
<i>a</i> (bottom)	79.4±0.8	3.23±0.02	0.38±0.03	5.2±0.2	11.5±0.1
<i>b</i> (bottom)	82.9±0.7	4.11±0.02	0.39±0.03	5.7±0.1	6.15±0.06
<i>c</i> (underside)	78.6±0.7	4.53±0.02	0.37±0.03	5.7±0.1	10.48±0.08
<i>d</i> (underside)	80.6±0.7	5.19±0.02	0.36±0.02	5.7±0.1	7.67±0.07



Figs. 12-13 – Toilet flask no. 386: bottom and underside.

6) Oil-lamp ring-handle no. 320 (Fig. 14)

Analysed points	Cu	Sn	Fe	Zn	Pb	Ca
<i>a</i> (thumb-rest)	84.14	0.68	1.11	9.37	4.69	0.33
<i>b</i> (pedestal)	98.34	0.09	0.40	0.86	9.31	0.13

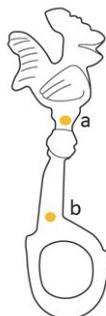


Fig. 14 – Oil-lamp ring-handle no. 320.

7) Miniature tray no. 438 (Fig. 15)

Analysed points	Cu	Pb
<i>a</i> (rim underside)	0.31±0.07	99±1
<i>b</i> (depression underside)	0.30±0.09	99±1

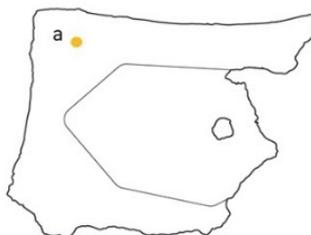


Fig. 15 – Miniature tray no. 438.

8) Finger-ring (MAIA Inv. no. C8)

Analysed point	Cu	Fe	Zn	Pb
bezel	90.45	1.75	1.42	6.14

9) Bracelet (MAIA Inv. no. C1861; Fig. 16)

Analysed points	Cu	Sn	Fe	Zn	Pb
a (thin crust)	99.04	0.54	0.09	0.27	0.06
b (thick crust)	98.02	0.64	0.95	0.34	0.05

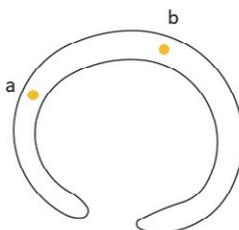


Fig. 16 – Bracelet (MAIA, Inv. no. C1861).

1.5 – Modern Times

Since the early 1980s, the metalwork collections housed in Afghanistan curated or documented by the Italians encountered a dramatic fate.

The Kabul National Museum suffered extensive damages in 1993 after being targeted by a rocket; a subsequent fire destroyed about 30% of the artefacts. During the Taliban regime, the Kabul collection had in fact been hidden and frequently moved in order to protect it. Since it has never been possible to conduct systematic research so far, it is hard to say exactly which items were destroyed in the museum fire. As far as we know, only two of the metalworks documented by the Italians survived: fragmentary basins no. 179 (in two pieces, rim and bottom) and no. 188; the former is on permanent exhibition in the Ghazni hall.⁵¹

With regard to metalwork that remained in Ghazni after the closing of the Rawza Museum, the situation is just as grim. Since 2002, when members of the Italian Archaeological Mission had the chance to come back to Ghazni, the considerable task of photographically documenting the materials preserved in the storeroom has been undertaken (Figs. 17-18).⁵²

In 2004, the *Archaeological Project Islamic Ghazni* was established with a new team of specialists. Few missions to Ghazni from 2002 to 2013 consented some checks, but, due to the safety condition, there was not enough time to open all the boxes and verify every find. During the last survey, Roberta Giunta found by chance four metalworks: one bowl (no. 70), which was part of the Rawza Museum collection and a second bowl (no. 65), purchased in 1969, which had already been attested in the Ghazni storeroom in 2005.

⁵¹ The author had the chance to visit the Kabul National Museum in 2013.

⁵² Italian Mission members verified the presence of about 1,050 marble finds, about 4,000 brick and stucco finds, and, later in 2005, of many boxes of pottery finds.



Fig. 17 – Ghazni storeroom in 2005. Marble elements (MAIA, photo by M. Rugiadi, 2005).

The other two items are an axe head with punched decoration (Fig. 19) and a large, circular tray with straight walls (Fig. 20). Margins of the gap in its bottom and the beautiful honeycomb decorative pattern, composed by punched dotted circles and rosettes, indicate it is made of high tin bronze. Both artefacts do not appear in the IsMEO Mission documentation. This might be explained by a custom adopted by the local population during the more recent difficult decades, during which time they often used Ghazni storeroom to recover various finds in need of protection.



Fig. 18 – The Ghazni storeroom in 2005. Marble elements, brick elements and pottery vessels (MAIA, photo by M. Rugiadi, 2005).

This story comes down to our days, punctuated by alternating promising and extremely sad events. The fortuitous discovery occurred in Maimana in 1953 was not destined to remain a unique one. In 2012, again a fortuitous finding brought to light many Islamic buckets at the feet of the Ghazni citadel, proving that Afghanistan has still a lot to say on Islamic art.⁵³

In that same period, the Italian Mission took part in the establishment of a new Islamic Museum in Ghazni, located in Shahr-i Naw, a few steps from the above-mentioned storeroom, and close to the local Antiquities authority. The occasion was the celebration of Ghazni, appointed by the ISESCO as the 2013 Capital of Islamic Culture for the Asian Region. In September 2014, a car bomb destroyed that small hall.

Finally, in 2016, the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "G. Tucci" was incorporated as a section of the anthropological Museo delle Civiltà; consequently, the name changed in Museo d'arte orientale.⁵⁴ Since the relocation from its previous standpoint in 2018, the exhibition space has been considerably reduced and access to the archives has been limited. The precious inkwell no. 390 notwithstanding its excellent condition is regrettably no longer exhibited.



Fig. 20 – Tray in the Ghazni storeroom (MAIA, photo by R. Giunta, 2013).



Fig. 19 – Axe head in the Ghazni storeroom (MAIA, photo by R. Giunta, 2013).

Beyond the metalwork given under the custody of the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale in Rome since 1966, our knowledge about the Afghan museums' collections is still incomplete; most probably, we should consider them as lost. The few surviving exceptions bear scant witnesses to the previous splendour. Most of the metalwork collections survive today only in the Italian photographic documentation.

With the hope that Afghanistan will become safer in future, this catalogue will represent a guide for conducting a conclusive check.

⁵³ Laviola 2018. A catalogue devoted to these buckets is in preparation by the author.

⁵⁴ The Museum historical name has been kept throughout this volume.

Chapter 2 – Catalogue

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Foreword to the Catalogue

The following catalogue is based on the documentation of the IsMEO Archaeological Mission; it does not claim to be exhaustive of the Eastern Iranian metalwork production, still it offers a large-scale typological variety. Any major lack in the documentation has been signalled.

Artefacts and fragments are presented in fourteen functional classes, each one of whom is followed by the photographic documentation in plates. Pictures are not in scale since measures of many metalwork are unknown, nor are they proportioned one another. The size of images has been chosen according to the object's importance and the quality of the available pictures.

Within classes items are ordered by morphology from the simpler to the more complex. A scheme precedes each class summarising its morphological variety and including objects' components (i.e. handle, lid, etc.) that have been assigned to a specific model; specimens whose morphology is unknown due to the lack of any picture or information are counted as "unidentified".

As far as possible, specimens bearing similar decoration have been gathered. Fragmentary handles and holds appear among the objects they are supposed to belong to.

Whenever the item's function is unclear, the object is listed in the closest morphological class; hypotheses about its use are proposed. Items with no available photo which are known after Scerrato notes and workbooks by Taddei have been inserted in the proper morphological group. Items with unknown location, instead, appear at the end of each functional class regardless to their morphology.

Some items are composed by elements made separately and then soldered or wedged together. It implies the possible loss of some components that could be replaced by integrations. Having no chance to analyse directly the artefacts, it is impossible to state that every element is the original one. In many cases, decoration and epigraphy come in help providing coherent details.

Objects and fragments are numbered in the catalogue from 1 to 439. Concordances between numbers given in this study and inventory/identification numbers assigned on the excavation field or by museums and collections are available in Annex B.

The object condition is stated through a judgement; then details are added about missing components and possible damages. The following scheme takes into account the condition of decoration and readability of inscriptions as well.

<i>Condition</i>	<i>Status</i>
Excellent	Intact object complete of its components. Excellent visibility of decoration and epigraphy.
Fair	Intact object with minor lacks. Fairly visible decoration and readable inscriptions.
Passable	Almost intact object (small chips). Presence of encrustation and/or thick patina. Decoration and inscriptions from visible to hardly visible.
Poor	Fragmentary object. Hardly visible decoration and inscriptions.

A dating is proposed. Should previous scholars have indicated any dating, the latter is reported in brackets in the references. Author's evaluations about chronology are also expressed in a devoted paragraph (see ch. 3.4).

Inscriptions are given in the original Arabic text and in translation, specifying their position on the object and the script. Texts are read by the author if not otherwise specified with regard to already published items.

The last known location is indicated with related inventory/identification number, whenever it is known.⁵⁵ The word “provenance” has been intentionally avoided since it would have pointed to the place of production, which cannot be determined; the place of finding or purchase is indicated. With the exception of objects coming from excavation, whether archaeological or fortuitous, the place of finding is based on information transmitted by museums’ staff and scholars (if the object is published) or by the Italian Mission, thus it is provided with the formula “found in”.

Information not deducible from pictures, but transmitted by scholars who saw directly and/or published some of the objects are signalled.

The name of Afghan collections is followed by the year of documentation since some among them exist no more. The Museo delle Civiltà (Museo d’arte orientale) is indicated by the acronym MuCIV-MAO for the sake of brevity.

References distinguish between publications and quotations.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Different items from the Rawza Museum bear the same identification number. Some excavated items housed in the Museo Nazionale d’Arte Orientale were assigned no inventory number; they bear the MAIA inventory number.

⁵⁶ A list of published and quoted items is available in Index II.

2.1 Tableware

Trays

35 Items	{	rectangular (nos. 1-15, 31)	{	straight wall (nos. 20-22)
		polygonal (nos. 16-19)		flared or curved wall (nos. 23-24)
		circular (nos. 20-27)		polylobed wall (nos. 25-26)
		unidentified (nos. 28-30, 32-35)		hexapod (no. 27)

No. 1

Pl. 1

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised.

Poor condition. Half of the rim missing; unpolished surface.

27.2 × 18.3 cm

12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-53); “found in Ghazni”.

Quoted: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 61, fig. 29 (12th c.).

No. 2

Pl. 1

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Large portion of the rim missing; cracks on the bottom.

12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-52); “found in Ghazni”.

On the depression, a fantastic animal on a scroll-patterned background appears in the central roundel, flanked by two affronted cartouches framing a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices:

باليمن والدولة / البركة والدولة

With good fortune, fortu(ne) / bl(essi)ng and fortu(ne)

Triangular, vegetal medallions can be seen in the resulting triangles. On the rim, four cartouches (one of those is missing) frame a benedictory text, which is unreadable due to the preservation status, and a pseudo-inscription.

No. 3

Pl. 2

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with silver.

Poor condition. Rim partially missing; many cracks and encrustations.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 4).

On the depression, a bird on a scroll-patterned background appears in the central roundel, flanked by two affronted, epigraphic cartouches. The cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* repeats four times:

الغاية

Intensity

Six small roundels with vegetal decoration can be seen in the resulting spaces on the depression. On the rim, a vegetal decoration fills the resulting triangles. Six small roundels including a vegetal decoration interrupt an epigraphic band. The latter, in Kufic script with pointed apices, is unreadable due to the preservation status.

No. 4

Pl. 2

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with silver.

Poor condition. Half of the rim and part of the bottom missing.

26.55 × 14 cm

13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 39); "found in Herat" (Melikian-Chirvani).

Quoted: Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 54, pl. VI, fig. 1 (middle of 12th c.).

On the depression, a continuous ribbon generates three roundels divided by knots. Each roundel includes a big, 8-petalled flower with four intertwined buds. On the background can be seen an intricate, vegetal motif of tight spirals, rich in stylised buds and ending in trilobed flowers. Another vegetal element, specifically designed to fit the triangular frame, occupies each one of the four resulting triangles.

On the rim a silver inlaid, cursive inscription runs in cartouches interrupted by inlaid roundels framing a vegetal element. The background is the same seen on the depression.

العز والاقبال وا / [...] والقادرة وا / لبقاء لصاحبه

Glory, prosperity and A / [...], capability and e / ternal life to its owner

No. 5

Pl. 3

Rectangular tray

Depression with trilobed short sides.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition.

28 × 17.5 cm

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

Quoted: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 62, fig. 30 (12th c.).

Oddly, the decoration appears on the underside, which is the only part portrayed in pictures. On the depression a central roundel with knotted apices is flanked by two rectangular cartouches framing a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background of stylised, spiralling scrolls:

والبركة والـ / والبر(ك)ة والبر

With blessing and AL- /, ble(ssi)ng and devotion

A vegetal roundel appears in the central lobes of the depression. In the resulting rectangles, cartouches frame a vegetal motif of spiralling scrolls ending in trilobed flowers. On the rim, four rectangular cartouches with slightly concave short sides frame a Kufic inscription on a background of spiralling scrolls with squared buds:

بالبركة والبر(ك)ة / والبر والبر والبر(ر) / والبر والبر والبر(ر) / [...]

*With blessing, blessin(g) /, devotion, devotion, devot(ion) /, devotion,
devotion, devot(ion) / [...]*

Each cartouche is flanked by two vegetal roundels; in addition, bud-shaped vegetal medallions are placed in the corners.

No. 6

Pl. 3

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, punched, engraved.

Poor condition. Fragmentary rim.

12th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5914; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by D. Faccenna in 1971.

Published: Di Flumeri Vatielli 1993b.

The surface is minutely punched with tiny circles. The central roundel, including a vegetal element, is surrounded by short, pentagonal rays. On its sides can be seen two hares with backward-facing heads, bud-shaped, vegetal medallions and isolated twigs ending in trilobed flowers. An octagonal border, decorated by thin nicks, frames the depression.

On the sloping walls stylised, V-shaped, vegetal elements topped by a pearl alternate with groups of three pearls disposed as triangles. Another vegetal element appears on the four resulting triangles. On the rim, a cursive inscription (only half of which is preserved), with

On the sloping walls ten running hares, with isolated pearls and trilobed flowers, are interrupted in the middle of longer sides by a bud-shaped, vegetal element. Another vegetal element appears on the four resulting triangles. On the rim, a cursive inscription, with isolated pearls, runs interrupted in the corners by bud-shaped, vegetal medallions and in the middle of the longer sides by vegetal roundels. The text (read by Melikian-Chirvani) repeats two times:

العز والاقبال / والدولة والبركة / والعافية وا لصاحبه

Glory, prosperity /, fortune, blessing /, wellness and A to its owner

No. 9

Pl. 4

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, punched.

Fair condition.

2 × 28 × 18 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-49); “found in Ghazni”.

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 60-61, pl. XI, fig. 6 (12th-early 13th c.).

The surface is minutely punched with tiny circles. The central roundel, including a cruciform element, is surrounded by round rays. On its sides can be seen crossing pairs of palmettes ending in trilobed flowers and isolated pearls. A thinly funnelled, octagonal border frames the depression bottom.

On the sloping walls stylised, V-shaped, vegetal elements alternate with trilobed palmettes. Another vegetal element appears on the four resulting triangles. On the rim runs a cursive inscription, interrupted in the corners by bud-shaped medallions and by roundels in the middle of the longer sides:

العز والاقبال / والدولة والعا / والعافية والبقاء

Glory, prosperity /, fortune, AL-‘Ā /, wellness and eternal life

No. 10

Pl. 4

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, punched.

Fair condition. Breaks on the rim.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 59-60, pl. X, fig. 5.

The surface is minutely punched with tiny circles. The central roundel, surrounded by round rays, includes a vegetal element. On its sides can be seen interlacing palmettes ending in trilobed flowers. A thinly funnelled, octagonal border frames the depression bottom.

On the sloping walls stylised, V-shaped, vegetal elements alternate with trilobed palmettes. V-shaped elements appears on the four resulting triangles as well. On the rim, a cursive inscription with isolated pearls runs interrupted in the corners by bud-shaped, vegetal medallions. The text repeats two times:

العز والاقبال والدولة والعا / والعافيا وال(ب)قا
Glory, prosperity, fortune, AL-‘Ā /, wellness and et(ernal li)fe

No. 11

Pl. 5

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, punched, engraved.

Fair condition. Gap on the rim.

29.5 × 18.5 × 2 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-50); “found in Ghazni”.

Published: Scerrato 1961, 161, no. 170 (second half of 12th c.); Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 61, fig. 8 (12th-early 13th c.).

The surface is minutely punched with tiny circles. The vegetal, central roundel is flanked by interlacing branches ending in bilobed or trilobed flowers. An octagonal border, decorated by nicks, frames the depression bottom.

On the sloping walls stylised, V-shaped, vegetal elements alternate with trilobed palmettes and, in the middle of the longer sides, with bud-shaped medallions. Another vegetal element appears on the four resulting triangles. On the rim, a cursive inscription with isolated pearls runs interrupted by vegetal roundels in the middle of the longer sides and by bud-shaped, vegetal medallions in the corners:

العز والاقبال ا / وا الدوا والدولة والعا / والعافية والبقاء
Glory, prosperity, A / and A AL-DAWĀ, fortune, AL-‘Ā /, wellness and eternal life

No. 12

Pl. 5

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, punched.

Fair condition.

29.6 × 18.9 cm

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 30); “found in Maydan (Wardak)”.

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 58-59, pl. IX, fig. 4 (12th-early 13th c.)

The surface is minutely dotted by tiny circles. On the depression, two big, sun-like roundels with short, pentagonal rays include a hare with backward-facing head. Double branches topped by a trilobed flower divide the two roundels.

On the sloping walls stylised, V-shaped, vegetal elements on the longer sides alternate with rosettes on shorter ones. Rosettes appear on the resulting triangles as well. On the rim a cursive inscription with isolated pearls runs interrupted by rosettes in the corners. The text repeats two times:

العز والاقبال والدولة وا / البقاء لصاحبه

Glory, prosperity, fortune and A / eternal life to its owner

An additional vegetal element fills the space resulting after the inscription at the end of the shorter sides.

No. 13

Pl. 5

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé.

Poor condition. Fragmentary.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

On the depression, a rhomboid element echoes in a big flower composed by four, bilobed petals. Interlacing palmettes surround it. On the sloping walls runs a festoon topped by stylised, V-shaped, vegetal elements and trilobed flowers. Another vegetal element appears on the resulting triangles.

On the rim a cursive inscription (only partially preserved) runs interrupted by rosettes in the corners:

العز والاقبال والدولة [...] / العافية وا [...] / [...] / [...] صاحبه

Glory, prosperity, fortune [...] / wellness and A [...] / [...] / [...]to] its owner

No. 14

Pl. 6

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, engraved.

Poor condition. Fragmentary.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 60).

On the depression, a geometric motif composed by a series of triangular elements alternates with big pearls disposed specularly to a horizontal line ending in a spade-shaped element. On the sloping walls can be seen stylised, V-shaped elements

No. 15

Rectangular tray

Octagonal depression.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, engraved.

Poor condition. One of the short sides missing. Restored; some cracks on the rim.

28 × 18 × 2 cm

12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-59); “found in Ghazni”.

Published: Scerrato 1961, 161, no. 171 (second half of 12th c.).

No picture available; information after Scerrato notes.

A cursive inscription runs on the rim, but the text is unavailable.

No. 16

Pl. 6a-b

Polygonal tray

Straight wall.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé toward the exterior, punched.

Poor condition. Half of the object fragmentary.

12th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5964; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.

A sun-like, central roundel surrounded by short, pentagonal rays includes a four-lobed flower on a tiny-circled punched background. Around it can be seen big rosettes with pentagonal petals and cartouches framing stylised, V-shaped, vegetal elements and trilobed flowers. Additional, stylised trilobed flowers dispose outside the cartouches.

No. 17

Pl. 7a-b

Polygonal tray

Straight wall.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé toward the exterior, punched, engraved.

Poor condition. Half of the object fragmentary.

12th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5953; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by M. Taddei in 1971 (MAIA Inv. no. Sp37).

A sun-like, central roundel surrounded by pentagonal rays includes a hare on tiny-circled punched background. Around it can be seen big rosettes with pentagonal petals and cartouches framing a cursive inscription (only partially preserved):

الاقبا / ل وا

Prosperi / ty and A

No. 18

Pl. 7

Polygonal tray

Straight wall.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé toward the exterior, punched, engraved.

Poor condition. More than half of the body missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 162).

A sun-line, central roundel surrounded by pentagonal rays includes a hare on a tiny-circled punched background. Around it can be seen big rosettes with pentagonal petals and cartouches framing a cursive inscription (only partially preserved):

الدولة والعيا

Fortune and AL-‘Ā

No. 19

Pl. 8

Polygonal tray

Straight wall.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé toward the exterior, engraved.

Poor condition. Half of the bottom and wall missing, some lacks.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 116).

A sun-like, central roundel surrounded by pentagonal rays, includes a lion with backward-facing head. Around it can be seen rosettes with pentagonal petals and cartouches framing a cursive inscription; the text is unreadable due to the poor preservation status.

No. 20

Pl. 8

Circular tray

Straight wall ending in an indented profile.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 178).

Three concentric registers surround the central roundel, including two Greek frets and a Kufic inscription, on a vegetal background, divided in four sections by crescent-shaped roundels. The text repeats benedictory terms, among those:

البر

Devotion

No. 21

Pl. 8

Circular tray

Straight wall.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958).

Two ellipses intersect in the central roundel. Around it, three concentric registers include an intricate, vegetal background and, in the larger register, a cursive inscription divided in four sections by as many roundels. Only the starting expression is readable due to the poor quality of the photographic documentation:

العز والاقبال

Glory and prosperity

No. 22

Pls. 9a-b

Circular tray

Straight wall.

High tin bronze. Forged; engraved.

Poor condition. Four patches nailed on the bottom.

Ø 25 cm

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 6); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1974a, 45-46, pl. XIV, fig. 17 (13th c.).

A geometric frame runs on the thin rim. In the central roundel four running hares share their long ears on a rich, vegetal background. Three concentric registers surround them. The first frames a tight, Kufic inscription with ornamental apices and elongated *hastae* on a densely, scroll-patterned background with trilobed flowers. The text reads:

باليمن والبركة واليمن والبركة والسعادة واليب[ر]كة

With good fortune, blessing, good fortune, blessing, happiness and bless[i]ng

In the second register runs a festoon with elongated, trilobed flowers. In the third one, a cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* and some overlapping letters runs against a background composed by budded scrolls and trilobed flowers:

العز الد[ا]ئم والدولة والاقبال [...] والنصرة والسلامة والشفاعة والبقاء لصاحبه

Lasting glory, fortune, prosperi[ty] ..., victory, spiritual integrity, prophetic intercession, and eternal life to its owner

No. 23

Pl. 10

Circular tray

Short flared wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition.

Ø max 46 cm, h. 4.5 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-48); “found in Ghazni”.

A budded, 8-petalled flower appears in the centre, surrounded by a Kufic pseudo-inscription interrupted by four crescent-shaped roundels on a sketched background and a festoon with elongated, trilobed flowers. Interlaced ribbons designing two six-point stars with curved sides comprise this composition. Each vertex of the stars points to one among the six crescent-shaped vegetal roundels, topped by a trilobed flower, or one of the cartouches, framing a cursive pseudo-inscription with elongated *hastae* on a sketched background. A geometric frame is engraved on the thin rim.

No. 24

Pl. 10

Circular tray

Short curved wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Lacks on the rim.

13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5944; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.

In the central roundel a rhomboid element is overlapped by four five-lobed palmettes generated by a continuous ribbon. In the first register around it, four quadrupeds (probably belonging to different species: a feline, a hare with backward-facing head, and perhaps a fox) run on a vegetal background divided by crescent-shaped roundels. In the second register, a cursive inscription on a vegetal background, rich in trilobed, five-lobed flowers and leaves, is divided in four sections by roundels including a double palmette:

العز الا / قبال و / الدولة / والسر

Glory, pros / perity, / fortune / and esoteric knowledge

The walls are funnelled. On the rim, four small roundels including a Solomon knot alternate with as many rectangular cartouches, with concave short sides, framing a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background:

والبركة و / [...] / والشفاعة / والشفاعة

And blessing, / [...] /, prophetic intercession / and prophetic intercession

No. 25

Pl. 11

Circular tray

Polylobed wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Cracks on the rim and at the base of the wall. Worn.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 58).

In the central roundel a winged sphynx appears on a vegetal background. Around it, three roundels including a bird alternate with as many cartouches framing a cursive inscription on an intricate, vegetal background. The text is unreadable due to the preservation status. On the rim a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background is divided in six sections by vegetal roundels; few words are readable due to the preservation status:

والشكر والشاكر (رة)

And thankfulness and gratitu(de)

No. 26

Pl. 11

Circular tray

Polylobed round wall.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, punched, engraved.

Fair condition.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 180).

A sun-like, central roundel with pentagonal rays includes a quadruped (perhaps a dog with a big head) on a punched background.

No. 27

Pls. 11a-b

Circular tray

Hexapod.

Copper alloy. Raised.

Poor condition.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-188); "found in Ghazni".

Only traces of vegetal roundels and cartouches can be seen. On the rim, a benedictory Kufic inscription in cartouches is partially preserved, but the text is unreadable due to the preservation status.

Unknown location

No. 28

Tray

High tin bronze. Raised.

Poor condition. Some cracks and a crude repair.

Ø 35.3 cm, h. 3.8 cm

Purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp111.

No picture available; information after Taddei.

A medallion shows a cross-legged, anthropomorphic figure holding a bowl in each hand. A Kufic inscription runs on a dotted background around the outer border of the decoration.

No. 29

Tray

Slightly concave, straight vertical wall.

High tin bronze. Raised; repoussé.

Poor condition; damaged along the edge, a hole and some fissures repaired.

Ø 51.5 cm

Purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1970; MAIA Inv. no. Sp142.

No picture available; information after Taddei.

On the bottom, a band consisting of a wavy line and a pseudo-inscription made of rows of punched circles can be seen. In the centre, hexagons composed by rows of punched circles draw a net of intersecting circles.

No. 30

Tray

Low tapering wall; everted flat rim. Two copper nails in the central medallion probably to fix the tray onto a stand.

Copper alloy. Raised; inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. Worn, cracked but complete, inlay partially missing.

Ø 15.5 cm, h. 2.6 cm

10th-11th century

Purchased from a private owner in Ghazni in 1976; MAIA Inv. no. Sp207.

No picture available; information after Taddei.

A medallion, included in a copper inlaid circle, shows a leftward-facing horseman and a leopard (?) on his right above the horse back. Scrolls appear on the rim. On the walls run a Kufic inscription and scrolls. On the slightly convex bottom, vegetal medallions and chain-like circles can be seen.

No. 31

Fragment of rectangular tray

Copper alloy. Raised.

Poor condition. Cracked; most of the rim missing.

31 × 17.5 cm

Purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1975; MAIA Inv. no. Sp180.

No picture available; information after Taddei.

On the bottom four harpies appear on a vegetal background. Four hares can be seen in the corners and an inscription runs on the rim.

No. 32

Fragment of tray

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition: much damaged.

Max preserved 32.7 cm

Purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp117.

No picture available; information after Taddei.

A central medallion shows Burāq on a scroll-patterned background.

No. 33

Fragment of tray

Polylobed rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition; only three sides preserved.

Max preserved 37 cm

Purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp118.

No picture available; information after Taddei.

A Kufic band runs along the edge.

No. 34

Fragment of tray

Polylobed rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition; edge missing.

Max preserved 42.5 cm

Purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp119.

No picture available; information after Taddei.

An 8-petalled flower appears in the centre. Two bands of Kufic inscriptions and a six-sided, scalloped decoration enclosing pot-shaped medallions can be seen.

No. 35

Bottom of tray

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé.

Poor condition; cut along the bottom's edge.

19.8 × 9.5 cm

Purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1970; MAIA Inv. no. Sp141.

No picture available; information after Taddei.

Comment

The thirty-five trays are classified according to three morphological models: rectangular, polygonal and circular. A square model is known as well, but it is not attested in the IsMEO documentation.⁵⁷

Rectangular trays are generally raised from a metal sheet, often so thin to look too fragile to hold any weight. This feature, along with the undecorated underside, have led to believe that the metal tray could cover a wooden base, like small low tables used as unmovable trays to serve dry fruit and sweets to the guests who – as it was, and still is, the custom – sat on the ground.⁵⁸

The shape is characteristic: from an octagonal depression raises a short flared wall, ending in a broad rectangular rim, limited by a fillet. Four triangles result on the corners between the depression and the rim. One undecorated specimen (no. 1) is attested, but the majority of preserved trays are either engraved or repoussé. The first kind of decoration consents a precise and refined drawing, while the second produces bold figures of strong visual impact. Four specimens are engraved according to a neat decorative scheme: a roundel in the centre frames an animal, which usually lays against a vegetal background, flanked by epigraphical cartouches. Tray no. 2 presents an interesting animal featuring rabbit-



Fig. 21 – Zoomorphic decoration on tray no. 2 (Neg. no. 175/13).

⁵⁷ See Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 99-100, nos. 28-29. Another square tray with a silver inlaid, lavish decoration is in the Aron Collection (Inv. no. Aron 407); this specimen is provided with a straight wall.

⁵⁸ See Allan 1976, I, 317, who defined such trays “table-top”. For a contribution from the sources, see also Laviola 2017a, 208-209.

head and bird-body (Fig. 21). Inscriptions usually occupy the whole rim, repeating two benedictory terms in Kufic; more extended texts occur when the cursive is employed on the depression. Tray no. 5 shows a simpler rectangular depression with trilobed short sides (the feature is known from other specimens, cf. Fig. 22).⁵⁹ The only available picture portrays the object's underside, which bears an engraved decoration. This is mostly unusual, as already stated above. Tray no. 4 (Pl. 2) differs from those previously mentioned in the ground-covering presence of a vegetal motif composed by tightly spiralling budded scrolls: such feature, together with the employ of silver inlay – only scanty preserved –, makes it probably the latest specimen of this series.



Fig. 22 – Tray, late 12th-early 13th c., Khurasan, Walters Art Museum, Inv. no. 54.530 (Creative Commons License).

Ten rectangular trays present a repoussé decoration, which compared to the previous kind conveys a sort of *horror vacui*. Almost each specimen bears in the centre a rosette or a roundel, whose iconographical origin is probably connected with an ancient representation of the sun. The round shape, in fact, is surrounded by a halo of rays, more or less developed, often designed as round or apicated pierced pearls. Common decorative patterns consist in crossed vegetal elements or quadrupeds – hares (no. 6, Pl. 3; no. 12, Pl. 5; Fig. 23) or felines (no. 7, Pl. 3). Running hares are employed on the wall of tray no. 8 (Pl. 4), while sphynxes appear on the depression.⁶⁰ Typically, the wall is decorated by a series of “V” elements of vegetal inspiration, possibly with a blossom in the centre, alternated to groups of three pierced pearls arranged in



Fig. 23 – Hares on the depression of tray no. 6 (MAIA, photo by R. Giunta, 2015).

⁵⁹ For a comparison, see a tray from the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (Inv. no. 54.530; see Ettinghausen 1957, pl. 10, fig. 31); another unpublished tray with trilobed depression is in the Aron Collection (Inv. no. Aron 14).

⁶⁰ For a comparison, see Fehérvári 1976, 72-73, no. 78, pl. 25a. According to Ettinghausen (1957, 344), the two sphynxes rotating around the central roundel represent an evolution of the ancient animal wheel.

triangles as stylized bunches. On the four resulting triangles, there are rosettes of ancient style and vegetal elements. On the rim usually runs a benedictory inscription, in cursive script, divided in six sections. Most refined specimens feature a peculiar background punched with tiny circles: this detail attests the intention to recall ancient Sasanian metalwork as the employ of rosettes does.

In other specimens (nos. 9-11) zoomorphic figures are replaced by vegetal elements; tray no. 13 might represent a late example of this model, considered the complex vegetal pattern starting from the central polylobed medallion.⁶¹

Some scholars reckon the repoussé rectangular trays as typical of the Sistan region and ascribe them to the second half of the 12th century on the basis of comparison with other raised objects.⁶²

Four fragmentary trays (nos. 20-23) bear witness to the polygonal model, provided with high wall and no rim. The decoration is repoussé but definitely simpler and stylised if compared to that on rectangular trays. Sunrays and rosettes' petals are invariably pentagonal, and epigraphical cartouches extremely short. The style traces closely that of circular trays with polylobed wall (see below).

Circular trays are more varied than rectangular ones from a morphological point of view, differing on the basis of the wall and rim. The decoration, engraved and sometimes inlaid, is limited to the inner surface. Among circular trays with high straight wall, no. 22 (Pl. 9, Fig. 24) is worthy of being examined closely. Its concentric decoration turns around a group of four running hares that generate, thanks to their radial position, a specific optic effect. Each hare seems provided with a pair of ears while actually the ears they share are just four. This zoomorphic composition boasts a long tradition.⁶³ It is attested in number of three hares on at least another metalwork in this catalogue (see tray-dish no. 40, Pl. 14a-b). Both the Kufic and cursive scripts assign it to the beginning of the 13th century on the basis of comparison with other circular specimens.⁶⁴ Back side of the tray is equally interesting: it is clear enough from the bad condition of the inner surface that the object suffered severe damages; the numerous patches nailed on the underside attest it was repaired to be kept still in use.



Fig. 24 – Decoration on tray no. 22
(Neg. no. 7942/14).

Tray no. 37 (Pl. 12a-b), with funnelled wall and flat rim, recalls a decorative scheme typical of basins with polylobed rim (many coming from Ghazni): an 8-petalled flower in the centre surrounded by a geometric composition based on the six-point star design. The second specimen of this series sums up many common elements: the Solomon knots, the vegetal composition in the centre, Kufic and cursive inscriptions, running animals and crescent-shaped

⁶¹ For a comparison, see Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 57-58, pl. VIII, fig. 3.

⁶² See Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, who published two trays more from Afghan museums absent from the IsMEO documentation (figs. 3, 5); Allan 1976, I, 319.

⁶³ Other trays with four walking hares sharing two pairs of ears are known: see one specimen from the d'Allemagne Collection, Paris; one from the Stuart Welch Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts (Ettinghausen 1957, figs. L, 21); and a third from the Keir Collection (Fehérvári 1976, 71, no. 74, pl. 23a). On the topic, see Filigenzi 2003; Auld 2010.

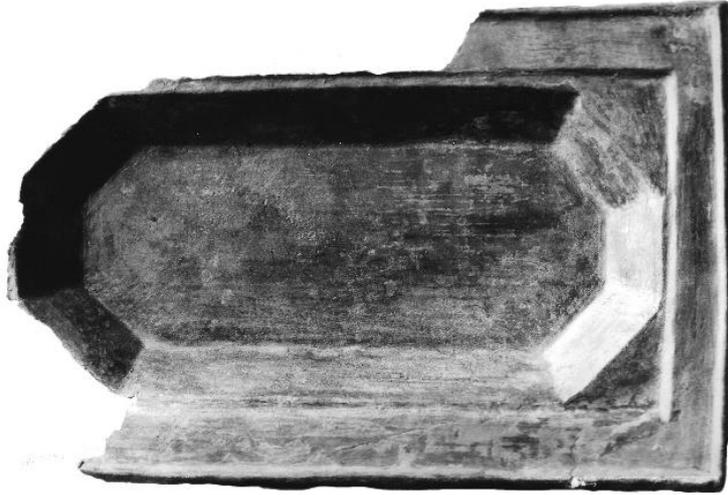
⁶⁴ See Melikian-Chirvani 1974a.

roundels. The output of these components, and even more their juxtaposition, betrays a late production.

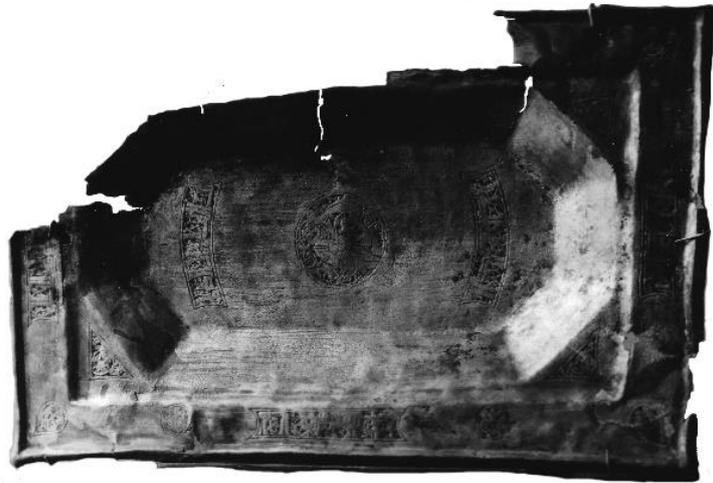
Specimen no. 26 (Pl. 11) presents a high polylobed wall missing the probably flat rim. The decoration, probably from southern Afghanistan, is to put in relation with that observed on polygonal trays and with rectangular ones for the punched background (see above). The central animal is unusual: a sort of canid or feline, which tail may end in a vegetal element or in a dragonhead. Unfortunately, the picture is not clear enough to determine.

Finally, no. 27 is the only specimen resting on six high tubular legs ending in a thick round foot: these elements are not necessarily original. The tray is flat with a short horizontal rim. Only small portions of its original "skin" are preserved, revealing vegetal small roundels employed on the inner surface to cover the legs' junction points (see Pl. 11b).

Pl. 1



No. 1



No. 2

Pl. 2



No. 3



No. 4

Pl. 3



No. 5



No. 6



No. 7

Pl. 4



No. 8



No. 9



No. 10



No. 11



No. 12



No. 13

Pl. 6



No. 14



No. 16

a

b



a

b

No. 17



No. 18

Pl. 8



No. 19



No. 20



No. 21



a

No. 22



b

Pl. 10



No. 23



No. 24



No. 25



No. 26



Tray-dishes

No. 36

Pl. 12

Tray-dish

Short wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid?

Very poor condition. Fragmentary.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 93).

On the rim a foliated Kufic inscription is interrupted by inlaid (?) roundels. Few words are readable due to the preservation status:

[...] اليمن والبركة

Good fortune and blessing [...]

No. 37

Pl. 12a-b

Tray-dish

Short wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 120).

On the bottom, the central roundel includes a bird with backward-facing head on a vegetal background. Around it a concentric register is filled with a scroll composed by bilobed palmettes. On the rim, three rectangular cartouches frame a cord motif, alternating with small roundels with four-lobed flowers. On the underside are engraved concentric circles, one of which frames a double, interlaced ribbon.

No. 38

Pl. 13a-b

Tray-dish

Short wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 119).

On the bottom, the central roundel includes a bird on a vegetal background composed by round scrolls with palmettes and trilobed flowers. The underside is arranged in concentric circles but undecorated.

No. 39

Pl. 14

Tray-dish

Short wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition.

H. 2.5 cm, Ø of the opening 14.9 cm, Ø of the underside 14.4 cm

13th century (?)

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 12).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 61, fig. 23 (late 12th-early 13th c.).

On the bottom, the central roundel includes a fantastic animal with dog-head and bird-body on a just hinted background. On the rim, six trapezoidal cartouches framing a raw scroll alternate with as many vegetal, small roundels. On the outer walls, an inscription (read by Melikian-Chirvani) in six cartouches repeats:

والبركة

And blessing

No. 40

Pl. 14a-b

Tray-dish

Short wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition. Black patina.

H. 2.65 cm, Ø of the opening 15.6 cm, Ø of the underside 14.4 cm

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 13); purchased.

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 61, figs. 21-22 (second half of 12th c.).

On the bottom, the central roundel includes three running hares, radially disposed so to share their ears, on an intricate, vegetal background composed by spiralling, budded scrolls and trilobed flowers. On the rim, six trapezoidal cartouches framing a scroll alternate with as many vegetal, small roundels. On the outer wall, rectangular cartouches with concave short sides frame a Kufic inscription on a hinted background, alternating with vegetal roundels:

باليمن والبركة / باليمن والبركة / باليمن والبركة (ة) / باليمن والبركة (ة) / باليمن
والبر / باليمن والبر

*With good fortune and blessing / with good fortune and blessing / with good fortune and
blessin(g) / with good fortune and blessing / with good fortune and devotion / with good
fortune and devotion*

No. 41

Pl. 15

Tray-dish

Short wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958).

On the bottom, the central roundel includes a sphynx on a background of spiralling, budded scrolls. On the rim, six trapezoidal cartouches framing a scroll alternate with as many vegetal, small roundels. The underside is arranged in concentric circles around a central, vegetal element (see Pl. 42b). On the outer walls, a Kufic inscription in cartouches alternate with vegetal, small roundels. Few words are readable due to the unclear photographic documentation:

[...] اليمن والسلامة [...]

Good fortune and spiritual integrity [...]

No. 42

Pl. 15a-b

Tray-dish

Short flared wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

Ø 15 cm, h. 21.1 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-58); "found in Ghazni".

On the bottom, the central roundel includes a sphynx with a big tail (information after Scerrato notes, since the detail picture is unavailable). The underside is arranged in concentric circles around a central, vegetal element composed by four palmettes disposed in a cruciform shape. On the outer walls, rectangular cartouches with concave short sides frame a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices, on a tight, vegetal background, alternating with vegetal, small roundels. The text is only partially photographed:

{...} والسلا و {...}

{...} and AL-SALĀ and {...}

No. 43

Pl. 16

Tray-dish

Short wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Crack on the bottom.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 163).

On the bottom, the central roundel includes a winged sphynx on an intricately budded, vegetal background. On the rim, six trapezoidal cartouches framing a scroll alternate with as many vegetal, small roundels.

No. 44

Pl. 16a-b

Tray-dish

Short wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958).

On the bottom, the central roundel includes a winged sphynx on an intricate, vegetal background of spiralling, budded, and floriated scrolls. Around it, a festoon with starred profile generated by a double, interlacing ribbon is topped by elongated, trilobed flowers. On the rim, six trapezoidal cartouches framing an elaborate scroll alternate with as many small roundels, including a single, trilobed flower. The underside is arranged in concentric circles around a central, vegetal element composed by four palmettes disposed in a cruciform shape (see Pl. 42b). On the outer walls, roundels including a bird on a vegetal background alternate with rectangular cartouches, with concave short sides, framing a cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* against the vegetal background seen on the bottom and rim. The text is only partially photographed:

{...} والسعادة (ة) والسلا / مة والعافية و {...}
 {...} and happiness(s), spiritual / integrity, wellness and {...}

No. 45

Pl. 17

Tray-dish

Short wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Excellent condition.

Ø 18.7 cm

12th-13th century

Kandahar "City Hall" (1957-1958); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1959b, 106, no. 8, fig. 17.

On the bottom, the central roundel includes a winged sphynx on a vegetal background of budded scrolls. Around it, four crescent-shaped roundels including a vegetal element alternate with as many cartouches framing a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background.

The same scheme repeats on the rim and on the outer walls, counting six roundels and cartouches. All the texts repeat the same terms:

باليمن والبر

With good fortune and devotion

No. 46

Pl. 17a-b

Tray-dish

Short wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with silver.

Passable condition. Worn, possible traces of fire on the central bottom.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958).

The figure in the central roundel is not visible due to the poor status of preservation of that area. Around it runs a continuous, cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* on a vegetal background made of budded scrolls and trilobed flowers:

العز والاقبال والدولة والسلامة والعافية والتامة و(?) لصاحبه

Glory, prosperity, fortune, spiritual integrity, wellness, plenitude, (?) to its owner

On the rim, six inlaid rosettes alternate with as many trapezoidal cartouches framing a Kufic inscription with elongated *hastae* and ornamental apices, on the background mentioned above:

الشكر و[...] / والتامة [...] / البركة / والدولة والكر / امة والتامة وال-

Gratitude, [...] / and plenitude [...] / blessing /, fortune, gene / rosity, plenitude and AL-

On the outer walls vegetal, small roundels alternate with rectangular cartouches, with concave short sides, framing a Kufic inscription on a just hinted background. Only one term is readable due to the incomplete photographic documentation:

اليمن

Good fortune

No. 47

Pl. 18a-b

Tray-dish

Straight wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition. Three feet missing; a chip on the rim. On the underside, traces of three missing feet.

13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 136).

On the bottom can be seen concentric circles, one of those includes a knotted, Kufic inscription, with ornamental apices, decorated by chevrons, palmettes, flowers above the terms, and additional *wāws* in the background.

باليمن والبركة و

With good fortune, blessing and

No. 48

Pl. 18

Tray-dish

Straight wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Passable condition. Three feet missing; fragmentary rim.

13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 117).

On the bottom, a circular register is punched with tiny circles. On such a background runs a cursive inscription, whose starting point is marked by a stylised vase:

باليمن والبركة

With good fortune and blessing

Comment

The definition of tray-dish identifies a round dish characterised by tapering walls and a flat and protruding rim. Fehérvári makes no distinction between different kinds of round trays.⁶⁵ These objects were possibly used to burn incense and perfumes, as it occurred in ancient times with Hellenistic (footed or not) prototypes. However, such a hypothesis raises some doubts about the damages a combustion could cause to the decoration engraved on the inner surface. Unfortunately, information is insufficient to make a distinction between specimens used as trays and those used as incense burners. For this reason, they have been gathered in this class on the basis of morphology.⁶⁶

The thirteen presented artefacts show a significant homogeneity in decoration, with few exceptions. This decoration features a roundel in the centre including a real or fantastic animal and small roundels alternating with a sequence of narrow cartouches framing vegetal patterns on the rim. Epigraphical cartouches usually appear on the external wall.

Tray-dishes nos. 37-38 (Pls. 12a-b, 13, respectively) share the same kind of disproportioned bird. A well-preserved rotating group of three running hares, arranged around the three ears they

⁶⁵ Fehérvári 1976, 71, pl. 23.

⁶⁶ Already Scerrato (1959b) put in relation specimens nos. 5, 19, 45-46 with incense burners. Allan (1976, II, 760) classified no. 45 as an incense burner as well.

share (Fig. 25), put in contact tray-dish no. 40 (Pl. 14a) with tray no. 22 (Pl. 9a).⁶⁷ A curious animal is engraved in the centre of no. 39 (Pl. 14): it looks like a griffin, but Melikian-Chirvani has reckoned there is in its mix an example of the ancient Sasanian *senmurv*.⁶⁸ The addition of epigraphical bands around the central zoomorphic roundel is attested on richly decorated specimens (see nos. 45-46).

Five specimens (nos. 39-40, Pl. 14; no. 41, Pl. 15; nos. 43-44, Pl. 16) show the same wavy scroll ending in palmettes framed in cartouches on the rim. The vegetal background in the central roundel is intricate, made of tightly spiralling scrolls with numerous stylised buds and a few trilobed flowers. These features recur on many metalworks, representing a standard on items from the 12th-13th century.

Worthy of note is tray-dish no. 36 (Pl. 12), whose fragmentary status still allows for the appreciation of the uncommon presence of an inscription on the rim. The most refined foliated Kufic script attests instead its early date.

Whether tray-dishes used to have foot or not it is still matter of discussion. The majority of items here presented has a polished underside, usually featuring three concentric circles traced by a compass (no. 37, Pl. 12a-b; no. 38, Pl. 13) or even a vegetal element engraved in the central roundel (nos. 41-42, Pl. 15; no. 44, Pl. 16a-b) – visible in Pl. 15b, which provides the best quality. Only one item shows clear traces of soldering, attesting the original presence of three feet (no. 47, Pl. 18b). Possibly, no. 48 was footed as well, given the similarity between the two artefacts, but no picture of its underside is available. Other features put these two tray-dishes in contrast with other specimens; in particular, the continuous inscription running on the inner bottom. In no. 47 (Pl. 18a), the text is executed in a knotted Kufic script with sharp apices and extremely pointed *mīm*, and it is enriched by chevrons and palmettes. In no. 48, an unrefined cursive script lies against a punched background; even the insertion of a vase element to mark the beginning of the text appears rough. The latter might look like a less refined output of the first, also betrayed by the use of the formula *al-yumn wa'l-baraka*, which is usually reserved for Kufic.



Fig. 25 – Decorative detail on tray-dish no. 40
(Neg. no. 7946/12a).

⁶⁷ See also for comparison Fehérvári 1976, no. 74, pl. 23a. About the iconographic theme, see Filigenzi 2003; Auld 2010.

⁶⁸ Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 61.



No. 36



a



No. 37

b

Pl. 13



a

No. 38



b



No. 39



a

No. 40



b

Pl. 15



No. 41

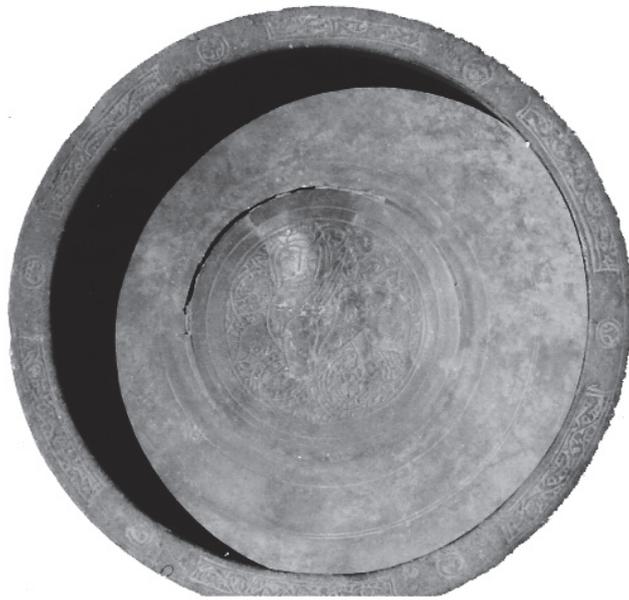


No. 42

a



b



No. 43



a

No. 44

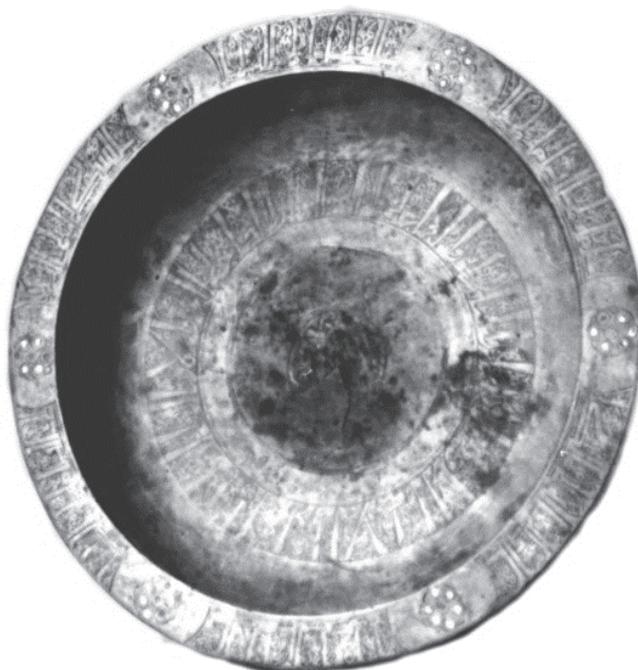


b

Pl. 17



No. 45



a

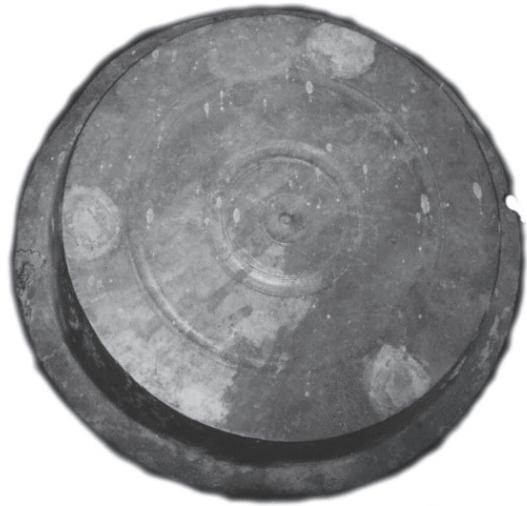
No. 46



b



a



b

No. 47



No. 48

Dishes

No. 49

Pl. 19a-b

Circular dish

Flat rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Fragmentary; thick patina covering the surface.

Ø 8 cm

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

On the bottom, a central roundel frames a winged sphynx on a vegetal background of spiralling scrolls and trilobed flowers.

Unknown location

No. 50

Pl. 20

Circular dish

Flared wall; broad flat rim.

High tin bronze. Forged; punched, engraved.

Passable condition. A gap on the rim; worn on the inner wall.

Ø 34 cm

10th-early 11th century

Purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1971; MAIA Inv. no. Sp151.

The surface is minutely punched with tiny, dotted circles. On the bottom a wavy, continuous ribbon generates a six-point star enriched by a geometric, interlacing design. Isolated drops can be seen in it. Narrow, circular bands composed by punched circles surround this composition. On the inner walls a peculiar, Kufic inscription runs unframed: its letters are composed by dotted circles. The text is unreadable due to the preservation status. On the rim, a single scroll ending in trilobed flowers runs behind a cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* on a punched background of dotted circles:

[الي]من والبركة والسلامة والسعادة والنعمة والبقاء والعدل و

[...bles]sing, spiritual integrity, happiness, grace, eternal life, righteousness and

Comment

The fragmentary dish no. 49 (Pl. 19) luckily preserves its central section that allows us to appreciate a winged sphynx against a background composed by nice spirals of scrolls with trilobed flowers. The softness of the latter, together with the gentle expression on the sphynx's face (so distant from the blank sphynxes engraved on tray-dishes above), attest the care provided during the execution of this artefact.

The second dish (no. 50, Pl. 20) comes thanks to an inspired purchase in the Ghazni bazaar. A big roundel encloses an interlaced geometrical pattern, based on a six-pointed star design, whose ribbons originate from its own margin.⁶⁹ The text unusually presents an additional term after the closing formula *al-baqā'*, and the term itself, *al-'adl*, is uncommon. The final *tā'* *marbūṭa* appears in its ligatured form, even after the *dāl* in the term *al-sa'āda*. The *kāf* in the term *al-baraka* is peculiar with its cutaway upper segment. Just as interesting is the single scroll running behind the inscription: it features big trilobed flowers with peculiar round petals that resembles those carved on the margin of the trilobed arch on the tomb of the Ghaznavid Maḥmūd b. Sebūktigin (1030).⁷⁰ The relevance of such a similarity relies on the fact that trilobed flowers, largely represented on metalwork, usually present a bigger elongated central lobe.

The whole background is minutely punched with dotted circles, saving just the flared wall for a good reason; there, dotted circles are employed to compose an unframed Kufic inscription (Fig. 26). Unfortunately, it is only partially preserved and the text has not been deciphered. Maurizio Taddei, in his handwritten notes, reckoned it as a pseudo-inscription.

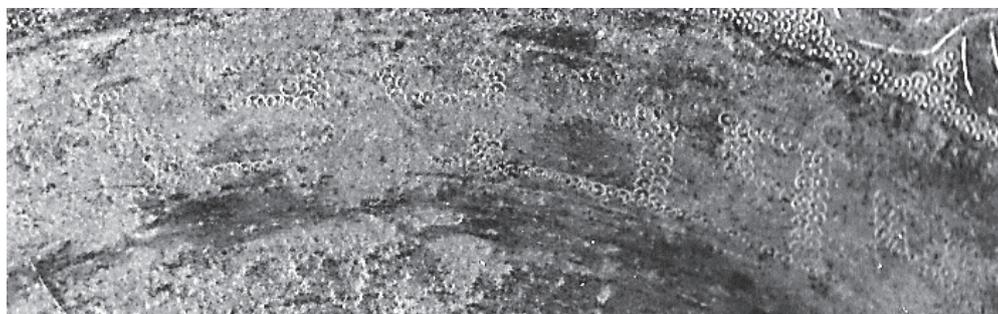
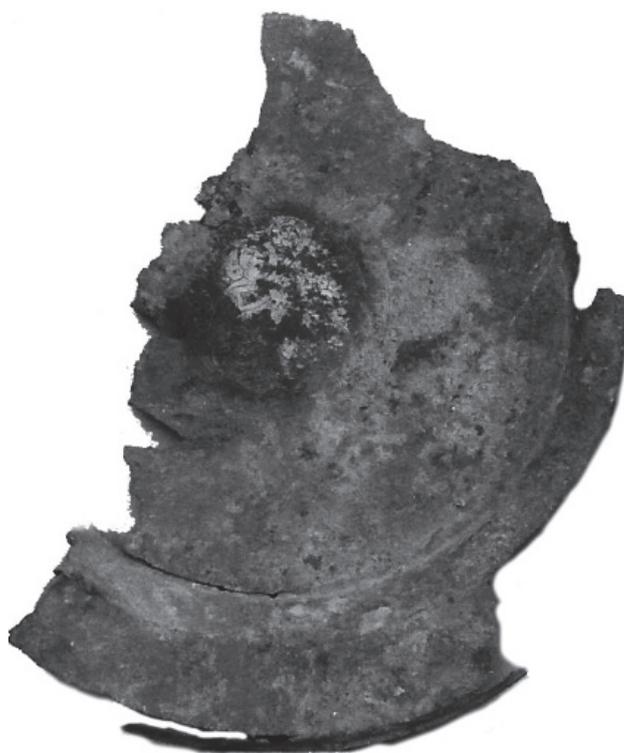


Fig. 26 – Punched inscription on the inner wall of dish no. 50 (Neg. no. 1682/3).

⁶⁹ Another version of the same pattern appears on a dish from the Victoria and Albert Museum (Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 96, no. 26a), assigned to the late 12th century. In this case, the pattern is based on a six-pointed star design, and again the ribbons originate from the margin of the roundel, but they are also knotted. It stands against a ring-matted background, as well.

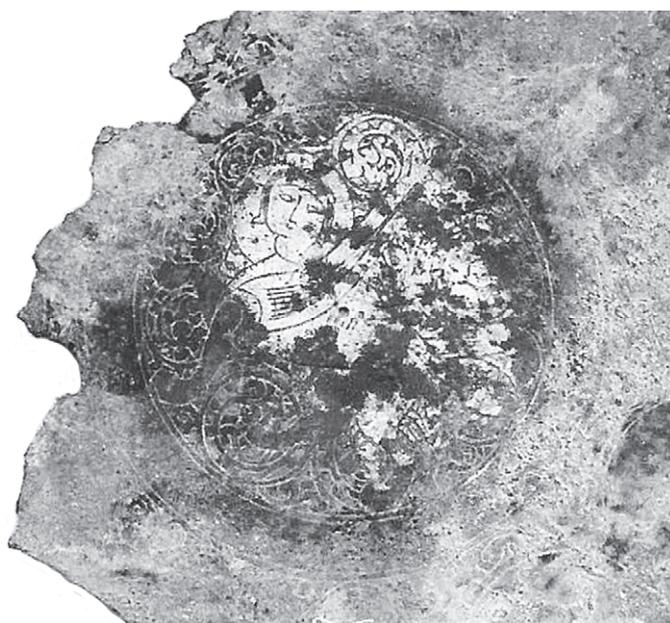
⁷⁰ See Giunta 2003, pl. VI, fig. 3.

Pl. 19



a

No. 49



b



No. 50

Bowls

30 Items	{	hemispherical (nos. 51-59, 61, 79)	
		flat base (nos. 60, 62-65, 67-69)	{ round wall (nos. 60, 62-64) flared wall (nos. 65, 67-69)
		concave base (no. 70)	flared wall (no. 70)
		footed (nos. 66, 71-78)	{ flared wall (no. 66) round wall (nos. 71-74, 76, lids nos. 77-78) high, straight wall (no. 75)
		unidentified (no. 80)	

No. 51

Pl. 21

Hemispherical bowl

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Excellent condition.

Ø 23 cm, h. 6 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-61); “found in Ghazni”.

Published: Scerrato 1961, 161-162, no. 172 (late 12th-early 13th c.); Rowland 1966, no. 103.

The central roundel includes a winged sphynx on a background of spiralling, budded and floriated scrolls. A dragon emerges from its tail and stands on its back representing the Jawzahr. Around it run three concentric registers; in the first, hunting dogs and running hares appear on the vegetal background mentioned above. In the second register twelve roundels, interlaced with each other and with register's border, include the zodiac signs disposed in a clockwise order on a vegetal background. In the third register, a cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* runs continuously on the same vegetal background:

العز والاقبال والدولة والسعادة [ة] والسلامة والشفاعة والـ [...] والعافية والراحة
والرحمة والنصرة والناصر والقادرة

*Glory, prosperity, fortune, happines[s], spiritual integrity, prophetic intercession, al-[...],
wellness, comfort, mercy, victory, that which makes victorious and capability*

No. 52

Pl. 21a-b

Hemispherical bowl

High tin bronze. Forged; punched, engraved.

Poor condition. Sharp-edged gap on the bottom; worn on the inner wall.

Ø 27.5 cm, h. 11.3 cm

10th-early 11th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1971; MAIA Inv. no. Sp146.

Below the outer rim runs a Kufic inscription with foliated apices; the text is only partially photographed:

{...} السرور والسعادة {...}
 {...} joy and happiness {...}

On the outer walls a scroll device is crosswise arranged in the centre: twenty-nine “petals” radiating from it resemble a funnelled decoration.

On the inner bottom a big, 12-petalled flower on a dotted background occupies the central roundel. Around it runs a circular register framing a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices and chevrons on a dotted background:

باليمن والبركة والسلامة والسرور و(ا)لسعا[د]ة
With good fortune, blessing, spiritual integrity, joy and happiness

A Kufic inscription with ornamental apices and chevrons runs below the inner rim on a dotted background. The text reads a maxim:

باليمن والد احفظ لسانك لا(ل)تقول فتبتلا ان البلا(ء) موكل بالمنطق لكل اجل كتاب
 لكل عمل ثواب

With good fortune and al-da curb your tongue do not talk in fact the scourge is responsible for the speech every moment is inscribed, every work is rewarded

No. 53

Pl. 22a-b

Hemispherical bowl

High tin bronze. Forged; engraved.

Fair condition. A small gap on the lower wall.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 200).

The outer walls are arranged in four horizontal registers: the first (bottom-up) frames a sequence of palmettes enclosed in a heart shape. A Greek fret occupies the second register, while in the third and main one runs a cursive inscription on a ground-covering, peculiar background composed by nicks, five-lobed palmettes and chevrons/*lām-alif* groups. The text is only partially photographed:

{...} السلامة / والسعادة {...}
 {...} spiritual integrity / and happiness {...}

A roundel including a bird with five-lobed palmettes on the background overlaps the three registers. Roundel's border is filled with nicks. On the underside, a seven-lobed palmette is included in a roundel.

No. 54

Pl. 22

Hemispherical bowl

High tin bronze. Forged; punched.
 Passable condition. Patina on the surface.
 10th-11th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 62).

A band of punched dotted circles runs below the outer rim. On the walls, arches and rosettes, composed by dotted circles, are scanty visible due to the preservation status.

No. 55

Pl. 22

Hemispherical bowl

High tin bronze. Forged.
 Poor condition. Thick patina covering the surface.
 10th-11th century
 Rawza Museum (1976).

No. 56

Pl. 23a-b

Hemispherical bowl

High tin bronze. Forged; punched, engraved.
 Poor condition. Two big gaps on the wall.
 Ø 21.5 cm, h. 11 cm
 10th-11th century
 Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1970; MAIA Inv. no. Sp137.

On the outer walls runs a horizontal band composed by dotted circles; below it, a triangular decoration filled with dotted circles can be seen. On the underside, a rosette in the centre is surrounded by a dotted circles band.

No. 57

Pl. 24a-b

Hemispherical bowl

Slightly convex wall.
 High tin bronze (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Cast; engraved, punched.

Passable condition. A copper patch on the wall.

Ø 25.2 cm, h. 12.7 cm, w. 0.8 cm, weight 1.757 gr

10th-11th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5954/6721; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.

Published: Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 304, no. 4, pl. 49b.

On the outer walls runs a horizontal band of dotted circles. Below it, the walls are vertically divided: part is decorated with rhomboid elements filled with dotted circles, part with engraved bands of triangles filled with dotted circles. On the underside, a six-point star can be seen. On the inner bottom, a composition of four chiselled circles disposing around a dotted one is surrounded by radial lines, a band of chiselled circles and another band of dotted circles.

No. 58

Pl. 25

Hemispherical bowl

High, convex wall.

High tin bronze (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Raised.

Poor condition. The decoration is covered.

Ø 20 cm, h. 11.5 cm, w. 0.3 cm, weight 547 gr

10th-11th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5868/6241; purchased in Ghazni and donated by U. Scerrato in 1970.

Published: Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 302, no. 2, pl. 48b.

No. 59

Pl. 25

Hemispherical bowl

High tin bronze. Forged; engraved.

Fair condition.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 63).

Below the outer rim runs a geometric band made of oblique and vertical cuts. On the walls appears a ground-covering, engraved decoration composed by stylised, vegetal elements.

No. 60

Pl. 25a-b

Round bowl

Flat base; round wall.

High tin bronze. Forged; punched, chiselled, engraved.

Fair condition.

Ø 21.3 cm, h. 11.3 cm

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1971; MAIA Inv. no. Sp149.

On the outer walls runs a horizontal band of dotted circles; below it, a sequence of engraved, rhomboid elements is filled with dotted and chiselled circles.

No. **61**

Pl. 26a-c

Hemispherical bowl

High tin bronze. Forged; punched, engraved.

Fair condition.

Ø 18.7 cm, h. 7.5 cm

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp109.

On the outer walls runs a horizontal band with dotted circles. Below it can be seen a sequence of roundels, each one of those includes a rosette and pairs of three dotted circles between one roundel and the following. On the underside, a central, dotted rosette is surrounded by concentric circles.

No. **62**

Pl. 27a-c

Round bowl

Flat base; almost vertical wall; slightly inverted at the rim.

High tin bronze. Forged; punched, chiselled, engraved.

Excellent condition.

Ø 25.5 cm, h. 12.2 cm

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1971; MAIA Inv. no. Sp147.

On the outer walls runs a horizontal band with dotted circles and another one with a grid decoration. Below this can be seen an obliquely disposed, rhomboid decoration filled with chiselled cavities and dotted circles. On the underside, a rosette in the centre is included in a six-point star, which is framed in a roundel composed by dotted circles. On the inner bottom, five dotted circles and four cavities appear in the centre; around them run two concentric bands of dotted circles and chiselled cavities.

No. **63**

Pl. 28a-b

Round bowl

Flat base; round wall; ring-handle and dovetail everted thumb-rest.

High tin bronze. Forged; punched, engraved.

Poor condition. Three gaps following a fracture on the body. Partially restored by a zinc (?) plaque.

Ø at the mouth 16 cm, Ø maximum 17 cm, h. without handle 8 cm, h. with handle 13 cm
10th-early 11th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1971; MAIA Inv. no. Sp145.

Below the outer rim runs a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices on a dotted background. The text is only partially photographed:

{...} وسرور وغبطة {...}

{...} and joy and beatitude {...}

On the walls appears a five-lobed flower enclosed by a scroll with palmettes on a dotted background. *Hastae* and knotted *hastae* are used as separators. Dotted circles in rows appear on the everted handle.

No. 64

Pl. 29

Round bowl

Flat base; short, round wall.

High tin bronze (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Cast; punched, chiselled, engraved.

Poor condition. A gap on the bottom.

Ø 16.1 cm, h. 4.3 cm, w. 0.3 cm, weight 195.81 gr

10th-11th century

MuCIv-MAO, Inv. no. 5865/6338; purchased in Ghazni and donated by U. Scerrato in 1970.

Published: Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 302, no. 3, pl. 49a.

On the central bottom, a chiselled rosette is surrounded by a circular band of dotted circles. Around it groups of three chiselled circles alternate with dotted circles, and runs another circular band filled by three rows of dotted circles.

No. 65

Pl. 29a-b

Flared bowl

Flat, narrow hexagonal base; flared wall composed by six convex, oval lobes.

High tin bronze. Cast.

Fair condition. A small crack on the lower wall.

Ø 15.2 cm, h. 6.4 cm

9th-11th century

Ghazni storeroom (2005); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp114.

No. 66

Pl. 30

Footed bowl

Flared wall; wide, flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Element missing from the inner surface; a gap on the rim.

Ø 8 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 686, no. 5, pl. 8, fig. 17.

No. **67**

Pl. 30

Flared bowl

Flat base; narrow, flat rim.

High tin bronze (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Cast; punched.

Passable condition. A gap on the base.

Ø of the rim 15.2 cm, Ø of the base 6.5 cm, h. 8.4 cm, w. 0.4 cm, weight 396 gr

10th-11th century

MuCIIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5867/6240; purchased in Ghazni and donated by U. Scerrato in 1970.

Published: Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 308-309, no. 7, pl. 51a.

A series of rosettes composed by dotted circles alternate with circular bands of dotted circles.

No. **68**

Pl. 30

Flared bowl

Flat base.

Lead. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 169).

No. **69**

Pl. 30

Flared bowl

Disc foot; slightly flared wall.

High tin bronze (?). Cast; punched, chiselled, engraved.

Fair condition.

Ø 11.8 cm, h. 6.6 cm

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp108.

On the upper section of the outer walls runs a horizontal band of chiselled circles comprised between two bands of dotted circles. Below it, the walls are gadrooned.

No. 70

Pl. 31a-b

Flared bowl

Narrow, concave base; high wall. Traces of a handle, presumably not original.

High tin bronze. Forged; punched, engraved.

Poor condition. A big gap on the bottom, a crack – restored – on the rim.

Ø 15.8 cm, h. 10.8 cm

10th-11th century

Ghazni storeroom (2013); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp113.

Below the outer rim can be seen two engraved grooves and bunches composed by small and tiny, dotted circles. Cross-like incisions appear on the underside.

No. 71

Pl. 31

Footed bowl

Round wall; short rim.

Lead. Cast.

Poor condition.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-102); “found in Ghazni”.

No. 72

Pl. 31

Footed bowl

Round wall; short rim.

Lead. Cast.

Passable condition.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-104); “found in Ghazni”.

No. 73

Pl. 31

Footed bowl

Round wall; short rim.

Lead. Cast.

Passable condition.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-105).

No. 74

Pl. 31

Footed bowl

Round wall; short rim.
Lead. Cast.
Passable condition.
12th-13th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 170).

No. 75

Pl. 32a-b

Footed bowl

High, straight wall curving near the splayed foot.
Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, punched, engraved.
Fair condition. Tiny gaps on the wall.
Ø 17.9 cm, h. 12.2 cm
12th century
Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-64); "found in Ghazni".
Published: Scerrato 1961, 159-160, no. 168 (11th-12th c.); Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 63, pl. XVI, fig. 12; 1982b, fig. 61.
Quoted: Tabbaa 1987, 98, figs. 1c, 6.
The foot is funnelled. On the body, the surface is minutely dotted. Below the outer rim runs a single scroll ending in palmettes. Below it, the wall is divided in two rows of intersecting, pentagonal panels. In the first row a seated, anthropomorphic figure, holding a scarf or bow (?) over his head, alternates with a pair of birds, disposed one over the other with crossing necks. In the second row, winged lions with backward-facing heads are disposed in alternating positions.

No. 76

Pl. 33

Footed bowl

Round wall; high, straight rim; splayed foot.
High tin bronze. Cast; engraved, inlaid with silver.
Fair condition. A small chipping on the rim.
Ø of opening 18.1 cm, h. 9 cm, Ø of body 18.5 cm, Ø of ring-foot 8.1 cm
Early 13th century
Rawza Museum (1976).
Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1977a, 191-193, pl. 7; 1982a, 61, 63, fig. 27 (early 13th c.).
Below the outer rim runs a cursive inscription characterized by trapezoidal, elongated *hastae* on a vegetal background, composed by round scrolls ending in trilobed flowers, and *sgraffiato* interstices:

العز والاقبال والدولة والسعادة والسلامة والشفاعة والشفاعة والسلتامة والشكرامة
والشفاعة والتامة والشفاعة

Glory, prosperity, fortune, happiness, spiritual integrity, prophetic intercession, prophetic intercession, spiritual integrity and plenitude, gratefulness and prestige, prophetic intercession, plenitude and prophetic intercession

No. 77

Pl. 33a-b

Footed bowl's lid

Pointed spherical knob hold.

High tin bronze. Cast; engraved, inlaid with silver and copper.

Poor condition. Fragmentary.

Ø maximum 11 cm, h. 6.8 cm

Late 12th-early 13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, 1965, Inv. no. 58-2-72); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 162-163, no. 173 (late 12th-early 13th c.); Melikian-Chirvani 1977a, 198-200, pl. 9b.

On the preserved portion of the lid, big roundels include a seated, human figure flanked by two dragon-headed staves. A ground-covering, vegetal decoration occupies the resulting spaces. At the base of the hold runs an inlaid, human-headed, cursive inscription enriched by numerous animals (reading after Scerrato's notes):

العز والاقبال والدولة والدوامه

Glory, prosperity, fortune and endurance

The inscription is surrounded by a circular band of pearls that lost the inlay. On the knob appear two mirroring, arched sequences enriched by inlaid pearls.

No. 78

Pl. 33

Hold of bowl lid

Probably belonging to a footed bowl.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid.

Fair condition. Fragmentary.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-90); "found in Ghazni".

Six birds carved in round protrude radially disposed on top of the knob. Once inlaid rosettes on what remains of the lid.

*Unknown location*No. **79**

Hemispherical bowl

High tin bronze. Cast; engraved, inlaid.

Ø 13.7 cm, h. 7.5 cm

Purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp112.

No picture available; information after Taddei.

On the inner surface can be seen an incised or beaten (?), grass-like decoration.

No. **80**

Bowl

Three flat handles; long spout. Probably used as a filler.

Copper alloy. Cast (?); engraved.

Poor condition; main handle damaged, a hole on the body.

12.8 × 9.3 cm

Purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1970; MAIA Inv. no. Sp138.

No picture available; information after Taddei.

A trellis pattern appears on the handles.

Comment

The hemispherical bowl was particularly on vogue in the Sasanian period. It also occurs portrayed on Islamic metalworks themselves, allowing one to hold in hand in scenes of convivial sessions or by isolated human figures (see below the bowl lid no. 77).

Bowl no. 51 (Pl. 21) is probably already known thanks to the publication by Scerrato. The decoration, limited to the inner surface, is ground-covering, encapsulating many among the beloved themes of Iranian medieval metalwork: running quadrupeds, benedictory inscription below the rim, vegetal background composed by budded spiralling scrolls that appears in each space of the composition giving it a homogenous effect. The crowned winged sphynx in the central roundel foreshadows the astrological theme developed in the second register;⁷¹ in fact, its knotted tail generates a dragon with a wide-open mouth, resting on the sphynx's back. It represents the Jawzahr, a monster held responsible for solar and lunar eclipses, conveyed on a mythological ground through the symbolic translation of lunar knots in a dragon's head and tail. The zodiac signs, without their ruling planets, are included in twelve interlaced roundels. A

⁷¹ In describing the decoration on circular objects, registers are numbered from inside to outside.

Jawzahr appears again, originating from the tail of Sagittarius. The same representation recurs on the high tin bronze basin no. 156 (Pl. 66).

The majority of hemispherical bowls are made of high tin bronze; thanks to its silvery colour and brightness, the alloy was a cheaper and more religiously permissible alternative to the precious metal that used to be employed in the Pre-Islamic period for wine bowls. The Islamic ban against the use of precious metals – and wine drinking – was certainly neglected at least in the upper classes and the courts of the Eastern Iranian area, as coeval sources strongly attest.⁷² Moreover, the hemispherical shape was easy to forge with red fire.⁷³ Two artefacts (nos. 52-53) stand out as unique. The densely punched background of no. 52 (Pl. 21a-b) immediately claims the high quality production, and also puts the item in relation with bowl no. 63 (see below). The huge, 12-petalled flower in the centre enriched in its core by the nice detail of a tiny punched rosette (Fig. 27) – is a loan from other kinds of vessels: this vegetal element in fact is typical of basins, but unusual on bowls. Arcading on the outer wall echoes a funnel decoration. Three epigraphic bands run continuously. The foliated Kufic running below the external rim shows bold letters executed with thin incisions. Inside the bowl, the Kufic script is highly rigid and neat, characterised by sharp triangular apices. The body of the *wāw* culminates in a triangle, while its terminal descends slightly into the writing line and then climbs up with a strong curve and a big apice, just as the *rā'* does. The teeth of *sīn* are disposed on a wide space, and they shorten progressively. A horizontal segment precedes the articles' *alifs* on the writing line. The *tā' marbūṭā* in final position descends the writing line with its stem. The *lām-alif* combination is



Fig. 27 – Rosette detail in the centre of bowl no. 52 (Neg. no. 1680/5).

is composed by a pair of crossed *hastae*, resulting in a big “X” resting on a shared horizontal base. On the epigraphic ground also appear other signs, namely round and drop-shaped points and chevrons. The latter seem not to have any functional role, but they just fill the spaces above short letters left between one *hasta* and the following one. Chevrons vary in size, all showing wedge-shaped terminals; two of them originate a half-palmette above the *rā'* in the term *al-baraka* and above the *sīn* of *al-sa'āda*. Some features are reminiscent of the inscriptions carved on the marble tombs of Sebūktigin and his son Maḥmūd in Ghazni.⁷⁴ Moreover, the term *surūr* was not as common in later periods.⁷⁵ The text below the inner rim is the most interesting: it starts as a common benedictory text, but soon leaves space

⁷² See Laviola 2017a.

⁷³ The high tin bronze (a copper alloy containing a tin component higher than 20%) melts easily but it breaks if hammered after a slow cooling: it needs instead a quenching to temper. Over time, it takes a black patina and due to its fragility at room temperature, whenever damaged the objects show neat and sharp edges, and clear cracks. For further information about the history of high tin bronze, see Allan 1979, 46-47; Lakpour 1997, 132-134.

⁷⁴ See Giunta 2003, 24, 39-41, figs. 3-4, 17-21.

⁷⁵ It appears, without article, on bowl no. 53.

for two different maxims. The first, whose origin is to be found in the esoteric *milieu* of the Ghaznavid period, recommends the virtue of silence.⁷⁶ The second sometimes appears on fine artefacts, usually accompanying the artisan signature, but this is not the case.⁷⁷ These peculiar texts along with the above-described Kufic script recur on a bowl housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 28).⁷⁸

Bowl no. 53 (Pl. 22a-b) represents a challenging item. It gathers peculiar elements mixed in a sort of *horror vacui*. The inscription's background is strangely divided into two sections: the lower one is hatched, while in the upper there are five and seven-lobed palmettes, horizontally disposed, and upturned trilobed flowers. The script shows a backward inclined *sīn* and small *lām-alif* combination suspended above the real text with the role of chevrons – these features recur on a high tin bronze basin (see no. 167, Pl. 70). Additional letters follow the benedictory terms. Quite inelegant is the Greek fret running along the half wall. Heart-shaped elements including a trilobed palmette fill the lower register of the bowl.⁷⁹ A big roundel, whose margin is enhanced by a series of oblique cuts, encloses a duck interrupting all three registers. Since cuts in roundels' margins usually appear on early metalwork (see no. 390, Pl. 140b), one might wonder if such detail was meant to ennoble a later production.

Apart from the two above-mentioned items, the typical decoration of hemispherical high tin bronze bowls involves the inner and outer surface. It consists in geometrical and repetitive motifs: concentric circles engraved using a compass; punched dotted circles – arranged in triangular groups of three to form a bunch, or seven to form a rosette (see no. 61, Pl. 26b); chiselled circular hollows that, alternated to the punched ones, create a *chiaroscuro* play of light and darkness. A strip running below the rim is common; either undecorated or filled with dotted circles, likewise engraved six-pointed stars on the underside (see no. 57, Pl. 24b; no. 62, Pl. 27b). In many cases, a rosette is punched at the centre of the inner bottom or underside.⁸⁰

The employ of high tin bronze was not limited to hemispherical bowls. Two more specimens show, in fact, a flat base. Bowl no. 63 (Pl. 28) is unique in re-proposing an ancient Sasanian model characterised by the ring-handle with everted thumb-rest.⁸¹ The old style is observed in the decoration as well: ten dotted circles are punched in degrading



Fig. 28 – Bowl, 11th c., probably Ghazni, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Inv. no. 1971.42 (Public Domain).

⁷⁶ See Melikian-Chirvani 1977b, 369-370.

⁷⁷ See some signed metalwork in Laviola 2017d, 82, 85, 98.

⁷⁸ Inv. no. 1971.42. The bowl was formerly part of the Kevorkian Collection. The inscriptions reading provided by Melikian-Chirvani, who published the bowl texts (1977b, 369-370), differs slightly from that offered on-line by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

⁷⁹ Palmettes into heart-shaped frames appear on 12th century pottery from Iran (see Grube 1976, no. 112; 1994, no. 198, Nasser D. Khalili Collection, Inv. no. POT1209).

⁸⁰ The Aron Collection owns a high tin bronze bowl (Inv. no. Aron 149) bearing the same decoration seen on no. 57.

⁸¹ A silver bowl of the same shape is preserved in the Museum of National Antiquities of Stockholm, bearing a Kufic inscription against a punched background; see Melikian-Chirvani 1974b, fig. 37; Allan 1976, II, 558, D/3; *Islam Konst och Kultur* 1985, 183, no. 1. A high tin bronze specimen is in the Aron Collection (Inv. no. Aron400): this bowl bears no inscriptions but the decoration composed by punched, dotted circles on the thumb-rest coincides with that on no. 63.

rows on the thumb-rest; the decorated surface of the external wall is covered by tiny dots. The Kufic inscription with scenographic apices reads benedictory terms deprived of an article. Letters are bold and full-bodied, occupying the whole space available. Terminals of the *wāws* are raised, drawing a square angle and almost reconnecting to the body. The *rā*'s have two terminals, one lying on the writing line, the other raising sinuously. The *tā*' in the word *ghibṭa* resembles those seen on many Ghaznavid inscriptions on marble, from the tomb of Sebūktigin onward. Moreover, the big five-lobed palmette encircled by its own foliated and budded scroll, recalls those pierced on a lampstand retrieved in Maimana (no. 280, Pl. 106). The two-ply strip framed by vertical lines that flank each panel finds a comparison on the spoon-ladle no. 142 (Pl. 60a-b). Many clues support the early date of this artefact, together with the existence of a silver direct comparison; it probably represents a highly refined production of the early Islamic period. Maurizio Taddei stressed in his notes that damages might have resulted from prolonged use.

The catalogue includes three bowls with a flat base and flared walls, each one different from the others. No. 67 represents an example of cast high tin bronze; the manufacturing technique can be inferred from the width of the rim, definitely wider than that of forged hemispherical bowls. Decoration is entirely made of punched dotted circles, arranged in bands and rosettes.

Again, the Sasanian silver models reappear in bowl no. 65, which was attested in Ghazni storeroom as recently as 2005; it was not photographed during the last visit, in 2013, but this does not mean it is not there anymore. It is the only specimen presenting a flared wall shaped in big concave lobes, resting on a narrow hexagonal base.⁸² Such a peculiar morphology cannot exceed the 11th century at the latest, but is probably even earlier. No. 70 is among the very few surviving metalworks as well. The sober decoration made of dotted circles bunches is certainly original, in contrast to the trace of a handle soldering.

Footed specimen no. 76 attests a further, probably later use of high tin bronze. The bowl may be dated to the early 13th century since a bowl of this shape is portrayed in the animated inscription in the upper register of the Bobrinsky bucket – dated to 1163 – so this model of footed bowl should have been in use at that time.⁸³ Chronology is confirmed by comparison with the famous Wade Cup,⁸⁴ a specimen from the Louvre Museum dedicated to a Khurasan vizier,⁸⁵ and a third specimen from the Keir Collection.⁸⁶ The bowl's surface is polished and blank, so that the beautiful cursive inscription inlaid with silver, running below the rim, stands out. The epigraphical background is enriched by hatchings and a refined vegetal motif composed by thin foliated scrolls ending in trilobed flowers with sinuous petals. The flowers are alternatively arranged upward or downward, giving an effect of softness. The benedictory text, besides common terms, includes few extremely peculiar ones obtained by the crasis of two terms. The script is characterised by massive trapezoidal *hastae*, wider at the top, thinner at the bottom, which fit into the *wāw* terminals. The upper segment of the *tā*' *marbūṭā* also raises as a *hasta*, while other letters rest low on the writing line. The whole text appears very neat.

Bowl no. 75 may be better known. Mentioned in various publications because of its peculiar decoration executed in repoussé, it is a unique specimen. Scerrato recalled that the spatial organisation – into pentagonal panels (see Pl. 32) – is attested in Sasanian precious metalworks

⁸² A Pre-Islamic specimen of this kind showing concave lobed walls is preserved in the Museo delle Civiltà (Museo d'arte orientale; Inv. no. 2701/4011).

⁸³ Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum (Inv. no. IR-2268); see Ettinghausen 1957, 337.

⁸⁴ Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art (Inv. no. 1944.485); see Rice 1955a.

⁸⁵ A single epigraphical band adorns the Louvre specimen (Inv. no. MAO 503). According to Melikian-Chirvani (1977a, 193-195), the choice of this model by a high rank personality would testify how in vogue it was.

⁸⁶ Fehérvári 1976, 67, no. 63, pl. 19a.

and Islamic ceramics.⁸⁷ The decoration employs an anthropomorphic theme: a cross-legged seated figure, holding in its arms a scarf over his head, probably to be interpreted as an astrological representation.⁸⁸ Zoomorphic panels have a specific character as well; not the usual, static pair of addorsed birds, but rather two superimposed birds, one preying on the other, both well-defined in details. In the lower register are winged lions looking backward. The care dedicated to execution is apparent in the engraved details added to figures beaten in high relief and in the punched background. Also the vegetal elements are interesting enough: petals of trilobed flowers recall pierced pearls, thus an old fashion device; the wavy scroll running below the rim features bilobed palmettes disposing alternatively. Therefore, vegetal elements point to a relatively early date. Decorative techniques and features assimilate this bowl to a specific production probably based in Sistan.

Bowls' lids

The fragmentary status of lid no. 77 (Pl. 33a-b) is regrettable indeed, since the artefact was likely a beautiful one. Morphologically, it could be associated with a footed bowl of the model shown by no. 76, based on comparison with the famous Vaso Vescovali.⁸⁹ Decoration is lavish and epigraphy follows the standard. The silver inlaid cursive script features human heads atop of letters, while some of the bodies are transformed into real and fantastic animals.⁹⁰ In addition, fantastic animals, standing or by profile, inhabit the epigraphical ground.⁹¹ On what remains of the proper lid, an enthroned king flanked by two attendants is framed in panels. The central figure holds in his right hand a hemispherical bowl. The throne is framed by two poles, each one topped with a dragonhead.

Only the top hold remains of lid no. 78 (Pl. 33).⁹² The group of six birds, radially arranged with the heads projecting outward, conveys a lively effect. Incisions, realised with different depths and in different directions, define the plumage that becomes denser on the neck and results in long feathers on the wing.

⁸⁷ Scerrato 1961, 63. A similar bowl coming from Afghanistan and bearing a zoomorphic decoration is housed in the Museo delle Civiltà (Museo d'arte orientale; Bavicchi Collection, without Inv. no.). Moreover, a bowl of this shape provided with a ring-handle is published in Marshak 1986, pls. 53-54.

⁸⁸ See Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 64.

⁸⁹ London, British Museum (Inv. no. 1950,0725.1); see Pinder-Wilson 1951.

⁹⁰ See for comparison the human headed script on a 13th century perfume bottle, also inlaid with silver, from the David Collection (Inv. no. 65/1998; Meyer 2015, Cat. no. 17).

⁹¹ Both the Wade Cup (Cleveland Museum of Art, Inv. no. 1944.485) and the Bobrinsky bucket (Hermitage Museum, Inv. no. IR-2268) offer examples of similarly rich animated inscriptions. See also the ewer from the Galleria Estense of Modena (Scerrato 1966, 56, no. 24).

⁹² For a comparison, see Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 121, no. 49.



No. 51



a

No. 52



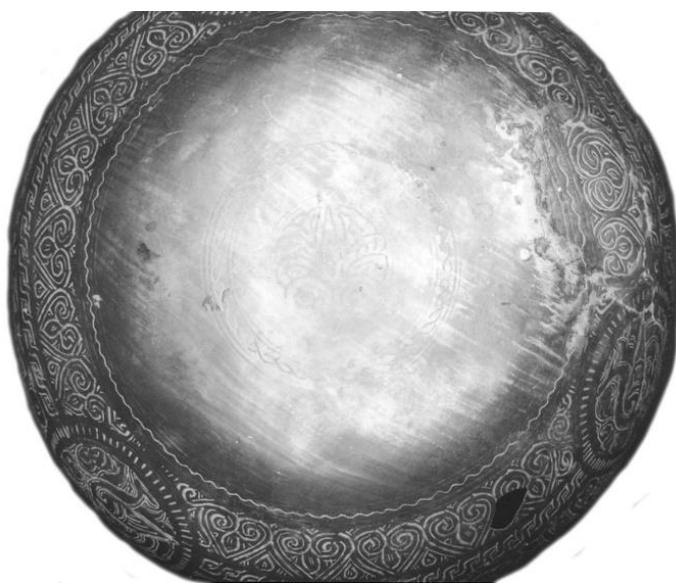
b

Pl. 22



a

No. 53



b



No. 54



No. 55



a

No. 56



b

Pl. 24



a

No. 57



b



No. 58

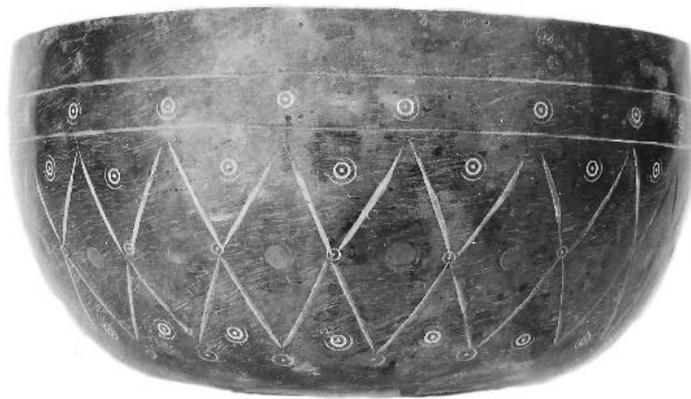


No. 59



a

No. 60



b

Pl. 26



a



b

No. 61



c





a

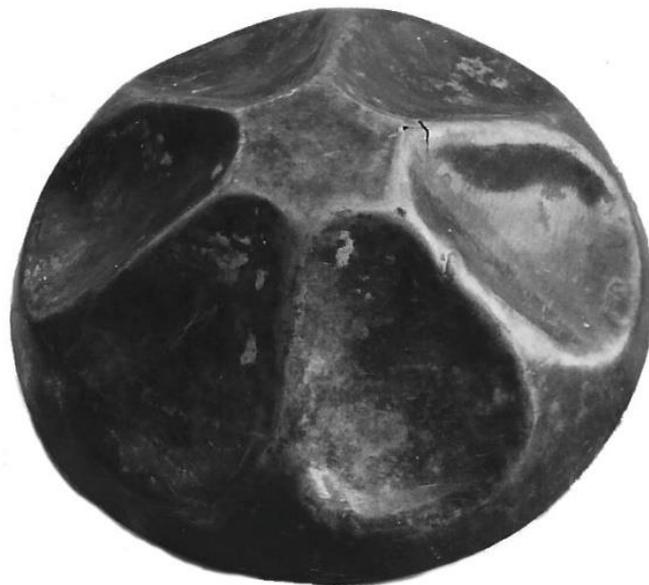
No. 63



b



No. 64



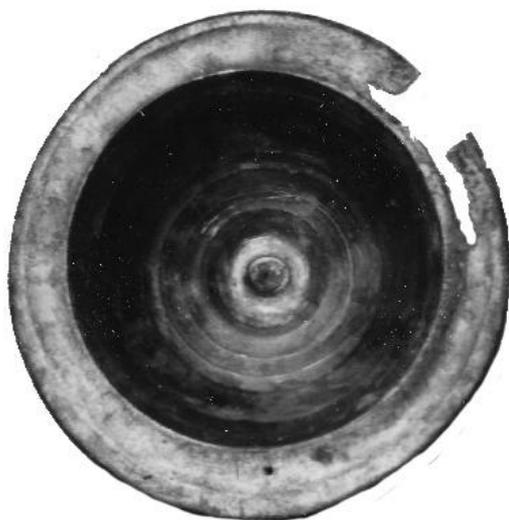
a

No. 65

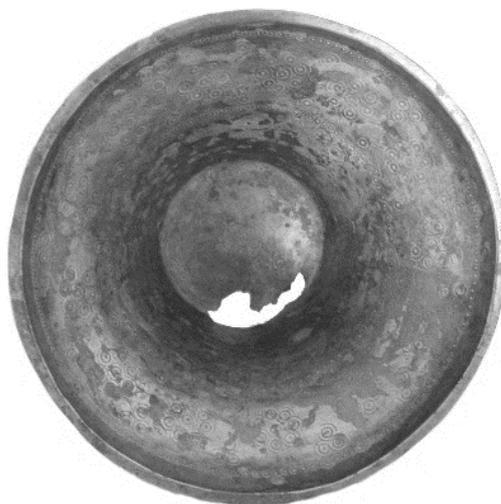


b

Pl. 30



No. 66



No. 67



No. 68



No. 69



a



b

No. 70



No. 71



No. 72



No. 73



No. 74

Pl. 32



a

No. 75



b



No. 76



a



b

No. 77



No. 78

*Mugs*No. **81**

Pl. 34

Ovoid mug

Flat base; waisted neck; ring-handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Some encrustations. A patch added to the body.

9th-10th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 152).

Two inscriptions on the patch are unreadable due to the unclear photographic documentation.

Jugs

8 Items { ovoid (nos. 82-85)
pear-shaped (nos. 86-89)

No. **82**

Pl. 34a-c

Ovoid jug

Circular opening; short, flared foot.

Copper alloy. Raised (?); engraved.

Fair condition.

Late 12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 118).

On the foot, the engraved decoration resembles a funnelled one. A Greek fret runs on the lower body. Above it, rectangular cartouches framing a hare on a vegetal background alternate with small, vegetal roundels and a bigger one including a bird. Opposite to the latter stands a big, armilla-shaped element filled with a vegetal decoration. A cursive inscription is engraved just above one cartouche's corner and the vegetal roundel; the text running unframed and disposing on at least two lines, reads a personal name:

محمود بن د (...)

Maḥmūd b. D(...)

Below the rim runs a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices on a vegetal background:

باليمن والبركة / والسلام(ة) والدو[لة]

With good fortune, blessing / and spiritual integrit(y) and domi[nion]

Interruptions in the epigraphic band leave space for a trilobed arch in the proximity of the roundel appearing below.

No. 83

Pl. 35

Ovoid jug

Circular opening; high, flared foot.
 Copper alloy. Raised (?); engraved.
 Poor condition. Thick encrustations covers the surface.
 12th-13th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 37).

On the body only one cartouche is partially visible: it frames a Kufic inscription on vegetal background:

باليمن و [...]

With good fortune and [...]

No. 84

Pl. 35

Ovoid jug

Circular opening; splayed foot.
 Copper alloy. Raised (?); engraved.
 Passable condition. Crack on the opening and tiny holes on the body.
 10th-11th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 50).

In the central body can be seen a vegetal element arranged in a round shape.

No. 85

Pl. 35

Ovoid jug

Circular opening; high, splayed foot.
 Copper alloy. Raised (?); engraved.
 Passable condition. Long crack affecting foot and body.
 10th-11th century
 Rawza Museum (1976).

On the foot runs a band framing a single scroll. A stylised Greek fret frames the space on the body and the roundels, which include a vegetal element (cf. No. 84) alternating with elongated, bud-shaped medallions including a vegetal decoration.

No. 86

Pl. 36

Pear-shaped jug

High, straight neck; splayed foot.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé.

H. 15 cm, Ø of the rim and foot 8.5 cm

Fair condition. A dent on the body.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-65); "found in Ghazni".

The foot is funnelled. A band decorated by nicks isolates the body from the neck. Below the rim runs a cursive inscription on a dotted background (reading after Scerrato's notes):

العز والاقبال والدولة والعز [...]

Glory, prosperity, fortune and AL-'A[...]

No. 87

Pl. 36a-b

Pear-shaped jug

High, straight neck; foot with polylobed profile.

High tin bronze. Raised; punched, engraved.

Poor condition. Smashed object, broken rim; some cracks on the body.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 197).

A geometric decoration runs on the foot. On the body, a central register with dotted background frames big parrots interrupted by roundels, including a five-lobed palmette. This register is comprised by a mirroring disposed band of chiselled circles, and by a register of dotted circles interrupted by roundels including the palmette mentioned above.

Below the rim runs a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices, isolated from the body by a band decorated with nicks. The text is only partially readable due to the poor preservation status:

[...] البقاء لصا(حبه)

[...] eternal life to its owner

No. 88

Pl. 37

Pear-shaped jug

Faceted wall; high, straight neck; short flared foot.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé.

Poor condition. Cracked rim.

H. 18 cm, Ø of the rim 8.5 cm, Ø of the foot 6 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-66); purchased in Ghazni.

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 68-69, pl. XXI, fig. 18 (12th-13th c.).

A series of upturned, crescent-shaped elements in repoussé isolates the body from the neck. Below the rim runs a cursive inscription with isolated pearls on a dotted background:

العز والاقبال والدوالة والعـ[...]

Glory, prosperity, fortune and AL-'A[...]

No. 89

Pl. 37a-b

Pear-shaped jug

Faceted wall; high straight neck; splayed foot. Body final section recessed on a lower layer.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with copper and silver.

Poor condition. Many dents.

H. 18.7 cm

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 33).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 62, fig. 31 (12th-13th c.).

On the lower body, a series of small roundels include a bird. Above this, a series of bigger, spade-shaped roundels include a vegetal decoration and crescent-shaped roundels.

On the body can be seen a sequence of crescent-shape roundels and a cursive inscription on a vegetal background. The script with bold, elongated *hastae* differs from the previous one; the text repeats the term:

التأييد

Divine support

Below the rim runs an inlaid cursive inscription on a background of budded scrolls ending in trilobed flowers:

العز والاقبال والدوالة والسعادة والتـ(امة)

Glory, prosperity, fortune, happiness and ple[nitude]

Comment

Mugs

The only mug presented (no. 81) shows a morphology that can be traced back to the Sasanian silverware.⁹³ Unfortunately, the item is probably interpolated. A sort of epigraphical patch, probably belonging to a finer object, was added to its body opposite to the ring-handle.

⁹³ See Marshak 1986, pl. 108.

Jugs

With regard to jugs, it is unclear whether they were used as drinking or pouring vessels. Unfortunately, measurements are unknown. A direct comparison has been found only for ovoid jugs with slightly flared foot in the Keir Collection. That specimen is 16 cm high and provided with a handle.⁹⁴

The best preserved decoration is visible on the ovoid jug no. 82 (Pl. 34a-c) and involves some elements recurring on ewer no. 108 (Pl. 46a); namely, an armilla-shaped element filled with a vegetal pattern (Figs. 29, 30). Opposite of this pattern lies a zoomorphic medallion, with corresponding epigraphical cartouches interrupted with a trilobed arch (Figs. 31, 32).

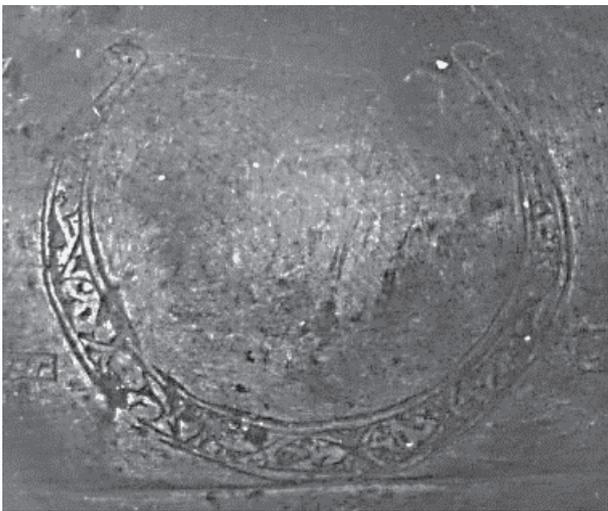


Fig. 29 – Armilla-shaped element on jug no. 82
(Neg. no. 7932/17a).



Fig. 30 – Armilla-shaped element
on ewer no. 108 (Neg. no. 184/13).

Jug no. 85 (Pl. 35) shares with ewer no. 96 (Pl. 40a) and incense burner no. 337 (Pl. 124a-b) a stylised vegetal band running along the foot of the former and around the body of the latter. The mentioned similarities between items meant to contain liquids shed light on a specific production.

Moreover, a cursive inscription added to jug no. 82 (Fig. 77) breaks the tidiness of benedictory texts always framed in cartouches. This is seen to be a personal name, only in part decipherable, that might belong to an owner of the object, while unlikely to the artisan since there is no term or expression introducing it as such (e.i. *'amal*). The script is compatible with the object's dating.

⁹⁴ See Fehérvári 1976, 66, no. 61, pl. 18d.



Fig. 31 – Zoomorphic medallion on jug no. 82
(Neg. no. 7932/12a).



Fig. 32 – Zoomorphic medallion on ewer no. 108
(Neg. no. 154/16).

Another decorative element helps to date jugs nos. 84-85 (Pl. 35) and ewers no. 93 (Pl. 39), no. 96 (Pl. 40a), where it appears as three stylised semi-palmettes disposed radially inside a roundel. This motif appeared for the first time on the prismatic side of the tomb of the Ghaznavid Maḥmūd b. Sebūktigin in Rawza.⁹⁵

Pear-shaped jugs are largely attested, though their function still raised some questions if Scerrato, in his unpublished notes, classified them as vases,⁹⁶ but the slot devoted to the attachment of a handle (then lost) is clearly marked on item no. 88 (Pl. 37) by a trilobed arch interrupting the inscription.⁹⁷ Such a detail is enough to identify these objects as jugs, following a renowned model that originated from ancient prototypes made of precious metal and had fortune in pottery as well.⁹⁸

Typically, with a blank or possibly faceted body, these jugs usually bear a cursive benedictory inscription running around the neck comprised between two fillets. Melikian-Chirvani already reckoned them (in particular no. 88) as part of a specific school dating to the 12th-early 13th century. Jug no. 87 (Pl. 36a-b), despite of its damaged condition, stands out for the rich, ground-covering decoration arranged in horizontal registers. This includes punched, pointed pearls and concave discs, big birds with bodies engraved in detail, and roundels including five-lobed palmettes. The epigraphical band, most probably benedictory, is in a very rigid Kufic scrip characterised by sharp rhomboid *ʿayns*. The object also rests on a polylobed

⁹⁵ See Giunta 2003, pl. VI, figs. 2, 4.

⁹⁶ A richly decorated vase close in shape to a jug is published by Barrett (1949, pl. 8). The scholar specifies that a handle was added later, and then removed.

⁹⁷ The detail is transmitted by Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 68.

⁹⁸ Allan 1976, I, 231.

foot. It certainly represents the highest outcome of this class and it should have been one of the best pieces of the early period taking into account the decoration and script.

Jug no. 89 (Pl. 37a-b) attests that the same morphological model might be decorated by engravings as well, benefiting in refinement thanks to the thin silver inlay.



No. 81



a



b

No. 82



c

Pl. 35



No. 83



No. 84



No. 85



No. 86



a

No. 87



b

Pl. 37



No. 88



No. 89

a



b

Ewers

37 Items	{	ovoid (nos. 90-92)	
		pear-shaped (nos. 93-98, handle no. 99)	lamp-shaped spout (nos. 93-96)
		cylindrical (nos. 100-116, 119-120, 126)	smooth wall (nos. 100-105, 107-110, spout no. 106)
			fluted wall (nos. 111-114, 116, 126, spout no. 115)
			faceted wall (no. 119)
sub-globular (nos. 121-125)	footed (no. 120)		
unidentified spouts (nos. 117-118)	smooth (nos. 121-124, 125)		
		fluted (no. 123)	

No. 90

Pl. 38

Ovoid ewer

Flared foot; trumpet-shaped neck; tapering handle with hemispherical pearls and thumb-rest. Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Fragmentary thumb-rest.

9th-10th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-22); "found in Ghazni".

On the foot, engraved palmettes alternate with big, dotted buds. Stylised vegetal elements appear at the base and in the upper section of the neck.

No. 91

Pl. 38a-b

Ovoid ewer

High ring foot; high, flaring neck; sinuous handle with full-rounded pearls and geometric thumb-rest.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

9th-10th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-21); "found in Ghazni".

Small, dotted almonds appear on the ring foot. A thinly dotted festoon with trilobed flowers runs below the neck collar, while a frame of rhomboid elements runs at the base of the neck and below the rim.

On the underside a big, 8-petalled, budded flower is encircled by a dotted roundel.

No. 92

Pl. 39

Ovoid ewer

Wall narrowing toward the neck; flared foot.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Neck, spout and handle missing; encrustations.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 123).

A geometrical and interlaced motif runs around the upper rim. A big rosette appears on the body, flanked by two vertically disposed, rectangular cartouches alternating with a roundel. Only one inscription, in floriated Kufic, is readable due to the state of preservation:

البركة / [...]

[...] / blessing

No. 93

Pl. 39

Pear-shaped ewer

Splayed foot; lamp-shaped spout.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. Handle missing.

H. 23.2 cm, max Ø 14.3 cm, Ø of foot 9.6 cm

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 124).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 201, pl. XV, fig. 11 (10th-early 11th c.).

Hooked Solomon knots into roundels can be seen on the body. A stylised, vegetal element appears in a roundel on the spout side.

No. 94

Pl. 39

Pear-shaped ewer

High trumpet-shaped neck; lamp-shaped spout with open reservoir; long handle with geometrical thumb-rest.

Copper alloy. Raised (?).

Very poor condition. Fragmentary body; deep cracks.
10th century
Rawza Museum 1976, no. 96.

No. 95

Pl. 40a-b

Pear-shaped ewer

Splayed foot; lamp-shaped spout; long tapering handle with high vegetal thumb-rest.
Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
Passable condition. Lid missing; worn.
10th-11th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 193).

A festoon decoration runs on the foot. On the body can be seen a Kufic inscription: the text is unreadable due to the preservation status. A spade-shaped medallion with vegetal decoration appears on the neck, while an almond-shaped medallion with vegetal decoration on the spout side.

No. 96

Pl. 40a-c

Pear-shaped ewer

Splayed foot; lamp-shaped spout.
Copper alloy. Cast; chiselled, engraved, inlaid with copper.
Poor condition. Lid, bottom and handle missing; long crack on the foot, some gaps on the body.
H. 23 cm, max Ø 12.5 cm, Ø of foot 9.6 cm
10th-11th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 32); purchased in Ghazni in 1958; MAIA Inv. no. Sp16.
Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 199-201, pls. XIII-XIV, figs. 9-10 (late 10th-early 11th c.).

A vegetal frame runs at the base of the neck. A vegetal roundel and a cartouche appear on each side of the head. On the body runs a row of vegetal, small roundels comprised between two rows of concave, small roundels. A Kufic signature disposes vertically on the neck in two sections:

عمل حسن بن / محمد بن سجزي

Work of Ḥasan b. / Muḥammad b. Sijzī

No. 97

Pl. 41

Pear-shaped ewer

Flared foot.
Copper alloy. Cast; chiselled, engraved.

Poor condition. Spout and handle missing; gaps on the body, encrustations.
 Late 10th-early 11th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 101).
 Rosettes into roundels run around the body.

Nos. **98-98bis**

Pl. 41

Pear-shaped ewer's fragments

Copper alloy. Cast; chiselled, engraved.
 Very poor condition.
 Late 10th-early 11th century
 Rawza Museum (1976).
 Roundels encircled by cut fillets are alternatively empty or include Solomon knots.

No. **99**

Pl. 41a-b

Ewer vertical handle

Stylised feline shape.
 Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
 Fair condition.
 12th century
 Rawza Museum (1976).
 The tail is in form of a stylised palmette. Details are carved on the snout. An engraved, vegetal decoration appears on the paws.

No. **100**

Pl. 42a-c

Cylindrical ewer

High tubular neck; movable ring-handle tied to the neck through a metal strip.
 Copper alloy. Raised; punched, engraved.
 Fair condition. Some dents, a hole on the body (Scerrato).
 H. 33 cm
 10th-11th century
 Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.
Published: Scerrato 1964, 699, no. 11, pls. XVIII-XIX, figs. 33-36.
 Dotted lines run on the walls. A decoration of epigraphical inspiration alternates with tiny, dotted rosettes on the shoulder, while a series of nicks and a fishbone-like frame encircle the neck. A geometric motif decorates the final section of the handle.

No. **101**

Pl. 43a-b

Cylindrical ewer

Flat shoulder; high tubular neck; handle tied to the neck through a metal strip.

Copper alloy. Raised; punched.

Fair condition. Handle hanging ring missing; some dents (Scerrato).

H. 34.4 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 700, no. 12, pls. XX-XXI, figs. 37-38.

Dotted lines run on the walls. A decoration inspired to epigraphical signs can be seen on the shoulder (see Pl. 42b).

No. **102**

Pl. 43

Cylindrical ewer

Convex, sloping bottom; slightly, concave wall.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, repoussé.

Poor condition. Neck and handle missing.

Uncertain dating

Rawza Museum (1976).

In the central register of the walls, big square panels defined by a continuous ribbon, knotted between one panel and the following, partition the space. Each panel includes four triangular sections filled with a vegetal scroll ending in palmettes.

No. **103**

Pl. 43

Cylindrical ewer

Sloping shoulder; high cylindrical neck; thin handle.

Copper alloy. Raised.

H. 39 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 700, no. 13, pl. XXI, fig. 39.

Poor condition. Metal strips tying neck and handle missing (Scerrato); thick patina and encrustations covering the surface.

No. 104

Pl. 44a-c

Cylindrical ewer

Flat shoulder; high neck with zoomorphic, projecting spout.

Copper alloy. Raised; pierced, engraved, inlaid with silver.

Poor condition. Gaps on the spout, cracks on the shoulder, encrustations on the wall.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 201).

On the shoulder, a vegetal decoration on a dotted background and a fishbone band encircle the neck. On the latter can be seen a vegetal cartouche with an inlaid profile and an epigraphic cartouche with inlaid, cursive inscription on a vegetal background (only partially photographed):

{...} اليمن والبركة

With good fortune and blessing {...}

On the lip engraved, small circles alternate with pairs of lines. A knotted design is pierced on the spout covering.

No. 105

Pl. 45a-b

Cylindrical ewer

Sloping shoulder; high neck with zoomorphic, projecting spout.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition.

H. maximum 32.5 cm, h. of body 17.5 cm

10th-11th century

Kandahar "City Hall" (1957-1958); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1959b, 104-105, no. 6, figs. 14-15.

A Kufic inscription runs on the shoulder; the text is unreadable due to the unclear photographic documentation.

No. 106

Pl. 45a-b

Ewer spout

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Gap on the neck and broken spout.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 144).

On the neck can be seen a festoon, a frame including a stylised, vegetal scroll, and a small Solomon knot into a roundel. On the everted spout a continuous ribbon defines a rectangular cartouche and a knotted element inside it.

No. 107

Pl. 46a-b

Cylindrical ewer

Round shoulder; high, tubular neck with projecting spout; square-section handle.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. Patina on the wall.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

A large band runs on the shoulder framing a continuous ribbon drawing a geometric design composed by alternating swastikas and rhomboid elements.

No. 108

Pl. 46a-b

Cylindrical ewer

Round shoulder; high, tubular neck with projecting spout; thin, square-section handle.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, engraved.

Fair condition. Some dents.

H. 31 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-18); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 152, no. 157 (late 12th c.); Rowland 1966, no. 109.

Interlaced ribbons, running horizontally and vertically, frame panels on the walls. A trilobed arch includes a sphynx on a stylised, scroll-patterned background. An armilla-shaped element, framing a vegetal decoration, appears in correspondence with the handle. Vases, whose three sections include a vegetal decoration with emerging branches and topped by a vegetal roundel can be seen as well. On the upper body, a Kufic inscription in two cartouches on a scroll-patterned background with trilobed flowers, repeats:

بالبير

With devotion

On the flat top of shoulder, an inscription in elongated cursive on a scroll-patterned background with trilobed flowers repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 109

Pl. 47

Cylindrical ewer

Round shoulder; square-section handle.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Neck and spout missing; encrustations.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 107).

Due to the preservation status, only a geometric frame on the lower walls is visible.

No. 110

Pl. 47

Cylindrical ewer

Round shoulder; high, tubular neck with everted spout; square-section handle.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Big gap on the body, detached neck. Traces of ancient restoration on the lower body.

H. 39.5 cm

12th-13th century

MuCIIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5961; purchased in Ghazni and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.

A festoon appears on the lower walls, while a geometric frame defines panels including different motifs. A sphynx on a vegetal background is enclosed in a trilobed arch; a vase includes in its three sections a vegetal decoration with emerging branches; a spade-shaped roundel frames a bird on a vegetal background. On the upper body, a Kufic inscription in four cartouches runs on a stylised, intricate, vegetal background:

باليـمـ [...] / والبركةـ[ة] / والبر وال / والبر واله

With good fortu[ne ...] / , blessin[g] / , devotion and AL- / and devotion and A-L-H

On the shoulder's top, a cursive inscription on a stylised, intricate, vegetal background repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 111

Pl. 47a-b

Fluted cylindrical ewer

Round and sloping alternatively fluted wall; round shoulder; splayed foot.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, engraved.

Fair condition. Neck, handle and bottom missing.

H. 24.3 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-16).

Published: Rowland 1966, no. 108.

On the sloping flutes, a pair of rectangular cartouches frame a scroll with trilobed palmettes; they continue on the round shoulder with two short cartouches. On the round flutes, cartouches present triangular ends and frame hunting dogs, lions, and running hares on a vegetal background; they are topped on the round shoulder by vegetal roundels.

On the shoulder's top, a cursive inscription characterised by elongated *hastae* on an intricate, stylised background composed by spiralling scrolls with buds and trilobed flowers, repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 112

Pl. 48

Fluted cylindrical ewer

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Passable condition. Neck, bottom and handle missing (only the shoulder's top visible due to the incomplete photographic documentation).

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 177).

On the shoulder's top, a cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* on a vegetal background repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 113

Pl. 48

Fluted cylindrical ewer

Round and sloping alternatively fluted wall; round shoulder; splayed foot.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, engraved, inlaid with copper.

Poor condition. Neck and handle missing; big gap on the body.

Splayed foot.

H. 27 cm, Ø 18.5 cm

12th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5945; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.

On the sloping flutes, a pair of cartouches frame interlaced ribbons; they are topped on the round shoulder by an almond-shaped roundel including a vegetal element. On the eleven round flutes, cartouches frame a Kufic inscription on a stylised, vegetal background, repeating:

البر

Devotion

They are topped on the round shoulder by a vegetal roundel.

On the shoulder's top, a cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* on a vegetal background is interrupted by copper inlaid roundels enclosing a vegetal element. The text repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 114

Pl. 49a-b

Fluted cylindrical ewer

Widely fluted, flared wall; round shoulder; splayed foot.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, engraved.

Fair condition. Neck, bottom and handle missing.

H. 21 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-17).

Published: Scerrato 1961, 151, no. 156, pl. LXII (last quarter of 12th c.); Rowland 1966, no. 106.

On the lower body, a cursive inscription in cartouches on a stylised, vegetal background repeats:

(ا)لتأييد

(D)ivine support

On the body, spade-shaped roundels include a bird on a vegetal background. A Kufic inscription runs in cartouches on the upper body: the text most probably reads benedictory terms. A series of small, vegetal roundels appears on the round shoulder. On the shoulder's top, a cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* on an intricate, vegetal background repeats:

(ا)لتأييد

(D)ivine support

Tripartite flowers appear above the inscription.

No. 115

Pl. 49a-b

Ewer spout

Cylindrical neck with everted spout ending in a three-holed opening.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, engraved, punched.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 9).

A seated lion in repoussé, with incised and punched details, is framed by interlaced ribbons on the neck. A vegetal cartouche appears on the spout side, while a geometric cartouche on the spout underside.

No. 116

Pl. 50a-d

Fluted cylindrical ewer

Wide and narrow, round alternatively fluted wall; round shoulder; cylindrical neck with everted spout; splayed foot.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, engraved, punched, inlaid with silver and copper.

Passable condition. Handle missing; long crack on foot and body, neck detached from the body.

H. 31 cm, Ø 21 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-186); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 150-151, no. 155 (last quarter of 12th c.).

Quoted: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 118, fig. 45a.

On the wide flutes is displayed a cartouche with silver inlaid, Kufic inscriptions on an intricate, vegetal background. The text is only partially photographed:

باليمن والبركة والدو[لة] / والعناية و[...] والدافعة والصاكة و[...] والشفاة
والسلامة [...] والدوامة {...}

With good fortune, blessing, fortu[ne] /, solicitude, [...], impetus, silence, and [...], prophetic intercession, spiritual integrity [...] and persistence {...}

On the narrow flutes runs a vegetal scroll inlaid with silver. On the round shoulder can be seen elaborate, vegetal roundels with silver inlaid rosettes. On the shoulder's top a silver inlaid, cursive inscription runs on an intricate, vegetal background with buds and trilobed flowers (reading after Scerrato's notes):

العز والاقبال والدولة والسلامة والسعاد(ة) والنعمة والعافية والنصرة والناصر(ة)
والقرا والبقاء د[ائمًا] لصاحبه

Glory, prosperity, fortune, spiritual integrity, happines(s), grace, wellness, victory, that which makes victorious, hospitality and eternal life per[petually] to its owner

The ribbon defining the upper profile of its cartouche evolves, above the inscription, in tripartite knotted flowers inlaid with silver as well.

On the neck side appears a seated lion in repoussé with punched and engraved details, and pairs of rosettes probably inlaid. On the everted spout's side can be seen a copper inlaid scroll with knotted section. A lying-down lion adorns the spout-covering section. Interlaced ribbons decorate the underside of the spout.

No. 117

Pl. 51

Ewer spout

Cylindrical neck with everted spout.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé.

Poor condition. Long crack on the neck.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 146).

A seated lion in repoussé appears on the neck.

No. 118

Pl. 51

Ewer spout

Cylindrical neck with everted spout.
 Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé.
 Very poor condition. Spout broken.
 12th-13th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 145).
 A seated lion in repoussé appears on the neck.

No. 119

Pl. 51

Faceted cylindrical ewer

Flat base; round shoulder; two nailed hooks.
 Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.
 Poor condition. Neck, spout and handle missing; flanges probably added later.
 H. 15.5 cm
 12th-13th century
 Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-23); “found in Ghazni”.
 On the lower body spade-shaped roundels include a bird on a vegetal background. In the upper register of the body, a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background repeats eleven times:

البركة

Blessing

On the faceted shoulder a Kufic inscription in cartouches alternate with vegetal roundels. The text is unreadable due to preservation status.

No. 120

Pl. 51

Footed cylindrical ewer

Sloping shoulder; wide, cylindrical neck; long, tubular spout; round-section handle.
 High tin bronze. Cast.
 Fair condition.
 H. 17.2 cm, Ø 5.8 cm
 10th-11th century
 Kabul Museum (1965); “found in Ghazni”.
Quoted: Melikian-Chirvani 1974b, 130, fig. 8.

No. 121

Pl. 52a-c

Sub-globular ewer

Cylindrical neck; big, everted spout; square-section handle with small geometric thumb-rest; hexagonal base.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition. Some dents. One neck ring missing.

Second half of 12th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 699, no. 10, pls. XVI-XVII, figs. 30-32.

Interlaced ribbons can be seen on the final section of the handle. A geometric frame and a small Solomon knot appear into a roundel on the neck side; a geometric frame runs at the base of the spout.

No. 122

Pl. 53a-d

Sub-globular ewer

Cylindrical neck with big, everted spout; small, geometric thumb-rest on the handle.

Copper alloy. Raised; chiselled, engraved, punched, inlaid with silver.

Fair condition. Neck rings missing; broken spout.

H. 25 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 696-699, no. 9, pls. XII-XV, figs. 25-29 (second half of 12th c.).

Kufic pseudo-inscriptions run unframed of on the foot, shoulder and spout. The body is divided in vertical sections, horizontally crossed in the middle by a series of rhomboid elements with punched decoration. Another Kufic pseudo-inscription, encircled by a series of pierced pearls, runs on the shoulder. On the neck and spout can be seen geometric frames, pseudo-Kufic bands and a rosette.

No. 123

Pl. 54a-c

Fluted sub-globular ewer

Flared neck; circular opening. One flute every two is divided in two sections by a fillet in relief.

Copper alloy. Cast moulded; engraved, punched, inlaid with copper.

Poor condition. Bottom, three feet, handle and lid missing.

H. 18.4 cm, Ø 17.4 cm, Ø of neck 8.4 cm

11th-12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-19).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1979a, 27-29, pl. XIV, figs. 18-19.

Flutes are defined by notches in relief, which also split one flute out of two in two sections. A cursive inscription on a dotted background with few vegetal elements disposes in three flutes reading a signature between benedictory texts:

باليمن والبركة و / عمل ابو الفتح و / باليمن والبركة

With good fortune and blessing, / work of Abū'l-Faṭḥ and / with good fortune and blessing

No. 124

Pl. 55a-c

Sub-globular ewer

Flared neck; circular opening with conical lid.
Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.
Fair condition. Spout, bottom, three feet and handle missing.
H. 23.2 cm, Ø maximum 17.5 cm, Ø of rim 8.6 cm
Second half of 12th /13th century
Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. No. 58-2-20); “found in Ghazni”.
Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1979a, 26-27, pl. XIII, fig. 17.

Running quadrupeds on a vegetal background are framed in cartouches on the underside. A Kufic inscription in the lower register of the body is interrupted by vegetal roundels:

باليمن والبر و / والبركة والر / والدولة وا / والسر وار وال / والسعاد[ة] واله /
والدولة والدو

With good fortune, devotion, / and blessing and AL-RA / and fortune and A /, esoteric knowledge and A, R and AL- / and happine[ss] and A-L-H /, fortune and AL-DAW

In the main register, the following elements alternate: an armilla-shaped element including a vegetal decoration, vases with emerging branches ending in daisy-like flowers, copper inlaid, six-pointed stars on a dotted and vegetal background including a bird into a roundel. The star is drawn by a continuous ribbon, and encircled by a roundel made of interlaced ribbons. Vegetal roundels appear in the upper register, along with a bold, cursive inscription, inlaid with copper, on a vegetal background with tripartite flowers, framed in cartouches:

العز والاقبال والـ / ا والدولة والعسا ا

Glory, prosperity and AL- / A, fortune and al- 'ASĀ A

A band of interlaced ribbons runs at the base of the neck. Around the neck, vegetal roundels alternate with a Kufic inscription in cartouches (read by Melikian-Chirvani):

باليمن / والبر[كة] / والكر[امة] / والد[ولة]

With good fortune /, ble[ssing] /, gener[osity] / and do[minion]

A stylised, vegetal scroll runs around the opening, and a cursive inscription (read by Melikian-Chirvani) on the lid:

العز والا ا

Glory and AL-A A

No. 125

Sub-globular ewer

Flared foot; trumpet-shaped neck with wide, protruding rim; tapering handle; pomegranate thumb-rest.

Copper alloy. Engraved.

Fair condition. Some dents, three holes on the body.

H. 27 cm

12th century

Kabul Museum (1958); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 150, no. 154.

No picture available; information after Scerrato notes.

On the body, a polylobed medallion includes a sphynx on a vegetal background, while a spade-shaped medallion encloses a vegetal decoration. On the neck, two cartouches linked by an arch frame a benedictory Kufic inscription on a vegetal background.

Unknown location

No. 126

Pl. 56a-b

Fluted cylindrical ewer

Round and sloping alternatively fluted wall; squared shoulder; very high, tubular neck with ring-handle and zoomorphic thumb-rest; further protruding birds' necks carved in round.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition. Interpolations: shoulder and neck replaced.

12th-13th century

"Found in Afghanistan".

A festoon of composite triangles runs below the rim. On the sloping flutes, a pair of cartouches frame a vegetal scroll; on the round flutes, a cartouche frames running quadrupeds on a vegetal background. Cartouches continuation is engraved on the replaced shoulder.

On the shoulder's top, a cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* is interrupted by big crescent-shaped roundels; the text is unreadable due to the incomplete photographic documentation. A vegetal scroll runs at the base of the neck; interlaced ribbons appear between one protruding bird and the other. A cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* on a rich, vegetal background probably reads:

العز والاقبال

Glory and prosperity

Comment

Ewers were employed as tableware to contain and serve water, wine and other drinks, but also for ablutions. This second function is inferred thanks to the Persian inscription engraved on a ewer from the Museum of Art in Tiflis,⁹⁹ and supported by the finding of ewers and buckets in sets.¹⁰⁰ Evidence is still insufficient to indicate which kind of ewer was related to each function.

The thirty-seven ewers (or ewers fragments) here presented show a high variety both in morphology and decoration. Among these are three main groups: ovoid and pear-shaped, cylindrical, and sub-globular ewers.

The ovoid and pear-shaped model is the most ancient, already testified in pre-Islamic times, and later adapted to the rising artistic taste.¹⁰¹ The handle is typically enriched by a series of inserted pearls (from five to seven), hemispherical or in round. At the top a thumb-rest, of geometrical form like the sphere on ewer no. 91 (Pl. 38a), or more often vegetal like the fragmentary palmette on ewer no. 90 (Pl. 38), dominates. The high neck, flared (no. 91)¹⁰² or waisted (no. 90), has a rib in relief at the base, which probably helped in hiding the junction point between neck and body. Beyond the already mentioned cast elements, this model usually shows a very simple decoration on the neck and foot: engraved and/or dotted geometrical and stylised vegetal elements. Ewer no. 90 should be considered the earliest specimen among this documentation, since the handle joins the shoulder by means of a flat link in the form of a stylised zoomorphic head (bird or gazelle head). Such elements are typical of late Sasanian and early Islamic ewers.¹⁰³ A most similar item, conserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum is assigned to the 8th century.¹⁰⁴ The latter also shares with ewer no. 91 (Pl. 38b) the 8-petalled flower with tiny lotus buds on the intervals between petals engraved on the underside.

The severely damaged ewer no. 94 finds an intact twin item, datable to the 10th century, in the Herat National Museum.¹⁰⁵ The handle is joined to the body through a thicker and stylised version of the link employed on ewer no. 90. Unfortunately the state of preservation prevents detection of any possible decoration, which might have been interesting if equal to that of Herat ewer.¹⁰⁶

Pear-shaped ewers with spouts in the form of oil-lamps are a very characteristic models that enjoyed great diffusion throughout the 12th century and later on, as testified by the numerous

⁹⁹ Allan 1976, I, 228.

¹⁰⁰ See Harari 1938-1939, 2484-2485; Ward 1993, fig. 48. No bucket was documented during the activity of the IsMEO Mission. Nowadays, a sub-globular bucket is on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum, and a group of sixteen buckets, which came to light in 2012 in Ghazni, are stored in the same Museum. For a preliminary analysis of the buckets, see Laviola 2018.

¹⁰¹ The so-called ewer of Abū Yazīd – from the artisan's name – is considered the most ancient specimen known: it bears the date of the year 69/688-689. Notwithstanding, some scholars (Ward 1993, 47; Loukonine, Ivanov 1996, 112, fig. 86) believe that date devoid of the term which specifies the hundreds. In the inscription

بركة من صنع ابو يزيد عمل بالبصرة سنة تسع وستين

the script narrows toward the end, due to a lack of space. This would be a plausible reason for the omission. Taking this hypothesis for good, the correct date would be later, as the ewer's decoration suggests: 169/785, if not even 269/882. Otherwise, Fehérvári (1976, 25) reckons such an omission as unlikely.

¹⁰² For comparison, see Fehérvári 1976, no. 5, pl. 2c.

¹⁰³ See Marshak 1971.

¹⁰⁴ Inv. no. 434-1906; see Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 40, no. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Inv. no. HNM 03.05.86a; see Müller-Wiener 2016, fig. 25, Cat. no. M42.

¹⁰⁶ The Herat specimen bears a silver inlaid inscription below the pouring lip, according to the Samanid fashion (Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 27-28, fig. 2, and previous bibliography).

preserved specimens.¹⁰⁷ The body tapers toward the neck, marked by two fillets in relief. The ewer's neck ends in an upward spout reckoned by Melikian-Chirvani as a stylised zoomorphic head.¹⁰⁸ The lamp-shaped head is sometimes replaced by a bull's head;¹⁰⁹ in other cases it is confined to the ewer's lid.¹¹⁰ Typically, these ewers feature some copper inlay; unfortunately, black and white pictures combined with the state of preservation consent not such analysis on the catalogued items.

Two interesting decorative elements appear on ewer no. 93 (Pl. 39): three radial vegetal elements on the spout side that recur on other items (see jugs nos. 84-85. Pl. 35 and ewer no. 96, Pl. 40a), and an interlaced pattern probably based on the Solomon knot developing around a central point, on the ewer's body.

Ewer no. 96 was purchased by the Rawza Museum from a Ghazni merchant, on Melikian-Chirvani's advice. The scholar was probably attracted by the artisan's signature (Figs. 33, 34)



Figs. 33, 34 – Artisan's signature on ewer no. 96
(Negs. nos. 7934/15-16).

that runs vertically, unframed and split into two sections, along the neck. The text begins, looking at the ewer with its spout leftward, reading top-to-bottom, while the second section is written in the opposite direction. The

term *'amal* introduces the name of *Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Sijzī*. Kufic script points to the Samanid period, in the second half of the 10th or first half of the 11th century. The ewers' head bears the decoration usually present on oil-lamps; namely, a vegetal pattern framed by a cartouche disposed along the spout and a stylised daisy on the lamp side. The flower recurs many times on the body as well, along with the above-mentioned radial symbol in rows of drop-shaped cavities where the thinned metal is perforated.

The out-of-proportion foot of ewer no. 97 (Pl. 41) betrays a later interpolation. Fragments nos. 98-98bis (Pl. 41) certainly used to belong to a ewer of the same kind; roundels including Solomon knots are a bigger version of those seen on ewer no. 93 (Pl. 39).

The long and sinuous handle no. 99 (Pl. 41a) should belong to a pear-shaped ewer with an oil-lamp spout as attested by comparison.¹¹¹ Cast in a feline shape, the zoomorphic naturalism is sacrificed for functional necessity. Paws are strongly stylised and reduced to segments that allow attaching it to the ewer's body. Moreover, an engraved vegetal scroll decorates them.

To sum up, not only the lamp-shaped spout, but the whole decorative repertoire places these ewers in the late 10th-early 11th century.

Cylindrical ewers diversify on the basis of the smooth or fluted surface. Ten specimens belong to the first group. The most interesting model, emerging from Maimana storage, shows a slightly concave wall, almost flat sloping shoulder, and a convex bottom; the opening is circular, with a short protruding rim. A metal strip wraps around the neck and then, becoming thinner, twists around the handle tying the two elements. This ewers' model was retrieved in Nishapur excavation as well.¹¹² The handle is nailed through plates in the form of heart-shaped

¹⁰⁷ Similar ewers are portrayed in the manuscript of the *Kitāb al-Diryāq*, probably Iraq, 595/1198-1199, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabe 2964, fol. 31 (cf. BnF website).

¹⁰⁸ Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 35, 52-53, no. 16.

¹⁰⁹ See the ewer Inv. no. M.107-1945 from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

¹¹⁰ See a specimen from Ribat-i Sharaf (11981, 93, no. 12) and another currently on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum (without Inv. no.).

¹¹¹ See Scerrato 1966, 38, fig. 14.

¹¹² See Allan 1982a, 79-81, nos. 93-98.

leaves. Decoration is limited to simple engraved patterns, including dotted rows on the wall, a fishbone band at the base of the neck, tiny dotted rosettes – present on the foot of ewer no. 91 (Pl. 38a) as well – and signs of epigraphical inspiration on the shoulder. The handle terminal is engraved with geometrical symbols, as well. Such simple features should indicate beyond a humble production, an early date, especially because of the dotted decoration.

Fragmentary ewer no. 102 belongs to this group on account of its morphology. This, together with the peculiar underside shaped as a rosette made of seven concave discs (Fig. 35) – would point to an early date, but the decoration is completely different. The space is geometrically divided into panels filled with a repetitive vegetal pattern that makes the dating problematic.¹¹³

A similar ewers' model differs from the previous one in the big upright spout clearly of zoomorphic inspiration (see no. 104, Pl. 44a-b; no. 105, Pl. 45a-b; no. 106, Pl. 45a-b). Such a device usually has a pierced covering over the pouring channel and is engraved with geometric or vegetal patterns, sometimes even a cursive inscription inlaid with silver on the neck (no. 104, Pl. 44b). On the ewer's shoulder sits a fishbone band and a vegetal motif, developed on a dotted background.

The most common model in the 12th century is attested by five cylindrical ewers resting on a flat base, with rounded shoulders and a considerably thinner spout rising obliquely with a square end. The handle is thin and squared in sections, as well. Two decorative elements in bas-relief are typical; a sitting lion on the neck's side, performing a clear apotropaic function, and a sunburst at neck's base – the latter useful in hiding the joints of metal sheets. The shoulder shows a ground-covering decoration: geometric in ewer no. 107 (Pl. 46b), made of continuous interlaced ribbons, creates a swastika design; epigraphic in ewers no. 108 (Pl. 46b), no. 110 (Pl. 47), with a cursive benedictory inscription on a vegetal background. Other typically Eastern Iranian motifs are engraved on the body, framed in panels, cartouches and roundels: a winged sphynx, the floriated vase and an armilla-shaped motif.

Coeval to this model, another version appeared: the fluted cylindrical ewer, which was destined for a great success. Flutes can be either of constant size (no. 114, Pl. 49a) or alternatively broad, with rounded and narrow double-sloping (no. 111, Pl. 47a; no. 113, Pl. 48; no. 116, Pl. 50a-b) producing a lively *chiaroscuro* and influencing the engraved decoration that can include epigraphical cartouches, running quadrupeds, and vegetal strips. The lion in repoussé sitting on the neck with engraved details of fur and snout – is preserved in this model, and often repeated on the pouring channel's cover. The sunburst at the base of the neck and the inlaid cursive inscription on the shoulder remain as well. Above the latter, stylised trilobed flowers are sketched on ewer no. 114 (Pl. 49b); on the far richer decorated no. 116 (Pl. 50c), a similar form is obtained through an inlaid knotted ribbon, whose stylistic influence affects the script below. Crossed and knotted ligatures between letters are preferred (see the term *al-ni'ma*). Inlaid seven-disc rosettes repeat around the shoulder.¹¹⁴

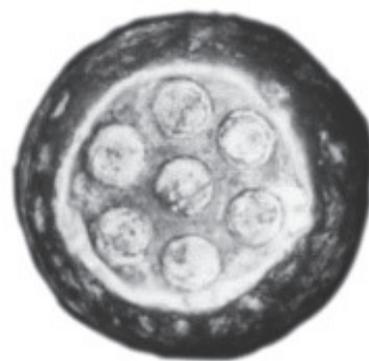


Fig. 35 – Underside of ewer no. 102.

¹¹³ For a possible comparison, see a ewer from the Herat National Museum (Inv. no. HNM 04.04.86; see Müller-Wiener 2016, Cat. no. M90, fig. 52) ascribed to the 10th-11th century.

¹¹⁴ For a close comparison, see a ewer from the Victoria and Albert Museum (Inv. no. 592-1898) published by Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 114-118, no. 45.

Ewer no. 114 (Pl. 49a) presents spade-shaped frames, topped by a trilobed flower, including a bird. The motif already recurred on ewer no. 110 (Pl. 47), associated to the same Kufic cartouches and vegetal roundels.

Object no. 126 (Pl. 56) is probably the result of some interpolations. An incoherent, flat shoulder tops the fluted body, the long neck bears a decoration that appears later than the one engraved on the body. Four swan busts protrude; one of them should have lost the head, replaced by a ring with a bird soldered on it as a thumb-rest. The latter is clearly unrelated, and probably earlier, than other birds.

Four fluted ewers had no neck, while three fragmentary necks remained.

Ewer's body no. 119 (Pl. 51) was probably adapted as teapot. It has a flat base, slightly flared, faceted walls, and a large sloping shoulder, while the upper portion is missing. It is not clear what kind of neck it could have had. The engraved decoration recalls that of ewer no. 114. Two vertical joints are nailed on the shoulder, as they should support a heavy, arched handle – which would be completely extraneous to a ewer but suitable on a bucket. The joints may be a later interpolation, occurring at a time when the object had already lost its original handle and neck.¹¹⁵ The Italian Mission notes classify it as a teapot, probably a function it assumed later.

One single specimen (no. 120, Pl. 51) presents a cylindrical body resting on three feet, with a sloping shoulder, and a very wide neck ending in a flat rim, a tape handle and an extremely long tubular spout, turning upward. There is no decoration at all, so the object was probably of functional and humble kind. The Kabul National Museum exhibits a close ewer, enriched by an extremely high thumb-rest, made of superimposed polygonal elements. The peculiar shape of the spout should be justified by a particular employ; it could be the model used for ablutions.¹¹⁶ These ewers are considerably bigger than the pear-shaped ones.¹¹⁷

Five sub-globular ewers present a low, smooth or fluted body. Ewer no. 121 (Pl. 52) has at its bottom a convex, hexagonal inner part (a similar base recurs on bowl no. 65, Pl. 29a), while ewer no. 122 (Pl. 53a-b) rests on a low foot. Nos. 123-124 (respectively, Pl. 54a, 55c) present at their bottom a circular opening with polished edges, evidence of the lost base disc and the clear trace of three lost feet. The neck is wide, waisted, ending in a circular opening covered by a conical lid topped by a finial (preserved only in no. 124, Pl. 55a-b). This ewers' model is unknown outside Ghazni; it looks like the outcome of a stylistic *mélange*, which could be dated to the 12th-13th century on the basis of the decoration.¹¹⁸ Vegetal frames, realised in *champlevé*, run around the opening and at the base of the neck. An inlaid epigraphical band, in benedictory cursive, decorates the shoulder. On the wall, six-pointed stars are inscribed in large roundels, alternating with floriated vases. On the lower wall, another inscription, in Kufic, in cartouches, alternates with small vegetal roundels.

Body of ewer no. 123 (Pl. 54) has sixteen large flutes, four of which are cut lengthwise in the middle, so that the others result in groups of three flutes. It lacks a handle, lid and spout, the latter leaving a circular hole on the body. Below it, there is a Kufic inscription, which reads the artisan's signature Abū'l-Faṭḥ (Fig. 36). Two more epigraphic bands, in cursive, are benedictory. This ewer

¹¹⁵ Unfortunately, the documentation includes no further image, which would have been useful to detect the original position of the handle.

¹¹⁶ Ward (1993, 65, fig. 48) published a similar ewer, from Egypt, dated to the 10th-11th century, in association with a bucket (Keir Collection, Inv. no. K.1.2014.65). Similar, more elaborated models coming from Egypt or Syria are dated to the late 7th-early 8th century (see Fehérvári 1976, 33-34, no. 3, pl. 2a).

¹¹⁷ See Melikian-Chirvani 1974b, 130.

¹¹⁸ Melikian-Chirvani (1979a, 24-27) relates the model to the shape of Buddhist stupas. He also draws attention to the stylistic identity between ewer no. 124 and a specimen sold in London in 1976 and decorated in the style of Ḥasan-i Bā Sahl. For a specimen still preserving handle and spout, see Melikian-Chirvani 1979a, pl. X, fig. 14.

could be earlier than no. 124, because of the Kufic style.¹¹⁹ A specimen in the Keir Collection bearing an engraved palmette on the flutes and Kufic pseudo-inscription provides a comparison for either neck no. 121 and body of ewer no. 123.¹²⁰



Fig. 36 – Artisan signature on ewer no. 123 (Neg. no. 170/8).

¹¹⁹ Melikian-Chirvani 1979a, 28.

¹²⁰ See Fehérvári 1976, 62, no. 51, pl. 15.



No. 90



No. 91

a



b

Pl. 39



No. 92



No. 93



No. 94



a

b

No. 95



a

b

c

No. 96

Pl. 41



No. 97



Nos. 98, 98bis



No. 99

a



b



a

No. 100



b



c

Pl. 43



No. 101

a



b



No. 102



No. 103



a

No. 104



b



c

Pl. 45



No. 105

a



b



No. 106

a



b

Pl. 46



a



b

No. 107



a



b

No. 108

Pl. 47



No. 109



No. 110



No. 111

a



b



No. 112



No. 113

Pl. 49



No. 114

a



b



No. 115

a



b



a



b

No. 116



c



d

Pl. 51



No. 117



No. 118



No. 119



No. 120



a



b

No. 121



c

Pl. 53



a



b

No. 122



c



d



a

No. 123



b



c

Pl. 55



a



b

No. 124



c



a

No. 126



b

Cutlery

16 Items	}	mono-functional	spoons (127-139)	}	ovoid spoon-bowl (nos. 127-131, 143-145)
		bi-functional	{ spoon-fork (no. 140) spoon-ladles (nos. 141-142)		hexagonal spoon-bowl (nos. 135-139)

No. 127

Pl. 57

Spoon

Ovoid spoon-bowl.
Copper alloy. Cast.
Passable condition.
L. 17.3 cm, l. of the handle 12.8 cm
11th-13th century
MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8356; excavated in the House of the Lustrewares, Ghazni, in 1960;
MAIA Inv. no. T67.

No. 128

Pl. 57

Spoon

Ovoid spoon-bowl.
Copper alloy. Cast.
Passable condition. Encrustations.
L. 15.6 cm, l. of the handle 11.5 cm
11th-13th century
MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8357; excavated in the House of the Lustrewares, Ghazni; MAIA
Inv. no. T69.

No. 129

Pl. 57

Spoon

Ovoid spoon-bowl.
Copper alloy (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Cast.
Restored.
Passable condition.

L. 15.8 cm, l. of the handle 11.3 cm

11th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8324; excavated in the House of the Lustrewares, Ghazni; MAIA Inv. no. T225.

No. 130

Pl. 57

Spoon

Ovoid spoon-bowl; squarish neck; long, sharp handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Cracks and a lack; restored.

L. 16.2 cm, l. of the handle 12 cm

12th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8323; excavated in the House of the Lustrewares, Ghazni; MAIA Inv. no. T226.

A footed, triangular medallion topped by a trilobed flower appears on the front of the spoon-bowl, flanked on the borders by two frames. Horizontal cuts can be seen at the handle's junction.

No. 131

Pl. 57

Spoon

Presumable ovoid spoon-bowl; long, sharp handle.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Very poor condition. Fragmentary spoon-bowl; encrustations.

L. 13.2 cm

11th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8310; excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C2173.

No. 132

Pl. 57a-b

Ovoid spoon-bowl

Square-section handle ending in a ring.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Excellent condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

The back of the spoon-bowl is partitioned in two sections with a vegetal decoration. A vegetal element is engraved on the handle's triangular junction applied on the spoon-bowl. On the front of the spoon-bowl, a sort of triangular medallion is topped by a trilobed flower.

No. 133

Pl. 57a-b

Ovoid spoon-bowl

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Handle missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

The back of the spoon-bowl is partitioned in two sections decorated with bilobed palmettes. A bud-shaped medallion appears on the front of the bowl.

No. 134

Pl. 57a-b

Ovoid spoon-bowl

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Handle missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

A geometric decoration appears on the front of the spoon-bowl; a bud-shaped medallion with four emerging flowers on the back of the spoon-bowl.

No. 135

Pl. 58

Spoon

Hexagonal spoon-bowl; long, sharp handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 82).

No. 136

Pl. 58

Spoon

Hexagonal spoon-bowl; long, squarish handle narrowing toward its sharp end.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 147).

A vegetal decoration can be seen on the back of the spoon-bowl.

No. **137**

Pl. 58

Hexagonal spoon-bowl

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Fragmentary spoon-bowl; handle missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

A vegetal decoration can be seen on the back of the spoon-bowl; the central section in relief bears an interlaced motif.

No. **138**

Pl. 58

Hexagonal spoon-bowl

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Handle missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

The back of the spoon-bowl is partitioned in two sections decorated with a vegetal motif, and separated by a central section in relief bearing an interlaced motif.

No. **139**

Pl. 58

Hexagonal spoon-bowl

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Handle missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

Vegetal elements in tiny roundels and rhombs appear on the back of the spoon-bowl.

No. **140**

Pl. 59a-f

Spoon-fork

Ovoid spoon-bowl; two-pronged fork; tapering handle.

Silver (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Cast; gilded, engraved, nielloed.

Excellent condition. Restored.

L. 18.5 cm, Ø 4 cm

12th-13th century

MuCIIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8370; purchased in Ghazni in 1960; MAIA Inv. no. Sp56.

Published: Di Flumeri Vatielli 2018.

Quoted: Scerrato 1966, 50; Di Flumeri Vatielli 2010, fig. 35.

On the front of the spoon-bowl, a pair of affronted birds with interlaced necks is divided by a central palmette. Fighting animals appear on the round necks of the handle: close to the fork, the upper quadruped bites the back of the lower one. On the neck, close to the fork, runs a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices:

باليمن و(بر)كة

With good fortune and (bles)ing

On the front handle runs a Kufic inscription:

باليمن ووالبركة sic ووا

With good fortune and and blessing, and and (sic)

On the back of the spoon-bowl, a roundel with tiny apices encloses a horned and winged quadruped with long tail ending in a half-palmette. On the back handle, a foliated cursive inscription appear into a cartouche:

باليمن والبركة والسرور والسلامة (?)

With good fortune, blessing, joy, and spiritual integrity (?)

No. 141

Pl. 60a-b

Spoon-ladle

High tin bronze. Forged; chiselled, punched, engraved.

Fair condition. Inner ladle-bowl missing.

L. 58.5 cm, Ø of the bowl 13 cm, Ø of the spoon 9.3 cm

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 79); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1971 (MAIA Inv. no. Sp153).

On the front side can be seen a series of chiselled and dotted circles. A rosette appear on the round section of the handle. The same scheme repeats with dotted circles on the backside.

No. 142

Pl. 60a-b

Spoon-ladle

High tin bronze. Forged; engraved, punched.

Fair condition. Half of the spoon-bowl missing; ladle-bowl missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 153).

On the front handle, four quadrupeds run on an elaborate, vegetal background. A geometric, interlaced motif is included in a roundel on the round section close to the missing ladle-bowl (Pl. 157). On the back handle can be seen a double scroll with flowers and leaves, while a vegetal decoration included in a roundel, surrounded by dotted circles, appears on the round section. The spoon back is partitioned in two sections, decorated by vegetal motifs, by a frame of interlaced ribbons running in its centre and along its borders.

*Unknown location*No. **143**

Pl. 61

Spoon

Ovoid spoon-bowl.
Copper alloy. Cast.
Passable condition. Encrustations.
L. 18.5 cm, l. of the handle 14.5 cm
11th-13th century
Excavated in the House of the Lustrewares, Ghazni; MAIA Inv. no. T66.

No. **144**

Pl. 61

Spoon

Ovoid spoon-bowl.
Copper alloy. Cast.
Passable condition. Encrustations.
L. 16.2 cm, l. of the handle 12 cm
11th-13th century
Excavated in the House of the Lustrewares, Ghazni; MAIA Inv. no. T68.

No. **145**

Pl. 61

Spoon

Presumable ovoid spoon-bowl; flat handle with fan-shaped ending.
Copper alloy. Cast.
Poor condition. Half of the spoon-bowl missing.
L. 7.5 cm
Uncertain dating
Excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C5633.

Comment

Many spoons emerged from excavations in Islamic sites, but just a few forks were unearthed in Rayy and Susa, and have not appeared on the market.¹²¹ No fork came from the excavation in Ghazni either, but in 1960 the IsMEO Mission purchased a spoon-fork in the local bazaar (see below).

Six spoons were retrieved in the House of the Lustrewares, two in the Ghazni royal palace; five of them are currently stored in the Museo delle Civiltà (Museo d'arte orientale). Besides items from excavation, eight spoons more were part of the Rawza Museum collection: three intact, five lacking the handle.

All specimens present a long, very thin handle, with a pointed end. Spoon no. 132 (Pl. 57a-b), exceptionally, ends in a ring probably meant to hang it. Two models of concave scoop coexist, namely oval and hexagonal. The handle is joined to the scoop through a thick, square-section neck (no. 133, Pl. 57a-b; nos. 135-136, Pl. 58), or a prosthesis (a strip in hexagonal spoons, a triangle in oval ones) starting from the handle and overlapping the bowl's backside (nos. 137-138, Pl. 58).

Many spoons are decorated with geometric or vegetal motifs, engraved on both sides of the scoop and on the handle joint. These include interlaced strips, spade-shaped medallions, foliated and flowered patterns. The excavated spoon no. 130 (Pl. 57) bears nicks on the neck and a peculiar element based on the trilobed flower (Fig. 37).

It is hard to indicate a dating for objects produced in series like spoons, especially when they are undecorated.

Spoon-fork no. 140 (Pl. 59) is beyond doubt one of the most exquisite artefacts in this catalogue: made of silver, and partially gilded, it stands out for being the only precious metalwork.¹²² A tapering handle, enriched by two round necks, joins an oval, almost flat spoon and a two-pronged fork. Refined nielloed engravings run on both sides of the object.¹²³ On the front side, the spoon bowl shows within a medallion a pair of affronted birds with interlaced necks, divided by a central palmette on a high stem. Fighting animals appear on the round necks of the handle; close to the fork sit two superimposed quadrupeds, the upper one biting the back of the lower one. A short and Kufic inscription is engraved close to the fork's prongs. The second word, *al-baraka*, is reduced to the final letters (*kāf* and *tā'* *marbūṭa*) deprived of the article. Its miniscule size notwithstanding, the script shows precise ornamental apices. The handle bears another Kufic inscription framed within a rectangular cartouche. The benedictory text includes some additional signs: the conjunction *wāw* is repeated twice after each word and two *rā's* appear in the word *al-baraka*. From an epigraphical point of view, it would be worth noting the pointed shape of the *mīm*, the *wāws* terminals raised up, and the vertical part of the *kāf* ending in a wide leftward apice. On the backside of the spoon bowl, a medallion (smaller than the one on the front) with four tiny apices



Fig. 37 – Drawing of spoon no. 130 by T. Tamagnini, 1970.

¹²¹ Allan (1976, I, 230) reckons this circumstance as a proof that forks production stopped in early Islamic time.

¹²² For further information about medieval precious metalwork mentioned by the sources, see Laviola 2017a.

¹²³ Another silver spoon decorated with nielloed engravings is known (Pope, Ackerman 1938-1939, pl. 1351c; Allan 1976, II, 565, fig. 8).

encloses a fantastic horned and winged quadruped with long tail ending in a half-palmette. Details on the animal body are realised with deep incisions and superficial scratches. A third inscription, in foliated cursive, runs unframed on the back of the handle and, in spite of the script, the benedictory formula chosen is that typical of the Kufic. Articles bear half-palmettes on top of their verticals parts, and additional leaves appear above the other letters. Scerrato reckoned this artefact as related to some Central Asian silverware owned by the Hermitage Museum, which show similar features.¹²⁴ Such relations would not be surprisingly, considering that Ghazni could have acted as an entrance gate for Central Asian influences, thanks to its composite cultural roots.

The Rawza Museum housed also two bifunctional spoon-ladles. No. 141 (Pl. 60a-b) presents the typical decoration of high tin bronze artefacts; the handle is divided into sections and adorned with punched dotted circles and chiselled discs, arranged in rows, roundels and rosettes. The back bears the same decoration of the front, but in a simpler version, made only by dotted circles.¹²⁵ On no. 142 (Pl. 60a-b) the punched decoration is restricted, on both sides, around the roundel that precedes the ladle-bowl; the rest derives its patterns from the Eastern Iranian repertoire: an interlaced pattern inside a roundel and running quadrupeds against an intricate vegetal background, on the front; a single scroll with trilobed flowers, strips of double ribbons interlaced on the back. The back of spoon-bowl is split into four parts by two peculiar knots that could stem from the signs *alif-lām*. The same knot appears on the bowl no. 63 (Pl. 28a-b).

¹²⁴ Scerrato 1966, 50.

¹²⁵ A very similar object (l. 30 cm), preserved in the National Museum of Iran, is datable to the 11th century (see Lakpour 1997, no. 24) and another one (l. 33.4 cm) was seen by Melikian-Chirvani in the Herat Museum in the 1970s (see Melikian-Chirvani 1974b, 139, fig. 24).

Pl. 57



No. 127



No. 128



No. 129



No. 130



No. 131



No. 132

a



b



No. 133

a



b



No. 134

a



b



No. 135



No. 136



No. 137



No. 138



No. 139

Pl. 59



a



b



c



d

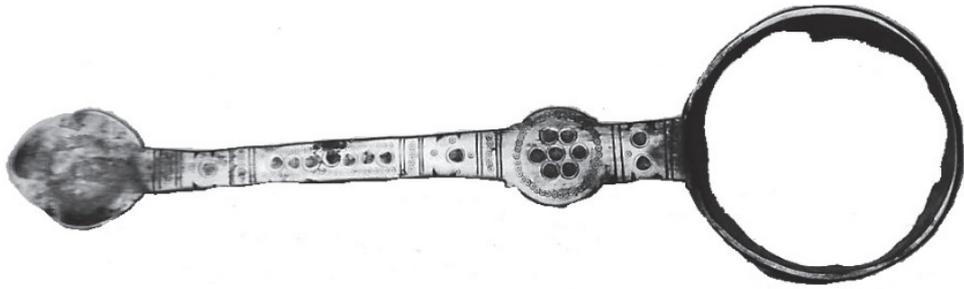
No. 140



e



f



a

No. 141



b



a

No. 142



b

Pl. 61



No. 143



No. 144



No. 145

Colanders

2 Items }
 } ladle-shaped (no. 146)
 } bowl-shaped (no. 147)

No. **146**

Pl. 62

Colander

Round bowl; long, tapering handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Poor condition. Half of the bowl missing.

Maximum 11 × 6.5 cm, h. of the bowl 1.5 cm, 24 gr

12th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8307; excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C4079.

A chain motif runs on the back handle and a flower is engraved at its junction with the missing bowl.

No. **147**

Pl. 62

Colander

Flat base; hemispherical wall.

High tin bronze (analysed, ch. 1.4). Cast; pierced, punched, chiselled, engraved and repoussé.

Fair condition.

Ø 14.2 cm, h. 5.5 cm, w. 0.2 cm, weight 172.70 gr

10th-11th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5866/6239; purchased in Ghazni and donated by U. Scerrato in 1970.

Published: Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 307, no. 6, pl. 50b.

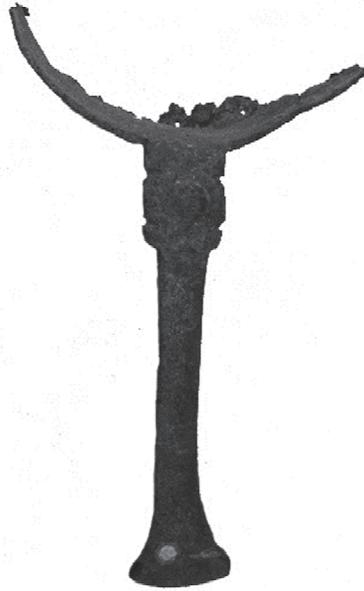
The inner bottom is decorated by a repeating flower-based scheme surrounded by big, concentric roundels: all is realised with repoussé, dotted, chiselled and pierced circles and discs.

Comment

Item no. 146 (Pl. 62), excavated in the Ghazni royal palace, has been identified as a colander thanks to a tiny fragment of its bowl still attached to the rim. The perforation revealed the object's function.

The handle is in fair condition, but the bowl has been lost leaving only a portion of its circular vertical rim. A geometrical strip runs on both sides of the handle; on the upper side of the square element joining the handle to the bowl, a small roundel is engraved and a flower on its lower one. A dark green patina covers the surface. The colander was chemically analysed.

Far easier to understand, colander no. 147 (Pl. 62) mirrors the high tin bronze bowl no. 64 (Pl. 29) in shape and material. Both the objects were purchased in Ghazni and later donated to the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale. The pierced bottom distinguishes the colander as a vessel not meant not to contain a liquid, but to drain it preserving the solid part. What is interesting from the decorative point of view is how naturally pierced holes are integrated among the design composition that employs similar elements such as punched dotted circles of different size and raised discs, arranged in a geometrical pattern.



No. 146



No. 147

2.2 Cooking Equipment

Cauldrons

7 Items { hemispherical (nos. 148-153)
 { cylindrical (nos. 154)

No. **148**

Pl. 63a-b

Hemispherical cauldron

Three conical feet; four flat, protruding flanges: one of which with an open spout. Additional, smaller flanges. Two fixed handles with finials in form of stylised flowers.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Fair condition.

11th-12th century

Mazar-i Sharif Museum (1964).

No. **149**

Pl. 63a-b

Hemispherical cauldron

Three conical feet; flat, protruding flanges: one of which with an open spout. Two fixed handles with finials in form of stylised flowers.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Rim partially broken, surface erased.

11th-12th century

Mazar-i Sharif Museum (1964).

Geometric elements are engraved on the tripartite pouring flange.

No. **150**

Pl. 63a-b

Hemispherical cauldron

Three conical feet; flat, protruding flanges: one of which with an open spout. Two fixed handles with finials in form of stylised flowers.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Rim partially broken.

11th-12th century

Mazar-i Sharif Museum (1964).

On the back flange, a trapezoidal cartouche frames a foliated and knotted Kufic inscription, executed in champlevé. The text reads an artisan's signature:

عمل محمد بن الحسن (ن)

Work of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasa(n)

A vegetal decoration can be seen in the central section of the tripartite pouring flange, while a roundel including an interlaced six-point star with a circle in its centre appears in the preserved lateral section.

No. 151

Pl. 64a-b

Hemispherical cauldron

Three conical feet; four flat, protruding flanges: one of which with an open spout. Two fixed handles with squarish finials.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

Ø 40 cm, h. 30 cm

11th-12th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 687, no. 7, pl. X, figs. 21-22; Allan 1976, II, 608.

A series of cuts is engraved on the edge of the flanges.

No. 152

Pl. 64a-b

Hemispherical cauldron

Three conical feet; four flat, protruding flanges: one of which with an open spout. Two fixed handles with finials in form of stylised flowers.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

Ø 35 cm, h. 25 cm

11th-12th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 687, no. 6, pl. IX, figs. 18-20; Allan 1976, II, 608.

A series of cuts is engraved on the edge of the flanges.

No. 153

Pl. 64

Hemispherical cauldron

Three conical feet; four flat, protruding flanges: one of which with an open spout.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved. Handles missing.

Fair condition.

12th century

MuCIIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5862; purchased in Ghazni and donated by U. Scerrato in 1970.

A geometric frame runs along the rim. A vegetal decoration can be seen in the three sections of the pouring flange. On the other flanges, a Kufic inscription in cartouches repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 154

Pl. 65a-b

Cylindrical cauldron

Convex bottom; movable ring-handles.

Copper alloy, iron handles (Scerrato). Raised.

Fair condition. Lid missing (Scerrato).

H. 44 cm, Ø maximum 38.5 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 700, no. 14, pl. XXII, figs. 40-41.

Pots

No. 155

Pl. 65

Pot

Flattened, globular body; everted rim.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Fair condition. Thick patina and encrustation.

11th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-62); "found in Ghazni".

Quoted: Scerrato 1964, 700, fn. no. 122.

Comment

Cauldrons and pots represent the most humble objects: items belonging to people's daily lives, and connected with cooking in particular. Nevertheless, the manufacturing still required time and skills, along with a comparatively significant cost. Thanks to their function, they retained an important position among the domestic supplies and were passed on within families from one generation to another.¹²⁶

The two cauldrons from Maimana (nos. 151-152) represent a mark of the cultural connections that linked the Turkestan area to the stepped territories, where the origin of these objects should be sought.

The hemispherical model resting on three conical feet was designed to be put on fires burning on the ground, so to be easily reminiscent of the nomadic context from the Central Asian steppe. The model has been passed on with virtually no variation until the modern age.¹²⁷ It would represent one of the influences brought to the Iranian lands by Turkic mercenaries. The cauldron body is cast in two halves then soldered together; the feet also are joined in a second time. The rim is flat and enriched by four protruding flanges, generally trapezoidal, two of whom support semi-circular handles decorated on top by an element sometimes moulded into a three-pointed stylised flower.

The IsMEO documentation counts three specimens from the Mazar-i Sharif Museum and one housed in Rome in the Museo delle Civiltà (Museo d'arte orientale). They all present the same morphology. One of the flanges bears two fillets in relief, so that the liquid could be poured from the cauldron. No. 148 (Pl. 63a-b) also presents four additional protruding segments, between one flange and the other, while no. 150 has its pouring flange adorned by geometric and vegetal engraved patterns, and the artisan's signature is framed by a cartouche on the back flange. The inscription, in Kufic with ornamental apices, reads: *'amal Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan*.¹²⁸ The *nasab* occupies the most damaged part in the cartouche; a knotted *lām-alif* group is clearly visible, followed by a letter very similar to the *ḥā'* in the previous word Muḥammad and another one with three little teeth, a *sīn*. The *nūn* is probably omitted. Chevrons appear above letters. The upper terminal of the *ḥā'* in the term Muḥammad evolves in a bilobed vegetal element.¹²⁹

Object no. 154 (Pl. 65a-b), retrieved from Maimana storage, stands out for its unique cylindrical shape attested only at this site. The body had very high wall, ending in a wide, round opening, slightly narrowed through an inward step. The bottom is flared and convex, resting on a flat base, just as that of the ewers coming from the same site. It is raised from metal sheets and the junctions between them are clearly visible on the surface, along the wall and bottom, confirming that this group of metalwork was produced for a lower social class.¹³⁰

The first identification as a cauldron claims some discussion since no other cylindrical cauldron is known.¹³¹ The difference between this and classic hemispherical cauldrons is

¹²⁶ Scerrato 1965, 231-232.

¹²⁷ Allan (1976, I, 195) recognised the cauldron prototype in a stone specimen retrieved in Nishapur and dated to the 9th century. About the preservation of the hemispherical model across time, see Laviola 2017c.

¹²⁸ About other signed cauldrons, see Scerrato 1965.

¹²⁹ A cauldron inscribed as this one is assigned by Ivanov (2003, 480-481) to the end of 11th or beginning of 12th century.

¹³⁰ Islamic metalwork offer many examples of raised objects on whose surface the traces of the manufacturing technique are masterly hidden (see for example the fluted cylindrical ewers).

¹³¹ See Scerrato 1964, 700, no. 14, pl. XXII, figs. 40-41. Allan (1976, I, 261) classified it as a bucket.

striking. The two movable ring handles on the Maimana cauldron could suggest that the vessel was meant to be hung over a fire instead of being put directly onto it.

Object no. 155 is recorded as a pot, allegedly on the basis of its size, weight and possible traces of fire on the bottom. In the single picture available, it looks covered with encrustations and a thick patina. It was presumably undecorated.

The pot has been put in this class on a functional basis; surely, the shape suggests that the object originated from a more sedentary context compared to that of the cauldrons.¹³² Scerrato reminds us that a two-handle pot emerged from the Raja Ghira castle (Swat, Pakistan).¹³³

¹³² Other cooking pots came from Nishapur; see Allan 1982a, 89, no. 114.

¹³³ See Scerrato 1964, 700, fn. no. 122.



a



b

No. 148



a



b

No. 149



a



b

No. 150

Pl. 64



No. 151

a



b



No. 152

a



b



No. 153



a



b

No. 154



No. 155

2.3 Ablutions Equipment

Basins

39 Items	{	hemispherical (no. 156)	{	almost hemispherical (no. 157)
		circular (nos. 157-185)		flared wall (no. 158)
		unidentified (nos. 186-194)		flared wall and rim (nos. 159-160)
				high straight wall, flared rim (no. 161)
				straight wall (nos. 162-172)
				curved wall, polylobed rim (nos. 173-185)

No. 156

Pl. 66a-c

Hemispherical basin

High tin bronze. Forged; engraved.

Passable condition. Restored cracks and a small chip on the bottom.

Ø 41 cm, h. 19 cm

11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-56); “found in Ghazni”.

Published: Ettinghausen 1957, 338, figs. 10, 14 (11th c.); Ivanov 1970, no. 5; Allan 1976, II, 603-604; Scerrato 1981, figs. 1a-h (11th c.).

Quoted: Scerrato 1964, 703, fn. no. 130b.

A Kufic inscription runs below the outer rim (not photographed; see Ettinghausen 1957). Below the inner rim, a foliated Kufic inscription with ornamental apices reads:

باليمن والبركة والدولة و[...] و[...] والسلامة والنصرة والسرور والسعادة و[...]
والنعم[مة] والبقاء

With good fortune, blessing, fortune, [...], [...], spiritual integrity, victory, joy, happiness, [...], gra[ce] and eternal life.

Below it, zodiac signs appear unframed.

No. 157

Pl. 67a-b

Circular basin

Almost hemispherical, slightly flattened bottom; horizontal rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; punched.

Poor condition. Big gap affects the bottom and side, small gap on the rim.

Ø 38 cm, h. 11 cm

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1971; MAIA Inv. no. Sp150.

On the rim, a wavy geometrical motif runs interrupted by small pyramids: all elements are composed by tiny, dotted circles.

No. 158

Pl. 68a-b

Circular basin

Flared wall.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Worn; small chip on the bottom.

Ø 51.6 cm, h. 15 cm

12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-54); "found in Ghazni".

A cursive inscription running below the inner rim is barely visible due to the preservation status.

No. 159

Pl. 68a-c

Circular basin

Flared wall and rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Inner surface cracked and detached from the rim.

Ø 58.5 cm, h. 12.5 cm

Late 12th-early 13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-55); "found in Ghazni".

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it runs a circular band filled with a double, interlaced ribbon, and four concentric bands continuously linked, with alternatively Kufic or cursive inscriptions in cartouches, interrupted by vegetal roundels.

Below the inner rim runs a cursive inscription, with human and lion-headed letters, on a background composed by spiralling, budded scrolls. Only few words are readable due to the unclear photographic documentation:

والعناية و [...] والشفاعة والشاكرة والشكرة والكرامة والعافية والراحة و

And care, [...], prophetic intercession, that which makes thankful, gratitude, prestige, comfort and

No. 160

Pl. 69

Circular basin

Flared wall and rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Few cracks.

12th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5864; purchased in Ghazni and donated by U. Scerrato in 1970.

A geometric frame runs on the rim. On the central bottom, a winged sphynx on a vegetal background is included into a roundel, which is decorated on its outer profile by arches ending in elongated trilobed flowers. Below the rim runs a cursive inscription on a vegetal background, divided in six sections by crescent-shaped roundels. The text reads:

العز والاقبالو الدولة والسلا / مة والسعادة والدوامة والتا / نيد والرايرة (?)
والشفاعة والعا / فية والدوالة والعناية والكرامة / والباقية والعناية و[...] والر / احة
و[...] والتانيد والبقاء لصاحب[ه]

*Glory, prosperity, fortune, spiritual / integrity, happiness, persistence, divine / support (?),
prophetic intercession, well / ness, fortune, care, prestige / , eternity, care, [...], com / fort, [...],
divine support and eternal life to its owne[r]*

No. 161

Pl. 69

Circular basin

High, straight wall; flared rim.

Copper alloy. Raised (?); engraved, inlaid with silver.

Fair condition. Inlay partially missing.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958).

On the outer wall, an inlaid band frames an inlaid, cursive inscription characterized by elongated, trapezoidal *hastae* on a background composed by richly budded, and foliated, spiralling scrolls ending in trilobed flowers. The text is only partially photographed:

{...} والسعادة والشفاعة والشكرة والد{...}
{...} and happiness, prophetic intercession, gratitude and AL-D{...}

No. 162

Pl. 70

Circular basin

Straight wall.

High tin bronze. Forged; punched.

Poor condition. Wall partially missing; black spots.

Ø 50.4 cm, h. 6 cm

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 131).

Quoted: Melikian-Chirvani 1974b, 141, fig. 28.

On the inner bottom can be seen a geometric decoration of interlacing ribbons composed by dotted circles.

No. 163

Pl. 70

Circular basin

Straight wall.

High tin bronze. Forged; engraved.

Passable condition. Black spots.

11th-12th c.

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 129).

A sun-like roundel with a geometric decoration can be seen in the centre. Around it runs a band with geometric cartouches alternating with stylised, vegetal elements, and another band composed by pseudo-epigraphic cartouches alternating with stylised, vegetal elements.

No. 164

Pl. 70

Circular basin

Straight wall.

High tin bronze. Forged; engraved.

Poor condition. Part of the wall missing; scratches on the surface.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 126).

In the central roundel a stylised, vegetal element is composed by ellipses. Around it runs a geometric decoration arranged in concentric bands.

No. 165

Pl. 70

Circular basin

Straight wall.

High tin bronze. Forged; engraved.

Poor condition. Big gap on the bottom with sharp edges; black spots.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 59).

A stylised, vegetal element appears in the central roundel. Around it runs a cursive pseudo-inscription in three cartouches.

No. 166

Pl. 70

Circular basin

Straight wall.

High tin bronze. Forged; engraved.

Passable condition. Small part of the wall missing; black spots.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 127).

In the central roundel appear geometric elements composed by intertwining ribbons. Around them, a geometric decoration is organised in concentric bands and animated by small and big roundels including a stylised bird.

No. 167

Pl. 70

Circular basin

Straight wall.

High tin bronze. Forged; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition. Few black spots.

Ø 48.2 cm, h. 5.8 cm

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 128); "found in Balkh", purchased in Ghazni.

Quoted: Melikian-Chirvani 1974b, 141, fig. 29 (12th c.).

In the central roundel, a geometric element is composed by inlaid intertwining ribbons; around it runs a circular, geometric frame. Six concentric bands follow, densely filled with stylised, epigraphic, vegetal and zoomorphic elements. Birds appear included in roundels.

No. 168

Pl. 71a-b

Circular basin

Straight wall.

Copper alloy. Raised.

Fair condition.

Ø 40 cm, h. 8 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 701, no. 19, pl. XXVII, fig. 47.

No. 169

Pl. 71a-b

Circular basin

Straight wall.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, punched.

Passable condition.

Ø 45 cm, h. 8 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 700-701, no. 16, pls. XXIV-XXV, figs. 44-45a.

In the central bottom, a six-point star on a background of five-lobed palmettes includes a stylised flower. Around it, a row of tiny, dotted circles and a Kufic inscription characterised by ornamental apices appear on a palmettes background. The text repeats seven times the same term, possibly:

العالية

Sublimity

No. 170

Pl. 72

Circular basin

Straight wall.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 176).

A winged sphynx on a vegetal background appears included in a big roundel, surrounded by arches with extremely elongated, trilobed flowers.

No. 171

Pl. 72a-b

Circular basin

Straight wall.

Copper alloy. Raised.

Poor condition. Wall partially fragmentary.

Ø 45 cm, h. 9 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 701, no. 21, pl. XXVIII, figs. 48-49.

No. 172

Pl. 73a-b

Circular basin

Straight wall.

Copper alloy. Raised, punched.

Fair condition.

Ø 65.5 cm, h. 9.5 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 700, no. 15, pl. XXIII, figs. 42-43.

The basin surface is almost completely dotted on the inner bottom and the outer wall.

No. 173

Pl. 73a-b

Basin

Curved wall; twelve-lobed rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition.

Ø 52 cm, h. 14 cm

Late 12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-46); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 157-158, no. 166 (late 12th c.).

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it can be seen four concentric bands defined by a continuous, knotted ribbon. In the first, second and fourth bands, Kufic, cursive, then again Kufic inscriptions run on a vegetal background alternating with small, vegetal roundels. In the third band, hunting dogs chase running hares on a vegetal background, interrupted by roundels including a bird. An arched motif with elongated, trilobed flowers concludes the decoration on the bottom.

Below the rim runs a cursive inscription on a vegetal background composed by tightly spiralling, budded scrolls. Only few terms are readable due to the incomplete photographic documentation:

{...} العناية والزيادة وا {...} الشفاعة و {...}
 {...} care, increase and A {...} prophetic intercession and {...}

No. 174

Pl. 74

Circular basin

Curved wall; twelve-lobed rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Deformed rim; lacks on the bottom.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 41).

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it runs a geometric, circular frame and a band composed by a continuous and knotted ribbon, filled with vegetal decoration and crescents. A festoon of arches with elongated, trilobed flowers concludes the decoration on the bottom. Below the rim runs an inscription: the text is unreadable due to the unclear photographic documentation.

No. 175

Pl. 74

Basin

Curved wall; twelve-lobe rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Heavily worn (information after Scerrato).

Ø 45 cm, h. 12 cm

Late 12th-early 13th century

Kandahar “City Hall” (1957-1958); “found in Gazab”.

Published: Scerrato 1959b, 103-104, no. 5, figs. 12-13 (late 12th-early 13th c.).

An 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it run two Kufic inscriptions in cartouches, disposed in concentric bands; the texts are unreadable due to the preservation status. Below the rim runs a cursive inscription, repeating:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 176

Pl. 74

Basin

Curved wall; fourteen-lobe rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 166).

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background, interrupted by roundels, runs into a circular band. The text is unreadable due to the preservation status. A festoon of arches with extremely elongated, trilobed flowers surrounds it. At a certain distance runs another circular band composed by cartouches alternated with vegetal, spade-shaped medallions. Cartouches frame a cursive inscription on a stylised, vegetal background; the text is only partially readable due to the preservation status:

[...] والسلامة و / السعادة (ة) والشفاء / [فة] و [...]

[...] and spiritual integrity, / happine(ss), prophetic / [intercession] and [...]

Below the rim, a cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* on a vegetal background runs into a band; the text is unreadable due to the preservation status.

No. 177

Pl. 75

Basin

Curved wall; fourteen-lobe rim.
Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.
Excellent condition.
Second half of 12th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 204).

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it run a geometric, circular frame and three concentric bands defined by a continuous, and knotted, ribbon. Inscriptions on a vegetal background fill the bands alternating with vegetal roundels. In the first, a Kufic one repeats:

بالبر و / البر(ك)ة / كة والبر / كة والـ

With devotion, / bles(si)ng / KA, bles / sing and AL-

In the second one, the cursive text repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

In the third band, the Kufic inscription repeats:

البر(ك)ة

Bles(si)ng

A festoon with arches and elongated, trilobed flowers concludes the decoration on the bottom. Below the rim, a cursive inscription on a background composed by tightly spiralling, budded scrolls with trilobed flowers runs framed into a band, which interrupts at each corner with an arch. The text repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 178

Pl. 75

Basin

Curved wall; fourteen-lobe rim.
Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.
Fair condition. Crack on the bottom.
Second half of 12th century
Kabul Museum (1958).

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it, a continuous ribbon draws a geometric scheme based on the repetition of six-point stars, which includes six stylised harpies and a Kufic pseudo-inscription, both on a just hinted, vegetal background. A festoon of arches topped by elongated, trilobed flowers concludes the decoration on the bottom. Below the rim, a cursive inscription with elongated, trapezoidal

hastae runs on a stylised, vegetal background in cartouches, framed into a band interrupted by a trilobed arch at each corner. The text repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 179

Pl. 76a-b

Basin

Curved wall; fourteen-lobe rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Rim detached from the bottom.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976), then Kabul Museum (2013, Inv. nos. 167-168).

On the bottom, a winged sphynx on a vegetal background appears into a big roundel surrounded by a festoon of arches with elongated, trilobed flowers. Below the rim runs a cursive inscription unreadable due to the preservation status.

No. 180

Pl. 76a-b

Basin's fragment

Curved wall; fourteen-lobe rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Very poor condition. Deformed rim, repaired with a nail; bottom missing.

Ø 39 cm, h. 13 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-44); "found in Ghazni".

Below the rim, a cursive inscription with elongated, trapezoidal *hastae* runs on a stylised, vegetal background framed into a band and interrupted by trilobed arches at each corner. The text repeats two times in each cartouche:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 181

Pl. 76

Basin

Curved wall; sixteen-lobe rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition.

Ø 52 cm

12th-13th century

Kandahar "City Hall" (1957-1958); "found in Gazab".

Published: Scerrato 1959b, 102-103, no. 4, figs. 9-11 (late 12th-early 13th c.).

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it runs Kufic and cursive inscriptions unreadable due to the unclear photographic documentation. Below the rim, a cursive inscription is framed into a band:

التأييد والدوامة

Divine support and persistence

No. 182

Pl. 76

Basin

Curved wall; sixteen-lobe rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Poor condition. Big lack on the bottom.

Second half of 12th century

Kabul Museum (1958).

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it runs two concentric bands: in the first, a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background is interrupted by crescent-shaped roundels. The text repeats:

بالبر

With devotion

In the second band, a cursive inscription on a vegetal background is interrupted by inlaid crescents including a vegetal element; the text repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

A narrow geometric band including a double, interlaced ribbon and a festoon of arches, topped by trilobed flowers, concludes the decoration on the bottom.

Below the rim, a cursive inscription with elongated, trapezoidal *hastae* runs on a stylised, vegetal background, framed into a band interrupting at each corner with a trilobed arch. The text repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 183

Pl. 77a-b

Basin

Curved wall; sixteen-lobe rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition.

Second half of 12th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 165).

A budded, 8-petalled flower appears in the central bottom. Around it runs a Kufic pseudo-inscription in a continuous, circular band; a continuous ribbon draws a band of knotted roundels, each one including a crescent element on a vegetal background; a third continuous band frames another Kufic pseudo-inscription. Finally, a festoon of arches topped by elongated, trilobed flowers concludes the decoration.

Below the rim a cursive inscription repeats:

العز
Glory

No. 184

Pl. 78a-b

Basin

Curved wall; sixteen-lobe rim.
Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.
Fair condition.

H. 15.6 cm, Ø of opening 56 cm

Second half of 12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 45).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 61, fig. 26 (second half of 12th c.).

Quoted: Scerrato 1981, 232, fig. 2.

A double, interlaced ribbon runs along the rim. A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it, a continuous ribbon draws a complex, interlaced, geometric scheme based on the repetition of six-point stars with a rich, vegetal background. The first circular series frames winged sphynxes alternating with winged lions. The second series frames the zodiac signs, disposed in anti-clockwise order. In the resulting spaces above them, can be seen fishes. A Kufic inscription on a vegetal background, framed in a continuous band, runs above:

باليمن والبركة والدولة والسلامة والسعادة والشكرة والكرامة والشفاعة والفائدة
والدائنة (?) والراحة والدائنة (?) والدائنة (?) والتامة والتامة والدائنة (?) والشاكرة
والكرامة واليه (?) والكرامة [امة] والتامة والتامة والكرامة

With good fortune, blessing, fortune, spiritual integrity, happiness, gratitude, prestige, prophetic intercession, spiritual benefit, (?), comfort, (?), (?), plenitude, plenitude, (?), thankfulness, prestige, (?), spiritual benefit, (?), plenitude, [...] pre[stige], plenitude, plenitude, prestige.

A festoon of arches topped by trilobed flowers concludes the bottom decoration. Below the rim a human-headed, cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* runs on a vegetal background composed by budded, spiralling scrolls ending in trilobed flowers. The text (read by Melikian-Chirvani) is divided in sixteen sections by trilobed arches interrupting the band at each corner:

العز والاقبالدول / عة والسعاد(ة) والـ / [ع]افية والسلامة وا / لتامة والشفاعة /
 والتائيد والد[و]لة / والشاكر[ة] والشكر[ة] / والكر[امة] والراحة / والراحة والنعمة
 / والعافية والراحة / والرحمة والتا / مة والراحة وا / لعلو والتامة وا / لتائيد والعلو
 وا / لعافية والتائيد وا / [لتا]مة والتائيد والتـ / [لا]مة والغنا لصاحبه

*Glory, prosperity, dominio / n, happines(s), wellness, spiritual integrity, p / lenitute, prophetic
 intercession / , divine support, do[mi]nion, / that which make thankful, gratitud[e] / ,
 gene[rosity], comfort / , comfort, grace / , wellness, comfort / , comfort, pleni / tude, comfort, e /
 levation, plenitude, d / ivine support, elevation, w / ellness, divine support, p / [le]nitute, divine
 support, ple / [ni]tude, wealth to its owner.*

No. 185

Basin

Curved wall; eighteen-lobe rim.
 Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with silver.
 Excellent condition.
 Ø 58 cm, h. 16 cm
 Late 12th century
 Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-250); “found in Ghazni”.
Published: Scerrato 1961, 158-159, no. 167.
 No picture available; information after Scerrato notes.

An 8-petalled flower appears in the centre. Around it, two Kufic inscriptions on a scroll-patterned background comprise a six-point star design enriched by crescents. A series of arches topped by trilobed flowers concludes the decoration. A human-headed, cursive inscription runs in cartouches interrupted by crescents, below the rim.

No. 186

Pl. 79

Fragment of basin

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.
 Passable condition. Rim missing.
 12th century
 Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-45); “found in Ghazni”.

Only the bottom is photographed. A 10-petalled flower in relief appears in the centre. Around it can be seen a double, interlaced ribbon framed in a circular band and two concentric bands defined by a knotted, continuous ribbon. In the first band, a Kufic pseudo-inscription is interrupted by vegetal roundels. In the second band, a cursive inscription on a vegetal background alternate with vegetal roundels. The text repeats:

التأيد

Divine support

A festoon of arches topped by elongated, trilobed flowers concludes the decoration on the bottom.

No. **187**

Pl. 79

Fragment of basin

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Rim missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 132).

An 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom, framed by a sun-like roundel.

No. **188**

Pl. 79

Fragment of basin

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 179), then Kabul Museum storage (2006).

A 12-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it, a circular band frames crescent-shaped roundels alternating with a Kufic inscription, which is unreadable due to the unclear photographic documentation. A festoon of arches topped by elongated, trilobed flowers concludes the decoration.

No. **189**

Pl. 79

Fragment of basin

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Very poor condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 172).

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it only crescent-shaped roundels are still visible.

No. 190

Pl. 79

Fragment of basin

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Very poor condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 171).

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it only crescent-shaped roundels and traces of a Kufic inscription into a circular band are still visible.

No. 191

Pl. 80

Fragment of basin

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Very poor condition. Only part of the bottom is preserved.

Ø 33 cm, h. 15 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-47).

The decoration is arranged in concentric bands. A festoon of intertwined arches, topped by elongated, trilobed flowers, can be seen. Above it, a continuous band frames a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background composed by stylised, budded scrolls and trilobed flowers. The text reads:

[...] دة والسلامة والدوامة والعافية والبرائة sic والنص [...]

[...] and spiritual integrity, persistence, blessing and AL-NAS[...]

Polylobed medallions, with a trilobed flower at their top and bottom, frame a seated, human figure on the vegetal background mentioned above. Spade-shaped medallions including a bird alternate with trapezoidal cartouches with concave short sides framing a cursive inscription on the same vegetal background:

[...] النعمة والعافية والعا [...] / والراحة والبقاء لصاحبه

[...] grace, wellness, AL- 'Ā[...] / , comfort and eternal life to its owner

No. 192

Pl. 80a-b

Fragment of basin

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Very poor condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

A budded, 8-petalled flower in relief appears in the central bottom. Around it traces of interlaced ribbons defining a starred design and traces of an epigraphic band can be seen.

Below the rim, a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices on a stylised, vegetal background with trilobed flowers is framed into a band.

No. **193**

Pl. 80

Fragment of basin

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.
 Very poor condition. Patina covering the surface.
 12th-13th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 142).
 Traces of an epigraphic band can be seen below the rim.

No. **194**

Pl. 80

Fragment of basin

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.
 Very poor condition.
 12th-13th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 174).
 Traces of a cursive inscription can be seen below the rim.

Basin stands

No. **195**

Pl. 81a-b

Basin stand

Truncated conical wall; splayed foot; wide, flat lip.
 Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.
 Fair condition. Few gaps in the lip.
 H. 10 cm, Ø max 18.5 cm
 11th-12th century
 Kandahar "City Hall" (1957-1958); "found in Kandahar".
Published: Scerrato 1959b, 101, no. 2, figs. 6-7 (late 11th c.); Allan 1976, II, 766, fig. 60.
 On the wall runs a cursive inscription on a vegetal background, interrupted by big roundels in three cartouches:

والسعادة [...]]

[...] and happiness

On the wide lip a Kufic inscription runs in three cartouches (reading after Scerrato notes):

[...] والسلامة والسعادة

[...] and spiritual integrity and happiness

Comment

Belonging to this class are the objects used for ablutions, intended both for a domestic or extra-domestic context. Along with basins, buckets were used for ablutions.¹³⁴ The high number of basins recorded in the IsMEO documentation testifies the widespread diffusion of these artefacts. They could be used in association with ewers to wash hands. Such habit had a symbolic and ritual value, and probably included the use of perfumed waters as well.¹³⁵

All documented basins present a round bottom, but they differ in wall inclination and rim.

The big hemispherical basin no. 156 (Pl. 66) is made of high tin bronze.¹³⁶ Engraved on both the inner and outer surface, it bears benedictory inscriptions in foliated Kufic with ornamental apices and two series of roundels, twelve of which host the zodiac signs, portrayed individually or in combination with their ruling planets. Signs are arranged in anti-clockwise order, opposite of later representations. Ettinghausen had already proposed that this artefact could date back to the 11th century, on the basis also of the employed alloy. This would make it the most ancient Iranian metalwork known so far bearing a zodiac representation.

The external inscription calls for a comparison with that on bowl no. 52 (Pl. 21b), thus confirming the early chronology of the latter.¹³⁷ The internal inscription in foliated Kufic shows apices and chevrons typical of Ghaznavid scripts.

Four basins (nos. 168, 169, 171-172) from Maimana storage present quite a high straight wall and are characterised by a basic decoration, suitable for domestic objects. No. 172 (Pl. 73a-b) bears an engraved and punched continuous dotted pattern inside and outside; while basin no. 169 (Pl. 71a) bears a star element on its inner surface.¹³⁸ The inscription repeats the same term of difficult reading, possibly *al-‘āliya*; it is, however, interesting to note the decorative layout of the *‘ayn*.

Another interesting series of five objects with the same shape is made in high tin bronze. Nos. 163-166 (Pl. 70) show a decoration arranged in concentric bands and composed by simple, engraved patterns: a vegetal or geometric one included in the central roundel, birds of a basic design, and cursive pseudo-inscriptions in cartouches. These elements float in large spaces. No. 167 (Pl. 70), instead, bears similar elements composing a ground-covering decoration. It is characterised by wavy engravings dividing the tall *hastae* with five-lobed palmettes in the epigraphic band. This motif in form of a double “8” recurs in basin no. 165, employed as a separator between epigraphic cartouches. The object, coming from Balkh, is datable to the 12th

¹³⁴ About recently retrieved buckets see ch. 1.5.

¹³⁵ Allan 1976, I, 187.

¹³⁶ The high tin alloy was particularly employed for vessels destined to contain water and other liquids (ewers, basins, and bowls) because it produced no verdigris, as attested by al-Bīrūnī (see Allan 1979, 48). Allan (1976, II, 603) classified basin no. 156 among the bowls, but its size denies such hypothesis. A picture of the external surface is published in Ettinghausen 1957, fig. 10. See also Scerrato 1981.

¹³⁷ Ettinghausen 1957, fig. 10.

¹³⁸ For a comparison, see Fehérvári 1976, 68, no. 66, pl. 20a.

century and testifies that high tin bronzes were still produced in that period, at least in the periphery of Khurasan.¹³⁹

Basin no. 161 is the only specimen characterised by an exceptionally high straight wall, ending in a flared rim. The functional attribution is disputable, since the diameter could be very short; it is hard to judge based only on the neck. The available photo displays only the outer surface, whose wall is occupied by a high epigraphical band in cursive, on a vegetal background, limited by a circular inlaid perimeter. The inscription is inlaid with silver as well. The writing style looks fluid; very high *hastae* already lost the inlay, which instead was preserved intact on the other letters. Both the epigraphic style and the silver inlay would suggest a comparatively late date.

Three basins present a slightly flared wall, ending in a flared rim. No. 158 had a very short rim, so that the cursive inscription runs just below it. The poor state of preservation does not allow detection of the background decoration. Basin no. 159 was extremely damaged, with the body already completely detached but still preserved. At its centre sits an 8-petalled flower, carved in bas-relief, typical especially of basins with polylobed rims (see below). The long epigraphical band running along the rim was extraordinary (see Pl. 68c); it showed a benedictory text, written in a fluid and dense cursive, standing against an elaborated vegetal motif made of concentric, flowered and budded scrolls. All the *hastae*, indeed numerous, bear a human face engraved in the upper part. This is one of the rare examples of human headed script.

Basin no. 160 resembles specimens currently on exhibition in the Kabul Museum. All of them look made of brass, and are decorated by a central flower or medallion (including a sphynx), and an epigraphic band, in Kufic or cursive, along the rim interrupted by small roundels.

Basin no. 157 (Pl. 67) presents a strongly flared wall and a broad horizontal rim. It is quite simple, decorated by motifs typical of the high tin bronzes; namely, a wavy motif interrupted by pointed circles arranged in pyramids.¹⁴⁰

A characteristic model of basins with curved walls and everted rims have the latter partitioned into many lobes (from twelve up to eighteen), which confer it a starred profile – one of the most typical expressions of the Eastern Iranian production. These basins spread between the 12th and 14th centuries, but the majority of documented specimens are to be assigned to the early period. The decoration is limited to the inner surface save for the wall, at least in early specimens.¹⁴¹ Decorative elements are almost fixed and very characteristic. These include an 8-petalled flower in the centre, defined by a double engraved line, deep enough to make it stand out as a bas-relief. Petals can be inlaid in copper, or copper alternated with silver. Around this, a continuous ribbon draws concentric bands and roundels, or a six-pointed star design. Real animals, harpies, sphinxes and winged horses, even zodiac signs find space in such schemes, along with inlaid crescents and inscriptions – all resting on an intricate vegetal background. The decoration on the inner surface concludes with a fringe motif resting on trilobed flowers. On the rim, a bold benedictory inscription runs divided inside cartouches interrupted by narrow, trilobed arches in conjunction with each corner produced by the lobed rim. The presence of Kufic on the inner ground and cursive on the rim (no. 192) appears frequently. The inscription is framed by a geometric strip.

Many documented fragments should belonged to basins with a polylobed rim, most of which are in poor condition. No. 179, formerly in the Rawza Museum collection, was moved to the Kabul Museum; it represents one of the few surviving metalwork (along with no. 188) in

¹³⁹ Melikian-Chirvani 1974b, 142.

¹⁴⁰ A comparable object is on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum (without inventory number).

¹⁴¹ Scerrato 1961, 159.

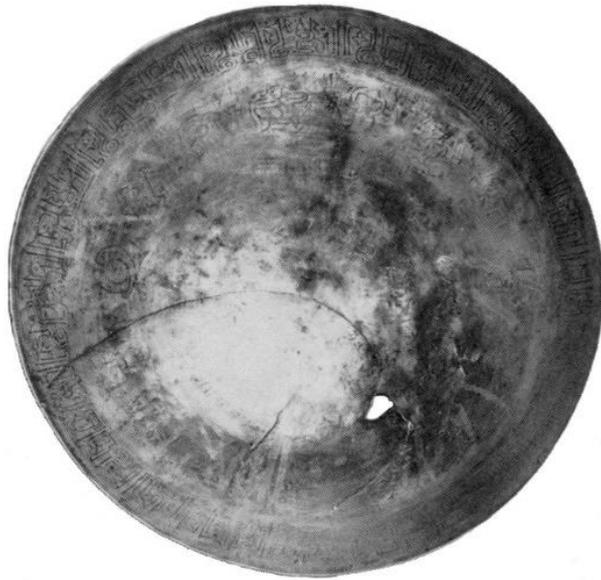
Afghanistan up until today among those documented by the Italian Mission. The fragmentary basin, in fact, was photographed in Kabul, in 2006.

Worthy of mention is basin fragment no. 191 (Pl. 80), showing the above-mentioned fringe motif surrounding the central roundel. Around this can be seen an epigraphical band in Kufic, and upper another one in cursive, divided in cartouches alternated to spade-shaped medallions filled by a bird. Between the two inscriptions, there are polylobed roundels, each one framing a figure seated cross-legged, with one arm up and one down. The Kufic script shows additional *hastae*, to create couples, and the *'ayn* in the term *al- 'āfiya* shaped as a trilobed flower.

Object no. 195 (Pl. 81), from the Kandahar *antiquarium*, presents a truncated conical body resting on a short oblique base. Its upper profile mirrors somehow the base through a broad, everted lip, almost flat. The circular opening suggests that it was used as a stand to support basins. It bears a cursive inscription, interrupted by roundels framing a bird, on the body. Another inscription, in Kufic, interrupted by roundels framing a vegetal interlaced motif, runs along the lip. Scerrato attributed the stand to the late 11th century, embracing the opinion of Ettinghausen,¹⁴² who believed such objects – indeed quite rare – were spread in the Ghaznavid period.¹⁴³

¹⁴² See Ettinghausen 1957, 337.

¹⁴³ See Scerrato 1959b, 101, no. 2, figs. 6-7; Giunta 2016, 97.



a



b



c

No. 156

Pl. 67



a

No. 157



b



a



b

No. 158



a



b

No. 159



c



No. 160



No. 161



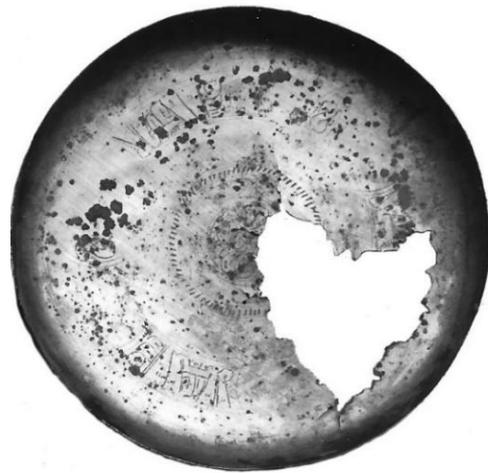
No. 162



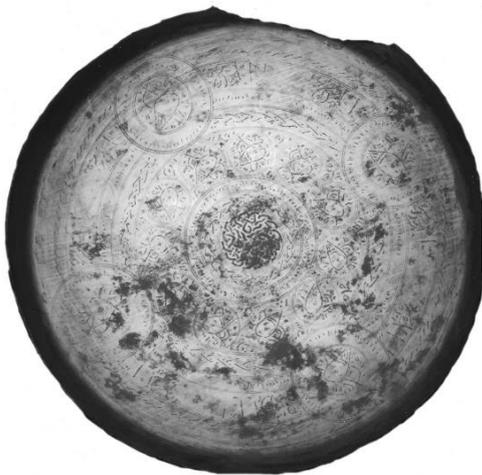
No. 163



No. 164



No. 165



No. 166



No. 167

Pl. 71

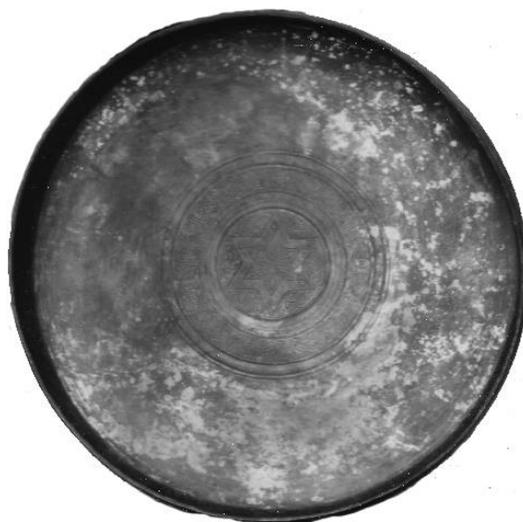


a

No. 168

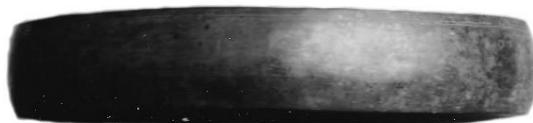


b



a

No. 169



b



No. 170



a

No. 171



b

Pl. 73



a

No. 172

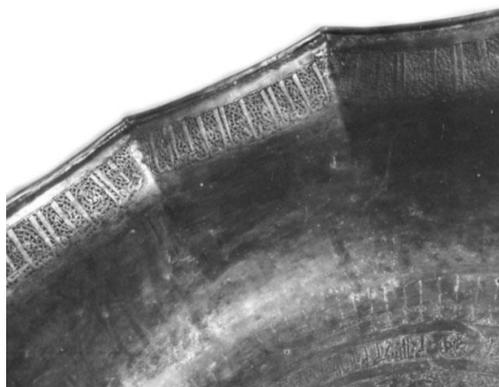


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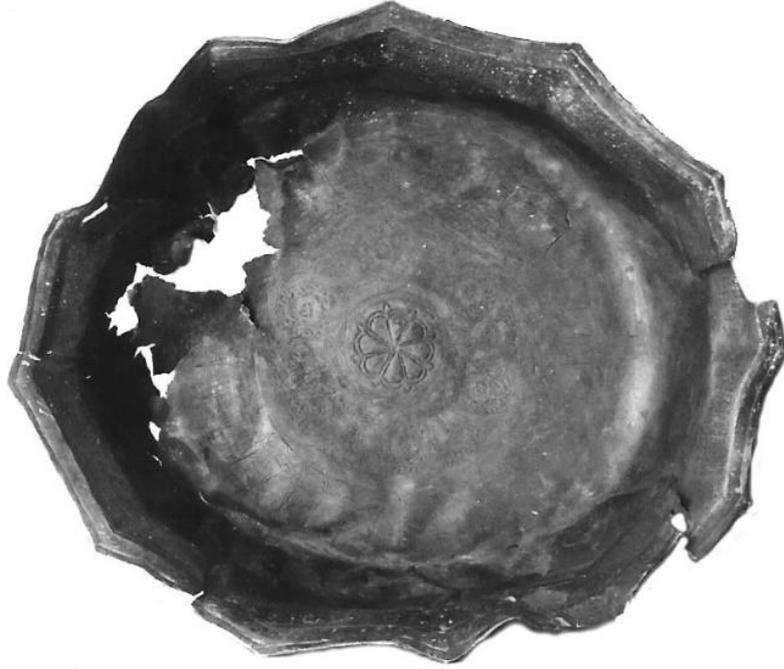


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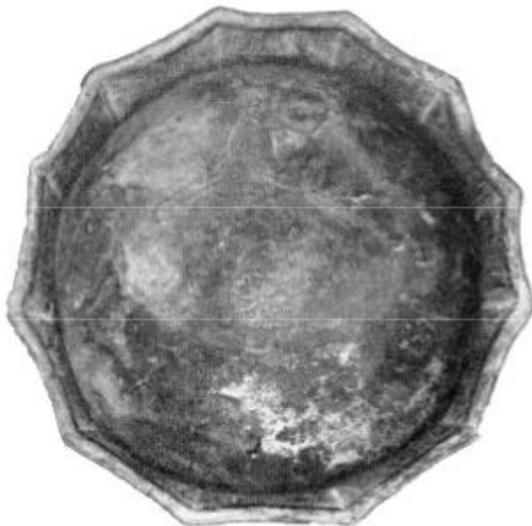
No. 173



b



No. 174



No. 175

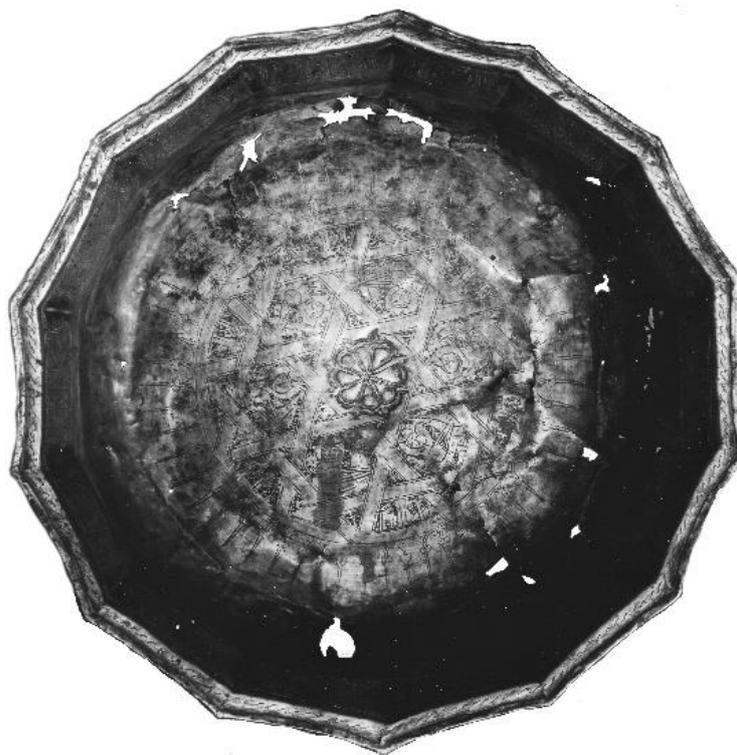


No. 176

Pl. 75



No. 177



No. 178



a

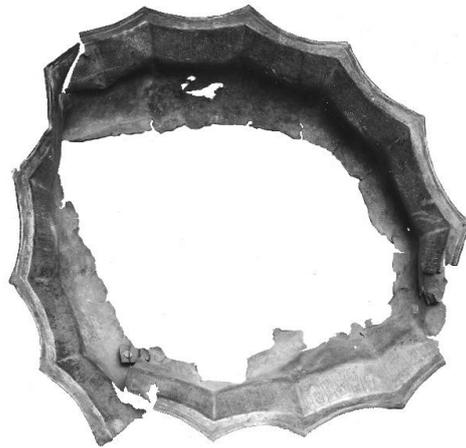


b

No. 179

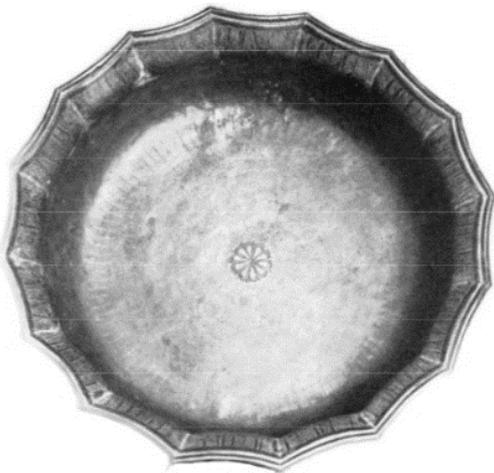


a

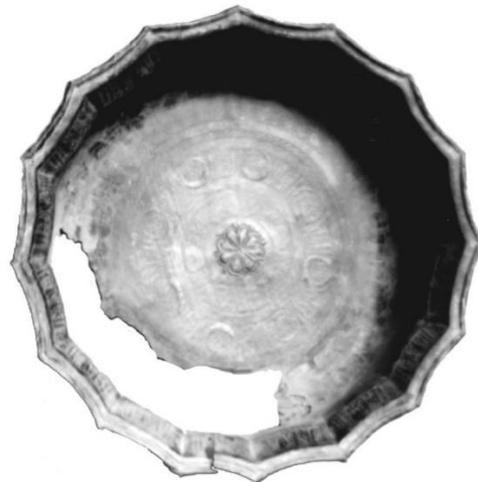


b

No. 180

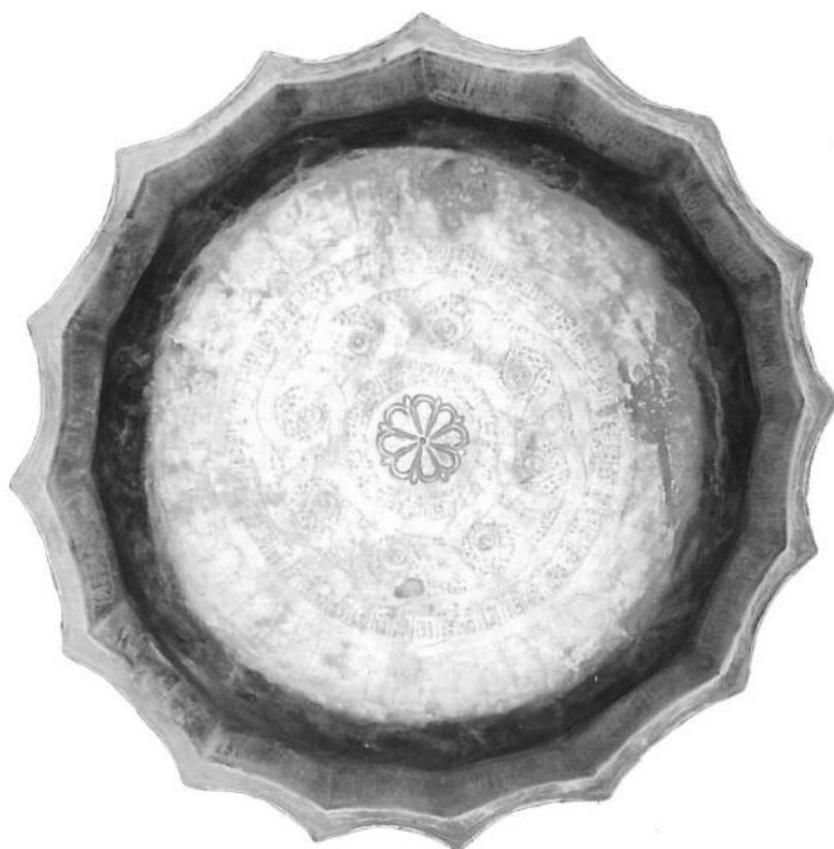


No. 181



No. 182

Pl. 77

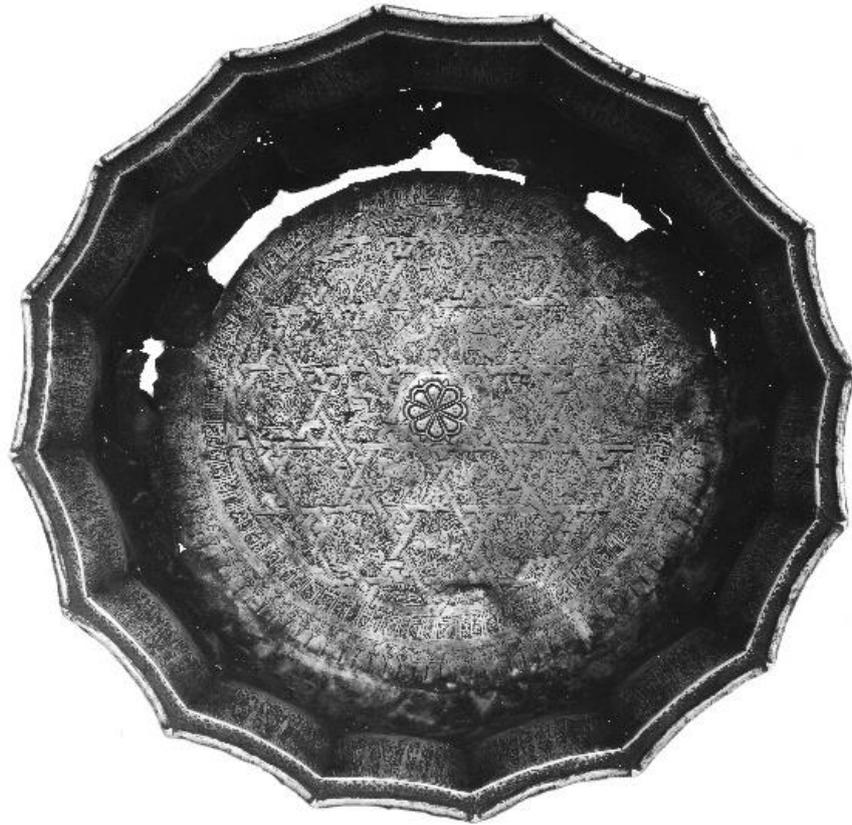


a

No. 183



b



a

No. 184

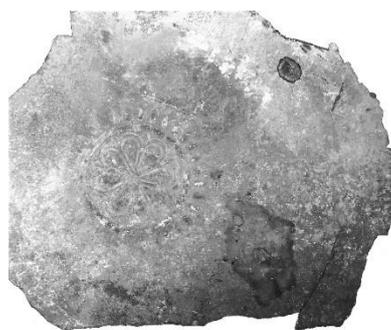


b

Pl. 79



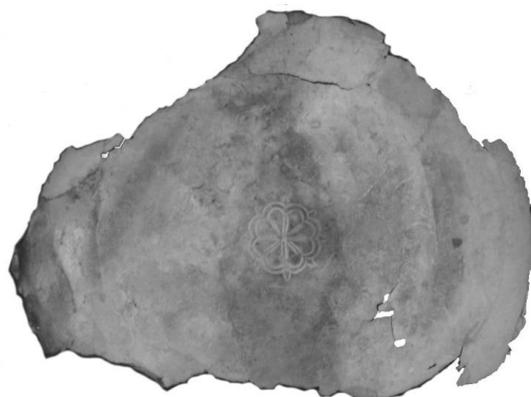
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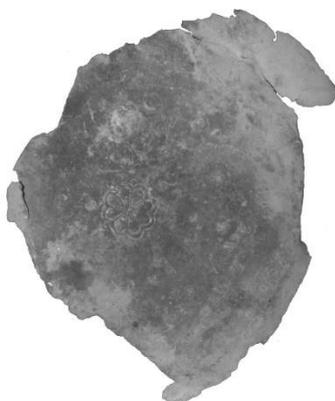
No. 187



No. 188



No. 189



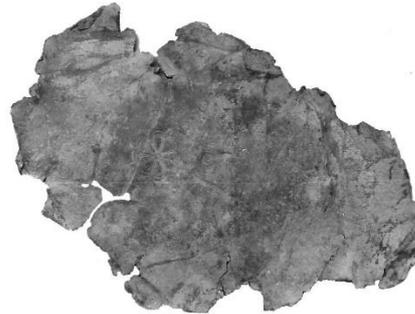
No. 190



No. 191



a



b

No. 192



No. 193



No. 194

Pl. 81



a

No. 195



b

2.4 Lighting Devices

Lampstand components

91 Items	bases (nos. 196-225)	{	domed pedestal (nos. 196-201)	{	globular (nos. 230-243)
			domed tripod (nos. 202-207, 209-212, foot no. 208)		
	shafts and shafts' components (nos. 227-262)	{	cylindrical (nos. 227-228)	{	globular (nos. 230-243)
			hexagonal (no. 229)		
small dishes (nos. 263-276)	{	elements of shaft (nos. 230-255)	{	globular (nos. 230-243)	
		composite shafts (nos. 256-262)			pear-shaped (nos. 244-255)
unidentified (no. 226)					

No. **196**

Pl. 82

Domed pedestal of lampstand

Flared step; unrelated, waisted, cylindrical neck.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Thick patina covering the surface, preventing to see any decoration.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 38).

No. **197**

Pl. 82

Domed pedestal of lampstand

Short drum; flared step.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958).

On the step, a Kufic inscription in cartouches runs on a vegetal background with trilobed flowers, alternating with vegetal roundels. The text repeats:

بالبر

With devotion

A geometric frame runs on the drum's shoulder; interlaced ribbons can be seen on the lower domed body. A cursive inscription with elongated *hastae* on a stylised, vegetal background,

alternates in cartouches with roundels including a bird on a vegetal background. The text repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

On the shoulder's top, a Kufic inscription runs on a vegetal background in cartouches alternating with vegetal roundels. The text repeats:

بالبر

With devotion

No. 198

Pl. 82

Domed pedestal of lampstand

Short drum; flared step.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Excellent condition.

Ø of the base 18.3 cm, h. 13.5 cm

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 11).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 56, fig. 16 (late 12th-early 13th c.).

On the step, roundels alternate with triangular medallions; both include a vegetal decoration. An arched sequence can be seen on the drum and a geometric frame runs on its top. Along the dome, rectangular cartouches framing running quadrupeds alternate with birds into roundels: all animals stand against a vegetal background. On the shoulder's top, a cursive inscription on a stylised, vegetal background, repeats seven times:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 199

Pl. 82

Domed pedestal of lampstand

Short drum; flared step.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Small gap in the drum.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 135).

On the step, roundels alternate with triangular cartouches: both include a vegetal decoration. On the dome, cartouches framing running quadrupeds on a stylised, vegetal background alternate with polylobed, vegetal roundels. On the shoulder's top, a Kufic inscription is interrupted by crescent-shaped roundels. The text is unreadable due to the incomplete photographic documentation.

No. 200

Pl. 82

Domed pedestal of lampstand

Short drum; flared step.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Neck broken at its top.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 196).

On the step, a Kufic inscription is interrupted by roundels. The text is unreadable due to its preservation status. A geometric frame runs on the drum's top. Along the dome, cartouches framing running quadrupeds on a stylised, vegetal background alternate with vegetal roundels. On the shoulder's top, crescent-shaped roundels interrupt a Kufic inscription on a just hinted background. The text repeats:

البركة

Blessing

No. 201

Pl. 83a-b

Domed pedestal of lampstand

Double step comprising a drum pierced with twelve arches.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Excellent condition.

Ø 30.5 cm, h. 25.7 cm

12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-83); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 156-157, no. 164, pl. LXII (12th c.); Rowland 1966, no. 107; Allan 1976, II, 713, fig. 48.

On the neck, a narrow band including a scroll-patterned decoration is interrupted by vegetal roundels. On the lower step, crescent-shaped roundels interrupt a single scroll with trilobed flowers and palmettes. On the drum can be seen quadrupeds running on a vegetal background. On the higher step, vegetal roundels alternate with cartouches framing a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices on a stylised, vegetal background:

باليمن والبركة / وال[...] والكر [...] والكر [...] / والكر [...] / والشفاعة والبقاء
لصاحبه

*With good fortune, blessing /, al-[...], gene[rosity], gene[rosity] /, gene[rosity] /, prophetic
intercession and eternal life to its owner*

Lions and bulls carved in round are applied on the dome. In the spaces between them, four big roundels including a horseman on a vegetal background are engraved; each scene is different. Below the carved animals, hares run unframed while other quadrupeds are framed into cartouches. Above the carved animals, cartouches frame a cursive inscription on a stylised, vegetal background:

العز والاقبال [والسلامة] والسعادة [...] البقاء لصاحبه
Glory, prosperity [, well-being], happiness [...] eternal life to its owner

No. 202

Pl. 84

Domed tripod base of lampstand

Fluted dome.

Copper alloy. Cast; carved, engraved.

Poor condition. Neck and feet missing.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 70).

A geometric frame with knots runs along the base of the dome. A vegetal decoration disposes vertically on the flutes alternating with hooked, Solomon knots. Fillets of cuts highlight the base of the neck.

No. 203

Pl. 84a-b

Domed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet; polylobed rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved. Inlaid with copper.

Fair condition. Neck and one foot missing; a second foot replaced.

Ø 16.6 cm

13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 48).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 56, fig. 15 (early 13th c.).

A geometric decoration composed by V-shaped elements runs on the rim. A continuous, cursive inscription runs on a floriated background on the shoulder:

العز والاقبال والدولة والسرور والسعادة

Glory, prosperity, fortune, joy and happiness

No. 204

Pl. 84

Domed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Passable condition. Patina covering the surface.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 99).

No. 205

Pl. 84

Domed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.
Copper alloy. Cast.
Fair condition.
12th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 151).

No. 206

Pl. 85

Domed tripod base of lampstand

(Associated to unrelated, probably later shaft and oil-lamp)
Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
Poor condition. Feet missing.
12th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 49).
On the shoulder, two spade-shaped medallions including a bird alternate with as many cartouches framing a Kufic inscription on a stylised, vegetal background. The text repeats:

باليمن

With good fortune

No. 207

Pl. 85

Domed tripod base of lampstand
(annexed to pear-shaped element of shaft no. 255)

Zoomorphic feet.
Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
Fair condition.
12th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 198).

A geometric decoration can be seen on the broadening are of the rim, at the junction of the feet.

No. 208

Pl. 85

Foot of domed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic.
Copper alloy. Cast.
Fair condition. Fragmentary.

H. max 6.5 cm

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976); excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C5785.

No. **209**

Pl. 85

Domed tripod base of lampstand
(annexed to globular element of shaft no. 240)

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Fair condition.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 98).

The dome is pierced. On the shoulder runs a cursive inscription, unreadable due to the incomplete photographic documentation.

No. **210**

Pl. 85

Domed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced.

Fair condition. One foot missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 68).

The shoulder is pierced with a heart-shaped scroll pattern including trilobed palmettes.

No. **211**

Pl. 85

Domed tripod base of lampstand
(annexed to globular element of shaft no. 241)

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Fair condition. One foot missing.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 22).

A Greek fret runs on the rim. On the shoulder, roundels alternate with trapezoidal frames including a pierced, vegetal decoration. A geometric decoration runs continuously at the base of the neck.

No. 212

Pl. 86a-b

Domed tripod base of lampstand
(annexed to globular element of shaft no. 242)

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition.

H. 30.7 cm

13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-82); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 155, no. 163 (second half of 12th c.).

At the junction of the feet, a trilobed palmette on a dotted background is included into a roundel. A Greek fret runs at the base of the dome, while a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices in three sections appears on the rim:

باليمن والبركة / باليمن والبركة / باليمن والبركة والسلامة

*With good fortune and blessing / with good fortune and blessing / with good fortune, blessing
and spiritual integrity*

On the shoulder, roundels surrounded by tiny flowers include a pierced bird; profiles of both the roundels and birds are decorated by nicks. A copper inlaid, cursive inscription runs at the base of the neck on a dotted background enriched by palmettes. The text, only partially photographed, reads a maxim:

لكل عمل رجال والكل اجل كتاب {...}

To every work [its] accomplisher, every moment is inscribed {...}

No. 213

Pl. 87a-b

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Neck missing.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-101); "found in Ghazni".

A Kufic inscription on a stylised, vegetal background with trilobed flowers runs in six cartouches on the rim; the text repeats:

الكرامة و

Prestige and

A Greek fret defines the inner border of each drop-shaped lobe of the base, which includes a vegetal, spade-shaped medallion. A geometric decoration can be seen on the resulting triangles at the base of the neck.

No. 214

Pl. 88a-b

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. One leg missing.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958); purchased in Ghazni; MAIA Inv. no. Sp14.

On the rim, Kufic inscription on a stylised, vegetal background in six cartouches:

والدولة / [...] / [...] / [...] / والسلامة و / والبر لصاحبه

And fortune / [...] / [...] / [...] / , spiritual integrity, / and devotion to its owner

Vegetal roundels decorate the legs' knees. Inside each lobe of the base can be seen a spade-shaped medallion including a bird on a vegetal background, topped by a polylobed niche filled with a vegetal motif. Above this, polygonal cartouches include a vegetal decoration. A narrow geometric band runs around the neck and daisies appear at its base.

No. 215

Pl. 89a-b

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition.

H. 14 cm, l. from top of the leg to the opposite projecting rod 19 cm

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 47); "found in Ghazni citadel".

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 56, fig. 14 (late 12th-early 13th c.).

On the rim, a Kufic inscription is framed by twelve cartouches interrupted by palmettes into roundels. Only few words are visible in the photographic documentation:

باليمن و {...} السر / و و

With good fortune, / {...} jo / y and

On the legs' knees, vegetal roundels are included into crescent-shaped roundels inlaid with copper. Each lobe of the base is framed by a double interlaced ribbon and includes a spade-shaped medallion framing a vegetal motif of palmettes. Above this, triangular cartouches with copper inlaid profiles can be seen. A narrow geometric band runs around the neck and graphic signs of uncertain nature appear at its base.

No. 216

Pl. 90a-b

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Legs missing; restored.

H. 12.8 cm

12th-13th century

MuCIIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8388; purchased in Ghazni in 1958; MAIA Inv. no. Sp15.

On the rim, a Kufic inscription on a sketched background is framed into six cartouches:

باليمن و / البركة / السلامة / الدولة / السلامة / الدولة

With good fortune / blessing / spiritual integrity / fortune / spiritual integrity / fortune

Inside each lobe of the base can be seen a spade-shaped medallion including a bird, and topped by a triangular niche framing a vegetal decoration. Above this, triangular cartouches including a scroll with trilobed flower are engraved. Tiny triangles are engraved around the neck and a geometric band at its base.

No. 217

Pl. 91

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. One foot missing; thick encrustations.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 36).

No. 218

Pl. 91

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Encrustations.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 44).

On the rim, a Kufic inscription in six cartouches is unreadable due to its state of preservation. A geometric element can be seen on the legs' knees.

No. 219

Pl. 91

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Decoration hardly visible.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 45).

Inside each lobe of the base can be seen a spade-shaped medallion including a bird. A geometric band runs at the base of the neck.

No. 220

Pl. 92

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 46).

On the rim, a Kufic inscription in six cartouches is unreadable due to its state of preservation. Spade-shaped medallions topped by a trilobed flower appear on the legs' knees and inside each lobe of the base. Above them triangular cartouches include a vegetal decoration.

No. 221

Pl. 92

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. One foot missing; broken rim. Decoration not visible anymore.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 46).

No. 222

Pl. 92

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 199).

On the rim, a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background is framed into six cartouches; the text is only partially photographed:

{...} والسلا(مة) / والشكرة والعاء / فية و {...}
 {...} and spiritual integri(ty) / , gratitude, well / ness and {...}

Spade-shaped medallions including a rich vegetal decoration appear on the legs' knees and inside each lobe of the base. The same vegetal motif recurs in the triangular cartouches above the lobes.

No. 223

Pl. 93

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Legs missing; broken rim.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 67).

On the rim, a Kufic inscription in six cartouches is unreadable due to its preservation status. A vegetal motif into spade-shaped medallions appears inside each lobe of the base and in the triangular cartouches above.

No. 224

Pl. 93

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Zoomorphic feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved. Inlaid with copper.

Poor condition. Neck broken. Decoration not visible anymore.

H. 11.4 cm, l. maximum 18.7 cm

12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-99).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 56, fig. 13 (12th c.).

No. 225

Pl. 93a-b

Polylobed tripod base of lampstand

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Legs missing, incomplete neck; cracks and gaps on the rim.

H. 7.2 cm

12th-13th century

MuCIIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5948; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.

On the rim, a Kufic inscription in six cartouches – three of those are missing – repeats:

والبر

And devotion

A vegetal decoration in spade-shaped medallions appears inside each lobe of the base. Above this, triangular cartouches frame a stylised decoration.

No. 226

Pl. 93

Fragment of lampstand base

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 66).

At the base of the neck runs a Kufic inscription, which is unreadable due to the unclear photographic documentation. It is surrounded by a band of interlaced ribbons. A geometric band runs around the neck.

No. 227

Pl. 94

Cylindrical shaft of lampstand

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Poor condition. Encrustations, worn surface.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 89).

The hardly visible decoration featured horizontal registers and a pierced decoration. An inscription runs along the lower section; it is unreadable due to the preservation status.

No. 228

Pl. 94

Cylindrical shaft of lampstand

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 122).

A Kufic inscription is pierced on the upper and lower registers, but it is almost unreadable due to the preservation status:

يمن

Good fortune

No. 229

Pl. 94

Hexagonal shaft of lampstand

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Few cracks.

H. 24 cm

11th-12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-81); "found in Ghazni".

A motif of interlaced ribbons is pierced in the central section, comprised between two Kufic inscriptions almost unreadable due to the preservation status. In the lower register, the text repeats:

اليمن

Good fortune

No. 230

Pl. 94

Globular element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Fair condition. Few cracks.

H. 9 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-91); "found in Ghazni".

On the body, a pierced motif of vegetal-epigraphic inspiration is interrupted by engraved roundels.

No. 231

Pl. 94

Globular element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 25).

A geometric band runs on the foot. On the body, a cursive inscription in cartouches on a sketched background repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 232

Pl. 94

Globular element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 26).

A geometric band runs on the foot. On the body, a Kufic inscription on a stylised background is interrupted by roundels. The text is only partially photographed:

{...} باليمن

With good fortune {...}

No. **233**

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Gap on the body.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 115).

A geometric band runs on the foot. On the body, a cursive inscription on a sketched background repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. **234**

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

No. **235**

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

No. **236**

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

No. 237

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast.
 Passable condition. Thick patina.
 12th-13th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 156).

No. 238

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
 Fair condition.
 12th-13th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 187).

No. 239

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
 Fair condition. Small crack on the upper rim.
 H. 7.5 cm
 12th-13th century
 Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-98); "found in Ghazni".
 A geometrical band runs on the foot. On the body, a cursive inscription on a stylised, vegetal background repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

No. 240

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft
 (annexed to domed tripod base no. 209)

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.
 Fair condition.
 11th-12th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 98).

The dome is pierced. On the shoulder runs a cursive inscription, which is unreadable due to the incomplete photographic documentation. A double interlaced ribbon runs horizontally on the body.

No. **241**

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft
(annexed to domed tripod base no. 211)

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Fair condition. One foot missing.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 22).

Big roundels in form of stylised daisies alternate with a pierced, vegetal decoration.

No. **242**

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft
(annexed to domed tripod base no. 212)

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition.

H. 30.7 cm

13th century

Kabul Museum (1958); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 155, no. 163 (second half of 12th c.).

A pierced, vegetal decoration enriched by nicks appears inside and outside roundels.

No. **243**

Pl. 95

Globular element of shaft
(annexed to lampstand dish no. 243)

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 23).

On the body, a Kufic inscription interrupted by roundels is unreadable due to its preservation status.

No. **244**

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

H. 9 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-92); "found in Ghazni".

A collar in relief separates body and foot. On the body spade-shaped, vegetal medallions alternate with pentagonal cartouches, which frame a scroll decoration. On the shoulder, triangular cartouches frame a stylised, vegetal (?) motif. A band of interlaced ribbons runs below the lip.

No. 245

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with silver.

Fair condition. Small gap on the lip.

H. 8 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-93); "found in Ghazni".

A collar in relief separates body and foot. On the body silver inlaid, geometrical knots alternate with rectangular cartouches, which frame a scroll decoration. A band of interlaced ribbons runs below the lip.

No. 246

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Broken lip, small gaps on the body.

H. 8 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-94); "found in Ghazni".

On the body, spade-shaped medallions alternate with pentagonal cartouches including a vegetal motif.

No. 247

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Lip missing. Oxidised.

H. 6.2 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-95); "found in Ghazni".

A collar in relief separates body and foot. On the body pentagonal cartouches frame a bird.

No. **248**

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Few cracks.

H. 8 cm

Late 12th-early 13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-97); "found in Ghazni".

On the body, pentagonal cartouches frame a stylised, vegetal motif.

No. **249**

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Broken lip.

H. 8 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-96); "found in Ghazni".

On the body, spade-shaped medallions alternate with pentagonal cartouches; both frame a vegetal decoration.

No. **250**

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Broken foot.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

A collar in relief separates body and foot.

No. **251**

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Lip missing; two big gaps on the body.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

A collar in relief separates body and foot.

No. **252**

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 154).

A collar in relief separates body and foot. On the body spade-shaped medallions alternate with pentagonal cartouches; both frame a vegetal decoration.

No. **253**

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Lip missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 155).

On the body spade-shaped medallions alternate with pentagonal cartouches; both frame a vegetal decoration.

No. **254**

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Decoration not visible anymore.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 186).

A collar in relief separates body and foot.

No. **255**

Pl. 96

Pear-shaped element of shaft
(annexed to domed tripod base no. 207)

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 198).

A band of interlaced ribbons runs on the foot. On the body spade-shaped, vegetal medallions, topped by a trilobed flower, alternate with vertically disposed cartouches framing a Kufic inscription:

والبركة الـ

And b(le)ssing AL-

No. **256**

Pl. 97

Composite shaft

Two globular and one pear-shaped elements.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Encrustations on the two lower elements.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 84).

On the upper element runs a Kufic inscription, which is unreadable due to the unclear photographic documentation.

No. **257**

Pl. 97

Composite shaft

Three pear-shaped elements.

Copper alloy. Cast; chiselled, engraved.

Fair condition. Tiny cracks.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

On the second element can be seen spade-shaped, vegetal medallions.

No. **258**

Pl. 97

Composite shaft

Two pear-shaped elements.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 84).

The decoration is unclear due to the photographic documentation.

No. **259**

Pl. 97

Composite shaft

Two pear-shaped elements.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
 Fair condition.
 12th-13th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 84).
 The decoration is unclear due to the photographic documentation.

No. 260

Pl. 97

Composite shaft

One globular and one pear-shaped elements.
 Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
 Passable condition. Small gap in the lip of the upper element.
 12th-13th century
 MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5861; purchased in Ghazni and donated by U. Scerrato in 1970.
 Three interlaced ribbons run into a band on the upper element. A stylised, vegetal band runs on the collar of the lower element. A cursive inscription runs on a vegetal background on the body:

العز والالاقبال والـ[دولة والـ] [...]

Good fortune, pro[sperity, fo]rtune and AL-R[...]

No. 261

Pl. 97

Composite shaft

One globular and one pear-shaped elements.
 Copper alloy. Cast; engraved in champlévé.
 Passable condition. Lip of the upper element missing; lower element fragmentary.
 12th-13th century
 MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5949; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.
 A Kufic pseudo-inscription is executed in champlévé on the upper element.

No. 262

Pl. 97

Composite shaft
 (annexed to oil-lamp no. 310)

Three globular and one pear-shaped elements soldered together.
 Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
 Passable condition.
 H. 52 cm, Ø of the base 18 cm
 12th-13th century
 Kabul Museum (no. 58-2-99); "found in Ghazni".

No. 263

Pl. 98a-b

Lampstand dish
(annexed to globular element of shaft no. 243)

Sloping rim; short, indented and pierced wall.
Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.
Passable condition.
12th-13th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 23).

On the inner bottom a winged sphynx appears in the central roundel, surrounded by four spade-shaped medallions alternated with as many cartouches framing a Kufic inscription. The text repeats disorderly:

باليمن والبركة

With good fortune and blessing

On the rim, small roundels including a palmette alternate with a Kufic inscription in six cartouches. The text repeats disorderly:

باليمن والبركة

With good fortune and blessing

No. 264

Pl. 99

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim; short, indented and pierced wall.
Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.
Passable condition. Rim broken in two points and deteriorated.
12th-13th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 55).

On the inner bottom, a fantastic animal with bird-head, wings, and quadruped body with a big tail can be seen on a highly stylised background in the central roundel. Around it runs a cursive inscription on a stylised, vegetal background interrupted by three crescents. The text reads:

العز والاقبال وا / لدولة والسلامة ا / لسعادة والصاحبه

Glory, prosperity, f / ortune, well-being and h / appiness to its owner

A series of arches topped by trilobed flowers concludes the decoration. On the rim, a Kufic inscription in cartouches is unreadable due to the preservation status.

No. 265

Pl. 99

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim; short, indented and pierced wall.
Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Small crack in the rim; thick patina.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

On the inner bottom a starred design, topped on each vertex by a spade-shaped medallion, surrounds the central roundel. Small roundels alternate with arches on the rim; both are filled with a vegetal decoration.

No. 266

Pl. 99

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim; short wall with indented rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Erased surface on the rim.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 74).

On the inner bottom can be seen a six-point star composed by interlaced ribbons that merge in the roundel surrounding it. A series of arches topped by trilobed flowers runs around. On the rim a Kufic inscription in cartouches alternates with small, vegetal roundels. The text is unreadable due to its preservation status.

No. 267

Pl. 99

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim; short wall with indented rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Broken rim; worn.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 24).

On the inner bottom, a bird in the central roundel is surrounded by three spade-shaped, vegetal medallions and by as many cartouches framing a cursive pseudo-inscription. On the rim, vegetal roundels alternate with a Kufic inscription; the text is only partially visible due to the preservation status:

باليمن والـ(بر)كة [...] والسلامة

With good fortune, b(le)ssing [...] and spiritual integrity

No. 268

Pl. 99a-b

Lampstand dish

Short, sloping rim; wall pierced with an interlaced motif.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Fair condition. Small gaps on the bottom, a chip in the wall.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 56).

On the inner bottom, a six-point star element in the centre is surrounded by six pointed half-roundels lying on a circular band; all are filled with a stylised scroll motif. On the rim, a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices is unreadable due to the unclear photographic documentation.

No. 269

Pl. 100

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim; short wall.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Deformed in the centre due to a hit from underside.

Ø maximum 16 cm, inner Ø 12.3 cm, h. 3 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-71); "found in Ghazni".

On the inner bottom, a winged sphynx stands against an intricate and stylised, vegetal background in the central roundel. Around it can be seen four vegetal roundels. On the rim, vegetal roundels alternate with a Kufic inscription in four cartouches. The text is readable only in part due to the unclear photographic documentation:

باليمن والبر و / والكرامة [...]

With good fortune, devotion and / and prestige [...]

No. 270

Pl. 100a-b

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim; short wall with indented rim. Connection element on the underside (see Pl. 100b).

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. Worn.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 8).

On the inner bottom, two geometric bands comprise a cursive inscription on a vegetal background into a continuous band:

العز والاقبال والدولة والسعادة (ة) والسلامة والبقاء لصاحبه

Glory, prosperity, fortune, happiness, well-being, and eternal life to its owner

On the rim, vegetal roundels included in copper inlaid crescents alternate with cartouches framing a Kufic inscription; the text is unreadable due to the preservation status.

No. 271

Pl. 101

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim: short wall with indented rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. A gap on the rim.

Ø 16.3 cm

12th-13th century

MuCIv-MAO, Inv. no. 5918; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by D. Faccenna in 1971.

On the inner bottom, an enthroned human figure on a vegetal background can be seen in the central roundel. The latter is surrounded by a copper inlaid band and a cursive inscription on a vegetal background:

العز والاقبال والدوالة والسعادة(ة) والسلامة والشفاعة والسهار والسهاله والعافية
والسهاعة(دة)

Glory, prosperity, fortune, happines(s), spiritual integrity, prophetic intercession, al-sār, al-sāla, wellness and happi(ness)

A narrow, vegetal band, composed by a single scroll with palmettes, concludes the decoration. On the rim, vegetal roundels alternate with a cursive inscription on a vegetal background in six cartouches (one of those is missing):

العز والاقبال والدول / واله السعادة(ة) والسا / والسلامة والشفاعة ا / والشفاعة والسا
والب / [...] / والسعادة(ة) والسلامة

Glory, prosperity, good fort / une, happines(s), AL-SĀ / spiritual integrity, prophetic intercession A / and prophetic intercession, AL-SĀ, AL-B / [...] / happines(s) and spiritual integrity

No. 272

Pl. 101

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim; short wall with indented rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Two gaps on the rim.

Ø 22.5 cm

12th-13th century

MuCIv-MAO, Inv. no. 5965; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.

On the inner bottom, the central roundel frames a winged sphynx on a vegetal background composed by spiralling and budded scrolls and trilobed flowers. Around it into a continuous band runs a cursive inscription on the above-mentioned background:

العز والاقبال واله والسعادة والسلامة والبقاء لصاح(به)

Glory, prosperity, A-L-H, happiness, well-being, and eternal life to its own(er)

On the rim small, vegetal roundels alternate with six cartouches framing a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices:

[اليمن والبر] / كة والدو / لة والسلام / ة والـ[...]/ [...] والشكر له / والبقاء
لصاحـ[به]

[With good fortune, ble] / ssing, fortu / ne, well-bein / g, [...] / [...], gratitude for him / and
eternal life to his own[er]

No. 273

Pl. 102a-c

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim; short wall composed by interlaced ribbons. Connection element on the underside.

Copper alloy. Cast; chiselled, engraved.

Fair condition.

Ø max 20.5 cm, inner Ø 17.5 cm, h. 2 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-73); “found in Ghazni”.

On the inner bottom the small, central roundel includes a Solomon knot evolving in palmettes. Around it a different, stylised scroll motif can be seen. On the rim a scroll motif runs continuously.

No. 274

Pl. 102a-b

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim; short, pierced wall with indented rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Broken rim, small gap on the bottom.

Ø 20.5 cm, inner Ø 18.6 cm, h. 2 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-74); “found in Ghazni”.

On the inner bottom, the central roundel includes a Solomon knot evolving in palmettes.

No. 275

Pl. 103

Lampstand dish

Sloping rim; short wall with indented rim; circular opening in the central bottom.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Poor condition. Broken rim, scratched surface.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 61).

On the inner bottom, vegetal roundels alternate with a cursive inscription in four cartouches. The text is unreadable due to the preservation status. On the rim, vegetal roundels alternate with a Kufic inscription in six cartouches, which is unreadable as well.

No. 276

Pl. 103

Lampstand dish

Double, short, vertical rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Big gap on the outer round, inner rim deformed.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 181).

In the central section of the inner bottom, a winged sphynx appears in a roundel. Around it, vegetal roundels alternate with a Kufic inscription in four cartouches inward-facing: the text is unreadable due to the preservation status.

Lampstands

No. 277

Pl. 103a-b

Lampstand

Domed pedestal on flared step; cylindrical shaft soldered on a parallelepiped and a globular elements; multi-wick oil-lamp (components unrelated to each other).

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, applied.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 203).

Three zoomorphic heads cast in round are applied to the dome pedestal, while animals' bodies are roughly engraved. The parallelepiped element in the shaft is pierced on each face with a 4-petalled flower.

No. 278

Pl. 104a-c

Lampstand

Tripod, domed base; cylindrical shaft comprised between two globular elements; small dish with indented, flat rim; oil-lamp (or *guttus*) with ring-handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, pierced, chiselled.

Fair condition. Gap in the dish rim.

Lampstand: h. 55.3 cm. Oil-lamp: l. 18 cm, l. with handle 21 cm, h. 9.5 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-4-1/2); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1961, 163-164, nos. 174-175; 1964, 684-686, nos. 2-3, pls. VI-VII, figs. 11-15.

The oil-lamp presents a thumb-rest shaped, and engraved, as a polylobed palmette (Fig. 60). Its three feet are shaped as boots (Fig. 55).

No. 279

Pl. 105a-e

Lampstand

Fluted, domed tripod base; fluted, cylindrical shaft comprised between two fluted, globular elements; small dish with sloping rim, short, everted wall and connection element on the underside.

Copper alloy. Cast; chiselled, engraved.

Excellent condition; restored.

H. 70 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 678-684, no. 1, pls. I-IV, figs. 1-10; Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 34-35, fig. 10 (10th-early 11th c.).

The flutes of the domed base bear alternatively a Solomon knot into a roundel and a narrow, rectangular cartouche framing a floriated Kufic inscription (read, as the followings, by Melikian-Chirvani):

بر / كة و / يمن و / سر / ر وسعا[دة]

Blessi / ng, / good fortune, esoteric knowledge / R and happine[ss]

At the base of the neck, floriated Kufic inscription in a continuous band:

بركة ويمن وسر لصا[حبه]

Blessing, good fortune and esoteric knowledge to its ow[ner]

The flutes of the globular element of shaft bear alternatively Solomon knots into roundels and narrow cartouches framing a floriated Kufic inscription:

بر / كة و / يمن و / سر / ور وسعا[دة]

Blessi / ng, good fortune, / jo / y and happi[ness]

The flutes of the shaft bear alternatively a Solomon knot in the centre, included into a roundel, and a cartouche, disposed on the whole length of the flute, framing a floriated Kufic inscription: nor the photo not the cast consent a full reading but of the term *salāma*.

On the dish inner bottom, the central roundel includes a Solomon knot on a vegetal background. Around it runs a narrow, continuous band framing a stylised scroll motif. On the dish rim, a floriated Kufic inscription runs into a continuous band:

بركة ويمن وسرور وسعادة وسلامة ونعمة ونصر و ر ورحمة لصا[حبه]

Blessing, good fortune, joy, happiness, spiritual integrity, grace, victory and R and mercy to its ow[ner]

No. 280

Pl. 106a-c

Lampstand

Domed tripod base; hexagonal shaft comprised between two globular elements.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Fair condition.

H. 70 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-76); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 155, no. 162, pl. LXI; Rowland 1966, no. 104; Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 192-194, pls. VII-VIII, figs. 3-4 (10th-early 11th c.); 1982a, 34, fig. 9.

All the elements are pierced with a five-lobe palmettes design. On the tripod base, at the base of the neck runs a foliated, Kufic inscription (read as the following by Melikian-Chirvani):

بركة ويمن وسرور لصا[حبه]

Blessing, good fortune and joy to its ow[ner]

On the lower and upper sections of the shaft a knotted, Kufic inscription repeats:

بر / كة / و / يمن / لصا / حبه

Bles / sing / and / good fortune / to its ow / ner

No. 281

Pl. 107

Lampstand

Domed tripod base; shaft composed by two globular and one pear-shaped elements; footed oil-lamp.

Copper alloy. Cast; chiselled, pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Many cracks; thick patina.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 104).

A geometrical decoration is engraved on the base rim. The dome is pierced and engraved with a stylised, vegetal design.

No. 282

Pl. 107a-b

Lampstand

Domed tripod base; cylindrical shaft soldered on a globular element (the latter possibly unrelated); small dish with flat rim and everted wall.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Poor condition. Many encrustations.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 21).

All elements with the exception of the globular element are pierced with circular holes. An engraved decoration runs on the base rim. Two continuous bands filled with stylised scroll motifs are engraved at the base of the neck. A pierced design integrates an engraved geometric one (Pl. 282b), which repeat also on the shaft central section.

On the dish inner bottom, a Solomon knot evolves in palmettes into the central roundel.

No. 283

Pl. 108

Lampstand

Polylobed tripod base; shaft composed by one globular, one pear-shaped and one truncated parallelepiped elements; small dish with short, flat rim and everted, indented wall.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Crack on the small dish; thick patina covering the surface.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 105).

On the base, epigraphic cartouches can be seen on the rim: the text is unreadable due to the preservation status. Vegetal, spade-shaped medallions are engraved inside the lobes and vegetal, triangular cartouches appear above them. On the dish inner bottom, a cursive inscription on a stylised background runs into a band interrupted by crescents. The text is unreadable due to the preservation status.

No. 284

Pl. 108

Lampstand

Domed tripod base; shaft composed by three pear-shaped elements.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 202).

On the base rim, a geometric decoration and engraved palmettes can be seen. Spade-shaped medallions appear on the shaft elements.

No. 285

Pl. 108a-b

Lampstand

Domed, faceted base; globular element soldered on a cylindrical shaft.

Copper alloy. Cast; chiseled, engraved.

Passable condition. Some gaps on the base and shaft.

Uncertain dating

Rawza Museum (1976).

A stylised bird is engraved into a roundel on the base. Two Kufic inscriptions appear on the shaft's upper and lower sections: the texts are unreadable due to the unclear photographic documentation.

Candlesticks

No. **286**

Pl. 108a-b

Candlestick

Polygonal.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with silver.

Poor condition. Half missing; many encrustations.

Late 12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 40).

Roundels in relief appear in the middle wall. Rosettes, and knotted and vegetal designs compose the engraved and silver inlaid ground-covering decoration. In the upper register, an inlaid Kufic inscription on a vegetal background runs in cartouches (only partially preserved):

باليمن و [...] والبركة والبر

With good fortune, [...], blessing and devotion

Comment

Lampstands from 12th-13th century are composed by three elements cast separately and then soldered, or fitted together: a base, a shaft, and a small dish. Such a composite nature, along with the height of the objects, makes it easy for some of the above-mentioned elements to get lost and be replaced. The replacement is not necessarily a modern manipulation; it could also have occurred when the lampstand was still in use. A lampstand can even be made of incoherent elements. For this reason, component elements are analysed before the complete, or partially complete, lampstands.

Components: bases

Three kinds of bases are known, all attested in the IsMEO documentation: a flat domed base, called a domed pedestal, and two others both standing on three feet but differing in the shape of the body: the domed tripod and the polylobed tripod base.

Feet are usually zoomorphic, resembling a one- or two-toed hoof, and they often have a polylobed sole. Feet with carved claws are also attested, but no specimen in the IsMEO documentation presents such feature.¹⁴⁴

Domed pedestals are high and solid, with a bold round shoulder and a sloping wall marked by fillets on relief or proper steps.¹⁴⁵ They usually have a rich, engraved decoration, arranged in superimposed horizontal registers filled by epigraphic bands, roundels alternated with cartouches, festoons and frames.

Base no. 201 (Pl. 83) features four crouched bulls and felines, carved in round and applied on the shoulder, replacing engravings. Around the step runs a series of open arches, which recall the architectural model of the Buddhist stupa from Afghanistan and the Swat valley.¹⁴⁶ Each one of four big roundels includes a slightly different scene; in the first, a galloping horseman looks backward, brandishing a sword in his right hand and grasping a lion at the throat with the left. In the second scene, he holds a long sword over his head with the other hand on his chest; a bird appears on the horse's back. The third scene repeats the latter, without the bird. The fourth scene portrays the galloping horseman looking backward with a lance.

No. 196 (Pl. 82) has a domed body, resting on a splayed step, reminiscent of a lampstand pedestal base. It is surmounted by a waisted cylindrical element, which acted as a connection with something else (maybe a shaft). The base could have been part of a lampstand, but the upper element looks incoherent. A thick patina covers all the components and no decoration is visible.¹⁴⁷

Domed tripod bases present a flattened body, ending in a flat rim. Dome surfaces can be smooth, fluted or pierced. The junction between the base and the feet develops into a stylised, flat bird-head that emerges from the base rim. An engraved epigraphic band sits on the dome, in cartouches in nos. 203, 206.

A zoomorphic leg (no. 208) emerged from the excavation of the Ghaznavid royal palace: stylised bird-shaped elements protrude from its top flat surface. This detail allows us to identify it as belonging to a domed tripod base, since legs from polylobed tripod bases usually present rounded knees.

Polylobed tripod bases constitute the most numerous group. They present a characteristic profile, being composed of six lobed cavities. Typically, the engraved decoration fills each cavity with a bird or a vegetal element included in a drop-shaped roundel; an epigraphic band, in cartouches, runs along the polylobed profile of the base. Another inscription can run along the top neck (see no. 215, Pl. 89a). Three protruding elements alternate with feet; this, along with the bird-shaped element of domed tripod bases, is considered a typical feature of the Khurasan production.¹⁴⁸ A small roundel usually decorates the above-mentioned knees of the zoomorphic legs. In no. 215, it is also framed by crescents inlaid with copper.¹⁴⁹

No. 222 might represent a late specimen featuring decorative elements inspired to the earlier style.

¹⁴⁴ One specimen of this kind is on exhibition in the Herat National Museum (Inv. nos. 02-16-86b; Müller-Wiener 2016, Cat. no. M66).

¹⁴⁵ Other three specimens from Ghazni are published along with those presented in this catalogue (see d'Allemagne 1911, II, 50; Rowland 1966, pl. 107).

¹⁴⁶ See Scerrato 1961, 950-951. On architectural forms reproduced in metalwork, see Aga-Oglu 1943.

¹⁴⁷ For a possible comparison, see the base from the Herat National Museum (Inv. no. HNM 02.18.86d; Müller-Wiener 2016, Cat. no. M70).

¹⁴⁸ Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 54.

¹⁴⁹ Base no. 215 was retrieved, according to Melikian-Chirvani (1982a, 56), in the *bālā ḥiṣār* by a local man in the ruins of his collapsed house.

Components: shafts

A cylindrical (nos. 227-228) or polygonal (no. 229) shaft, comprised of two sub-globular elements that connect it to the base and the small dish, usually topped by domed pedestals and domed tripod bases. A shaft can also be made by a series of superimposed elements. The latter are either sub-globular smooth, fluted or pierced – or pear-shaped – smooth or faceted. Generally, about four of these elements form a shaft; the one soldered to the base seems to be often sub-globular, like the upper one. All of them present a flared, hollow foot and neck that allows them to be piled one over the other, hiding the junction mechanism or soldering. They often are engraved with geometric patterns disposed in bands, vegetal or symbolic patterns (as the Solomon knot) or even epigraphic cartouches. The latter usually appear on sub-globular ones that offer a wider surface to engrave on. The inscription can be an important clue of interpolation; in some cases, the shaft elements are re-assembled upturned, which results clear from the wrong reading direction.

No. 245 is the most refined specimen, thanks to its silver inlay, while no. 247 is the smallest specimen of the group (h. 6.2 cm).

About six shafts composed by a variable number of elements are documented. No. 262 is topped by an oil-lamp, without any dish, resulting in a precarious stability.

Like the above-mentioned specimen no. 212, no. 242 imitates earlier specimens.

Components: small dishes

Small circular dishes atop lampstands offering a surface to rest the oil-lamp on safely. They usually are linked to the shaft through a bayonet fitting. The traditional model presents a downward-sloping wall and a short, vertical rim, often pierced, indented in respect to the wall. The rim was probably soldered to the dish. The engraved decoration is commonly disposed in concentric bands: the central roundel includes real or fantastic animals. On the sloping wall, epigraphic cartouches alternate with small roundels.

A different model of the dish, with no rim, is attested on a complete lampstand from the Maimana storage (see below no. 278). In a third model, as the previous one scarcely attested, the dish's central area usually occupied by a roundel is cut out, leaving the passage open (no. 275, Pl. 103). This specimen could belong to a candlestick instead of a lampstand. Dish no. 276 (Pl. 103) presents the same central area bordered by a rough rim. Both these small dishes show inward-looking inscriptions, contrary to the usual manner.

Lampstands

Islamic lampstands probably derive from Byzantine prototypes that were modified once they reached the Iranian lands.¹⁵⁰

Complete lampstands in the IsMEO documentation are few compared to an elevated number of components, but an interesting typological variety is attested in specimens coming from Maimana and Ghazni. Analysing the complete and best preserved lampstands documented it appears clear that every component element should be coherent with the morphological and decorative style of the others (see nos. 278-279, 282). Items that raise more doubts figure at the end of the catalogue.

¹⁵⁰ See Allan 1976, I, 281-282.

On top of lampstand no. 278 there was an almond-shaped oil-lamp¹⁵¹ with an open reservoir, featuring three anthropomorphic feet shoed by Central Asian boots.¹⁵² Similar boots recur on kohl flasks nos. 379, 382 (Pl. 136).

No. 277 seems composed by unrelated elements, replying in a simpler version no. 201.

Elements of no. 278 instead look coherent with each other. They feature traces of soldering behind the small dish, which has no connection element and has, in fact, a different shape. There is no decoration, but rather a balanced elegance provided by the pleasant shapes.

No. 279 (Pl. 105) presents some features that put it in relation with incense burner no. 337 (Pl. 124a-b).¹⁵³ The inscription is executed in *champlevé* (as with the one on lampstand no. 280, Pl. 106b-c). The decoration on the small dish, a Solomon knot and tiny five-lobed palmettes, betrays the same output seen on the other mentioned objects, originating from Khurasan. The script is the same as that adopted on Samanid coins; these inscriptions represent the earliest example of a *du'ā'* composed by words split so as to convey a double meaning.¹⁵⁴ Such features assign the lampstand to an early period (10th-early 11th century). Both nos. 279-280 present margins adorned by cuts.

No. 280 (Pl. 106a) is characterised by the refined pierced decoration, made by five-lobed palmettes attested on other metalworks, notably some incense burners preserved in the Herat Museum¹⁵⁵ and Linden-Museum of Stuttgart. A fillet with incised cuts borders the inscriptions: this is another early feature recurring on other metalworks. The benedictory terms have no article, and the script is coeval to that on lampstand no. 279.



Fig. 38 – Incense burner, Kabul National Museum,
Inv. no. 9-2-31a
(MAIA, photo by F. Colombo, 2013).

Each component of no. 282 (Pl. 107a-b) is pierced with the same decoration with the exception of the globular element, which is probably a later interpolation replacing the original one.

No. 285 (Pl. 108a-b) is made of three components soldered together. The base differs from the attested models, as it is shaped as a flatted dome, faceted in arcade walls defined by a fillet in relief, and sloping toward a flat foot. Each arcade includes a bird within a small roundel. The obliquely fluted cylindrical shaft is unusual, too. From a morphological point of view, the object would seem extraneous to the production under analysis in this catalogue, but a feature links it to other documented metalworks; namely, the bird, looking leftward,

¹⁵¹ Allan (1982a, 48) reckons the definition of *guttus* by Scerrato unsupported, because classical *guttus* used to be different in shape.

¹⁵² Scerrato (1961, 164, no. 175; 1964, 686, no. 3, pl. VII, figs. 14-15) reckoned this feature as proving the cultural influence of Central Asian steppes in the Eastern Iranian area. A fragmentary boot was retrieved in Nishapur as well (see Allan 1982a, 70-71, no. 67).

¹⁵³ Melikian-Chirvani 1975b.

¹⁵⁴ See Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 34-35.

¹⁵⁵ Inv. nos. 01.15.06, 01.30.86a; see Müller-Wiener 2016, Cat. nos. M39-40.

characterised by a round body, stylised wings and tail, recurring on artefacts probably dating to the Samanid period (cf. Fig. 38).¹⁵⁶ Components unrelated to each other make for a confused mix. The shaft has a curious shape but still it bears a script which is compatible with the Samanid period.

Candlesticks

Fragmentary object no. 286 (Pl. 108a-b), severely damaged and covered by thick encrustation, should have been a polygonal candlestick, resting on a stepped base. Probably raised from a metal sheet, it would attest a model that reached a great fortune during the 12th-13th century. This single specimen is of no help explaining the origin and morphological evolution of such devices, since it represents not a primordial specimen, but a refined outcome. Still, it differs strongly from impressive candlesticks adorned by rows of birds or lions in repoussé – as some fluted ewers – usually ascribed to Herat. The fact that only a single specimen survived against the numerous lampstands and components could be a clue of this object's lower diffusion or production in the Eastern Iranian lands.

¹⁵⁶ See vase no. 347. The same bird appears on a bowl-shaped incense burner currently on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum (Inv. no. 9-2-31a).

Pl. 82



No. 196



No. 197



No. 198



No. 199



No. 200



a

No. 201



b

Pl. 84



No. 202



No. 203

a

b



No. 204



No. 205



No. 206



No. 207



No. 208



No. 209



No. 210



No. 211

Pl. 86

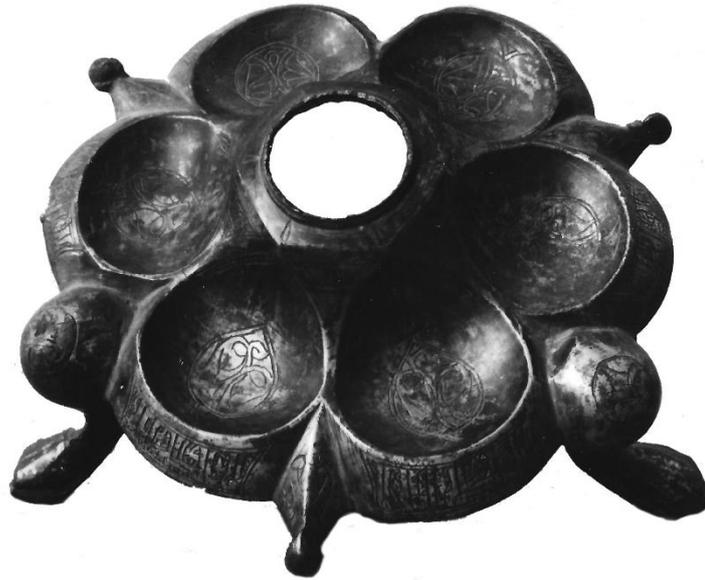


a

No. 212



b



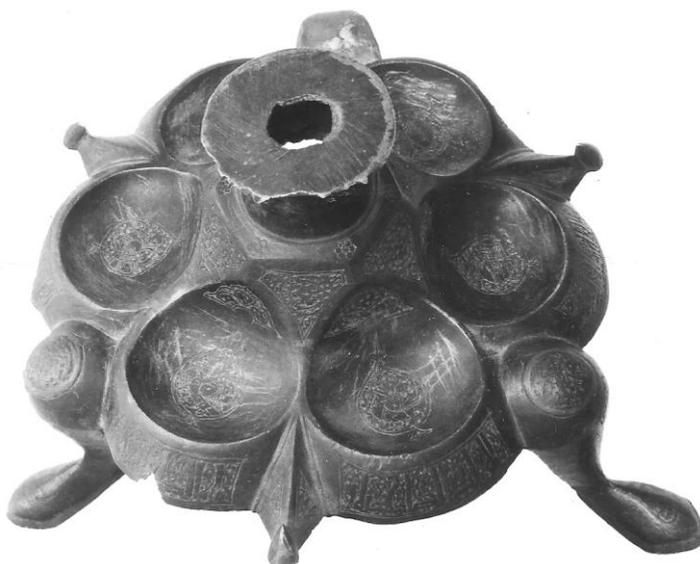
a

No. 213



b

Pl. 88

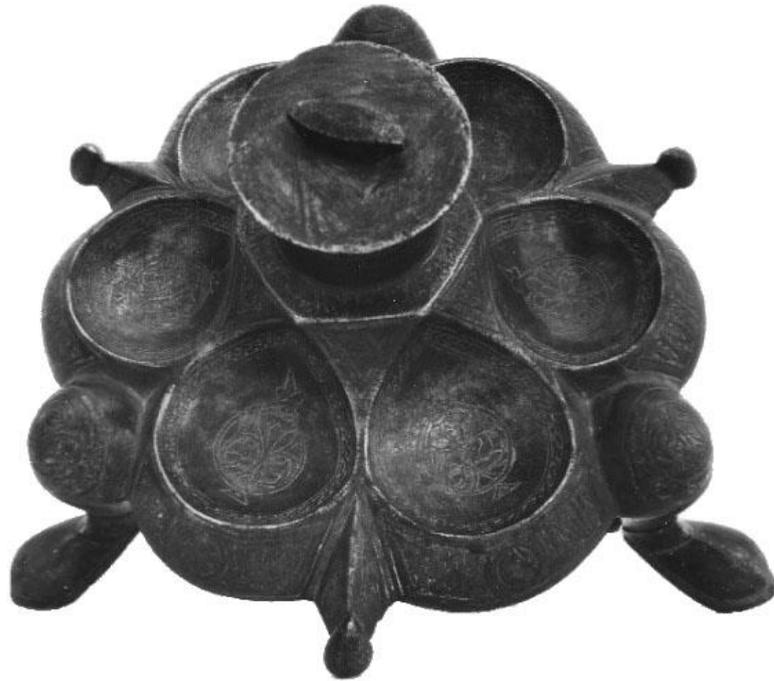


a

No. 214



b



a

No. 215



b

Pl. 90



a

No. 216



b



No. 217



No. 218



No. 219

Pl. 92



No. 220



No. 221



No. 222



No. 223



No. 224



a



b

No. 225



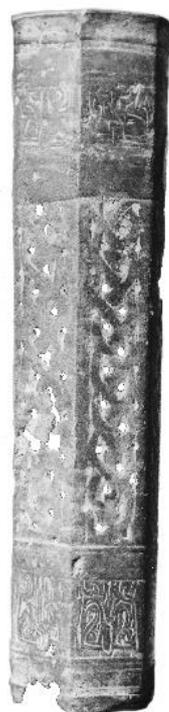
No. 226



No. 227



No. 228



No. 229



No. 230



No. 231



No. 232



No. 233



No. 234



No. 235



No. 236



No. 237



No. 238



No. 239



No. 240



No. 241



No. 242



No. 243

Pl. 96



No. 244



No. 245



No. 246



No. 247



No. 248



No. 249



No. 250



No. 251



No. 252



No. 253



No. 254



No. 255



No. 256



No. 257



No. 258



No. 259



No. 260



No. 261



No. 262

Pl. 98



a

No. 263



b



No. 264



No. 265



No. 266



No. 267



No. 268



a

b

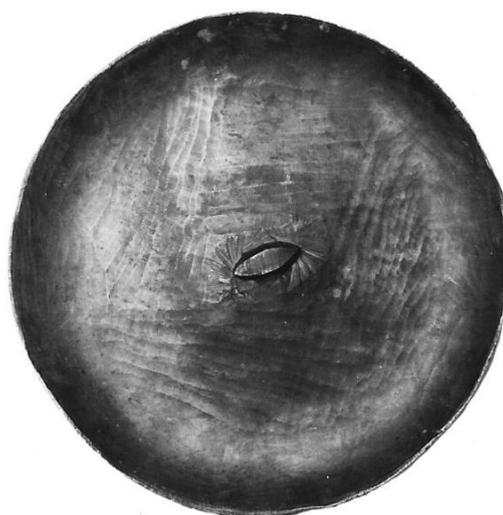


No. 269



No. 270

a



b



No. 271

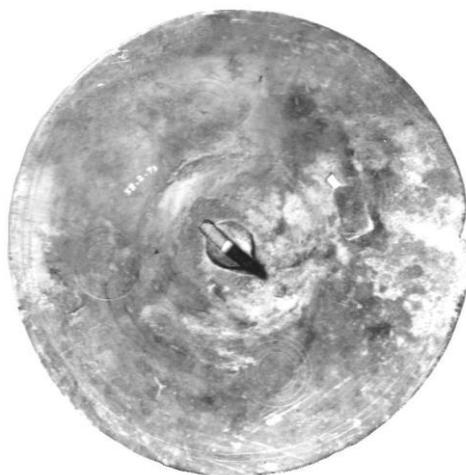


No. 272

Pl. 102



a



b

No. 273

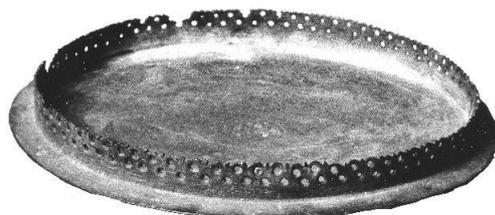


c



No. 274

a



b



No. 275



No. 276



No. 277

a



b

Pl. 104



a

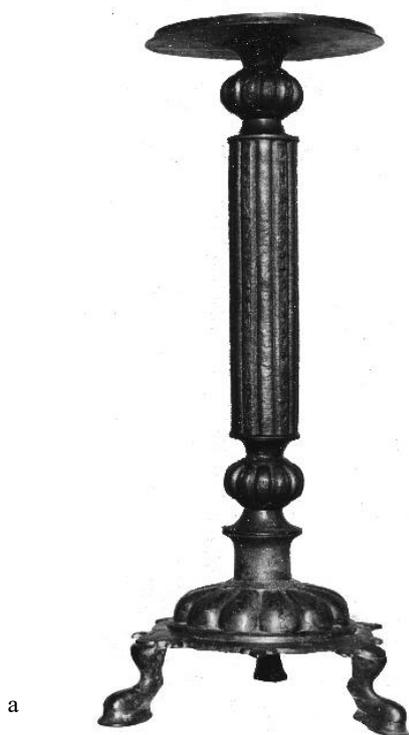
No. 278



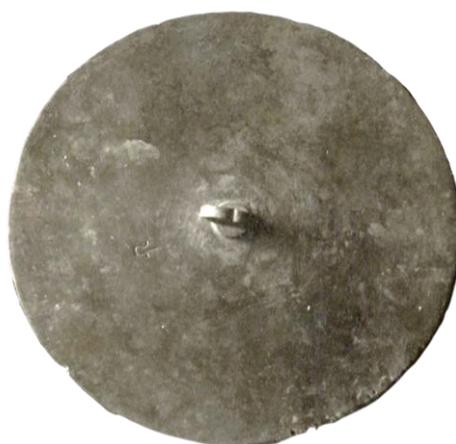
b



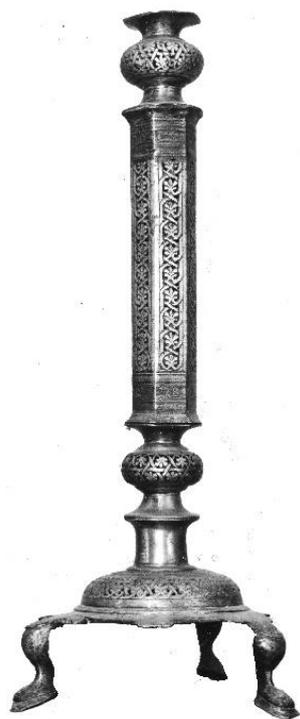
c



No. 279



Pl. 106



a

No. 280



b



c



No. 281



a



b

No. 282

Pl. 108



No. 283



No. 284



No. 285

a



b



No. 286

a



b

Oil-lamps

41 Items	{	one-wick oil-lamps	{	flat base	{	open reservoir	{	almond-shaped (no. 287)
						closed reservoir	{	globular (no. 288)
						open reservoir	{	globular (nos. 289-290)
							{	cup-shaped (no. 291)
				smooth foot	{	closed reservoir	{	globular (nos. 296-297)
							{	almond-shaped (nos. 304-308)
				faceted foot		closed reservoir		almond-shaped (nos. 309, 311-319, 330)
				missing foot		closed reservoir	{	globular (nos. 292-298)
							{	pipe-shaped (nos. 299-303)
							{	almond-shaped (no. 310)
re-composed oil-lamps		closed reservoir	{	globular (nos. 321, 323)				
			{	pipe-shaped (no. 322)				
			{	almond-shaped (no. 324)				
		two-wick oil-lamps	{	globular (nos. 325-326)				
			{	rectangular (nos. 327-328)				
		three-wick oil-lamps		rectangular (no. 329)				
		unidentified ring-handle (no. 320)						

No. **287**

Pl. 109

One-wick oil-lamp

Flat base; open, almond-shaped reservoir; flat handle.
 Copper alloy. Cast.
 Fair condition.
 9th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

No. **288**

Pl. 109

One-wick oil-lamp

Flat base; open, globular reservoir; ring-handle.
 Copper alloy. Cast.
 Poor condition. Deformed rim.
 10th-11th century
 Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

No. **289**

Pl. 109

One-wick oil-lamp

Flat base; closed, globular reservoir; tripartite lateral flanges.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Passable condition. Lid and handle missing.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 159).

No. **290**

Pl. 109

One-wick oil-lamp

Flat base; closed, globular reservoir; long, open channel.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Passable condition. Lid and handle missing.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

No. **291**

Pl. 109

One-wick oil-lamp

Smooth, high truncated conical foot; open, cup-shaped reservoir; pointed lateral flanges; flat handle.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Fair condition.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 90).

No. **292**

Pl. 109a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Closed, globular reservoir; long, half-opened channel.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Lid, foot and handle missing.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 110).

Engraved interlaced ribbons run around the reservoir opening. An engraved, and pierced, knotted element can be seen at the channel starting.

No. 293

Pl. 109a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Closed, globular reservoir; long, half-opened channel.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Lid, foot and handle missing; dark greenish patina (notes by Scerrato).

L. 16 cm, w. 6.3 cm

11th-12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-38); "found in Ghazni".

A foliated, Kufic inscription runs around the reservoir opening; the text is unreadable due to the preservation status. An engraved, and pierced, knotted element can be seen at the channel starting.

No. 294

Pl. 110a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Closed, globular reservoir; lateral flanges; half-opened channel.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. Lid, foot and handle missing.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1965, Inv. no. 58-2-39); "found in Ghazni".

On the body, two small roundels inlaid with copper include a Solomon knot.

No. 295

Pl. 110

One-wick oil-lamp

Closed, globular reservoir; opened channel.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Lid, foot, handle and channel cover missing.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

No. 296

Pl. 110a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

High conical, smooth foot; closed, globular reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Lid and handle missing.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 191).

A stylised, vegetal scroll is engraved in champlévé around the reservoir opening. A stylised palmette can be seen on the best-preserved flange.

No. 297

Pl. 110a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Truncated conical, smooth foot; closed, globular reservoir; long, open channel.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Lid missing.

H. 4 cm, l. 10 cm, w. 6 cm (notes by Scerrato).

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-30).

Two short, Kufic inscriptions run unframed laterally down the body. The photographic documentation is unfair: the text might read a signature:

عمل / سليمان or اسحاق؟

Work of / Sulaymān or Ishāq?

No. 298

Pl. 111a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Closed, globular reservoir; half-opened channel; ring-handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Lid and foot missing.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 143).

Vegetal scroll composed by stylised palmettes run around the reservoir opening.

No. 299

Pl. 111a-b

One-wick pipe-shaped oil-lamp

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Foot, lid and handle missing; some small gaps on the body and channel.

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-36).

Quoted: Grube 1981, fig. 325 (12th c.).

On the frontal body, two small roundels include a hooked Solomon knot alternating with as many stylised, vegetal elements.

No. 300

Pl. 111a-b

One-wick pipe-shaped oil-lamp

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Foot, lid and handle missing.

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-37); "found in Ghazni".

Eight small roundels include a Solomon knot around the reservoir opening; two bigger roundels with a four-palmetted Solomon knot can be seen on the body sides. A thin Greek fret connects the lateral knobs. An engraved, geometric collar separates the body from the channel. A pair of stylised, trilobed flowers encircles the channel opening.

No. 301

Pl. 111

One-wick pipe-shaped oil-lamp

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Foot, lid and handle missing; gap on the body.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 48).

A Solomon knot and a thin, geometric frame can be seen on the body sides.

No. 302

Pl. 112a-b

One-wick pipe-shaped oil-lamp

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Foot, lid and handle missing; gap on the body.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 133).

A ribbon connects the lateral knobs. Small roundels with a stylised daisy can be seen on the back body; another poorly preserved, decorative element appears in the frontal body. A Kufic inscription with ornamental apices runs on the opening rim: the text is unreadable due to the unclear photographic documentation.

No. 303

Pl. 112a-b

One-wick pipe-shaped oil-lamp

Copper alloy. Raised.

Poor condition. Foot, lid, foot and handle missing; gaps on the body and channel.

L. 14.7 cm, w. 7.8 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-35); "found in Ghazni".
Published: Scerrato 1964, 696, no. 8, pl. XI, figs. 23-24.

No. **304**

Pl. 112a-c

One-wick oil-lamp

High, smooth, conical foot; almond-shaped reservoir; included, closed channel.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Lid missing; gap on the foot.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in 1960; MAIA Inv. no. Sp22.

A footed, spade-shaped cartouche topped by a trilobed flower can be seen on the back foot: it includes vegetal elements. A cartouche appears on each side of the body, including a vegetal decoration.

No. **305**

Pl. 112

One-wick oil-lamp

High, smooth, conical foot; almond-shaped reservoir; included, closed channel.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Lid missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 19).

On the foot runs an engraved, funnelled decoration ending in upturned arches. A cartouche appears on each side of the body, including a vegetal decoration.

No. **306**

Pl. 113

One-wick oil-lamp

Smooth foot; almond-shaped reservoir; tapering handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, applied.

Poor condition. Lid missing; deformed handle, broken spout.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 53).

A wave-shaped frame runs on the foot base, while an engraved, funnelled decoration ending in upturned arches can be seen along the foot. An inscription in two cartouches runs around the opening: the text is unreadable due to the incomplete photographic documentation.

No. 307

Pl. 113a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Smooth, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, applied.

Passable condition. Lid and handle missing; small chip on the foot.

L. 13.2 cm, w. from one projecting element to the other 10.9 cm, h. 11.3 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (958, Inv. no. 58-2-31); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 57.

The foot is funnelled by light engravings; two frames of interlaced ribbons run at its base. A trapezoidal cartouche including a short scroll with palmette appears on each side of the lamp channel. A Kufic inscription in three cartouches appears on the body sides:

الد[ولة] / والسر والد / والسر (...)

For[tune] / , esoteric knowledge and AL- / and AL-S(...)

Another Kufic inscription, in two cartouches, runs along the opening rim:

السر والد[ولة] / والكرامة

And esoteric knowledge, for[tune] / and prestige

No. 308

Pl. 113a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Smooth, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Lid and handle missing.

12th-13th century

MuCIv-MAO, Inv. no. 8366; purchased in Ghazni in 1961; MAIA Inv. no. Sp54.

Quoted: Di Flumeri Vatielli 2010, fig. 39.

Stylised ribbons run at the base of the foot, while an engraved, funnelled decoration ending in upturned arches can be seen along the foot. A cartouche, including a scroll with palmette, appears on each side of the lamp channel; other vegetal cartouches appear on the lower and back body repeating:

الكة

AL-KA

Two cartouches around the opening rim frame a Kufic inscription on a background made of scrolls with five-lobed flowers. The text repeat:

الكرامة

Prestige

No. 309

Pl. 114a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir; flat lid.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Poor condition. Handle missing, original lid replaced by an iron one (notes by Scerrato); worn.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-33); "found in Ghazni".

Interlaced ribbons run at the base of the foot, while triangular, vegetal medallions can be seen along the foot. Two lozenges with a knob in the centre appear on each side of the lamp. Two copper, small roundels (one of those is missing) appear around the opening near the channel. A Kufic inscription, in cartouches, runs around the opening rim and on the body, repeating:

باليمن

With good fortune

No. 310

Pl. 114

Oil-lamp

(annexed to composite shaft no. 262)

Unrelated foot; almond-shaped reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. Lid missing.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (no. 58-2-100); "found in Ghazni".

Two concentric circles inlaid with copper appear on the lamp side.

No. 311

Pl. 114a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir; tapering handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, applied.

Passable condition. Lid and thumb-rest missing.

H. 7.3 cm, l. without handle 9.4 cm, l. including the ring 12.8 cm, Ø of the base circle 6.4 cm, w. maximum of the opening 3 cm

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased.

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 60, figs. 19-20 (second half of 12th c.).

A frame of interlaced ribbons runs at the base of the foot. Triangular cartouches alternate with spade-shaped medallions on the foot: both include a vegetal decoration. The same medallions repeat on the body, alternated with stylised, seated human figure, whose heads

are represented by a knob. The geometrical frame repeats on the channel, defining its lateral space. Two cartouches running around the opening frame a bold, cursive inscription with few vegetal elements on the background:

العز والاقبال / والدولة والـ

Glory, prosperity / and fortune and AL-

No. 312

Pl. 115a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir; flat lid.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Lid, handle and foot missing.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-34); "found in Ghazni".

Three lozenges and a stylised human face appear on each side of the body. Cartouches of varied shapes include stylised, vegetal elements. Two drop-shaped cartouches appear on top of the channel opening including a palmette. A Kufic inscription in two cartouches runs on the opening rim, repeating:

السلامة

Spiritual integrity

No. 313

Pl. 115a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition. Lid and handle missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 189); "found in Ghazni".

Interlaced ribbons run at foot base, while triangular, and spade-shaped, vegetal medallions can be seen on the foot. Vegetal cartouches of different shapes appear on the body, along with two lozenges as knobs on each side. Four copper discs (one of those is missing) appear around the opening. A Kufic inscription on a vegetal background, in two cartouches, runs around the opening rim:

الكرامة

Prestige

No. 314

Pl. 115

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Lid and handle missing; gap on the channel.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 94).

Two drop-shaped medallions with a vegetal element appear on top of the channel opening. A Kufic inscription in two cartouches runs on the opening rim; the text is unreadable due to the preservation status.

No. 315

Pl. 115

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, applied.

Poor condition. Lid and handle missing; worn.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 52).

Traces of vegetal medallions can be seen on the foot. A pair of horizontal knobs appear on each side of the body, probably for the suspension system. An epigraphic cartouche runs around the opening.

No. 316

Pl. 116a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. Lid and handle missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 16).

Triangular cartouches alternate with spade-shaped medallions on the foot, both including a vegetal decoration. Two lozenge knobs appear on each side of the body, employed as stylised heads for engraved, seated human bodies. Cartouches of different shapes frame palmettes and scrolls. A Kufic inscription in two cartouches runs on the opening rim, repeating:

باليمن

With good fortune

No. **317**

Pl. 116

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, applied.

Poor condition. Lid and handle missing; circular gap on the lower reservoir.

H. 8 cm

12th-13th century

Kandahar "City Hall" (1957-1958); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1959b, 106-107, no. 9, fig. 18.

Triangular, vegetal cartouches can be seen on the faceted base of the foot. A rhomboid medallion alternate with spade-shaped ones on the foot: both include spiralling scrolls. A pair of horizontal knobs appear on each side of the body, probably for the suspension system.

No. **318**

Pl. 116

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, applied.

Poor condition. Lid and handle missing.

12th-13th century

MuCIIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5940; purchased in Ghazni and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.

Lateral knobs and traces of vegetal cartouches can be seen on the body. Two vegetal cartouches run around the opening.

No. **319**

Pl. 116a-b

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir; tapering handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Lid and thumb-rest missing; gap on the lower body.

H. 7.5 cm, l. 7 cm, w. 6 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-32); "found in Ghazni".

A geometric frame runs on the foot base, while triangular, vegetal cartouches appear on the foot. A pair of horizontal knobs appears on each side of the body. Two cartouches runs around the opening including vegetal scrolls.

No. 320

Pl. 117

Ring-handle

Surmounted by a cockerel-shaped thumb-rest on a high pedestal.

Copper alloy (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Cast; chiselled, engraved.

Fair condition.

Max 8.5 × 3 cm, 44 gr

12th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8306; excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C4094.

Engraved cuts roughly define the plumage on the cockerel body and tail.

No. 321

Pl. 117a-b

Re-composed one-wick oil-lamp

Closed, globular reservoir; pointed later flanges; half-opened channel. Oil-lamp soldered on a globular element of shaft.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Lid, handle and original foot missing; thick patina covering the surface.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 109).

No. 322

Pl. 117a-b

Re-composed one-wick oil-lamp

Pipe-shaped reservoir; hinged lid in form of lion's head. Oil-lamp soldered on unrelated foot.

Copper alloy. Cast; moulded, engraved.

Passable condition. Handle and original foot missing; thick patina partially covering the decoration.

Uncertain dating (oil-lamp 11th century)

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 141).

Small roundels of different kind appear on the foot, while others alternate with vegetal elements around the body. Scrolls run around the opening and an isolated, upturned palmette points toward the channel.

No. 323

Pl. 118

Re-composed one-wick oil-lamp

Closed reservoir; included channel. Oil-lamp resting on unrelated, short shaft.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Foot, lid and handle missing.

Uncertain dating (oil-lamp 12th-13th century)

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 102).

A spade-shaped medallion including a vegetal decoration can be seen on the body. A cursive inscription on a vegetal background runs around the rim; the text is unreadable due to the preservation status.

No. 324

Pl. 118a-b

Re-composed one-wick oil-lamp

Almond-shaped reservoir. Oil-lamp soldered to an upturned, pear-shaped element of shaft.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Lid, handle and original foot missing; worn. Shaft element in fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 27).

Oil-lamp: a vegetal scrolls framed in two cartouches runs around the opening. A pair of horizontal knobs appears on each side of the body.

Element of shaft: a geometric frame runs around the base, while rectangular cartouches alternate with spade-shaped ones including a vegetal decoration on the faceted body.

No. 325

Pl. 118a-b

Two-wick oil-lamp

Closed, globular reservoir; pointed lateral flanges; half-opened channels.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Lid and handle missing; small chip on one channel, thick patina covering the surface.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 112).

A vegetal decoration runs around the opening.

No. 326

Pl. 119a-b

Two-wick oil-lamp

Closed, globular reservoir; pointed lateral flanges; half-opened channels.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Lid and handle missing; gap on the upper body, thick patina covering the surface.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 113).

A zoomorphic (?) roundel appears on the body.

No. **327**

Pl. 119

Two-wick oil-lamp

Closed, rectangular reservoir; ring-handle with lion-shaped thumb-rest.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced.

Fair condition. Lid missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

A pierced, vegetal decoration can be seen on the flat, upper section of the body.

No. **328**

Pl. 119

Two-wick oil-lamp

Closed, rectangular reservoir; ring-handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced.

Poor condition. Lid partially broken, deformed and broken channels.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 81).

A geometric, pierced decoration – possibly a solar element – appears on the lid.

No. **329**

Pl. 120a-b

Three-wick oil-lamp

Three zoomorphic feet; closed, rectangular reservoir; ring-handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced.

Passable condition. Lid missing, slightly deformed upper body.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 103).

A pierced, and engraved, vegetal, crossing decoration appears on the upper body.

*Unknown location*No. **330**

Pl. 120

One-wick oil-lamp

Faceted, trumpet-shaped foot; almond-shaped reservoir.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Lid and handle missing; broken spout.

12th-13th century

A geometric frame runs at the base of the foot, while triangular, vegetal cartouches can be seen on the foot. Small, rhomboid cartouches alternate on the body with stylised, seated human figures, whose heads are represented by a knob.

Comment

Islamic oil-lamps probably originate from classical and Byzantine prototypes; Roman models used to have loops for hanging, while Islamic specimens lost such features. Some models still show short flanges or lateral knobs that could represent a reminiscence of those loops, but on Iranian oil-lamps these protruding elements are purely decorative.¹⁵⁷ In fact, Islamic oil-lamps are always provided with a handle.¹⁵⁸ Feet and handles are often lost, as well as the lid closing the reservoir.

This catalogue contains forty-six oil-lamps. Unfortunately, the size of the objects is generally unknown. Two pictures taken in the Rawza Museum in 1976 paint a portrait of some oil-lamps, bracelets and spoons together, so that a proportion between the objects can be inferred.

Oil-lamps have been classified in one-wick and two- or three-wick items and then further into models within these two categories, on the basis of the eventual foot and morphology.

One-wick oil-lamps

Globular oil-lamps with an open or closed channel probably rest on a short, smooth foot, as attested by no. 298 (Pl. 111), which preserves only a hint of it. They display three models.

Four specimens with a flat base show many different shapes. Two of them have an open reservoir: no. 287 (Pl. 109) has an almond-shaped body mirrored in the flat hold and no. 288 (Pl. 109) has a globular body with just hinted spout and ring-handle. The other two specimens show a globular closed reservoir; both lack the once hinged lid and the handle.

Among the oil-lamps with a smooth foot, only one specimen (no. 291, Pl. 109) presents a cup-shaped body with no rim, fixed on a high, truncated conical foot. A broad, flat hold and two cuspidate flanges protrude horizontally. Nineteen oil-lamps with closed reservoirs resting on a smooth foot display three models. The main model (nos. 292-298) presents a globular body with flat base upon which the foot was soldered, laterally protruding flanges and a ring-handle. The channel can be either completely open or partially closed by a pierced cover near the lamp's body (nos. 292-293). It shows a square or heart-shaped end, the latter with a horizontal lip. A geometrical (interlaced ribbons on no. 292, Pl. 109b), vegetal (nos. 296, 298, respectively Pl. 110b, 111b) or epigraphic (no. 293, Pl. 109b) band often decorates the shoulder around the opening. Lateral flanges are round or apicated. The thumb-rest, wherever preserved, consists in a short, flat, sloping strip. The date of item no. 296 can be inferred on the base of the decorative scroll it shares with ewer no. 96.

No. 297 (Pl. 110a-b) bears two unframed Kufic inscriptions, in two sections, running perpendicular to the flanges. Unfortunately, the photographic documentation does not allow for

¹⁵⁷ Allan 1976, I, 268-270.

¹⁵⁸ The introduction of the handle could have followed the conquest of Sogdiana (namely in the 8th century), since all the vessels – also pottery ones – from there featured a ring-handle (Allan 1976, I, 270-271).

a full reading. But taken into account the script, the simple style and the position, it is likely to be a signature.

Six specimens (nos. 299-303, 322) show a characteristic pipe-shaped profile, with an upturned, closed channel ending in a flat round lip. Lateral flanges are mostly reduced to knobs, sometimes linked to one another by a spiralling fillet. A collar in relief usually underlies the junction of the channel. Oil-lamp no. 300 (Pl. 111a-b) bears a series of eight roundels, which include as many Solomon knots. A stylised vegetal motif encircles the channel's opening. Hooked Solomon knots appear also on no. 299 (Pl. 111a). The Kufic script detected on no. 302 (Pl. 112b) looks close to that employed on lampstand no. 279 (Pl. 105b) and it is identified as Samanid. This detail fits well with the above-mentioned decorative elements used on this kind of oil-lamps.

The third model on a smooth foot has an almond-shaped reservoir, with a short included channel usually ending in a heart-shaped, flat lip. Two cartouches sit on the reservoir rim while other two beside the lateral knobs; all frame benedictory terms. Vegetal motifs, also in cartouches, can decorate the channel side, while the foot usually bears geometric patterns. The same model is re-proposed on a faceted foot (see below).

Oil-lamp no. 304 (Pl. 112a-c) represents a unique specimen: the almond-shaped body is significantly shorter than others are, and rests on a high foot. Two cartouches, following the body profile, include a vegetal motif on the sides. Spade-shaped roundels with a foot and apice decorate the stem.

Twelve oil-lamps, all belonging to the almond-shaped model explained above, rest on a faceted foot. Only two of them preserve the handle (nos. 311, 319) and only one the covering lid (no. 309). Lateral knobs, in numbers of two or four, sometimes evolve into a stylised anthropomorphic face topping an engraved body (no. 311, Pl. 114a; no. 316, Pl. 116a; no. 330, Pl. 120). Vegetal motifs, framed in triangular or rhomboid cartouches, usually decorate the foot.

From the excavation of the royal palace in Ghazni emerged a sturdy ring-handle (no. 320, Pl. 117), most probably belonging to an oil-lamp. A high vertical pedestal, topped by an ornamental thumb-rest shaped as a cockerel, surmounts it. The zoomorphic element is cast in round, but a bit flattened since it was meant to be seen on the profile. Deep incisions define the plumage on its wings and tail.

Four oil-lamps show evident interpolation: the lost foot is replaced by an unfitting element. No. 324 was soldered onto an upturned element of shaft deprived of its foot. The others (nos. 322-33) rest on supports completely unrelated to the original, probably dating to a later period. No. 322 (Pl. 117a) shows an interesting lid shaped in form of a feline head with protruding ears.¹⁵⁹

Two- and three-wick oil-lamps

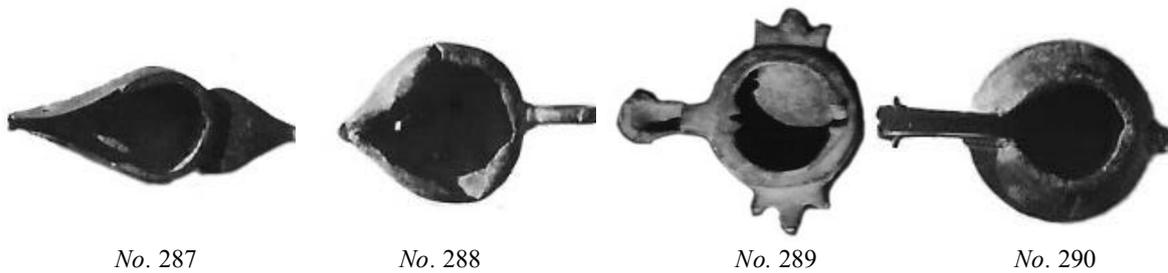
Two globular oil-lamps with a flat base present two wicks with half-covered channels (nos. 325-326). Both lack the lid, but the lateral flanges are preserved.

Other two specimens with a double wick show a rectangular shape: no. 327 (Pl. 119) is narrower, with a pierced surface covering the reservoir. The lid that used to be hinged on it is missing. The lamp still retains a ring-handle with zoomorphic thumb-rest. No. 328 (Pl. 119) still has the lid, but broken at its end as the wicks' channels. A geometrical pattern, composed by four small holes around a bigger one, is pierced onto the lid.

¹⁵⁹ The object is to be compared with a specimen from Eastern Iran or Afghanistan, 11th century (Aron Collection, Inv. no. Aron33; see Allan 1986a, 122, no. 29).

Footed three-wick oil-lamp no. 329 (Pl. 120a-b) is quite similar to no. 327 in its pierced upper surface (also decorated by engravings), ring-handle, and missing hinged lid. Two “seated” feet sit under the backside, another one on the front side.

Pl. 109



No. 291



No. 292

a



b



No. 293

a



b



a



b

No. 294



No. 295



a



b

No. 296



a



b

No. 297

Pl. 111



No. 298

a



b



No. 299

a



b



No. 300

a



b



No. 301



a

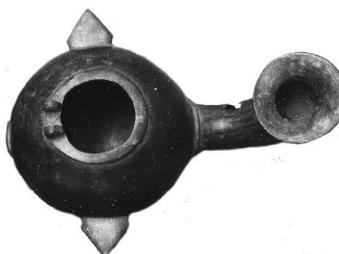


b

No. 302



a



b

No. 303



a



b



c

No. 304



No. 305

Pl. 113



No. 306



No. 307

a



b



No. 308

a



b



a



b

No. 309



No. 310



a



b

No. 311

Pl. 115



No. 312

a

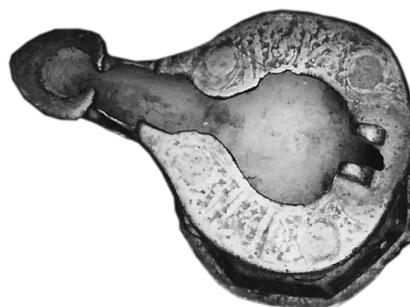


b

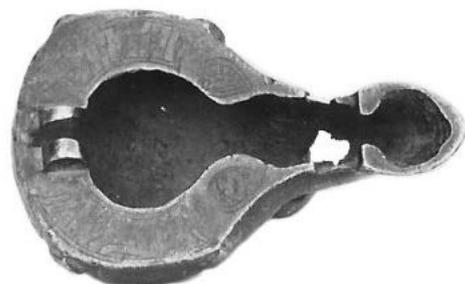


No. 313

a



b



No. 314



No. 315



a



b

No. 316



No. 317



No. 318



a



b

No. 319

Pl. 117



No. 320



No. 321

a

b



No. 322

a

b



No. 323



a



b

No. 324



a



b

No. 325

Pl. 119



No. 326

a



b



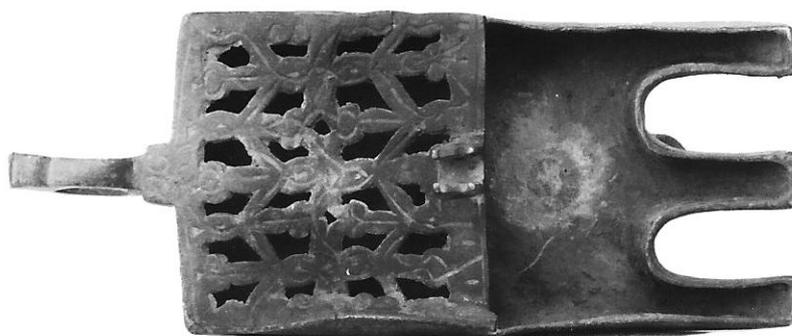
No. 327



No. 328



a



No. 329

b



No. 330

2.5 Thurification Furniture

Incense burners

8 Items { cubic (nos. 331-332)
dome-shaped (nos. 333, 335, handle no. 334)
cup-shaped (no. 336)
bowl-shaped (nos. 337-338)

No. 331

Pl. 121a-c

Cubic incense burner

Four feet; four conical pivots originally sustaining the upper part; long, horizontal handle with square section.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Poor condition. Upper part of the body missing.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 184).

A pierced decoration can be seen on the body and on the thicker section of the handle. A geometric interlace runs along the handle sides, while deep cuts decorate the handle top. Concentric circles engraved on the underside, framing a sort of stylised daisy.

No. 332

Pl. 121a-b

Cubic incense burner

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition. Cover, clasps, catch, handle and three feet missing.

H. 6.7 cm

11th-12th century

Kandahar "City Hall" (1957-1958); "found in Kandahar (?)".

Published: Scerrato 1959b, pp. 99-101, no. 1, figs. 1-5 (11th-12th c.); Allan 1976, II, 750.

Each face is pierced with a vegetal motif and bears a Kufic inscription in relief:

باليمن والدوامة والبر

With good fortune, endurance and devotion

On the underside, a central, circular depression is filled by an umbo pierced with a starred design.

No. 333

Pl. 122a-b

Dome-shaped incense burner

Cylindrical body; dome supported by a drum, culminating in a vegetal element. Four zoomorphic feet; long, horizontal handle with square section ending in a pointed, funnelled knob.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, applied.

Fair condition.

H. 14.3 cm, l. 33 cm

9th-10th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-40); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, pp. 153-154, no. 160 (half of 12th c.); Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, p. 32, fig. 7 (9th-10th c.).

Cast almond-shaped bosses on a sole are applied on the cylindrical body and on the upper side of the handle. The drum is pierced with triangular elements, while circular and triangular piercings alternate in rows on the dome. An indented, thin collar divides the drum from the dome. Triangular piercings can be seen on the handle sides as well.

No. 334

Pl. 122a-b

Handle of dome-shaped (?) incense burner

Horizontal; in form of a rampant lion.

Copper alloy. Cast; chiselled, engraved.

Fair condition.

H. 5.8 cm

9th-10th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-89); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Allan 1976, I, 368, II, 839, fig. 83.

Quoted: Rice, Rowland 1971, pls. 202-203.

The lion is portrayed with an open mouth. Precise incisions define the fur on the lion's head, its neck and under the tail.

No. 335

Pl. 123a-b

Dome-shaped incense burner

Cylindrical body; dome, half of which is movable; three feet.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition. Movable upper section and finial missing; two modern feet (Scerrato).

H. 14.6 cm

12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-41); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 154, no. 161, pl. LXIII (12th-13th c.); Rowland 1966, no. 105; Allan 1976, II, 748.

Three feet culminating in a trilobed flower are nailed to the outer walls of the body. A band framing a single scroll runs at the base. The main register on the body includes a cursive inscription on a punched background enriched by a thin scroll with trilobed flowers:

باليمن وا / لبركة و / السلامة و

With good fortune, b / lessing, / spiritual integrity and

A band of geometrically interlaced ribbons repeats below the rim and comparting the dome, whose inner profile is polylobed. The dome itself is pierced and engraved with circular scrolls including a trilobed palmette.

No. 336

Pl. 124a-b

Cup-shaped incense burner

High, straight wall; circular, flared lid with convex shoulder and raised, round opening. Four zoomorphic holds.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Passable condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 114).

Cast holds shaped as stylised, feline protomes alternate with spade-shaped medallions including a vegetal decoration.

No. 337

Pl. 124a-b

Bowl-shaped incense burner

Flat base; sloping wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Handle missing; small hole on the body.

Ø of the base 13.5 cm; upper Ø 12.5 cm; h. 4.8 cm; w. of the rim 0.9 cm

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 138); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 188, pl. 5, fig. 1 (10th-11th c.).

A continuous ribbon including a thin scroll defines the space on the body creating roundels and panels. The latter host Solomon knots with apices. The ribbon is doubled by a series of vertical cuts.

No. 338

Pl. 124a-b

Bowl-shaped incense burner

Flat base; high, straight wall; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, engraved.

Fair condition. Handle missing.

H. 7 cm, Ø 17.5 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-63); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Allan 1976, II, 764, fig. 59.

Quoted: Rice, Rowland 1971, pl. 179.

A geometric ribbon runs along the rim. Three rows of almond-shaped bosses are repoussé on the wall. The lower row alternates with cartouches framing a Kufic inscription on an intricate, vegetal background with trilobed flowers. The text repeats:

باليمن والبركة

With good fortune and blessing

Bosses in the central row alternates with trapezoidal cartouches, each one of those includes a running hare on a vegetal background. Bosses in the upper row alternate with cartouches framing a cursive inscription on an intricate, vegetal background with trilobed flowers:

العز والاقبال وا / لدولة والسعاد(ة) / والسع[...]. والنجمة / النعمة وا / لرحمة
والبقاء

*Glory, prosperity, f/ortune, happine(ss) /, al-sa'a[...], fortune / grace, m / ercy and
eternal life*

Comment

Incense and perfume burners were already part of the domestic equipment in the Iranian world already before the Islamic period.¹⁶⁰ The seven specimens recorded in the IsMEO documentation provide a rich overview of incense burner production, attesting a high morphological variety. Even more models are attested in the Islamic production, which are absent from this documentation. These include the ovoid-shaped models with a high shoulder and trumpet-shaped or splayed foot as well as the zoomorphic, three-dimensional model, which differ according to the animal species (especially birds and felines) and opening (cf. Figs. 39-40).¹⁶¹

Tray-dishes, whose employment as incense burners is still doubtful, do not appear in this class; they are classified among trays.

¹⁶⁰ Allan 1986a, 25.

¹⁶¹ A bird-shaped (Inv. no. 9-2-79) and a feline-shaped (without inventory number) specimens are currently on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum (Figs. 39-40).

The majority of incense burners present a pierced body, primarily for a functional purpose and secondly for decoration. Morphologically, they often reproduce architectonic or zoomorphic forms. More elements compose the object, some of which are subject to loss or modification; interpolations affect the handle, the finial, the feet, the opening door, or sometimes even the upper half of the object.



Fig. 39 – Bird-shaped incense burner, Kabul National Museum, Inv. no. 9-2-79 (MAIA, photo by M. Ferrandi, 2012).



Fig. 40 – Feline-shaped incense burner, Kabul National Museum, without inventory number (MAIA, photo by M. Ferrandi, 2012).

Two specimens portray the cubic model. Only the lower half of no. 331 (Pl. 121a-c) is preserved: a cubic body provided at corners with four pillars, vertically protruding, which could at one time be inserted into the upper half. It rests on four thin feet, which are quite unusual since incense burners often have three feet. From the body protrudes a very long handle with a squared profile, tapering toward the end. Both the body and the first section of the handle are pierced. Measurements of the object are unknown, but it was photographed alongside other metalworks. Comparisons allow us to conclude that it was quite small, since its length barely exceeds that of a spoon.

Incense burner no. 332 (Pl. 121a-b) rests on four zoomorphic feet, of which only one was still preserved. Each side is partitioned into three horizontal registers; an epigraphic cartouche, in raised Kufic, comprised between two series of four medallions each, occupies the central one. Two flat lugs, already lost, joined the lid to the body. The object should have had a handle as well. The bottom is decorated by a pierced umbo, protruding inside a round depression.

No. 333 (Pl. 122a-b) is a beautiful and intact domed incense burner, geometric in shape and composed by two parts: a cylindrical base, bearing almonds on relief, resting on three bold zoomorphic feet ending in soled horseshoes. The domed upper half rests on a tympanum and is pierced with round and triangular holes; a sort of big and open flower topped it, revealing the original pomegranate shape of the whole object. This detail also points to a similarity, along with the entire shape, with a Buddhist stupa. A lug linked the two halves, composing the opening in which incense is inserted. A strong handle, with squared profile and decorated by two almonds on relief on the upper face, was attached to the base. It ended in a big finial, shaped as a tapered dome, topped by a knob.

Geometry expressed both in morphology and openwork decoration would point to an early date such the 9th-10th century. A similar specimen from the Bumiller Collection preserved only the lower part and the handle; it is decorated with almonds, as well.¹⁶²

The second domed specimen (no. 335, Pl. 123) presents a cylindrical body, resting on three feet, surmounted by a half dome with a polylobed inner profile. The upper half, cast in one piece with a well, is pierced with a vegetal decoration made of superimposed trilobed flowers, each one included into a round scroll. On the lower vessel runs a big epigraphic band, in cursive on a vegetal background. Two strings frame the inscription; the lower one filled by a single vegetal scroll, the upper one by interlaced ribbons. The latter repeats also along the dome outer profile. The handle is missing. Extremely interesting is the dotted background of the vessel. The object is datable to 12th-13th century.¹⁶³

Fragmentary handle no. 334 (Pl. 122a-b) most probably belonged to a domed incense burner. It is shaped as a rampant lion, designed to rest on its forelegs joined together under the chest, and with separated hind legs. The animal is slender and carved carefully in every detail of the muzzle. The mouth is open with showing off teeth, as usually occurs; the mane is chiselled in two different layers of depth; some cuts suggest the ribs' hollows, while shallow incisions define the fur on the hind legs. Most probably, the object was the horizontal handle of a dish incense burner, according to an ancient Parthian model.¹⁶⁴ The naturalistic treatment of the lion supports an early dating.

Object no. 336 (Pl. 124a-b) is a cup with a round bottom, closed at its top by a slightly concave lid provided with a round opening at the centre. A series of small holes on its top suggests that its function was to let the smoke or perfume exit. Four protruding knobs, shaped as stylised protomes, act as holds.¹⁶⁵ The object is engraved on the body with spade-shaped elements topped by a trilobed flower and filled by a vegetal motif. The model is unusual and no parallel has been found.

Two objects in the form of a bowl with a flat base and high wall have been classified as incense burners, mainly because of their unpolished inner surface. Alternatively, no. 337 (Pl. 124a-b) could be considered as the external shell of a more delicate and maybe precious object to be inserted into.¹⁶⁶ It is missing its handle, probably horizontal; a square-shaped element protrudes from the body. Two vegetal bands on the upper and lower body create interlacing roundels, concave at the centre.¹⁶⁷ Smaller roundels with apices, filled by a Solomon knot, occupy the intervening spaces.¹⁶⁸ The bands are profiled by a second margin, filled by vertical cuts; this is a peculiar feature, already noted on other metalworks. A strip of interlaced ribbons runs along the rim. The object looks unpolished inside. The shape and decoration points to the Samanid context, which would assign the item to the 10th-early 11th century.

No. 338 (Pl. 124a-b) was recorded as "vase" in the IsMEO documentation. It bears a decoration of repoussé almond-shaped elements, typical of mortars and perfume bottles. Such

¹⁶² Inv. no. 2386, see Daiber 2012, 104. See also the incense burner, 8th-9th century, in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. (Inv. no. F1952.1), and the comparison items indicated in Gelber 2012.

¹⁶³ Scerrato 1961, 154, no. 161. An unpublished, similar specimen is in the Aron Collection (Inv. no. Aron339): the shape, the foot, the dotted background, the script and the vegetal scroll look the same; the object is provided on top with a finial in form of a harpy.

¹⁶⁴ Allan 1976, I, 312.

¹⁶⁵ The knobs find a comparison in some protomes protruding from the handle of buckets retrieved in Ghazni few years ago. The buckets are currently under analysis by the author.

¹⁶⁶ Melikian-Chirvani (1975b, 189) already drew attention on the similarity between this bowl and a lobed bowl once preserved in the Herat Museum.

¹⁶⁷ The vegetal bands are to be compared with those on oil-lamp no. 279.

¹⁶⁸ Melikian-Chirvani (1975b, 188) identifies object no. 337 as a bowl.

elements appear in three rows, with upward vertices. The object is clearly obtained from a raised metal sheet, as attested by the concave almond-shaped visible from the interior. Two movable handles are missing, leaving empty the slots in which they were fixed. These elements are embossed too, so to be perfectly integrated into the decorative scheme; in fact, cartouches above and below them are adapted to their shape. Three registers of cartouches alternate with the almonds; in the upper one runs a cursive benedictory inscription, the central one shows running hares – one into each cartouche – and in the lower one there is a Kufic inscription, again benedictory. A strip filled by two interlaced ribbons runs along the rim.

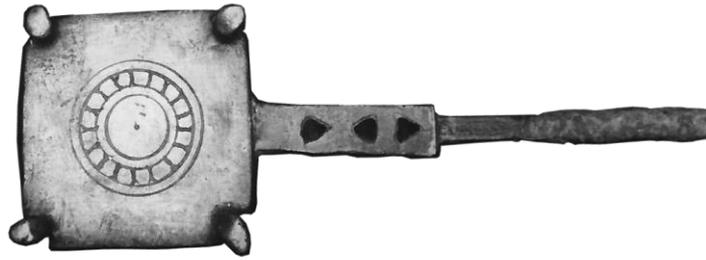
Two closely comparable objects are known: the first from 9th-10th century Iran from the Keir Collection is classified as a bowl,¹⁶⁹ the second is currently on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum. The latter rests on three zoomorphic feet in the form of a polylobed horseshoe and has a thinner wall with no rim. This specimen preserves the ring handles; the device is integrated into the decoration as well. In fact, the ring is fixed through a nail piercing an almond-shaped element.¹⁷⁰ The inner wall is smooth, and there is no sign of applied decoration, so they were likely cast together with the object. The vessel shares some features also with no. 337, e.g. the Solomon knots included in roundels with apices. The epigraphic script, the shortened terms, and the hinted vegetal background are all clues pointing to the Samanid period.

¹⁶⁹ Fehérvári 1976, 37, no. 15, pl. 5a.

¹⁷⁰ This kind of handle again represents a feature typical of mortars (Scerrato 1983, 36), but the thin wall and the ratio between height and width of the objects prevents such an identification.



a



b

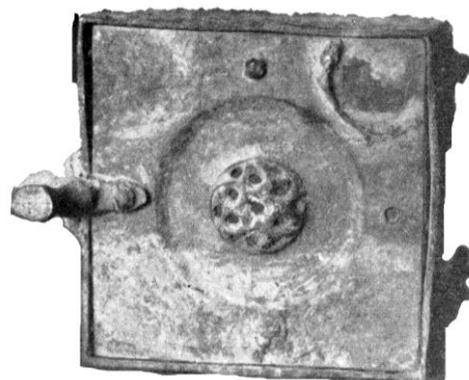


c

No. 331



a



b

No. 332

Pl. 122



a

No. 333



b



a



b

No. 334



a

No. 335



b

Pl. 124



No. 336

a



b



No. 337

a



b



No. 338

a



b

2.6 Domestic Supplies

Boxes

No. **339**

Pl. 125a-b

Circular box lid

Two closing hinges jointed to the wall.

Copper alloy. Raised (?); engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition. Hold missing.

Ø 23.1 cm, h. 3.6 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-75); “found in Ghazni”.

On the walls, a double interlaced scroll ending in floriated palmettes runs on a dotted background. Above it runs a double interlaced ribbon into a narrower band. On lid's top, a triple interlaced ribbon runs into a circular band on an upper layer in respect to the centre, where the missing hold should have been set. A wider, circular band frames a cursive inscription on a vegetal background composed by a spiralling single scroll enriched by leaves and trilobed flowers. The text, divided in four sections by as many crescents inlaid with copper and including the palmette already seen on the wall, reads:

العز والا / قبال والد / ولة والسعا / دة والسلا(مة)

Glory, pro / sperity, goo / d fortune, happine / ss and well-bei(ng)

A vegetal scroll into another circular band concludes the decoration.

No. **340**

Pl. 125

Circular box lid

Sunken bottom; flat rim; flower-shaped hold.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with silver, applied.

Fair condition.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 164).

Three rosettes, inlaid with silver, dispose on the lid's top around the hold.

No. 341

Pl. 125

Circular box lid

Slightly sunken bottom; flower-shaped hold.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, applied.

Poor condition. Rim broken.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 71).

A pseudo-inscription in four cartouches runs on a highly stylised background, interrupted by four rhomboid elements.

No. 342

Pl. 126

Circular box lid

Slightly sunken bottom.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Poor condition. Hold missing; erased surface.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 71).

A pseudo-inscription in four cartouches runs on a highly stylised background, interrupted by four rhomboid elements.

No. 343

Pl. 126a-b

Circular box lid

Domed; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved, inlaid with copper and silver.

Fair condition. Hold missing.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-60); "found in Ghazni".

On the flat rim, a single vegetal scroll with trilobed palmettes runs into a continuous band. Along the dome, four cartouches alternate with as many roundels including a rosette, which petals are alternatively inlaid with copper and silver. Cartouches frame a Kufic inscription characterised by elongated *hastae* and ornamental apices, on a vegetal background composed by spiralling scrolls and trilobed flowers. The text is only partially photographed:

{...} / باليمن والبر

With good fortune, devotion / {...}

No. 344

Pl. 127a-b

Circular box lid

Domed; flat rim.

Copper alloy. Raised; engraved.

Fair condition. Hold missing.

Ø 10.9 cm, h. 4.3 cm

Late 12th-early 13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-69); “found in Ghazni”.

On the flat rim, a double interlaced ribbon runs into a continuous band. Along the dome, four cartouches alternate with as many vegetal roundels. Cartouches frame a cursive inscription on a stylised, vegetal background; the text repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

Comment

Six lids indicate as many circular boxes. Lid no. 339 (Pl. 125a-b), from Ghazni, is cylindrical, with a flaring wall with two polygonal plates nailed to it, clearly to assuring a tight closure to the box. It bears a rich decoration; on its upper surface, there is a raised circular band, filled by interlaced ribbons. It probably used to surround a hold, now lost, attached to the lid. Around this band, there is an undecorated one, and then another broader one framing a cursive inscription interrupted by four small roundels. These include copper inlaid crescents (one of which has lost the inlay and shows very clearly the cuts chiselled to insert the copper foil) and in the resulting space engraved trilobed flowers. A narrow band, filled by a dense vegetal scroll, is also featured. On the wall, a high band frames two interlaced vegetal scrolls, very sinuous, ending in palmettes and trilobed flowers. The motif stands out for its uniqueness; it employs elements common to many metalworks from the Eastern Iranian area, but here declined in a new sophisticated form. There are some cuts along the scroll and on flowers made to host the inlay. The background surface is also minutely dotted. Above this vegetal band runs a narrow strip filled by two interlaced ribbons.

Trilobed flowers appearing within the roundel on the upper surface and those engraved into the wall band differ from those in the epigraphic background: in fact, they have uniform triangular petals, while the others present the common shape observed on so many other metalworks (soft-profiled, rounded petals, with a central one ending in a curl). Some letters – as also the vegetal motif on the wall – show empty chiselled slots, once filled by the inlay. The *du ā* is composed by common terms, arranged in the traditional sequence; the last term, *al-salāma*, appears in a shortened form due to a lack of space. The *tā marbūṭa* in *al-dawla* has an open body, resembling a little *dāl*. The *sīn* has flattened teeth, remaining very low on the writing line. The *dāl* in *al-sa āda* shows an almost closed body, which appears more similar to the following *tā marbūṭa* (with upper crossed endings) than to the wide-open *dāl* in the term *al-dawla*. On the background runs a vegetal spiralling flowered scroll.

Three other lids (nos. 340-342) show a disc with short vertical wall ending in a horizontal rim in the first case, and in a barely everted lip in the other two items. Lid no. 340 (Pl. 125) is topped at its centre by a raised flower, carved in round, providing a hold; at the base of the flower there are two engraved concentric circles, repeating near the wall of the lid. Three seven-disc rosettes inlaid with silver surround the flower. No. 341 (Pl. 125) shows a hold flower as well, carved in round but less defined than the previous one, raised on a disc attached to the lid, while lid no. 342 (Pl. 126) has since lost it, showing the empty surface where the disc was once fixed. Both lids' shoulders are decorated by engraved short cartouches, framing pseudo-inscriptions. Unfortunately, lid no. 341 lacks this along its profile, while no. 342, even intact, has a corroded surface.

Objects very close to these from the site of Ribat-i Sharaf were identified as small circular trays,¹⁷¹ just as other three specimens from the Keir Collection.¹⁷² The slightly concave surface of items nos. 341-342 seems to contrast such a function.

Other two objects from Ghazni (nos. 343-344) have a domed body resting on a broad base. They are topped by a smooth disc, barely raised and undecorated. Both of them were recorded in the IsMEO documentation as bases, but they look more likely to have been lids of cylindrical boxes. The inscriptions along the dome indicate the original position of the items. An extremely similar object, classified as a lid, came from Nishapur.¹⁷³ The decoration is rich; on no. 343 (Pl. 126a-b), four trapezoidal cartouches, framing a benedictory inscription, alternate with inlaid roundels, with four axial pointed buds, which include seven-disc rosettes also inlaid with silver (probably, only half of the petals, in alternance, and the central point, were inlaid). The cartouches' backgrounds bear an intricate vegetal motif made of spiralling budded scrolls ending in trilobed flowers. The script is a very tight Kufic, with sharp ornamental apices on top of the tall addorsed *hastae* in *lām-alif* groups. Unfortunately, only one cartouch is visible from the pictures, but still enough to learn it is a benedictory text, starting with the traditional expression *bi-l-yumn wa 'l-bara[ka]*. *Mīm*, *wāw* and *nūn* have rounded bodies, their endings climbing up tall as the *hastae*. Ligatures are rigidly horizontal, and the *hastae* extend just below the writing line after them. A band runs along the base of the lid, framing a quite rigid vegetal motif: a tight scroll made of curling half-palmettes.

On the shoulder of lid no. 344 (Pl. 127) there are cartouches in cursive on a vegetal background, alternated with roundels enriched by four axial buds and including a vegetal motif. Along the base runs a band framing two rigid interlaced ribbons. Scerrato, understanding the fillings on the disc as modern ones, supposed that the connection device had been removed. He dated the object to the end of the 12th or the beginning of the 13th century.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Kiani 1981, 94-98, nos. 15-17.

¹⁷² Fehérvári 1976, pls. 22a-c.

¹⁷³ Allan 1982a, no. 165.

¹⁷⁴ Scerrato unpublished notes.



a

No. 339



b



No. 340



No. 341

Pl. 126



No. 342



a

No. 343



b



a

No. 344



b

Vases

No. 345

Pl. 128a-b

Pear-shaped vase

Cylindrical neck ending in a wide, splayed opening; dome-shaped base with flat, protruding rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Fair condition.

H. 29 cm, Ø of the rim 15.8 cm, Ø of the base 16.8 cm

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 28); purchased, "found in Kunduz".

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 202-203, pl. XVII, fig. 13 (10th-early 11th c.).

On the underside can be seen a Solomon knot into a roundel. A pierced, geometric pattern decorates the dome-shaped base. On the body runs a festoon composed by heart-shaped palmettes and a row of pearls in relief above it. A square-sectioned moulding protrudes below the opening.

No. 346

Pl. 128a-b

Pear-shaped vase

Wide, splayed opening; neck ring.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Base missing.

H. 16.8 cm, Ø of the rim 11.2 cm

12th century

Kandahar "City Hall" (1957-1958); "found in Kandahar (?)".

Published: Scerrato 1959b, 102, no. 3, figs. 8a-b (12th c.); Allan 1976, II, 776, fig. 62.

A festoon of stylised arches ending in trilobed flowers runs on the lower body. Above it, a single scroll runs into a continuous band. A polylobed festoon on the upper body frames a cursive inscription on a stylised, vegetal background. The text repeats:

التأييد

Divine support

Trilobed flowers top the festoon and vegetal roundels, alternated with 4-petalled flowers, descend from it. On the neck moulding, a Kufic inscription in relief repeats:

البر

Devotion

On the inner lip runs a cursive inscription on a vegetal background, divided in four cartouches alternated with vegetal roundels. The text is only partially readable due to its preservation status:

السلامة والسعادة

Spiritual integrity and happiness

No. 347

Pl. 129a-b

Pear-shaped faceted vase

High, cylindrical neck ending in a wide, splayed opening. Body composed by a concave lower section and a hexagonally faceted upper one. Domed base with wide flat brim and waisted neck.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Base replaced.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 29); "found in Narkh (village in the district of Maydan, 50 km on the west of Kabul)".

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 203-204, pls. XVIII-XIX, figs. 14-15 (10th-early 11th c.).

6-petalled flowers appear into a roundel in the lower section of the body. At the junction of the faceted body with the smooth, lower section, protruding corners are decorated by pointed, trilobed palmettes. A stylised bird into a roundel appears on the faceted body. On the neck three mouldings in relief are decorated by nicks. On the inner lip, a pseudo-inscription runs into a band interrupted at corners by crescent-shaped roundels.

Comment

Three vases present the pear-shaped model. Interestingly they represent the actual version of those employed as a decorative motif on many metalworks, confirming their realism. The pear-shaped body, with a very high and wide, splayed neck, rests on a domed base. Some pottery specimens, devoted to the same function, are morphologically close.¹⁷⁵

These objects, raised from metal sheets, are decorated by engraving and/or piercing. Vase no. 345 (Pl. 128a-b) was brought to Ghazni from Kunduz by a merchant.¹⁷⁶ The domed base is pierced, reproducing a motif of interlaced ribbons, and rests on a slightly oblique base. A few steps lead to the waisted neck that links the base to the body. The latter is decorated at its maximum width by a festoon made of heart-shaped vegetal elements, and above them, by a series of pearls on relief. The wide, splayed neck is inserted on the body through a protruding band with squared profile, preceded and followed by a fillet.

¹⁷⁵ Allan 1976, I, 321.

¹⁷⁶ Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 202-203, pl. XVII, fig. 13.

Inside the base, there is a Solomon knot framed by a small roundel. The position it holds, visible only upturning the vase, reveals the esoteric nature and intention of such an element. A series of Solomon knots appears on a faceted vase from the Keir Collection, whose shape is very close to no. 347.¹⁷⁷ The two vases feature an octagonal rim and a foot ring, both with scalloped edges.

Vase no. 346 (Pl. 128a-b) comes from Kandahar. It is fragmentary, lacking the base. It bears a rich engraved decoration; the lower register hosts a very stylised motif of intertwined and apicated arches. Above this sits a band filled by a vegetal scroll. In the main register, upturned spade-shaped medallions, alternated with 4-petalled vegetal elements, are topped by an epigraphic band in cursive. Trilobed flowers run above the band. A raised band at the junction where the body meets the neck bears a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background. Decoration continues on the inner surface of the wide lip; four epigraphic cartouches alternate with the same amount of budded roundels. The vase is datable to the 12th century on the basis of decorative elements.¹⁷⁸

Vase no. 347 comes from Narkh, a village in Maydan district, about 50 km on the west of Kabul. The domed base rests on a wide horizontal brim and is connected to the body through a waisted neck. According to Melikian-Chirvani the base is not original, but was replaced.¹⁷⁹ The pear-shaped body is faceted in its upper half into six sides, just as the lampstand no. 280 (Pl. 106a). A sort of collar, made by squared hatched fillets on relief, hides the insertion of the large neck, also faceted. Decoration is limited to a simple geometrical band on the base, while on the body there are birds and 6-petalled flowers framed by roundels. At the junction of the two halves composing the body, some flanges protrude continuing the faceting. This object and no. 358 (Pl. 131) can probably be assigned to an early date (10th-early 11th century), since the decorative elements and the script on the lip point to the Samanid period.¹⁸⁰ The same bird appearing on no. 360 (Pl. 132) recurs on a lampstand base (no. 285, Pl. 108b) and an incense burner currently on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum.

¹⁷⁷ See Fehérvári 1976, 64, no. 57, pl. 17c.

¹⁷⁸ Scerrato 1959b, 102, no. 3, figs. 8a-b.

¹⁷⁹ Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 203.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Ward 1993, fig. 21; Keir Collection (Inv. no. K.1.2014.505).



a



b

No. 345



a



b

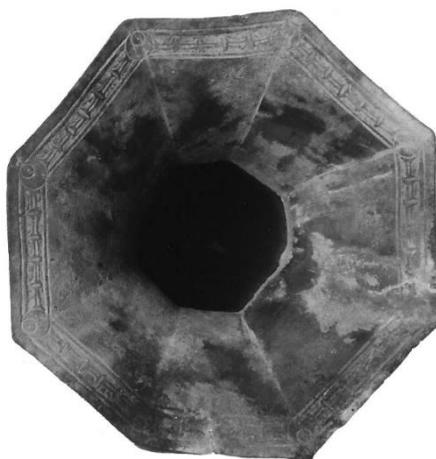
No. 346

Pl. 129



a

No. 347



b

2.7 Vanity Objects

Belt fittings

7 Items { rectangular (nos. 348-351)
square (no. 352)
flower-shaped (nos. 353-354)

No. **348**

Pl. 130

Rectangular belt buckle

Indented and pierced lower section.

Copper alloy. Cast moulded, pierced.

Poor condition. Partially worn.

12th-13th century (?)

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 80).

A vegetal decoration in champlévé is composed by palmettes and branches.

No. **349**

Pl. 130

Rectangular belt buckle

Indented and pierced lower section.

Copper alloy. Cast moulded, pierced, drilled.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century (?)

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 80).

A vegetal decoration in champlévé is composed by drilled palmettes and branches.

No. **350**

Pl. 130

Rectangular belt buckle

Pierced lower section.

Copper alloy. Cast moulded, pierced.

Poor condition. Worn; crack on the upper body.

12th-13th century (?)

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 80).

A vegetal decoration is executed in champlévé.

No. **351**

Pl. 130

Rectangular belt buckle

Copper alloy. Cast moulded.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century (?)

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 80).

A vegetal decoration is executed in champlevé. A series of pearls runs below it.

No. **352**

Pl. 130

Square buckle

Two joints in form of tiny, human hands.

Copper alloy. Raised (?).

Fair condition.

11th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO (2010); excavated in the Ghazni royal palace in 1959; MAIA Inv. no. C2034.

*Unknown location*No. **353**

Pl. 130

Buckle

Central bar with flower-shaped, lateral sections.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Fair condition.

4.3 × 1.5 × 1.1 cm

11th-13th century

Excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C5823.

Two holes are pierced in the centre of the lateral sections; engravings provide a stylised, floral shape.

No. **354**

Pl. 130

Plate

Flower-shaped.

Copper alloy. Raised, pierced.

Poor condition. Almost half missing.

Ø. 2.6 cm, w. 0.1 cm

11th-13th century

Excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C5636.

Comment

Personal care has always played a major role in the Islamic context, especially among sovereigns and the upper classes from the urban environment. Appearing in an elegant robe and gracefully perfumed was a way to display one's own wealth and social position.

In this class are gathered objects of personal use that had ornamental functions related to clothing, and hygienic and cosmetic tools used for the daily toilet. Generally, they are small items.

Belt fittings of different sizes are attested in the Islamic production, since they fulfilled a number of functions. Buckles are at the same time functional objects, since they help in closing the coat, as well as vanity objects, providing a decorative metal element on the clothing. Many silver, bronze or gilded bronze specimens emerged from the Nihavand hoard and Nishapur.¹⁸¹ Allan discusses the influence of Central Asian nomads on the decorative style of Islamic buckles.

The use of belt buckles by men in the Ghaznavid period is attested by paintings found in the palace of Lashkari Bazar and by the figures carved into Ghazni marble slabs.¹⁸² Specimens presented here probably date back to a later period.

Housed in the Rawza Museum and marked by the same identification number, four of them seem similar in morphology and decoration, still showing some differences upon closer look. All are rectangular, but different in proportions. Three feature a depressed lower section in their profile. The flat surface bears a moulded vegetal pattern in variable states of preservation.¹⁸³ The motif on no. 348 repeats on no. 349 (both Pl. 130) with the addition of a drilled dotting. No inscription appears and pictures of the back side are not available, which prevent us from saying anything more about their specific use.

Items from excavation offer a higher variety: no. 352 (Pl. 130) in its square simplicity features two peculiar joints in the form of tiny human hands, while nos. 353-354 show two different kinds of flower-inspired shapes.

¹⁸¹ Allan 1982a, 28-29.

¹⁸² See Schlumberger 1952, pl. 32, fig. 1; Bombaci 1959, 5, 9-11, figs. 1-4, 6, respectively.

¹⁸³ Rectangular belt fittings from Nishapur show vegetal patterns quite different from Ghazni specimens (cf. Allan 1982a, nos. 15-16).

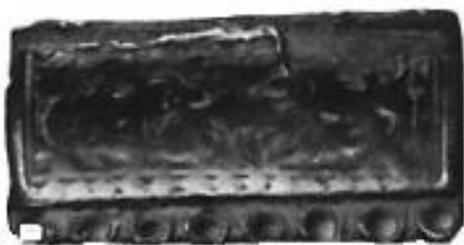
Pl. 130



No. 348



No. 349



No. 350



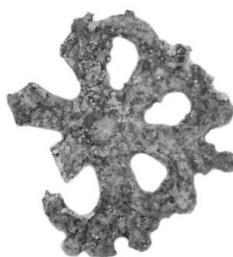
No. 351



No. 352



No. 353



No. 354

Perfume bottles

12 Items { ovoid (nos. 355-358)
 globular { smooth (nos. 359-365)
 faceted (no. 366)

No. **355**

Pl. 131

Ovoid perfume bottle

Short foot; high, waisted neck; flat, polylobed mouth.

Copper alloy. Cast; applied.

Fair condition.

H. 14.5 cm

9th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-29); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Allan 1976, II, 596, fig. 21.

Quoted: Rice, Rowland 1971, pl. 181.

Almond-shaped bosses in relief on a sole decorate the body.

No. **356**

Pl. 131

Ovoid perfume bottle

Short foot; waisted neck ending in a short, cylindrical opening.

Copper alloy. Cast; applied.

Fair condition.

H. 14 cm

9th-10th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-28); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 152, no. 158 (11th c.).

Small, round knobs protrude around the opening. Almond-shaped bosses in relief on a sole decorate the body.

No. **357**

Pl. 131

Ovoid perfume bottle

Short foot; waisted neck ending in a high, cylindrical opening.

Copper alloy. Cast; applied.

Fair condition.

10th-11th century

MuCIIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5874; purchased in Ghazni and donated by U. Scerrato in 1970.

Published: Di Flumeri Vatielli 1993a; 2003b, 89.

Round knobs protrude around the opening. Almond-shaped in relief on a sole decorate the body.

No. 358

Pl. 131

Ovoid perfume bottle

Short foot; waisted neck ending in a short, cylindrical opening.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Small break around the mouth.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 14).

Small, round knobs protrude around the opening. A geometric frame runs in the lower body. In the central body roundels, including a pair of addorsed birds topped by a disc, alternate with big, trilobed arches framing a vegetal decoration. In the upper section, a band frames a cursive inscription on a vegetal background with soft trilobed flowers. The text is only partially photographed:

{...} العز والاقبال

Glory and prosperity {...}

No. 359

Pl. 132

Globular perfume bottle

High, flaring foot; waisted neck ending in a high, flared opening.

Copper alloy. Raised and cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-24); "found in Ghazni".

Quoted: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 29, fig. 5 (9th-10th c.).

A vegetal decoration framed in rhomboid elements is engraved on the foot. Scrolls run on the flat shoulder. Knobs protrude around the opening.

No. 360

Pl. 132

Globular perfume bottle

High, flared foot; waisted neck ending in a high, flared opening.

Copper alloy. Raised and cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Cracks on the body.

H. 18.5 cm

12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-25); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 152-153, no. 159 (second half of 12th c.).

A vegetal decoration is engraved on the foot. On the body, two bands of interlaced ribbons comprise the main register, where a roundel framing a bird on a vegetal background interrupts a cursive inscription on vegetal background. The text is only partially photographed:

العز {...} السلا(مة)

Glory {...} spiritual integri(ty)

Knobs protrude around the opening; above them runs a vegetal band composed by a tight, single scroll with trilobed palmettes.

No. 361

Pl. 132

Globular perfume bottle

High, flared foot; waisted neck ending in a very high, flared opening.

Copper alloy. Raised and cast; engraved, punched.

Fair condition. One fragmentary knob.

H. 17.2 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-26); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Allan 1976, II, 598, fig. 22.

Quoted: Rice, Rowland 1971, pl. 182.

A dotted, vegetal decoration runs on the foot, while a geometric band can be seen on the lower body. On the body, a roundel includes a bird on a sketched background. Above it a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices repeats:

والبركة

And blessing

Knobs protrude around the opening; above them runs a geometric band composed by stylised, interlaced ribbons.

No. 362

Pl. 132

Globular perfume bottle

High, flared foot; waisted neck ending in a very high, flared opening.

Copper alloy. Raised and cast; engraved, punched.

Passable condition. Cracks on the body.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 139).

A dotted, vegetal decoration runs on the foot and shoulder. Knobs protrude around the opening.

No. 363

Pl. 132

Globular perfume bottle

High, flaring foot; waisted neck ending in a high, flared opening.

Copper alloy. Raised and cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Cracks and dents on the body.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 140).

A stylised, vegetal decoration runs on the foot. On the body, vegetal roundels alternate with cartouches framing a cursive inscription on a stylised background. The text repeats:

التائيد

Divine support

A vegetal decoration can be seen on the shoulder. Knobs protrude around the opening; above them runs a geometric band.

No. 364

Pl. 132

Globular perfume bottle

Flared foot.

Copper alloy. Raised and cast; engraved, inlaid with silver.

Poor condition. Neck missing.

11th-12th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-27); "found in Ghazni".

Two silver inlaid, interlaced ribbons run on the foot. On the body, rosettes which were inlaid with silver, alternate with cartouches framing a silver inlaid, Kufic inscription on a vegetal background:

باليمن واليد / من (ا) لكاة والـ / الدو البر / (ا) لدوالة و

With good fortune, good / fortune (A)L-KA, AL- / AL-DAW devotion / (f)ortune and

No. 365

Pl. 133

Globular perfume bottle

Flared foot; waisted neck ending in a high, cylindrical opening.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

H. 13 cm

12th century

Kandahar "City Hall" (1957-1958); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1959b, 105-106, no. 7, fig. 16 (mid 12th c.).

Knobs protrude around the opening. A band framing a double scroll with palmettes runs on the foot and shoulder. On the body, spade-shaped vegetal medallions alternate with vertically disposed cartouches framing a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background:

[...] / والنصرة (ة) والبر / كة والسلامة / [...]

[...] / and victor(y), bles / sing, spiritual integrity / [...]

No. 366

Pl. 133

Globular perfume bottle

Hexagonally faceted body; flared foot; waisted neck ending in a high, cylindrical opening.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition. Encrustations: hardly visible decoration.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 192).

A geometric band runs on the foot, while a vegetal one runs on the shoulder. On the body hexagons and vegetal roundels can be seen. Knobs protrude around the opening.

Perfume-sprinklers

No. 367

Pl. 133a-b

Perfume sprinkler

Globular body; splayed foot.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, engraved.

Poor condition. Big cracks, head missing; encrustations.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 51).

Hardly visible, vegetal leaves or petals dispose around the neck. On the body, big roundels frame a harpy on a vegetal background. On the shoulder, a cursive inscription on a vegetal background is interrupted by crescents. The text is only partially photographed:

{...} العز والاقبال والدولة {...}
Glory, prosperity, fortune {...}

Comment

Perfume bottles

Perfumes played a role in the hosting ceremony and were also appreciated gifts, being an expensive and often exotic product. Water perfumed with the essence of roses was one major income voice in Fars. Therefore, the existence of a variety of metalworks used to contain, preserve and sprinkle perfumes and aromatic oils is unsurprising.¹⁸⁴

Perfume bottles are vessels of small size, their height usually varies from 12 cm to 16 cm. Three separately cast elements compose them: foot, body and neck.¹⁸⁵ Bottles show two main models, ovoid or globular body. The typical 10th-11th century model is likely to have derived from a Roman prototype, which developed in the Sasanian period in silver bottles decorated with almond-shaped bosses in relief;¹⁸⁶ it continued in the early Islamic period, produced in different materials and in many areas.¹⁸⁷ This catalogue includes ovoid and globular bottles, but no specimen with a flat base, cylindrical body, round shoulder and high trumpet-shaped neck. A ribbed body and a flange on the neck, probably designed to handle the object, often characterise the latter model.¹⁸⁸

The ovoid model is attested early in the 9th-10th centuries and continues throughout the 11th century as well. Four ovoid bottles rest on a low ring foot. No. 355 looks the earlier one, because of its protruding polylobed lip;¹⁸⁹ two others (nos. 356, 358) follow in an ideal chronological order, presenting a short cylindrical opening adorned by flattened knobs. Only the bottle no. 357 shows the typical high, flared cylindrical opening with protruding knobs around it, which became so popular in the following period.

All the bottles present a collar at the base of the waisted neck. Three specimens bear almond-shaped elements on their bodies, probably applied at a second time since they rely on a

¹⁸⁴ Scerrato (1972a, 6) excluded that such vessels could have contained drinks, since their inner surface is not polished, thus it would have been toxic for the drinker.

¹⁸⁵ The manufacturing technique is testified by the finding of a bottle's neck with knobs, dated to the 10th-11th century, in the excavation at Istakhr (Allan 1979, pl. 1d). A bottle neck and mouth were found in Maimana as well (Scerrato 1964, 705, no. 26).

¹⁸⁶ Allan 1976, I, 176.

¹⁸⁷ Items testify to the spread of the Eastern Iranian model even in Egypt (Allan 1976, I, 178).

¹⁸⁸ Scerrato (1972a, 7) reported that some items had a sort of convex diaphragm closing the neck at its top. It was pierced, or made of a thick grill that would have permitted only small quantities of liquid to be poured out. On the basis of the decorative style and some peculiar elements, the model is attributed to the Eastern area and is dated to the late 12th or early 13th century. Probably, it had a shorter chronological diffusion, but at that period it should have been on fashion, as attested by parallel items in glass and many pottery imitations. A bottle, published by Melikian-Chirvani (1982a, 31), represents the synthesis of the two models; a cylindrical funnelled body with a flared cylindrical neck decorated with knobs.

¹⁸⁹ For a comparison, see a perfume bottle in the Bumiller Collection dated to the 8th century (Daiber 2012, 102, Inv. no. 2155); see also Fehérvári 1976, 37, no. 13, pl. 4c.

platform. Only no. 358 is engraved, showing a more refined and unusual decoration, arranged in three registers: a lower geometrical band, made of two interlaced ribbons; five-lobed arches including vegetal scrolls alternating with small roundels, which frame a couple of back-to-back birds divided by a trilobed palmette and a disc. A cursive benedictory inscription runs along a vegetal background in the upper register.

The globular model was first attested by a specimen brought to light at Afrasiyab, the ancient site of Samarqand, from a layer dated to the 9th-10th century.¹⁹⁰ The model has a solid and geometric shape, and it is also the most numerous in the IsMEO documentation. The globular body rests on a high flared foot, the waisted neck ends in a high cylindrical flared opening surrounded by knobs; the opening seems to mirror the foot. All the specimens present an engraved decoration, often composed by vegetal volutes on the foot, bands of interlaced ribbons on the body and around the opening, bird-shaped and vegetal roundels alternated to rosettes and epigraphic cartouches, in one case even inlaid with silver. Specimens showing a more developed decoration are datable to the 12th century.

A variation is offered by no. 366, whose globular body is faceted into three rows of hexagons. Such a shape is attested also by a perfume bottle assigned to the 12th-13th century;¹⁹¹ it would thus represent the later specimen of the class.

Perfume sprinklers

The only documented perfume sprinkler (no. 367) is fragmentary and in a severely damaged state of preservation. The globular body likely rested on a high trumpet-shaped foot, which is only partially preserved. The conical neck is missing entirely. The object seems raised from a metal sheet, and the decoration of the neck and foot was probably realised in repoussé. Two similar perfume sprinklers from the Herat Museum are published by Melikian-Chirvani, who underlined the extreme thinness of their wall.¹⁹² No. 367, instead, is engraved with thin incisions: roundels with apices frame animals and a cursive inscription on a vegetal background.

¹⁹⁰ Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 29.

¹⁹¹ Keir Collection, see Fehérvári 1976, 65, no. 59, pl. 18b.

¹⁹² Unfortunately, the two published items also have a broken neck. See Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 65-68, pls. 19-20, figs. 16-17.

Pl. 131



No. 355



No. 356



No. 357



No. 358



No. 359



No. 360



No. 361



No. 362



No. 363



No. 364

Pl. 133



No. 365



No. 366



No. 367

a



b

Cosmetic Mortars

10 Items { hemispherical (nos. 368-375, 377)
 { globular (no. 376)

No. 368

Pl. 134

Hemispherical cosmetic mortar

Long spout; lateral flanges; wide hold.

Copper alloy. Cast; punched.

Passable condition. Some holes on the bottom.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 82).

A series of dotted circles of two different sizes disposes horizontally on the back and the lateral flanges.

No. 369

Pl. 134

Hemispherical cosmetic mortar

Long spout; fragmentary, flat lateral flanges; flat hold.

Copper alloy. Cast; punched, chiselled.

Passable condition. Hold broken.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 82).

A series of dotted circles is punched on the lateral flanges; other dotted circles alternate with chiselled circles on the back flange.

No. 370

Pl. 134

Hemispherical cosmetic mortar

Copper alloy. Cast; punched.

Poor condition. Lateral flange and spout fragmentary.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 82).

A series of dotted circles are punched on the back and the lateral flanges.

No. **371**

Pl. 134

Hemispherical cosmetic mortar

Copper alloy. Cast; punched.

Poor condition. Hold and lateral flanges missing; spout broken.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 82).

Traces of dotted circles are visible on the fragmentary edges.

No. **372**

Pl. 134

Hemispherical cosmetic mortar

Copper alloy. Cast; punched.

Poor condition. Hold and lateral flanges missing; spout broken.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 82).

Only two dotted circles flanking the spout starting are preserved.

No. **373**

Pl. 134

Hemispherical cosmetic mortar

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Hold and lateral flange missing; spout broken.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 82).

A big circle, possibly once inlaid (?), can be seen on the preserved lateral flange.

No. **374**

Pl. 134

Hemispherical cosmetic mortar

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Hold and lateral flanges missing; spout broken.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 82).

No. 375

Pl. 134

Hemispherical cosmetic mortar

Long spout; wide hold with polylobed profile.

Copper alloy. Cast; punched, engraved.

Fair condition. Flat lateral flanges slightly broken.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 183).

A series of tiny, dotted circles is punched around the opening. Other dotted circles dispose in concentric bands on the back flange and the fragmentary, lateral ones.

No. 376

Pl. 135a-b

Globular cosmetic mortar

Short, flared neck with protruding rim. Protruding, squared almond-shaped elements.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Fair condition.

13th century

Mazar-i Sharif Museum (1964); "found in the area between Balkh and Mazar-i Sharif".

Published: Scerrato 1971a, figs. 1-2.

A band in relief in the middle of the body bear stylised, protruding almonds, cast in round with a truncated bottom.

Unknown location

No. 377

Pl. 135

Flange of hemispherical cosmetic mortar

Polylobed profile.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

H. 4.5 cm, l. 4 cm, w. 0.3 cm

11th-12th century

Excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C4063.

Three series of concentric circles decorate the flange.

Comment

Cosmetic mortars are small size vessels designed to contain indigo. This pigment draws its name from the region of origin, India. It has been known since ancient times and used in many countries to paint skin and fabrics.

Many common cosmetic mortars present the same shape of bigger crucibles, used in metallurgical and alchemical processes. The model is composed by a hemispherical bowl with flat base and slightly inclined wall, ending in a short horizontal lip. A long open channel, with square or round-section ending, acts as a spout.¹⁹³ Opposite to the spout, there is a flat hold, which size is typically increased in 11th-12th century objects from Khurasan. It often resembles a cuspidate arch or a polylobed palmette. The bowl has also two tiny ornamental flanges that generally repeat the hold profile. Some variations concern only the decoration, which is limited to the upper surface of the object. Some decorative features usually stress the breaking point where the channel goes out from the bowl. Punched pointed circles decorate the hold.¹⁹⁴

Mortar no. 375 presents elaborate protruding elements: the hold, shaped as a polylobed palmette, ends in two refined curls at the junction with the bowl. It is also decorated by engraved concentric circles, repeated on the damaged flanges as well. Highly stylised palmettes can be seen on a specimen in the Kabul National Museum (Inv. no. 9-2-45f, Fig. 41).

Globular cosmetic mortars were probably designed to contain a liquid. A bulbous body with a high flaring neck and protruding lip characterise the only documented specimen (no. 376). A sequence of stylised, almond-shaped elements with a square profile runs on a band in relief. It recalls the usual decoration present on bigger mortars. This very standard decoration, spread from east to west, makes it hard to identify the original region. Globular cosmetic mortars are usually assigned to the 13th century. Since the measure is unknown, its identification remains disputable, still some similar items confirm the small size thus the cosmetic use (cf. Fig. 42).¹⁹⁵



Fig. 41 – Cosmetic mortar, Kabul National Museum, Inv. no. 9-2-45f (MAIA, photo by F. Colombo, 2013).



Fig. 42 – Globular cosmetic mortar, Kabul National Museum, Inv. no. 9-2-35b (MAIA, photo by F. Colombo, 2013).

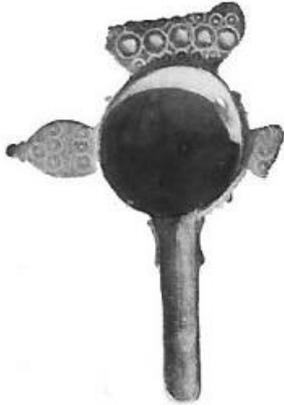
¹⁹³ Melikian-Chirvani (1982a, 51) underlines how the rim and the spouting channel of cosmetic mortars look like a smaller version of those seen on cauldrons. He claims these features as a proof of the Eastern Iranian origin of cosmetic mortars.

¹⁹⁴ Similar specimens emerged from the Nishapur excavation; see Allan 1982a, nos. 80-81.

¹⁹⁵ A similar cosmetic mortar with a flattened globular body is currently on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum (Inv. no. 9-2-35b; here, Fig. 42). A second specimen (h. 8 cm, Ø of the opening 7 cm, max Ø 10 cm) is in the Aron Collection (Inv. no. Aron 036).



No. 368



No. 369



No. 370



No. 371



No. 372



No. 373



No. 374



No. 375

Pl. 135



No. 376

a



b



No. 377

Kohl flasks

6 Items { pear-shaped (nos. 378-382)
 { globular (no. 383)

No. **378**

Pl. 136

Pear-shaped kohl flask

Flat base; high, cylindrical neck; protruding rim.
Copper alloy. Cast.
Passable condition. Feet missing (?). Hole on the neck.
9th-10th century
Rawza Museum (1976).

No. **379**

Pl. 136

Pear-shaped kohl flask

Three anthropomorphic feet; cylindrical neck; protruding rim.
Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
Poor condition. One foot missing.
9th-10th century
Rawza Museum (1976).

A collar is engraved on the neck. A moulding in relief on the wider point of the body is decorated by oblique cuts.

No. **380**

Pl. 136

Pear-shaped kohl flask

Three feet; cylindrical neck; protruding rim.
Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
Passable condition. One foot missing.
9th-10th century
Rawza Museum (1976).

A moulding in relief on the wider point of the body is decorated by oblique cuts.

No. **381**

Pl. 136

Pear-shaped kohl flask

Three feet; cylindrical neck; protruding rim.
 Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.
 Fair condition.
 9th-10th century
 Rawza Museum (1976).
 A collar in relief can be seen at the base of the neck.

No. **382**

Pl. 136

Pear-shaped kohl flask

Three anthropomorphic feet; cylindrical neck; protruding rim.
 Copper alloy. Cast; engraved. Fair condition.
 9th-10th century
 Rawza Museum (1976).
 A collar in relief can be seen at the base of the neck.

No. **383**

Pl. 136

Globular kohl flask

Cylindrical neck; protruding rim.
 Copper alloy. Cast.
 Passable condition. Feet missing (?).
 9th-10th century
 Rawza Museum (1976).
 A collar in relief can be seen at the base of the neck and in the middle of the body.

*Kohl Sticks*No. **384**

Pl. 136

Kohl Stick

Copper alloy (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Cast; pierced, engraved.
 Fair condition. One of head's branches broken.
 10 × 2.5 cm, 11 g
 12th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8320; excavated in the House of the Lustrewares, Ghazni; MAIA Inv. no. V186.

At the joint of the stick, a diamond-shaped element is pierced through on each face. The head is in shape of a vegetal trident, supported by a drop-shaped element pierced through.

Comment

Kohl Flasks

Kohl was used for medical and cosmetic purposes, mainly to paint eyelids and eyebrows. This oily powder was obtained from the incomplete carbonisation of mixed materials (lapis lazuli, turquoise, *tūtīya* – a lead oxide, etc.).¹⁹⁶

The Rawza Museum housed six kohl flasks, identified through the same number: five pear-shaped and one globular. Two items (nos. 378, 383) rest flat bases, while others feature three protruding feet. The latter model differs from the better-known molar flask, so-called because of its included feet.¹⁹⁷ Either model performs the same function.

All flasks have a fillet or engraved lines underlining the neck. Decoration, when present, is elementary: a fillet on relief running around the maximum width of the body or a geometrical motif. Such simplicity in shape and ornament leads us to assign these items to the early Islamic period. The detail of boot-shaped feet on nos. 379 and 382 confirms this chronology.¹⁹⁸

Kohl Sticks

Sticks of various kinds, and with different functions, were in use during the Islamic period. Turbans or hairpins should have a pointed end; others, characterised by a curved head, were used as back scratchers; and still others as kohl sticks, which needed to be rounded in order to avoid being painful.¹⁹⁹ Kohl was applied to the eyes, and still is today, with a short stick made of wood or metal dipped into the flask. Such tools, introduced by Greeks, had been known in Iran since the 4th-3rd century BC.²⁰⁰ Sticks came from a number of Islamic – also Iranian – sites.²⁰¹ One of the specimens from Nishapur shows a geometric decoration on the neck very close to that on the item presented here. The Nishapur specimen lacks the head.²⁰²

Item no. 384, found in the excavation of the House of the Lustrewares, has a stocky squarish end. A head shaped in two palmettes flanking a central axis, composed by two drop-shaped

¹⁹⁶ Kohl used to indicate also a mineral or metal extracted from mines (Allan 1979, 166-167). Moreover, from the term *kohl* derives the word *al-kuḥul* thus alcohol, since the impalpable powder is identified with the idea of sublimation and 'spirit'.

¹⁹⁷ See Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 43-44, no. 4: the artefact is catalogued as kohl flask, but differs in shape from no. 2a (1982a, 42), which is globular with protruding feet.

¹⁹⁸ About the booted feet, see the oil-lamp from Maimana no. 278 dated to 8th-9th century, and a kohl flask preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Inv. no. 527-1876) published by Melikian-Chirvani (1982a, 42).

¹⁹⁹ A zoomorphic head often tops pins; namely, birds looking sideward. Specimens came from the excavations in Rayy, Nishapur and Siraf (see Allan 1976, I, 324; 1982a, 68-69).

²⁰⁰ Allan 1976, I, 342.

²⁰¹ Allan 1982a, 38.

²⁰² Allan 1982a, no. 84.

elements, rests on a cubic element pierced on its four sides. It has been classified as a kohl stick with respect to its length and profile, but other interpretations are possible. Maurizio Taddei wrote in his notes that the artefact was broken, thus imagining a longer pin, but direct examination of the item leads to the exclusion of such a hypothesis.



No. 378



No. 379



No. 380



No. 381



No. 382



No. 383



No. 384

Unguent containers

4 Items { ovoid (no. 385)
 { zoomorphic (nos. 386-388)

No. **385**

Pl. 137

Small vase

Narrow flat base; ovoid body; round shoulder; protruding rim.
Copper alloy. Cast.
Passable condition. Thick patina covering the surface.
12th-13th century
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 92).

No. **386**

Pl. 137

Toilet flask

Zoomorphic; trilobed terminal.
Copper alloy (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Cast.
Poor condition. Top and half of the body missing.
L. 6 cm, w. 3.5 cm, 15 gr
10th-12th century
MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8319; excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C4279.

No. **387**

Pl. 137a-b

Toilet flask

In form of a bird with crossed wings reclined on a flat base; round neck.
Copper alloy. Cast; incised.
Fair condition. Top missing.
12th century (?)
Rawza Museum (1976, no. 149).
Crossed wings are carved on the upper surface.

No. 388

Pl. 137

Toilet flask

In form of standing bird.

Copper alloy. Cast; carved in round, chiselled, engraved.

Fair condition. Top missing.

H. 6.5 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-88); “found in Ghazni”.

Published: Allan 1976, II, 834.

Quoted: Rice, Rowland 1971, pl. 204.

Engravings define the tail and the eye.

Comment

Islamic unguent containers encompass a variety of forms. Here a simple vase (no. 385) and three zoomorphic specimens are presented. Measures of the first object are unknown, but a comparison with similar specimens on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum²⁰³ makes it look suitable for the toilet. The narrow opening suggests that it should contain something costly, perhaps a body or hair balm.

Zoomorphic vessels are common models in the vanity category, perhaps because of the gentle, refined shape. Nos. 386-387 are conceptually similar, proposing a stylised fish and bird. The first item, emerging from the excavation of the Ghazni royal palace, had been formerly mistaken as a miniature object. But the slightly concave, almond-shaped body is indeed the fragmentary half of a flask, enriched by two tiny lateral flanges – one of which is fragmentary – and a flat, trilobed ending.²⁰⁴ A fragmentary spout, starting on the opposite side, would have represented the neck, probably provided with a cap. The second, and better preserved, specimen shows a reclined bird with crossed wings. The short neck is pushed out, but again the cap that should have represented the bird head is missing, leaving the circular opening empty. A similar specimen from the Victoria and Albert Museum preserves the bird-head cap with a curved spatula.²⁰⁵ Some specimens of this kind are even signed by artisans.²⁰⁶

No. 388, instead, is a bird standing on its own feet, cast in round. The wing is in relief, but defined by few shallow incisions. The everted oblique tail is chiselled to show the main feathers in profile, and the same treatment is reserved for the eye and beak. In this case, object's function had been misinterpreted as well, imagining it as an applique topping an oil-lamp, but the abruptly cut bird's head reveals the missing cap.

²⁰³ Two small vases without inventory numbers: one with a sub-globular body, short cylindrical neck and protruding flat; the other with an ovoid body and flared neck.

²⁰⁴ See for comparison a flask from Nishapur (Tehran, National Museum of Iran; Allan 1982a, 76, no. 86) and one from the Bumiller Collection (Inv. no. 3682, see Daiber 2012, 41).

²⁰⁵ See Allan 1976, II, 814, fig. 71, C/1/3; Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 122, no. 50 (without inventory number).

²⁰⁶ See for example Laviola 2017d, 93 and previous bibliography.

Pl. 137



No. 385



No. 386



No. 387

a



b



No. 388

Mirrors

No. 389

Pl. 138

Circular mirror

Slightly raised rim; central hold.

Copper alloy. Cast moulded.

Poor condition. Deteriorated surface.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976).

Possibly a pseudo-inscription runs radially on the upper surface, framed into a circular band.

Comment

Islamic mirrors were either made of iron, a material subject to a fast decline once buried – and this would explain why so few specimens from the pre-Mongol period survived²⁰⁷ – or high tin alloys (about 25-30%), to obtain a surface bright enough to be reflective, as in the classical time.²⁰⁸ They usually are round, of small size, polished on one face, while the back bears a mould decoration framed by a barely raised rim. Many are provided with a central knob, cast during the moulding; it allowed a cord to pass through and the mirror to be hung. Alternatively, the mirror could have a vertical handle joined to its perimeter, though this element is often lost.²⁰⁹ Handled mirrors are portrayed on two ewers made in Mosul, both dated to the first half of the 13th century (see Fig. 43)²¹⁰ and in a later miniature of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* (1307-1314).²¹¹ A specimen probably provided with both systems – a knob hold and the fragmentary segment the handle was joined to – is currently on exhibition in the Herat National Museum.²¹²

In the first half of the 11th century, the green sand cast technique was introduced in the Islamic lands from China. Such period usually is adopted as a *terminus post quem* in dating mirrors that often derive from Chinese models. The flat surface made it easy to mould the decoration in series, as attested by some very similar specimens (see, for instance, the series of mirrors bearing the scorpion-tail sphinxes).²¹³

The only mirror (no. 389) in the IsMEO documentation hardly pays justice to the class. Provided with a small ring hold, fixed to its centre, it possibly bears an epigraphic decoration,

²⁰⁷ Allan 1976, I, 336.

²⁰⁸ Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 299.

²⁰⁹ Harari 1938-1939, 2483.

²¹⁰ The first (1223) is from the Cleveland Museum of Art (Inv. no. 1956.11); the second is the so-called Blacas ewer (1232) from the British Museum (Inv. no. 1866,1229.61). They are respectively published in Pope, Ackerman 1938-1939, pls. 1329, 1330E; Ward 1993, fig. 24.

²¹¹ Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (fol. 287v), see Blair 1995, fig. 46.

²¹² Inv. no. 02.09.86f, see Müller-Wiener 2016, Cat. no. M123.

²¹³ Scerrato 1980; Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 130-131, nos. 58-59.

but the poor state of preservation and the low quality of the picture as well makes it hard to say any further.



Fig. 43 – Detail of the Blacas ewer, Mosul, 1232, portraying a handled mirror. British Museum, Inv. no. 1866, 1229.61, after Ward 1993, fig. 24.



2.8 Writing Equipment

Inkwells

12 Items {
cylindrical (nos. 390-392, boxes nos. 393-396, lids nos. 400-401)
parallelepiped (nos. 397-398)
hexagonal (no. 399)

No. 390

Pl. 139-140

Cylindrical inkwell

Three squared feet; slightly concave walls; lobed dome on the lid. Three loops inside the box corresponding to as many holes pierced on the lid; a hole pierced in the base.

Copper alloy (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Cast; silver plates engraved and nielloed.

Fair condition. One foot missing, one silver plate missing from the lid.

Ø of the base 7.5 cm, h. max 9.9 cm, h. of the body 5.6 cm, 395 gr

Early 11th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8368; excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C11.

Published: Scerrato 1959a, 39; 1959b, 96-97; 1966, 62, fig. 16; Allan 1976, I, 289-291; Laviola 2017b, figs. 2, 4-7.

Quoted: Di Flumeri Vatielli 2010, 70, fig. 69.

Three circular, silver plates are applied on the box: two include a pair of addorsed birds holding a flower with their backward-facing beaks. The third includes a single, leftward-facing bird.

Three trapezoidal, silver plates are applied on the lid shoulder, all bear a cartouche framing a Kufic inscription that repeats:

باليمن والبر(كة)

With good fortune and blessi(ng)

Two (three originally) silver, almond-shaped plates are applied alternatively on the lobes of lid dome: they include a vegetal decoration.

No. 391

Pl. 141-142

Cylindrical inkwell

Flat base; lobed dome on the lid; loops attached on the lid side; hinges on the box.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved; inlaid with copper and silver.

Excellent condition.

Ø of the base 7.6 cm, h. max 9.2 cm, h. of the body 6.2 cm

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976); excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C10.

Published: Scerrato 1959a, 39; 1959b, 39, 96-97; 1966, 62; Allan 1976, II, 728, no. 7; Laviola 2017b, figs. 3, 8-12; Graves 2018, 108, 119-124, figs. 3.20-3.22.

On the underside, a central roundel includes a bird surrounded by three almond-shaped medallions. A continuous ribbon distributes the box in three trilobed niches and three cartouches. Resulting spaces are decorated with a stylised, vegetal motif. The cartouches frame a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices on a vegetal background:

باليمن والبركة والـ / والدولة والسلا(مة) / والكرامة والسلا(مة)

With good luck, blessing, al- / and fortune, spiritual inte(grity) / , prestige and spiritual inte(grity)

The niches include three scenes: a seated man presenting the spectator with an inkwell, a seated man holding a pen, a seated man writing on a tablet.

On the lid side, a Kufic inscription runs on a vegetal background in cartouches:

باليمن والبركة والسلا(مة) / والدولة والكرامة / والسلا(مة) والدولة والس(...)

With good luck, blessing, spiritual inte(grity) / , fortune, prestige / spiritual inte(grity), fortune and AL-S(...)

On the lid shoulder, vegetal roundels alternate with three cartouches framing a cursive inscription on a luxuriant, vegetal background:

العز والاقبال وا / لدولة والسلامة / والسعادة) والبقاء لصاح(به)

Glory, prosperity, / fortune, spiritual integrity / , happines(s), eternal life to its own(er)

On the knob finial of the lid, a tiny, cursive inscription reads:

الله

Allāh

No. 392

Pl. 143

Cylindrical inkwell

Flat base; lobed dome on the lid; loops nailed to the lid side.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Poor condition. Huge fracture passing through the body. Hinged loops missing.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 190).

No. **393**

Cylindrical inkwell box

Pl. 143

Flat base; hinged loops on the wall.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Lid and one loop missing.

12th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 5946; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.

On the walls, a niche frames a bird on a vegetal background. Small, vegetal roundels can be seen in the upper section of the box and vegetal cartouches in the lower one.

No. **394**

Pl. 143a-b

Cylindrical inkwell box

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Gap on the base. Lid, bottom and hinged loops missing.

H. 4.1 cm, Ø 6.1 cm

12th-13th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8367; purchased in Ghazni in 1961; MAIA Inv. no. Sp53.

A stylised, vegetal decoration into a big niche is surrounded by small roundels.

No. **395**

Pl. 143a-b

Cylindrical inkwell box

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved; inlaid with copper and silver.

Poor condition. Lid missing; big gaps on the body and base; inlay partially missing.

H. 7.9 cm, Ø 10 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-187)

On the underside, only traces of the central roundel remain: its profile was once inlaid and included a silver inlaid, geometrical motif. Around it three cartouches, with copper inlaid profile, frame one dog and two running foxes on a vegetal background.

In the upper section of the walls, small roundels with silver inlaid profile include tiny dogs, deer and hares on a vegetal background. Three polylobed niches frame a silver inlaid, geometric motif on a background composed by scrolls and tiny animals (hares and birds). In the lower section, cartouches frame a silver inlaid, cursive inscription (reading after Scerrato's notes):

العز والاقبال / والدولة وال[...]

Glory, prosperity / , fortune and AL-[...]

No. 396

Pl. 144a-c

Cylindrical inkwell box

Lobed dome; three fixed loops on the side.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper and silver.

Excellent condition.

H. 6 cm, Ø of shoulder 9.4 cm, Ø of inner opening 9 cm

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1958); "found in Gardez" (Scerrato).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 69, fig. 39 (late 12th-early 13th c.).

Quoted: Scerrato 1959a, fn. no. 38; Rice, Rowland 1971, pls. 200-201; Scerrato 1981, 238, fns. nos. 16, 42, fig. 3.

On the shoulder, a silver inlaid, geometrical motif generates twelve roundels including the zodiac. Vegetal motifs decorate the dome lobes and a crossed, geometric pattern can be seen on the dome knob: all are inlaid with silver. On the lid side, a silver inlaid, Kufic inscription with ornamental apices runs on a refined background composed by scrolls, palmettes and flowers. The text reads:

باليمن والبركة والدولة والر / احة والسلامة والسعادة والز / يادة والتامة والرياضة
والبقاء د[ائماً]

*With good fortune, blessing, fortune, com / fort, spiritual integrity, happiness, inc / rease,
plenitude, self-restraint and eternal life p[erpetually]*

On the inner surface, a cursive inscription inlaid with silver runs on the above-mentioned vegetal background:

العز والاقبال والدولة والسلامة والسعادة (ة) والغاية والبقاء لصا(حبه)

*Glory, prosperity, fortune, spiritual integrity, happiness(s), intensity and eternal life to his
ow(ner)*

No. 397

Pl. 145

Parallelepiped inkwell

Protruding, sloping cover.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Cover broken.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 91); "found in Ghazni".

A foliated, Kufic inscription runs on the body (only one side is photographed):

{...} باليمن

With good fortune {...}

No. **398**

Pl. 145

Parallelepiped inkwell

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Half of the body missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 91); “found in Ghazni”.

A foliated, Kufic inscription runs on the body (only one side is photographed):

{...} باليمن

With good fortune {...}

Unknown location

No. **399**

Pl. 145a-c

Hexagonal inkwell

Three almond-shaped feet; three holes pierced on the shoulder and the underside.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Fair condition. Lid missing. A big gap on the shoulder, linked to the round opening.

11th century (?)

Excavated in the House of the Lustrewares, Ghazni.

Published: Laviola 2017b, figs. 13-15.

No. **400**

Pl. 146

Cylindrical inkwell lid

Smooth dome.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with silver.

Passable condition. Most of the inlay missing.

12th-13th century

On the lid shoulder, a silver inlaid, cursive inscription runs on a vegetal background composed by budded scrolls ending in trilobed flowers:

العز والاقبال والدولة والسعادة والسلامة والشفاة

Glory, prosperity, fortune, happiness, spiritual integrity and prophetic intercession

No. 401

Pl. 146a-b

Cylindrical inkwell lid

Lobed dome.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition. Knob finial and loops missing.

12th-13th century

On the lid shoulder, roundels including a duck on a vegetal background alternate with cartouches. Three cartouches frame a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices on a stylised, vegetal background:

باليمن والبر / والبركة و / والسلامة ا

With good fortune, piety / , blessing, / and spiritual integrity A

A vegetal decoration can be seen on the dome lobes.

Comment

The numerous inkwells presented here attest an extraordinary variety of models – cylindrical, hexagonal, and parallelepiped – on the other hand, there is no pen-box in the IsMEO documentation.²¹⁴ Three specimens are particularly important, since they come from the excavation in Ghazni.²¹⁵

The cylindrical model was the most common in the Islamic period. This is a box with slightly concave wall, resting on a flat base, with a short indented rim and a protruding fillet where the lid rested. The latter is cylindrical as well, topped by a dome, whose surface can be either smooth or lobed in six almonds carved in relief, ending in a round knob. The Eastern Iranian origin of this shape is testified by a fragmentary box found in Nishapur, bearing the inscribed name of the owner and dating back to the 11th century (Fig. 44).²¹⁶ This model then spread throughout the 11th and 13th centuries.²¹⁷ Three fragmentary lids, unrelated to the boxes in this catalogue, bear witness to the easy separation of the two components.

²¹⁴ About some published pen-boxes, see Herzfeld 1936; Melikian-Chirvani 1986b.

²¹⁵ See Laviola 2017b. Along with the metal inkwells, also two glass specimens emerged from the two sites. The first in colourless glass, with octagonal faceted body and flaring neck, came from the House of the Lustrewares; it is housed in the Museo delle Civiltà (Museo d'arte orientale) in Rome (Inv. no. 8292). The second is a fragmentary inkwell, composed by a sub-cylindrical glass vessel with everted rim, inserted in a plaster cube, that emerged from the royal palace (Inv. no. C4155). In 2004, the object was still stored in the Kabul National Museum (Inv. no. 05.2.0692).

²¹⁶ Metropolitan Museum of Art (Inv. no. 40.170.116), see Allan 1982a, 44-45, 87, no. 105.

²¹⁷ Allan 1976, I, 291.



Fig. 44 – Inkwell from Nishapur, 11th c.,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Inv. no. 40.170.116
(Public Domain).

Inkwells no. 390 (Pls. 139-140) and no. 391 (Pls. 141-142), found together in the royal palace, had opposite destinies. The first left for Italy in 1966 and since then it has been preserved at the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale (nowadays Museo delle Civiltà). Its presence in a western museum has led to comparative notoriety. Conversely, the existence of no. 391, which remained in the Rawza Museum, has regrettably gone unnoticed for too long.²¹⁸

Inkwell no. 390 shows a dark black and green colour and a perfectly smooth and polished outer surface, while the inner surface is extremely raw. The base material is a copper alloy, enriched by an elevated percentage of lead that surely helped the object's stability.²¹⁹

The square feet are interestingly decorated in the inner section by a rhomboid lozenge – a feature recurring on the brick decoration of Ghazni royal palace.²²⁰ Certainly, they were soldered to the box as attested by the change in colour visible where the third foot is missing. The round hole pierced in the centre of its underside seems made on purpose, because of its neat margin, and executed with expertise. Beside it, there is a corresponding smaller hole, whose irregular contour is probably due to accidental damage originating from inside the box. The loops protruding inside the box, just below the rim, must have been cast along with the box, given their thickness. Three circular holes, pierced through the lid shoulder, coincide with them. This is confirmed by the fact that the lid fits perfectly onto the box, only making the loops and holes correspond. All these features suggest that a suspension system – maybe chains or cords – passed through the holes and loops to fasten the lid to its box, and then to the scribe's wrist as well.²²¹ Most probably, it can also explain the hole on the underside as well. This kind of suspension system, passing inside the object, represents an early device, since in other Islamic cylindrical inkwells the lid usually is bent through loops applied on the external surface.²²² The external system was likely introduced in the early 12th century.²²³

²¹⁸ Allan (1976, II, 728, no. 7) is probably the only one, apart from Scerrato (1959a, 39; 1959b, 39, 96-97; 1966, 62), to mention it.

²¹⁹ Preventing the ink from splashing outside the box was a primary concern: many inkwells – of any material – had a tube inside the vessel, while others used a piece of felt or wool inside (Allan 1982a, 44).

²²⁰ See a column element and other two finds in the Museo delle Civiltà (Museo d'arte orientale, Inv. nos. 7086, 5450, 5839).

²²¹ A walking man holding in hand an inkwell suspended through a cord appears in a figurative scene engraved on an inkwell from the David Collection (Inv. no. 32/1970; see Taragan 2005, fig. 13).

²²² Other specimens are known to adopt such a system; the first is an inkwell of unknown provenance housed in the British Museum (Inv. no. 1968.7-22.3), ascribed to the 11th century and provided with internal tubes, cast in one with the box, through which passed the cords (see Allan 1976, I, 289-290; 1982a, 44). The second specimen is an inkwell lid from the Keir Collection, assigned to the 12th-early 13th century and reckoned to have been produced in Transoxiana. It would attest a late persistence of the internal system in a period when it had already been abandoned in the Iranian area (see Allan 1976, I, 291, 724). A third, unpublished inkwell box with internal tubes is in the Aron Collection (Inv. no. Aron106): the object could be ascribed to the 11th century.

²²³ For a discussion on the topic, see Allan 1976, I, 291.

The decoration is peculiar as well. On the lid, a dome lobed in six almonds carved in relief is raised on a tympanum. The dome itself is topped by an almost spherical knob, which rests on a raised step. Silver plates are applied on the undecorated box and lid with a mastic, instead of being inlaid, as it was common. This inkwell is the only known specimen to adopt a different technique.²²⁴ The width due to the mastic is clearly visible and makes the thin silver plates stand out on the surface.

Three circular silver plates are applied to the box wall, each one framed by an engraved roundel, filled with oblique cuts. In two cases, they include a pair of back-to-back birds with backward-turned heads, so that the beaks meld together. They hold an upturned trilobed flower, composed by two curled lobes at the base and an elongated and pointed central lobe that inserts between the birds' wings. On the third plate, a single bird, looking leftward with an uprising double tail, is engraved. All the incisions on silver are nielloed to make them stand out.

Three trapezoidal silver plates are applied on the lid's shoulder, alternating with the above-mentioned holes. Each one bears an engraved epigraphical cartouche, with concave short sides, that frames an engraved and nielloed Arabic inscription in Kufic with ornamental apices. The same benedictory expression, *bi-l-yumn wa 'l-bara(ka)*, repeats every time. The second term, *al-baraka*, is shortened omitting the last two letters; this is a common feature that consents also a double reading, interpreting the term as *al-birr*, "devotion". The inscription is written on a single line, occupying the available height. The three cartouches show variations in the script, details that testify they were hand-written and not obtained with a stencil. The presence on the epigraphical background of additional signs and trilobed leaves above the text recurs in the inscriptions carved on the upper part of the marble tomb of Sebüktigin (r. 977-997).²²⁵ The Kufic script, particularly sober, is attested in Ghazni within the 11th century.

Three silver almond-shaped plates used to cover the same amount of lobes of the dome. One of these is missing, revealing that only the undecorated lobes were polished. Each plate bears an engraved almond-shaped frame enclosing a vegetal element.

All the decoration is executed according to a stylistic coherence: roundels, cartouches and almond-shaped frames are defined by a double line, engraved and nielloed. Oblique cuts encircle the round plates on the body and recur on the fillet underlying the box edge, and at the base of the dome tympanum on the lid. Birds, vegetal elements and inscriptions show variations typical of the handmade work, which must have been a tricky challenge on such thin plates. Moreover, the niello is quite well preserved – it is another rare circumstance.²²⁶ Taking into account the technical, decorative and epigraphic features, the early 11th century seems an appropriate date for this inkwell.

²²⁴ Formerly Scerrato (1959b, 96-97; 1966, 62) pointed out this feature. In his opinion, it was a cheaper solution less resistant than the usual one, and this would explain why no other specimen of this kind survived. However, from the moment of discovery (in 1958) until now, silver plates have always been firm in their location.

²²⁵ See Giunta 2003, 24, figs. 3-4.

²²⁶ Other silver artefacts with engraved and nielloed decoration are known, but most of them coming from western Iran. See for example the wine service from Hamadan, probably dating to the first half of the 11th century, inscribed in the name of Abū'l-Abbās Walgīn b. Harūn (Pope, Ackerman 1938-1939, pls. 1345-1346; Melikian-Chirvani 1986a, 99; Allan 1986a, 56).

Inkwell no. 391 (Pl. 141a-b) is provided with three heart-shaped loop handles hinged to the wall of the box; three fixed semi-circular loops are nailed on the lid side. The dome on the lid is raised on a tympanum and lobed in six almonds carved in relief. It is topped by a slightly squared and raised knob finial. The inkwell, in an excellent state of preservation, is inlaid with copper and silver.²²⁷

On the centre of the underside, a small roundel includes a bird looking to its right on a vegetal background. Around this, three elongated almond-shaped frames enclose a lance-shaped leaf. As in other known inkwells (Fig. 45), the position usually held by almond-shaped feet is occupied by engraved almond-shaped elements.²²⁸ A continuous ribbon runs on the body, distributing the space and obtaining three trilobed niches, flanked by round knots. An intricate vegetal background, composed by concentric budded scrolls ending in five-lobed flowers, covers any space framed by the ribbon, like a wallpaper. Each niche encloses a figurative scene related to the writing art (scenes nos. 1-3). In the scene no. 1 a man, in three-quarter profile looking to his left, sits on his heels. He wears a three-pointed hat, a tunic closed at the centre and waist – enriched by decorated inserts (*tirāz*) on the shoulders –, trousers and boots. The softness of the fabric is conveyed through the incisions, which also help in indicating the bent arms and suggesting the knee's angle. Long hair frames his face descending in two locks upon the shoulders. The figure is portrayed in the act of presenting the spectator with a round-bottomed box, probably an inkwell, which he holds with both hands.

In scene no. 2 there is a man sitting cross-legged, as the trousers' volume and roundness suggest, his body is in a frontal position, while his face is visible in a three-quarter profile looking to his right. He wears a small turban, from which a fabric ribbon protrudes backwards, and a tunic closed in the front, enriched by decorated inserts (*tirāz*) on the shoulders recalling those on the turban. The right arm, close-up, is bent; the wrist and hand come out from the wide sleeve vertically holding a long pen. Face features are defined simply: a long thin eyebrow runs parallel to the elongated almond eye, while the nose ends in a square profile.

In scene no. 3, a man sits in the same position as the previous one, wearing the same kind of clothes. He handles a long pen, which seems to be moving on a square tablet. The latter bears engraved two 'S' symbols, probably meant to represent the already written text. Face features are sketched hastily.



Fig. 45 – Inkwell bottom, Iran, early 13th c.,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Inv. no. 59.69.2a
(Public Domain).

²²⁷ Unfortunately, it is not easy to detect copper inlay in black and white pictures. Scerrato (1959b, 96-97) noted such decoration without specifying its position. On the basis of comparison with similar inkwells mentioned below, the inlay is likely to have involved the niches framing the figurative scenes and cartouches framing the inscriptions.

²²⁸ See an inkwell probably from Iran housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Inv. no. 59.69.2a; see Baer 1972, 201, 203, fig. 9; here Fig. 45). Another inkwell from Khurasan, housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum shows traces of the solder in the points where it lost the three feet (Inv. no. 86-1969; see Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 124, no. 52). See also below the hexagonal inkwell excavated in Ghazni.

A Kufic benedictory inscription, in three cartouches, runs along the lower body. Fixed loops alternate on the lid side with long, thin rectangular cartouches, which frame a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices, on a vegetal background. In Kufic cartouches, the script is geometric and squat, almost forced into the limited space available. The text on the box and that on the lid's side almost mirror each other; the wishing terms chosen are the same, with particular stress on the terms *al-dawla wa'l-salāma*, repeated with a change in word order. The term *al-salāma* is the only shortened term, always appearing in the form *al-salā*. A third inscription, in cursive, runs along the shoulder, distributed in three trapezoidal cartouches with concave short sides. An intricate and luxuriant vegetal pattern, composed by scrolls ending in trilobed flowers, decorates the background. Roundels alternate with cartouches enclosing a vegetal element. The cursive inscription shows a remarkable game of proportions between the letters, which creates an alternation of empty and full spaces, vertical leaps of the *hastae* and soft curves of the *wāws*. The text employs different terms in respect to the previous ones, none of which is shortened. The sequence is common and shares some details with the inscription on an inkwell lid, also coming from Ghazni, ascribed to the second half of the 12th century.²²⁹ The term *al-sa'āda* lacks the final *tā' marbūṭa*; the *ḥā'* in the closing formula *li-ṣāḥibi-hi* overlaps the *alif*. The word *Allāh* is engraved with a tiny, rapid incision on the knob finial that tops the dome, as to rectify from such high position the use of figurative scenes usually opposed on inkwells on the ground that these vessels would have been employed to copy the holy Quran.²³⁰

Each lobe of the lid dome bears an engraved almond-shaped frame enclosing a lance-shaped leaf, an accurate copy of those on the box underside.

The three scenes devoted to the art of writing portray the inkwell itself and related implements, testifying the object's function. This is a quite rare circumstance among metalworks.²³¹ The three inscriptions express good wishes to an unknown recipient, while each one of the aforementioned inkwells is dedicated to a more or less specific person. The ground-covering vegetal pattern that plays a crucial role in the decoration is executed with an incision deep enough to create a vivid *chiaroscuro*. Trilobed and five-lobed flowers represent a traditional feature in Eastern Iranian metalwork, and especially in Ghazni, detected on numerous artefacts and materials. Vegetal elements enclosed in the almond-shaped frames on the underside, on the lid's dome and into roundels on the lid's shoulder are executed with a lighter, but precise incision.

Niches recur on other inkwells, framing a big bird on a vegetal background (no. 393, Pl. 143), or a vegetal pattern of spiralling budded scrolls (no. 394, Pl. 143a-b). No. 395 (Pl. 143a-b) also features polylobed niches: silver inlaid interlaced ribbons generate a star-like design; the inlay probably was conceived to make them stand out on the elaborated background. A pair of affronted hares sits below the niche tympanum, and a pair of affronted birds and one of birds looking backward sit in the central niche. A quadruped (dog, hare or deer) appears in each roundel on the upper body.²³² It is inlaid with copper and silver, only partially preserved. The silver was used to highlight the inscription into cartouches on the lower body, the margins of

²²⁹ The inkwell lid was purchased in 1934 by J. Hackin; Louvre Museum, Paris, Inv. no. AA 65. See Marchal 1974, 10, fig. 3.

²³⁰ See Baer 1972, 199.

²³¹ Other inkwells, generally ascribed to Khurasan and datable to the second half of the 12th-early 13th century, showing *kātibs* portrayed in the same way are known: one from the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (Inv. no. K 722 A, formerly in the Köfler Collection; see Baer 1972, 199-201, figs. 1-5); a second from the Victoria and Albert Museum (Inv. no. 86-1969; see Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 124-125, no. 52); and a third from the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv (Inv. no. MHM1.93; see Taragan 2005). Clearly, the three figurative scenes are based on the same model.

²³² Notes by Scerrato, who preferred to define the object as a jewel box instead of an inkwell.

small roundels on the upper body and the geometrical pattern into the niches. Copper inlay stresses the margins of cartouches and niches. Each cartouche is split into two by an upturned trilobed arch that echoes the profile of plates, once nailed to the wall to hang the loop handles. The fixed loops nailed on the lid almost overlap the inscription they split into three sections. The underside is decorated as well; the central roundel, whose margin was inlaid with copper and the inner geometrical pattern with silver, is barely visible due to an extended damage. Around it, three cartouches, also defined by a copper inlay, each frame a running quadruped (two foxes and a dog) on a vegetal background. Traces of the solder left by the missing feet are visible between cartouches. This is a very refined box, probably made in Herat in the third quarter of the 12th century on the basis of comparison with similar objects (cf. Fig. 46).²³³

The most interesting among the cylindrical lids is no. 396. It was extremely well preserved, especially concerning the inlay. The shoulder shows a sequence of twelve roundels generated and linked to one another by interlaced ribbons inlaid with silver. The zodiac signs, represented without their ruling planets, appear inlaid with copper and silver foils. A pair of addorsed harpies, divided by a monstrous human head on a pole, namely the *Jawzahr*, represents the Gemini.



Fig. 46 – Inkwell signed by Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Sahl al-Harawī, Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, Inv. no. 54.514 (Common Creative License).

The lid dome, raised on a tympanum, is carved in bas-relief in six almonds and topped by a round knob. A series of pearls, inlaid alternatively with copper and silver, runs at the base of the tympanum. A silver inlaid single scroll, with bilobed leaves, decorates the latter. A heart-shaped vegetal element, including a trilobed leaf, again inlaid with silver, adorns each almond of the dome. Even the knob is decorated with a flat grille inlaid with silver. Two benedictory inscriptions inlaid with silver, in Kufic and cursive script respectively, run on the lid side and on its inner surface. Both of them lie against a scrolls background that looks sparser than usual, executed with light incisions.²³⁴

The Kufic inscription shows very interesting apices, shaped as rounded half triangles fully inlaid. The same full triangle renders the letter *qāf* in the term *al-baqā’*. The *lām-alif* group in *al-salāma* is crossed, while the *‘ayn* in the term *al-sa’āda* remains open on its top as a “V”. The *sīn* has degrading teeth and the *ḥā’* in the term *al-rāḥa* climbs up at the height of *hastae*. The same script appears on an inkwell from the Victoria and Albert Museum.²³⁵ From a semantic point of view, a couple of terms adopted in the Kufic inscription are unusual and could be a clue of a later date. The cursive inscription, framed by a continuous band, looks very plain; the *hastae* rise straight up without any change in width. The *alif* in the article inserts on the terminal of the preceding *wāw*. Quite peculiar is the *lām-alif*

²³³ For a comparison, see Pope, Ackerman 1938-1939, pl. 1311a; Barrett 1949, pl. 5b (for the engraving style); an inkwell signed by Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Sahl al-Harawī from the Walters Art Museum (Inv. no. 54.514), see Ettinghausen 1943, fig. 4; *here* Fig. 46.

²³⁴ Scerrato stressed this feature in its notes, reckoning it as a clue of late dating.

²³⁵ Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 123, no. 51.

group in the term *al-iqbāl*; the *lām* elongates backward, passing behind the *alif* and then falling on the previous term.

A third inkwell emerged from the excavation in the House of the Lustrewares in 1957. Curiously, no information about its discovery appeared in the publications. Only recently, its place of finding has been ascertained through a cross-check between Italian Mission registers and photographic negatives. The last picture portrays the object in Ghazni storeroom, in 1966; there is no news about what happened to the inkwell after the Italian Mission left Afghanistan in 1979. However, its importance is twofold. First, the hexagonal shape rests on three almond-shaped feet, with the wall protruding in respect to the shoulder. A gap enlarges the regular round opening on top. The lid unfortunately is missing, but three small holes are pierced on the shoulder and underside, communicating with each other. This confirms that the object was provided with an internal suspension system passing through the whole body.²³⁶ This inkwell is then to be added to the few cylindrical ones mentioned above. Second, as the base is raised by the feet, there would have been enough space to knot, under the inkwell, the cords passing through the box. The surface is undecorated, so no clue other than its technical device can help in dating. The model is quite a rarity in the medieval period. The only similar specimen to my knowledge is an object on exhibition in the National Museum of Iran, in Tehran, provided with three holes pierced on the lid.²³⁷

Square and parallelepiped inkwells are rarer; such shapes were not recommended by scribes because it was difficult to keep them clean (dust would have gathered in the corners).²³⁸ Luckily, nos. 397-398 (Pl. 145) entered the Rawza Museum collection. The first was almost intact, topped by a wide sloping covering, which protrudes from the box borders. The round opening was partially broken. The second, identical in shape, was seriously damaged, as the upper half of the object is entirely missing. Moreover, archaeologists provided it with two modelling clay feet, probably in order to ensure its stability while taking the photo. This would denounce further damage at the base.

Two-thirds of the walls of both inkwells are covered (bottom-top) by a high epigraphic band, comprised between two fillets on relief. The benedictory text displays one word on each side of the box. Unfortunately, only two pictures are available for the two inkwells, both portraying the same side, so it is impossible to state whether the expression *bi-l-yumn* repeated or it introduced a longer formula. The inscription shows a tremendous elegance; lying on a single line, it is executed in a Kufic script, rigid at the base, drawing 90° corners in the ligatures between letters, but slender and extremely vertical at its top. Apices from each letter reach the top of the epigraphical band, confronting one another, and ending in a kind of sinuous half-palmette.

²³⁶ No picture of the inner box is available, so it is impossible to state whether each pair of holes was linked through a tube or not.

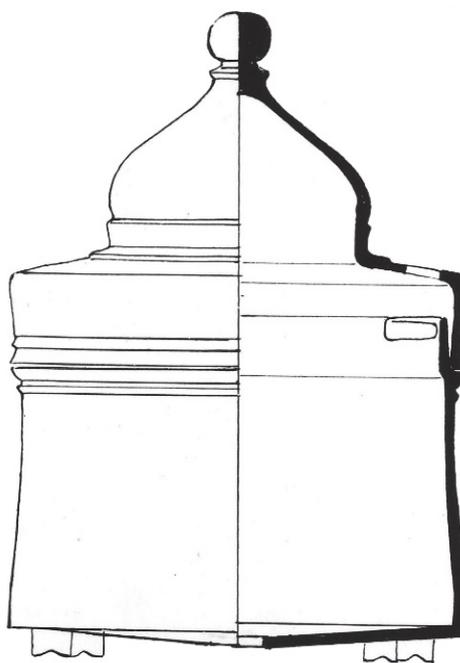
²³⁷ Inv. no. 3463. The artefact, attributed to the 12th century, is published as an incense-burner by Ettinghausen (1969, pl. 13) who infers its function on the basis of the open-worked wall of the box, echoed by the open-worked hold on the lid. It would be worthy to note that the object is very close to inkwells in shape and size. Should have been used as an inkwell, an inner vessel would have been necessary.

²³⁸ Baer 1983, 66-68. A glass square inkwell is known from Nishapur (see Kröger 1995, 176, no. 229).

Pl. 139



a



b (Drawing by G. Ioppolo)

No. 390



c



d



a

No. 390

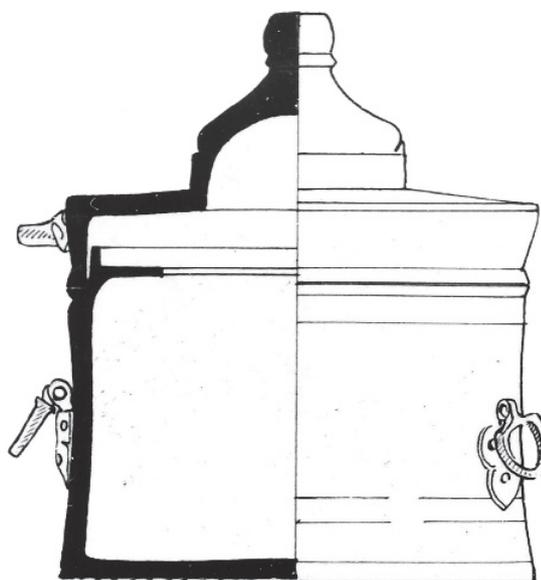


b

Pl. 141



a



b (Drawing by G. Ioppolo)

No. 391



c



d



a



b



c



No. 392



No. 393



No. 394

a



b



No. 395

a



b



a



b

No. 396



c

Pl. 145



No. 397

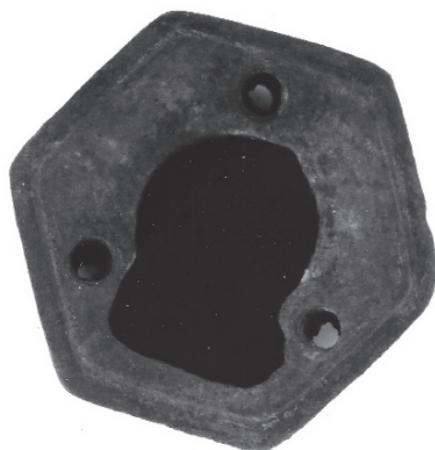


No. 398



a

No. 399



b



c



No. 400



a



b

No. 401

2.9 Pharmacy Equipment

Mortars

12 Items	{ cylindrical	{ flat base, flared rim (nos. 402-409) flat base and flat protruding rim (no. 410) sloping base, flat protruding rim (no. 411) flat protruding base and rim (nos. 412-413)
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No. **402**

Pl. 147a-b

Cylindrical mortar

Flat base; flared rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Broken rim, scratched surface.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 195).

Two series of three, deeply engraved lines isolate the central register from the base and the rim. Two roundels can be seen on the walls: the first includes a bird, while the second frames two trilobed palmettes topped by an upturned, five-lobed palmette. Below the rim runs a Kufic inscription with few, vegetal elements on the background:

[باليمن] والبركة والسرور والنصرة (ة) ودولة وتأييد ونصرة (ة) والسأ[...]

[*With good fortune*], blessing, felicity, solicitude, fortune, divine support, victory and *AL-SĀ*[...]

No. **403**

Pl. 148

Cylindrical mortar and sceptre-shaped pestle

Mortar: flat base; flared rim. Pestle: flattened hold; protruding band around the shaft.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Mortar: h. 12 cm. Pestle: l. 20.5 cm

10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-42); “found in Ghazni”.

Published: Rice, Rowland 1971, pl. 180; Allan 1976, II, 664, fig. 37.

A geometric frame runs at the base. Two rows of almond-shaped bosses cast in high relief alternate with triangular cartouches including scrolls with trilobed flowers. Apices of almonds and cartouches point to each other. Below the rim a Kufic pseudo-inscription running on a vegetal background is divided in sections by roundels.

A vegetal frame runs on the pestle.

No. 404

Pl. 148a-b

Cylindrical mortar and sceptre-shaped pestle

Mortar: flat base; flared rim. Pestle: flattened pounding end; protruding band around the shaft; sub-hemispherical hold.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 34).

On the walls, two rows of almond-shaped bosses cast in high relief alternate with anthropomorphic figures included into roundels. A vegetal band runs at the base. A cursive inscription can be seen below the rim: it is unreadable due to the incomplete photographic documentation.

No. 405

Pl. 149

Cylindrical mortar

Flat base; flared rim.

Leaded copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition.

H. 11.7 cm, Ø of base 11.8 cm, Ø of opening 14.2 cm

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 7).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 67, fig. 34 (second half of 12th-early 13th c.).

On the walls, two rows of almond-shaped bosses cast in high relief are encircled by engravings culminating in a trilobed flower. Two different, geometric frames run below and above the bosses. On the walls, two Kufic inscriptions with ornamental apices repeat:

البركة والبر

Blessing and devotion

A cursive inscription (read by Melikian-Chirvani) runs below the rim:

العز والاقبال وا / الدولة والسلامة والـ / سعادة والنصر والبكر (?) / والشكرة
والبقاء

Glory, prosperity, f / ortune, spiritual integrity, ha / ppiness, victory, ? / gratitude and eternal life

No. 406

Pl. 149

Cylindrical mortar and sceptre-shaped pestle

Mortar: flat base; flared rim. Pestle: protruding knob in the middle of the shaft; sub-hemispherical hold.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 43).

At the base, a Kufic inscription runs on a scroll-patterned background, divided by roundels; the text is unreadable due to its preservation status. Two rows of almond-shaped bosses cast in high relief alternate with triangular cartouches including scrolls with trilobed flowers. Below the rim, a cursive inscription runs on a scroll-patterned background, interrupted by rhombs. The photographic documentation is incomplete:

{...} السلامة {...}
 {...} *spiritual integrity* {...}

Geometric engravings can be seen on the upper section of the pestle.

No. 407

Pl. 150

Cylindrical mortar

Flat base; flared rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

10th-11th century

Mazar-i Sharif Museum (1964).

Quoted: Scerrato 1983, fig. 6.1 (10th-11th c.).

A geometric band runs at the base. On the walls, two rows of almond-shaped bosses cast in high relief are topped by engraved flowers. Below the rim, a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices runs on a background composed by five-lobed palmettes; the text is only partially photographed:

{...} الشفاعة والشاكر والسلامة {...}
 {...} *prophetic intercession, gratitude and spiritual integrity* {...}

No. 408

Pl. 150

Cylindrical mortar

Flat base; flared rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition.

10th-11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 100).

Two rows of almond-shaped bosses are cast in high relief on the walls. Below the rim, a Kufic inscription with tall *hastae* runs on a scroll-patterned background, divided by crescent-shaped roundels. The text repeats:

بالبير

With devotion

No. 409

Pl. 151a-b

Cylindrical mortar

Flared base and rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper and silver.

Fair condition. Handles missing.

H. 13.3 cm, Ø of base 16.6 cm, Ø of opening 16.4 cm

13th century

Mazar-i Sharif Museum (1964).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 67, fig. 35 (early 13th c.).

Quoted: Melikian-Chirvani 1974a, 78, pl. XVI, fig. 20; Scerrato 1983, fig. 6.14.

At the base, a knotted Kufic inscription is divided in six sections by roundels framing a vegetal decoration. The text is read by Melikian-Chirvani:

باليمن والبر / كة والدو / لة والسعادة / والسلامة و / (و)الكرامة و / البقاء
لصا[حبه]

*With good fortune, bles / sing, for / tune, happiness / and (and) prestige, / eternal
life to its ow[ner]*

On the walls, two rows of almond-shaped bosses cast in high relief comprise one row of rhomboid elements. A trilobed flower decorates each boss, while a knotted grill or a vegetal decoration can be seen on the rhombs. Some of the rhombs are provided with a protruding rod in order to hang the handles (see Pl. 151b). The walls present a ground-covering, intricate, vegetal background, small roundels including five-lobed palmettes, and peacocks disposing around the rhombs.

Below the rim, a cursive inscription is divided in six sections by birds into roundels:

العز الدائم / والاقبال و / البركة وا / لدولة وا / لكرامة وا / لتامة لصاحبه

Lasting glory / , prosperity, / blessing, f/ortun , pr / estige and p / lenitude to its owner

On the rim, an inscription divided in seven sections contains the artisan's signature; the text is read by Melikian-Chirvani:

عمل حسن بن حسين / وبوى (?) / السماوى(?) / باليمن والبركة / والكرامة
والنع / مة والسعادة / والسلامة لصا[حبه]

*Work of Hasan b. Husayn / ? / with good fortune, blessing / , prestige, gra / ce, happiness /
and spiritual integrity to its [owner]*

No. 410

Pl. 152a-b

Cylindrical mortar

Flat base; flat, protruding rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition.

13th century

Mazar-i Sharif Museum (1964).

On the underside, a continuous ribbon generates a roundel and a six-point star including a geometric interlacing and a vegetal decoration. On the rim, an inscription runs on an intricate, vegetal background; the text is divided in sections of inlaid, interlaced ribbons. The inscription is unreadable due to its preservation status.

No. 411

Pl. 153

Cylindrical mortar and sceptre-shaped pestle

Mortar: sloping base; flat, protruding rim; double ridge around the body. Pestle: squarish hold.

Copper alloy. Cast.

Fair condition.

Mortar: h. 12 cm, Ø 16.8 cm. Pestle: l. 20 cm

11th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 686, no. 4, pl. VIII, fig. 16.

Quoted: Scerrato 1983, fig. 6.12 (11th c.).

Two mouldings in relief in the middle of walls.

No. 412

Pl. 153

Cylindrical mortar

Flat, protruding base and rim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Passable condition.

11th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 194).

Two horizontal bands are slightly in relief on the walls.

No. 413

Pls. 154a-c

Cylindrical mortar

Wide, flat, protruding base and rim.

Leaded copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Fair condition.

12th-13th century

Kabul Museum (1964).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 69, figs. 36-37.

A cursive inscription, read by Melikian-Chirvani as the followings, runs on the underside:

بالبير والد / والبير وبالبير و / وبالبير والد

With piety, AL-D /, piety, with piety, / and with piety and AL-D

A Kufic inscription runs on the upper surface of the base interrupted by rosettes into roundels:

بالبير والبير / كة بالبير / وبالبير و نا ا

With piety, ble / ssing, with piety /, with piety and [...]

Mouldings in relief can be seen on the walls. Under the lip, a cursive inscription repeats:

التائيد

Divine support

Six wedges in relief divide the lip in as many cartouches: each cartouche presents a profile defined by interlaced frames and includes alternatively a crescent with a rosette or a cursive inscription on an intricate, vegetal background:

العزا / لاقبال (ل) / والدول(ة)

Glory, p / rosperit(y) / and fortun(e)

Pestles

6 Items {
sceptre-shaped (nos. 403-404, 406, 411, 414)
flared (no. 415)

No. 414

Pl. 155

Sceptre-shaped pestle

Flared pounding end; protruding knob around the shaft; sub-hemispherical knob handle.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 95).

Oblique lines comprised between two horizontal lines are engraved on the upper section. The knob handle is divided in wedges by engravings.

No. 415

Pl. 155

Flaring pestle

Flat pounding end.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Knob handle missing.

11th century (?)

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 173).

On the upper section, a spade-shaped medallion includes a vegetal decoration. A horizontal band frames a Kufic inscription on a vegetal background on the lower section; the text is unreadable due to the incomplete photographic documentation.

Comment

Mortars were used to mince herbs and spices, to prepare remedies and pigments, and in alchemic and metallurgical processes as well. Marble items were preferred in antiquity, while Islamic specimens usually are made of sturdy metal alloys. A considerable lead content can be reasonably expected in order to provide stability for the object,²³⁹ and sources confirm this. However, Savage-Smith drew attention to the reaction of lead to acidic substances inside the mortars, resulting in poisoning as well as the possible deformation of the mortar base.²⁴⁰

Morphologically, a number of different models is known (see an octagonal mortar in Fig. 47),²⁴¹ none of which stem from the Sasanian tradition nor the Chinese or Indian ones. Therefore, shapes are likely to have been created in the early Islamic period (10th century), probably mimicking ancient stone mortars, which were cylindrical outside and concave

²³⁹ On the lead content of the alloy in the mortars, see Allan 1976, I, 237-238; 1979, 52. For chemical analysis made in the British Museum, see Craddock 1990, 99.

²⁴⁰ Savage-Smith 1997, 290, 296.

²⁴¹ An octagonal model with a truncated conical base and flaring rim is on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum (Inv. no. 10-2-113). The decoration is arranged into five-lobed arches. A specimen similar in shape, but different in decoration is preserved in the Ashmolean Museum (Inv. no. 1968.34; see Allan 1979, pl. 6c). See also Cat. 197 from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection (Savage-Smith 1997, 314-315).

inside.²⁴² Only cylindrical specimens are attested in this catalogue; they nonetheless differ in the base and rim. All are without a handle, though no. 409 probably featured lost movable rings.

Seven mortars present an imposing shape that can be reckoned as an earlier one, probably introduced in the 10th-11th century: a flat base and a cylindrical, straight-sided body ending in a slightly flared rim.²⁴³ The wall and rim are very thick. A band, often filled by a geometric motif, is engraved on the lower body and another epigraphical one along the rim. Almond-shaped bosses applied on the wall represent a typical feature; they run in two horizontal rows, alternating in orientation, with vertices pointing toward the inside of the object. Generally, elements in high relief or ribs are needed to assure a firm hold of the mortar. The engraved decoration of triangular motifs, filled by arabesques, sits facing the almonds (no. 403, Pl. 148; no. 406, Pl. 149). In other cases, roundels alternate with almonds, even including an anthropomorphic (possibly astrological) motif (no. 404, Pl. 148a). Only mortar no. 402 (Pl. 147) presents a smooth wall, with fillets in relief, isolating the two usual bands. The lower one remains empty, while a Kufic inscription runs along the upper one. The benedictory terms lose the article as the text proceeds. Three roundels appear on the wall, two of which frame a vegetal pattern composed by an upturned, five-lobed palmette surmounting two trilobed palmettes, each one included in a scroll, the third including a bird. Decoration engraved on no. 405 (Pl. 149) might be a later addition or retouch, meant to enrich an originally simple shape.²⁴⁴

The waisted model with flared base and rim, probably from Khurasan, may represent an evolution of the previous model. There is no picture of the underside of mortar no. 409 in the IsMEO documentation, but it was published by Melikian-Chirvani.²⁴⁵ A comparable item can be found in a mortar in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, richly inlaid with silver and copper, ascribed to the early 13th century.²⁴⁶ Our specimen bears an extremely rich decoration: applied cast elements, ground-covering engravings, copper and silver inlay. Big, rhomboid elements are applied between the usual rows of almonds. Two epigraphic bands, in Kufic and cursive respectively, both inlaid in copper, appear along the base and rim interrupted by roundels framing a bird or a vegetal element. Small roundels framing a five-lobed palmette repeat on the wall, flanked by long-tailed birds against an intricate vegetal background. The applied elements are engraved as well, including a vegetal element on the almonds and a dense interlace inlaid in



Fig. 47 – Octagonal mortar, Kabul National Museum, Inv. no. 10-2-113 (MAIA, photo by F. Colombo, 2013).

The waisted model with flared base and rim, probably from Khurasan, may represent an evolution of the previous model. There is no picture of the underside of mortar no. 409 in the IsMEO documentation, but it was published by Melikian-Chirvani.²⁴⁵ A comparable item can be found in a mortar in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, richly inlaid with silver and copper, ascribed to the early 13th century.²⁴⁶ Our specimen bears an extremely rich decoration: applied cast elements, ground-covering engravings, copper and silver inlay. Big, rhomboid elements are applied between the usual rows of almonds. Two epigraphic bands, in Kufic and cursive respectively, both inlaid in copper, appear along the base and rim interrupted by roundels framing a bird or a vegetal element. Small roundels framing a five-lobed palmette repeat on the wall, flanked by long-tailed birds against an intricate vegetal background. The applied elements are engraved as well, including a vegetal element on the almonds and a dense interlace inlaid in

²⁴² Allan (1976, I, 237) underlines that, when mentioned in the sources (alchemic texts), mortars usually are referred to with the Persian term *hāwan*, instead of the Arabic *mihrās*. This could support the Persian origin of the model. Moreover, al-Bīrūnī (first half of the 11th century) included mortars in the list of his coeval objects. For a panoramic view of models, see Allan 1976, II, 544; Scerrato 1983; Savage-Smith 1997.

²⁴³ Savage-Smith (1997, 291), commenting on similar mortars with unknown provenance from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, states that, even if it usually ascribed to Iran, this model could have a more western origin, possibly in the Syro-Egyptian area.

²⁴⁴ See Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 67.

²⁴⁵ See Melikian-Chirvani 1974a, 78, pl. XVI, fig. 20.

²⁴⁶ See Savage-Smith 1997, Cat. 196. The item is a bit smaller; it bears the name of the owner inlaid in cursive beneath the upper cursive inscription.

silver on the rhombus. Two out of six rhombi bear a protruding squared segment, which should have allowed for the attachment of the handles. It is the only mortar provided with such a feature. A similar specimen, preserved in the Hermitage Museum, is assigned to the 12th century.²⁴⁷ Considering the rich, ground-covering decoration, even the 13th century would seem appropriate.

No. 410 (Pl. 152) has been identified as a mortar on the basis of its stocky wall and undecorated inner surface. The flat rim appears worn, in particular around the intricate vegetal pattern, while the six copper inlaid interlaces are still visible. The underside is decorated and inlaid as well.

Three mortars present a protruding base – either flat or sloping – and rim. They are mostly undecorated, but grooves and fillets in relief on the body offer friction to the holding. No. 413 (Pl. 154) finds a parallel in a mortar from the Victoria and Albert Museum.²⁴⁸ The high cylindrical body is articulated in fillets in relief. On the base, made of two steps, medallions framing rosettes alternate with epigraphical cartouches. The protruding rim, which is the most visible part of the object, presents a ground-covering and rich decoration: flaps in relief isolate six sections, each one bearing a wide cartouche defined by interlaced ribbons. Cartouches frame a benedictory inscription, in cursive on a vegetal background, alternating with copper inlaid crescents. The latter detail, together with the above-mentioned seven-disc rosettes, points to an Eastern Iranian provenance and assigns the object to the 12th-13th century. The specimen can be held as an example showing to what extent decoration on mortars increased with the passage of time.

Pestles

Mortars and pestles are cast separately but used together. This makes it easy to separate and substitute them. Sometimes, the presence of coherent decorative features on the two items can indicate they pertain to each other (see no. 403).

Two models are attested among pestles retrieved in Iranian sites²⁴⁹ and in this catalogue as well by two single specimens (nos. 414-415) and the four in set with above-mentioned mortars nos. 403-404, 406, and 411.²⁵⁰ The sceptre-shaped one shows a big rounded knob serving as a handle, and a flat, strongly flared surface at the pounding end. A cable, usually round or faceted, protrudes in the middle of the cylindrical central body; it was designed to protect the hand of the employer, preventing it from banging against the mortar rim. Whenever an engraved decoration is present, it appears on the upper part of the object; motifs are very simple, mostly geometric, presented as a series of oblique lines. The pestle associated with mortar no. 411 from Maimana is undecorated, but it features a faceted knob with a cut top. The pestle pertaining to mortar no. 403 bears the same vegetal motif observed on the latter.

Pestle no. 415 corresponds to the model defined unbanded by Allan, thus deprived of the knob in the middle.²⁵¹ It presents a cylindrical flared body with flat pounding end. It bears a richly engraved decoration including motifs typical of 12th century Iranian lands, such as spade-shaped medallion framing a vegetal pattern. A comparison for no. 415 comes from Nishapur.²⁵²

²⁴⁷ Inv. no. IR-1465; see Loukonine, Ivanov 1996, 132-133, no. 113.

²⁴⁸ Inv. no. 948-1886; Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 109-110, no. 40.

²⁴⁹ Allan 1976, I, 241.

²⁵⁰ These mortars and pestles shared the same inventory numbers.

²⁵¹ See Allan 1976, I, 241.

²⁵² See Allan 1982a, no. 115.

Pl. 147



a

No. 402



b

Pl. 148



No. 403



No. 404

a



b



No. 405



No. 406

Pl. 150



No. 407



No. 408



a

No. 409



b

Pl. 152



a

No. 410



b



No. 411



No. 412

Pl. 154



a



b

No. 413



c



No. 414



No. 415

2.10 Tools

Unknown location

No. **416**

Pl. 156

Singular tong

Three diamond-shaped mouldings.

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Poor condition. Half of the tongs, handle ending and curved point missing.

L. 10.3 cm

12th-13th century

Excavated in the Ghazni royal palace, MAIA Inv. no. C5517.

Five pierced holes and simple, geometric engravings can be seen on the tong.

No. **417**

Pl. 156

Tweezers

Copper alloy. Cast; pierced, engraved.

Fair condition.

L. 3.9 cm

11th-13th century

Excavated in the Ghazni royal palace, MAIA Inv. no. C4478.

Comment

Among the tools that emerged from Ghazni excavations can be counted a fragmentary singular tong and a pair of tweezers. The identification of the first item has been possible thanks to an artefact in the Nasser. D. Khalili Collection, perhaps coming from Eastern Iran, which is ascribed to the 14th century.²⁵³ Its length (21.6 cm) gives an idea about the whole extension of the intact tongs; the item from Ghazni, in fact, lacks the rectangular handle as well as the curved point. The two objects are similar in the three mouldings disposing at constant distance on the handle and in the pierced decoration: a proper rosette surrounded by punched circles appears on the Khalili item, while a simpler version can be seen on Ghazni one where only five holes are pierced at the core of an engraved "X". The design recalls that seen on belt buckle no. 353 (Pl. 130) coming from the Ghazni royal palace as well. With regard to the chronology, it can be said

²⁵³ Inv. no. SCI126, see Stanley 1997, no. 364.

that the tong's room of provenance should have been added to the Ghazni royal palace during the 12th century.

Tweezers made of copper alloys were retrieved in Nishapur and Siraf, attesting to the continuity of such tools from the antiquity to the Islamic period.²⁵⁴ The specimen from Ghazni presents a technical and morphological difference, since the grip area is closed and the mechanism on the object's top consents its opening. The item comes from the royal palace's private apartments, where two inkwells emerged as well.

²⁵⁴ See Allan 1982a, 39.



No. 416



No. 417

2.11 Bucklers or Cymbals

6 Items } stepped (nos. 418-421)
 } domed (nos. 422-423)

No. 418

Pl. 157

Stepped buckler

Central umbo topped by a knob hold.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. Rim restored in ancient time (Melikian-Chirvani); a gap on the umbo.

Ø 20.5 cm, h. 8.5 cm

12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 150).

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 70, fig. 42 (12th c.).

A Greek fret runs at the base of the knob, while a vegetal decoration is engraved on the umbo. On the step, four cartouches profiled by a Greek fret alternate with vegetal, spade-shaped medallions. Cartouches frames a bold, cursive inscription that runs on a singles scroll; the text repeats:

والبر(كة) والد(ولة)

And bles(sing) and good (fortune)

On the rim, a copper inlaid Kufic inscription cannot be deciphered due to the unclear photographic documentation. It is made to be read from outside toward inside, and alternates with vegetal roundels, whose profile is inlaid with copper as well.

No. 419

Pl. 157

Stepped buckler

Central umbo.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. Knob hold missing.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 175).

Vegetal roundels run along the umbo. On the step, vegetal, spade-shaped medallions alternate with four cartouches. The latter frame a cursive inscription running on a vegetal background:

العز والا / قبال / والدولة / والبقاء لصا[حبه]

Glory, pro / sperity / , fortune / and eternal life to its ow[ner]

On the rim, vegetal roundels, with copper inlaid profiles, alternate with four cartouches that frame a Kufic inscription running on an intricate, vegetal background. Few words are readable due to the unclear photographic documentation:

[...] / [...] / السلامة والسلامة / السع[ة] والبقاء [...] / [...]
 [...] / [...] / *spiritual integrity, spiritual integrity / happine[ss] and eternal life [...]*

No. 420

Pl. 157

Stepped buckler

Central umbo.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Poor condition. Knob hold missing; oxidised surface.

12th-13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 57).

A refined, single scroll with thin palmettes runs along the umbo. On the step, three vegetal roundels, with copper inlaid profiles, alternate with as many cartouches framing a cursive inscription on a vegetal background. The text is unreadable due to the preservation status. On the rim, the same vegetal roundels alternate with four cartouches framing a foliated Kufic inscription on a vegetal background. The text repeats:

باليمن والبركة

With good fortune and blessing

No. 421

Pl. 157

Stepped buckler

Central umbo.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, inlaid with copper.

Passable condition. Knob hold missing; a gap on the rim.

12th-13th century

MuCIv-MAO, Inv. no. 5943; purchased in Afghanistan and donated by M. Taddei in 1971.

On the umbo, roundels including a six-point star design alternate with three cartouches framing a floriated Kufic inscription on a vegetal background:

باليمن / والبر / كة و(...)لة

With good fortune / , blessi / ng and (...)

On the step, the above-mentioned roundels alternate with four cartouches that frame a cursive inscription on a vegetal background:

العز والاقبال / والسلامة والعناية / والسلامة والعناية

Glory, prosperity / , spiritual integrity, care / , spiritual integrity and care

On the rim, six cartouches frame a floriated Kufic inscription on a vegetal background alternating with the above-mentioned roundels and crescent-shaped ones:

باليمن والبر / كة والدولة / والسلام(ة) / [...] / لة والسلامة و / مة والغنة و

With good fortune, blessi / ng, fortune / , spiritual integri(ty) / [...] / la, spiritual integrity, / ma, richness and

No. 422

Pl. 157a-b

Domed buckler

Wide, flat brim.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved, punched, inlaid with copper.

Poor condition. Knob hold missing; three gaps on the brim.

Ø 15.3 cm, h. 4.5 cm

Late 12th-early 13th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-68); “found in Ghazni”.

Cuts can be seen where the missing hold should have set. A peculiar scroll runs into a band on the umbo (cf. the rim of tray-dish no. 44, Pl. 16a). On the brim, a bold, inlaid, cursive inscription runs on a vegetal background composed by big, trilobed flowers enriched by dots:

والعز والاقبال والدولة و[...] لصا(حبه)

And glory, prosperity and fortune and [...] to its (owner)

No. 423

Pls. 158a-b

Domed buckler

Two steps.

Copper alloy. Raised; repoussé, punched, engraved.

Fair condition. Central knob missing, few gaps.

Ø 31 cm, h. 8 cm

12th century

Unknown location; purchased in Ghazni bazaar by M. Taddei in 1971; MAIA Inv. no. Sp152.

Quoted: Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 70.

A fluted, truncated cone tops the dome, once ending in a knob. A row of eight lions walk leftward on a scroll-patterned background; two of the lions are partially superimposed. Below them, a row of hares run leftward interrupted by four, stylised, human heads.

Comment

Bucklers are typical objects of the Eastern Iranian production whose function has been, and somehow still is, under discussion. The same shape was used for a long time for both cymbals and shields.²⁵⁵ Its assignment as a piece of military equipment relies on the similarity between ancient bronze plaques retrieved in Iran, in pre-Achaemenid sites, and identified by archaeologists as shields and those portrayed in a skirmish scene on a ewer (Fars, 14th century).²⁵⁶ The discovery of such objects in pairs could support either their musical function or a defensive one, since in official duels the contenders used the same equipment.

Only the alloy is crucial to define its function; shields contain lead and are thus heavier, while cymbals are made from high tin bronze (an alloy renowned for its silvery sound). A specimen of the latter group is preserved in the Louvre Museum.²⁵⁷

While five of the bucklers in this catalogue look cast, no. 423 (Pl. 158) is raised and decorated in repoussé.²⁵⁸ The artefact definitely stands out with respect to others. It presents a central hemispherical boss in two steps – one round, one flat – flattened by a flaring and fluted neck. Something else, probably a knob, is missing on its top. Hatched strips underlie any passage from one section to another. The background is ring-dotted, as in other metalworks from Ghazni. A sequence of walking lions runs along the domed body and the round step. Animals are portrayed with front-facing muzzles and a long curving tail; punched circles are employed for the mane, while fishbone-like segments decorate the rest of their bodies. The eyes, nose, mouth and ears are equally detailed. Trilobed flowers appear behind the animals. On the flat step, a hexagonal stylised human face, front-facing, framed by a sort of mane, separates sequences of running hares. An object (Ø 20.35 cm) from Ghazni in the Louvre Museum provides a direct comparison showing lions, disposed on a single register, against a punched background and a cursive inscription on the step.²⁵⁹ The human faces are put in relation with those of the seated figures on bowl no. 75 (Pl. 32b).

The other bucklers present a wide, flat, circular brim, with a step surmounted by an umbo, pierced at its centre to host a knob finial, which is still preserved only in no. 418 (Pl. 157). Typically, the decoration in concentric bands is engraved; Kufic and cursive benedictory inscriptions interrupted by small medallions face outward. The vegetal decoration on buckler no. 420 appears richer than usual and more refined. No. 421 (Pl. 157) has been revealed as particularly interesting from an epigraphical point of view, as a floriated Kufic is employed on the step and around the umbo. Additional *hastae* accompany the *wāw* in order to create the graphical effect of the *lām-alif* group. *Hastae* and vertical segments split in two at their top into a sharp, vertical apice and a round lobe. The other two letters, the *wāw* in the term *al-dawla* and the *mīm* in *al-salām(a)*, are animated, upending in the form of an open mouth similar to that of the Jawzahr. Peculiar symbols, inlaid with copper, interrupt the two upper epigraphical bands, while in the lower one they alternate with inlaid crescents. The symbol is composed by

²⁵⁵ Allan 1976, I, 360.

²⁵⁶ See Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 62, pl. XIV, fig. 10; 1979c, 99-100. The ewer is housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Inv. no. 419-1905; see Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 214-215, no. 99, figs. 57b, 99-99a).

²⁵⁷ Allan 1979, 143, nos. 11-12.

²⁵⁸ Melikian-Chirvani (1982a, 129) proposed that the raised metal sheet was applied on a harder base, maybe leather or wood. The scholar writes that he had the chance to see the buckler in Ghazni storeroom, without specifying the date of his visit.

²⁵⁹ Louvre Museum (Inv. no. AA 100); see Melikian-Chirvani 1973, 41; 1975a, 62, pl. XIV, fig. 9; Allan 1976, II, 856-857, fig. 92.

interlacing wires, originating from the roundel, which encloses a triangle and a three-section interlace.

Buckler no. 422 (Pl. 157), instead, has no step: the brim is wider and the umbo develops into a big, domed body. Its decoration differs as well: the cursive inscription running on the brim looks more spontaneous and less tidy than usual, confused in lush trilobed flowers. A vegetal band runs along the dome.

Pl. 157



No. 418



No. 419



No. 420



No. 421



No. 422

a



b



a

No. 423



b

2.12 Horse-harness

Stirrups

No. 424

Pl. 159a-c

Stirrup

Wide, rectangular footplate; semi-circular arch; square strap bracket.

Copper alloy. Cast; engraved.

Fair condition.

H. 12.5 cm, footplate 6 × 12 cm

11th-12th century

Kandahar "City Hall" (1957-1958); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1959b, 107, no. 10, figs. 19-21 (11th-12th c.); 1971b, 457, no. 3, pls. III-V, figs. 6, 8-9.

Knobs in line decorate the footplate sides alternating with lines of small, pierced holes. On the arch, two vaults ending in a curl flank horse-head protomes.

No. 425

Pl. 160a-c

Stirrup

Wide, rectangular footplate; square strap bracket.

Copper alloy. Cast; drilled, engraved, pierced, embossed.

Passable condition. Rectangular gap on the footplate.

H. 14 cm, footplate 7 × 14.5 cm

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1966, no. 46); "found in Ghazni".

Published: Scerrato 1961, 157, no. 165 (11th-12th c.); 1971b, 455, no. 1, pls. I-II, figs. 1, 3-4; Allan 1976, II, 826, fig. 76.

Quoted: Rice, Rowland 1971, pls. 195-196; Melikian-Chirvani 1982c, figs. 68-69.

The footplate presents a dotted, polylobed frame and is decorated on its outer sides by lines of pierced holes alternated with lines of four knobs. At the arch junction, two vaults ending in a curl flank horse-head protomes. A pair of birds with backward-facing heads is adressed to the strap bracket; engravings define the tail and the wings in detail.

No. 426

Pl. 161a-c

Pair of stirrups

Rectangular footplate; roughly triangular arch; rectangular strap bracket.

Copper alloy. Cast moulded.

Fair condition.

H. 17 cm, footplate 11 × 8.4 cm; 16.5 cm, footplate 10.4 × 8 cm
10th-11th century

Kabul Museum (1958, Inv. no. 58-2-85/86); “found in Ghazni”.

Published: Scerrato 1971b, 458, pl. VI, figs. 13-14 (10th-11th c.).

Arch sides are decorated by rhomboid elements in bas-relief, the last of which overlaps the footplate underside. A stylised flower is pierced in the centre of the footplate and square holes are visible in the corners.

Comment

Stirrups, based on a model whose origin must be looked for in the East (possibly China), were introduced in the Islamic lands in the 8th century as attested by their representation in the floor paintings of Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi.²⁶⁰ However, archaeological finds are scanty. With regard to the medieval period, Muqaddasī recalls Samarqand as a production centre; this is the most plausible circumstance considering that the city was the main market for horses and mercenaries.²⁶¹ These four specimens (two single stirrups and a pair) have already been published. Nos. 424-425 (Pls. 159-160, respectively), in particular, are quite similar to each other because they belong to a Ghaznavid replicated model well known to scholars through other purchased items.²⁶² The zoomorphic protome laid at the junction between the arch and the footplate implies a twofold interest; first, the horse helmet establishes a meaningful connection between the decorative element and the stirrup function, and second, the helmet shows a sort of round bezel in the horse’s forehead. This seems to suggest that mounts used to wear some sort of amulets as lucky charm (see ch. 2.13). A similar custom in the Ghaznavid context is inferred from the sources.²⁶³

No. 424 represents a lower-quality specimen, while no. 425 bears in addition two eagles with backward-facing heads, carved in high relief, addorsed to the stirrup strap bracket. Such birds represent royal symbols, thus a possible clue about the object’s owner. Moreover, they possibly suggest a connection with the Iranian idea of mythical winged horses as well.²⁶⁴ Drilled rosettes on the polylobed festoon profile and dotted lines along the arch profile enrich the decoration. Stirrups no. 426 (Pl. 161) are simpler than the previous in shape and decoration. Almond-shaped elements and lozenges in bas-relief highlight the junction of the arch and decorate the outer profile. The footplate is pierced in the corners with four holes and a bigger 4-lobed “flower” in the centre.

²⁶⁰ See Schlumberger 1986, pl. 34; Scerrato 1971b, 459-460.

²⁶¹ See Allan 1976, I, 363; de la Vaissière 2007, 59, 98-99.

²⁶² Musée de l’Homme, Paris (Inv. no. 35.115/66-1), see Melikian-Chirvani 1982c, 190, figs. 70-71; Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (Inv. no. MTW 1290), see Alexander 1992, 58, no. 18. A third unpublished stirrup is in the Aron Collection (Inv. no. Aron344).

²⁶³ See Bombaci 1959; Laviola 2017a, 204-205.

²⁶⁴ Winged horses support the throne on a Sasanian silver-gilt plate from Strelka in the Hermitage Museum (Inv. no. S250; see Harper 1981, 41, pl. 19).

Pl. 159



a

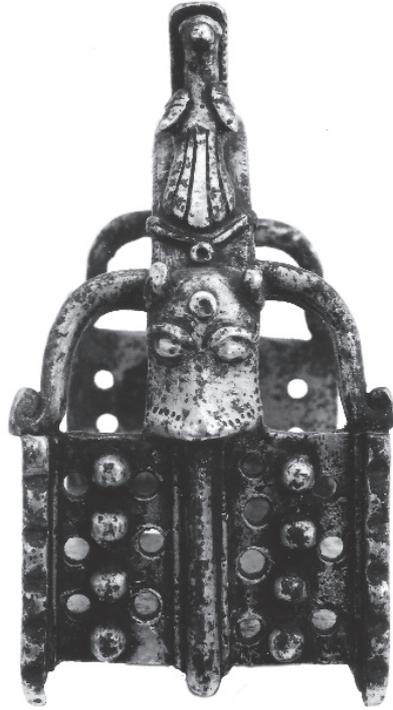
No. 424



b



c

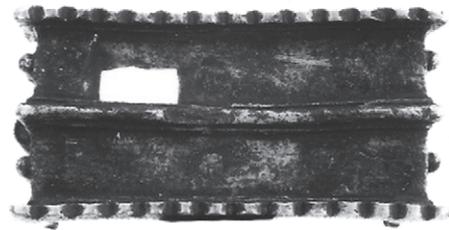


a

No. 425



b



c

Pl. 161

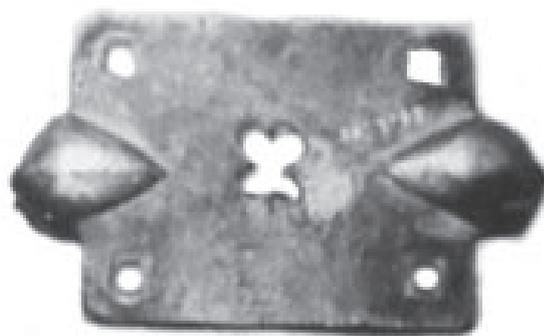


a

No. 426



b



c

2.13 Magic Objects

Amulets

10 Items { crescent-shaped (nos. 427-435)
 { circular (no. 436)

No. **427**

Pl. 162a-d

Crescent-shaped amulet

Copper alloy. Cast moulded; engraved.

Fair condition.

4.9 × 4.9 cm

10th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp134.

Published: Scerrato 1972b, 6, 23, figs. 6a-b, pl. I c-d.

On the front two mirroring trilobed palmettes divide a pair of addorsed elephants; the animals wear a saddlecloth and join the tails. On the back there is an almost effaced roundel and a decorative band above it.

No. **428**

Pl. 162a-c

Crescent-shaped amulet

Copper alloy. Cast moulded; engraved.

Fair condition.

5.5 × 5.3 cm.

10th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969, MAIA Inv. no. Sp132.

Published: Scerrato 1972b, 8, 23, figs. 7a-b, pl. I e-f.

A crescent emerges from the upper profile, while a stylised flower from the lower one. A pair of affronted quadrupeds with big ears and long tail appears on the front. The vegetal pattern on the back is almost effaced.

No. **429**

Pl. 163a-c

Crescent-shaped amulet

Copper alloy. Cast moulded; engraved.

Poor condition. Left horn missing; erased decoration.

3.6 × 3.7 cm

10th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp130.

Published: Scerrato 1972b, 8, 23, figs. 8a-b, pl. II a-b.

Two affronted dogs or hares appear on the front.

No. 430

Pl. 163a-d

Crescent-shaped amulet

Copper alloy. Cast moulded; engraved.

Passable condition. One horn missing.

5.2 × 5.1 cm

10th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp133.

Published: Scerrato 1972b, 8, 23, figs. 9a-b, pl. II c-d.

A vegetal decoration, possibly including stylised, small birds, appears on the front. On the back there is an almost effaced roundel.

No. 431

Pl. 164a-b

Crescent-shaped amulet

Copper alloy. Cast moulded; engraved.

Fair condition.

5.7 × 6.4 cm

10th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1975; MAIA Inv. no. Sp179.

On the front a pair of affronted peacocks rich in details is engraved in champlévé. They flank a central, vertical, vegetal element topped by an empty, circular slot. On the back, a peacock is engraved in champlévé into a roundel; above it, a rectangular cartouche is flanked by two tiny birds in roundels. The cartouche probably frames an inscription, which is unreadable due to its preservation status. Rhomboid elements in relief decorate the horns on both the front and back.

No. 432

Pl. 164a-b

Crescent-shaped amulet

Round central bezel.

Copper alloy. Cast moulded.

Fair condition.

4 × 4.2 cm

10th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969, MAIA Inv. no. Sp129.

Published: Scerrato 1972b, 9, 24, fig. 10, pl. II e.

No. 433

Pl. 164a-b

Crescent-shaped amulet

Round central bezel.

Copper alloy. Cast moulded.

Poor condition. Left horn missing; encrustations on the surface.

3.4 × 4 cm

10th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976); purchased in Ghazni bazaar in 1969; MAIA Inv. no. Sp128.

Published: Scerrato 1972b, 9, 24, fig. 11, pl. II f.

No. 434

Pl. 165a-b

Crescent-shaped amulet

Copper alloy. Cast moulded; engraved.

Passable condition. Two horns missing.

11th-12th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 73).

On the front a leftward looking bird, framed in a roundel, holds a palmette in its beak. Two vegetal cartouches flank the roundel. The same scheme repeats on the back, with few variations in the bird and the palmette.

No. 435

Pl. 165a-b

Upturned crescent-shaped amulet

Ring soldered on the back for suspension.

Copper alloy. Cast moulded.

Poor condition. Gap in the upper section.

13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 78).

On the front the profile shape is echoed in negative isolating a central section where a cursive inscription is engraved in negative as well, running from left to right:

أبو بكر

Abū Bakr

No. 436

Pl. 165

Circular amulet

Eye at right angle for suspension.

Copper alloy. Cast moulded.

Poor condition. Lower section missing.

13th century

Rawza Museum (1976, no. 77).

Two concentric mouldings and a cord motif appear in relief.

Comment

The main model attested, the crescent-shaped amulet, is provided with two pierced horns in order to hang it. Some also have apices, looking upward and downward, that adjust their profile. Typically, a pair of heraldically addorsed or affronted animals adorns them. Drop-shaped medallions appear on the horns. Considering their heaviness, despite their small size, they were probably meant as ornamentation on animal harnesses instead of for humans.²⁶⁵ On the basis of similarities with Ghaznavid and Seljuq decorative motifs, these objects are datable to the 12th century.

A high variety of animals are employed on these items: elephants (no. 427, Pl. 162a-b), which are portrayed with their harness, bovines (no. 428, Pl. 162a-b), hares (no. 429, Pl. 163a-c), and birds included in a vegetal motif (no. 430, Pl. 163a-b). Three amulets (nos. 431-433) show a central raised and concave roundel, which should have hosted a stone as a central eye.²⁶⁶ No. 431 (Pl. 164a-b) also bears a pair of peacocks, with a sumptuous tail rising upward. The bodies of the birds are carefully engraved in details, including the hollows of the eyes, the wings and feet. The stone slot is reminiscent of a solar disc surmounting a stylised vegetal element, possibly recalling the tree of life. All these symbols concur to an apotropaic and benedictory meaning.

Amulet no. 434 (Pl. 165a-b) is horizontally cut in the upper profile; a vertical segment replaces the traditional upward apice, while horns are fragmentary. Decoration, instead, appears coeval to previous specimens. A roundel frames a bird, from whose beak hangs down a vegetal scroll. Deep incisions define the bird eye, its collar, the pointed wing and the tail, rising upward in two volutes. The thin scroll falls softly, ending in a bi-lobed palmette on one side and a flower on the other. Two upturned concave triangles, filled by a vegetal pattern, flank the medallion.

Amulet no. 435 (Pl. 165a-b) presents a different shape and is the only epigraphical specimen. The crescent is upturned and deprived of horns; a ring is soldered onto the back. A second crescent, carved onto the surface, echoes the profile; it includes a cursive inscription characterised by some points with no diacritic function. The text, moulded in negative, reads *Abū Bakr*, possibly the name of the owner. The inscription direction indicates that the object

²⁶⁵ Scerrato 1972b, 22. See ch. 2.12.

²⁶⁶ For a comparison, see Bumiller Collection (Inv. nos. 1752, 2477); Daiber 2012, 99, 113.

was also used as a seal. A comparison for this specimen comes from an amulet preserved in a private collection in Washington D.C.²⁶⁷

Only one item (no. 436, Pl. 165) shows a circular model. Its lower section is missing, but the complete profile is easy to understand. It differs much from crescent-shaped amulets in morphology and in the absence of any zoomorphic representation or inscription. Decoration is naïve and geometric, arranged in concentric rounds starting from a central point; the outer circle is composed of wavy segments. Somehow, it could still convey the ancestral idea linked to the sun.

²⁶⁷ See Scerrato 1972b.

Pl. 162



a

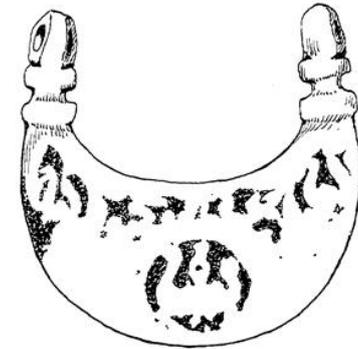


b (Drawing by T. Tamagnini)

No. 427



c



d (Drawing by T. Tamagnini)



a



b (Drawing by T. Tamagnini)



c

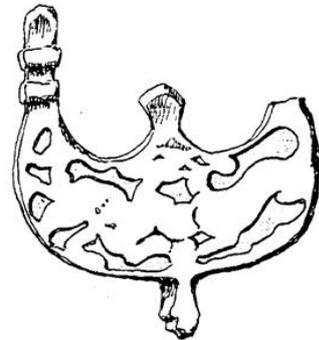
No. 428



a



b (Drawing by T. Tamagnini)



c

No. 429

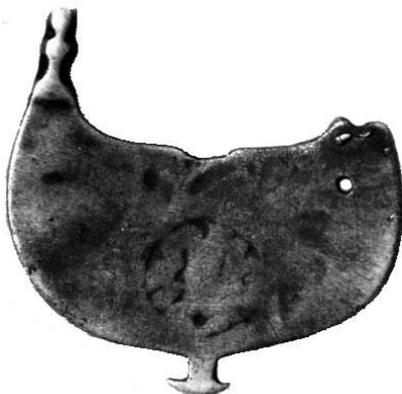


a

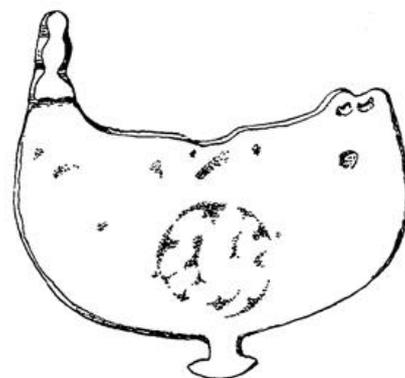


b (Drawing by T. Tamagnini)

No. 430



c



d (Drawing by T. Tamagnini)

Pl. 164



No. 431

a

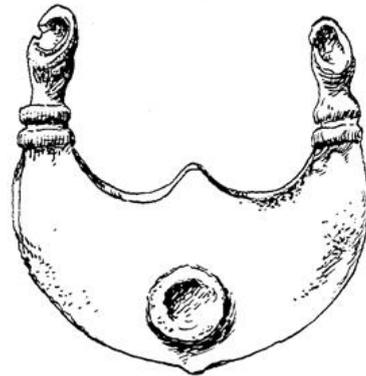


b



No. 432

a

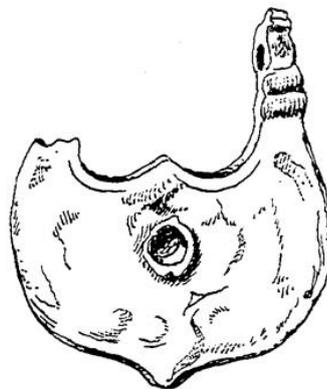


b (Drawing by T. Tamagnini)



No. 433

a



b (Drawing by T. Tamagnini)



a



b

No. 434



a



b

No. 435



No. 436

2.14 Miniature Objects

No. **437**

Pl. 166

Cylindrical vessel

Flat base; pierced hole in the centre.

Copper alloy. Cast (?).

Passable condition.

H. 2 cm, Ø 4 cm

Uncertain dating

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8305; excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C4594.

A series of vertical, spade-shaped elements runs along the rim.

No. **438**

Pl. 166

Rectangular tray

Hexagonal depression.

Lead (analysed, see ch. 1.4). Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Half of the object missing; broken rim, hole on the bottom.

5 × 4 cm, 22 gr

12th century

MuCIV-MAO, Inv. no. 8314; excavated in the Ghazni royal palace; MAIA Inv. no. C5516.

Two dots in relief on the triangles resulting from the depression. A geometric decoration composed by triangular cuts is engraved along the rim.

No. **439**

Pl. 166

Circular dish

Wide brim.

Lead. Cast; engraved.

Poor condition. Fragmentary rim, many cracks.

Ø 8 cm

12th century

Kabul Museum (1958); found in Maimana storage.

Published: Scerrato 1964, 705, no. 31, pl. XXIX, figs. 50-50a.

Two concentric circles are engraved on the bottom. On the brim can be seen a decoration composed by engraved fish scales.

Comment

Some miniature items, supposedly used as cosmetic objects or little jewellery boxes, had already come to light in Nishapur and Rayy.²⁶⁸ The two specimens retrieved from Ghazni excavation look too tiny even for such purposes.

Vessel no. 437 (Pl. 166) presents a crenellated rim, profiled by a sequence of vertical spade elements. It is unclear whether the hole in the bottom was intentionally pierced or resulted after some damage; thus, the function remains uncertain as well and no comparison has proved helpful.

A more straightforward specimen is tiny tray no. 438. Its shape and decoration – although the latter a simplified version – astonish for the faithful reproduction of a regular-sized rectangular tray (see ch. 2.1). Such similarities together with the cheaper material (lead) suggest that the item was meant to be a toy designed for children, or a knick-knack.

The third item (no. 439, Pl. 166) included in this class was recorded in the documentation as a «piattello», a term usually employed in Italian to identify a lampstand dish. But its diameter looks too short to perform such a role. Again, the material is humbler than the usual copper alloy; moreover the peculiar decoration is reminiscent of glazed *sgraffiato* pottery, but it is quite rare on metalwork.²⁶⁹ These features appear less strange, considering that this small dish was retrieved in Maimana along with daily use objects.

²⁶⁸ Allan 1976, I, 320.

²⁶⁹ Scerrato 1964, 705.

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Islamic Metalwork from Afghanistan (9th-13th century)

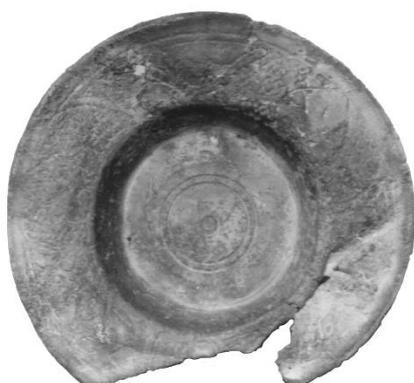
Pl. 166



No. 437



No. 438



No. 439

Chapter 3 – Morphology, Decoration, Epigraphy and Chronology

3.1 Morphology

Morphological Models

This catalogue encompasses every kind of objects. Even those functional groups including less numerous specimens are still varied from a typological point of view. Noteworthy of attention are some unusual artefacts, such as colanders or models scantily attested in other collections, e.g. the rare parallelepiped and hexagonal inkwells, the cup-shaped and bowl-shaped incense burners and the basin stand. On the other hand, the fourteen classes cannot be considered exhaustive of the whole Islamic production. Among the regrettably unattested objects, there are pen-boxes and buckets.²⁷⁰ Models of pear-shaped ewers with zoomorphic head, square trays, and sub-globular cauldrons knew a certain diffusion in the regional production, but are absent from this documentation.

Tableware is one of the most varied classes. With regard to trays, the rectangular model with the characteristic octagonal depression presents a constant morphology expressing its variety in the decoration; the circular trays, instead, differ in the shape of the walls, which are straight in the early, elementary model, then flared, curved, and even polylobed. Tray-dishes show a peculiar shape with short, slightly sloping walls and a flat rim. The number of preserved specimens attests to a considerable diffusion; in fact, the decorative scheme is quite well-established. On the other hand, their intended use as either proper trays or incense burners is still disputed.

Most of bowls reproduce the classic hemispherical model, already in vogue in pre-Islamic times and mainly reserved for wine, tracing a *continuum* with that tradition. But the production in high tin bronze was enriched in the Islamic period by the creation of a new, footed model, usually covered by a lid. Other bowls with flared walls resting on a flat base or a foot provide both common specimens and unique, extraordinary ones characterised by peculiar shapes and decorative styles.

Jugs are attested by an ovoid and a pear-shaped models, but none specimen features a preserved handle. Water, wine and other drinks were served by ewers, possibly differing in shape on the basis of the liquid they contained. Some ewers, yet to be identified conclusively, served for ablutions. The thirty-five documented specimens trace not only a chronological progress among each morphological model (pear-shaped, cylindrical and sub-globular), but a real journey through the evolution of Islamic taste along with the introduction of new techniques. Early pear-shaped ewers were reproductions of pre-Islamic models, characterised by cast decorative elements such as the pearls inserted in the handle and the high thumb-rest. Lamp-shaped spouts appeared on top of a slightly later, popular model. Raised cylindrical ewers include early specimens with a convex bottom (possibly developing a zoomorphic spout) and ewers with a flat bottom, the two models diverging in decoration. Ewers with fluted walls represent the best outcome of higher-level of technical skill, reached only in the 12th-13th century. Flutes of different size and shape enliven the walls; decorative elements in repoussé are conceived to hide the junction points between one metal sheet and the other. Sub-globular ewers diverge in the plain or fluted walls, and in the neck either cylindrical or conical. The latter model, usually topped by a specular lid, is among the oddly region-specific productions, unattested outside Ghazni.

²⁷⁰ As previously said, some buckets were retrieved in Ghazni few years ago (see ch. 1.5).

Cutlery stretches from daily use to the aristocratic or courtly *milieu*, including basic spoons with an ovoid spoon-bowl – coming from excavation – and others of unknown provenance with a hexagonal spoon-bowl, along with refined specimens such as the two spoon-ladles in high tin bronze and the rare silver spoon-fork.

Two unusual items, a cylindrical specimen featuring movable ring-handles and a flat-bottomed pot, enlarge the landscape of cooking equipment beyond the long-time tradition of hemispherical cauldrons.

Beautifully decorated basins must have been a constant presence in order to meet the hygienic needs at a table, like hand washing as well as the generally numerous ablutions required throughout the day by Islamic prayers. Early basins with straight walls are largely made of high tin bronze. Different quality levels are attested among those made of a raised copper alloy, starting from the humble specimens retrieved in Maimana. In the 12th century, a new, gentler model with flared wall and rim emerged. It was probably the necessary step to elaborate what can be regarded as the top product: the basin with curved walls and a polylobed rim accented by twelve to eighteen sides.

Lighting was provided by oil-lamps safely resting on small dishes on top of lampstands. The exceptional variety in shapes of oil-lamps demonstrates an evolutionary process in search of functionally better, but also nicer solutions, proceeding from small, elementary, open reservoirs to closed ones, which also developed independent channels and spouts and comfortable, tapering handles. Already spread in the 10th-11th century, the pipe-shaped oil-lamp was peculiarly different from previous and contemporary models: lateral flanges were reduced to just a knob, reminiscent of an ancient suspension system and turning it into a decorative feature. The stable and manageable footed oil-lamp represents the landing place of this morphological research.

The number of preserved lampstands and their components attests to a large diffusion, while only one specimen of candlestick is preserved, whose poor condition could be imputed to the more fragile nature of raised objects. Although preservation throughout the centuries can occur randomly, such a disparity in the number of items should be considered a datum *per se*.

Taking into account the technological and morphological development of lampstands, it could be inferred that the pre-eminence of cast lighting devices in the earlier period continued even later in the Eastern Iranian lands, establishing a preference over the expense of candlesticks. It is unclear whether the one-piece shaft and the composite shaft – made of superimposed globular and pear-shaped elements – coexisted or if the second device should be considered as a further step. From a technological point of view, the composed lampstand is a more complex structure: strong joints and welding between one piece and the other were needed to obtain a firm shaft, but they were smartly hidden inside trumpet-shaped feet and necks and under the sloping rim of lampstand dishes. Some good specimens from Ghazni and Maimana, ascribed to the early period (10th-11th century), feature the one-piece shaft on a domed tripod base; this can be a clue of an ancient trend that changed in favour of the domed pedestal and polylobed tripod base, which are usually associated with composite shafts.

Eight specimens of incense burner show four different models, from the simple bowl-shaped to solid geometric-shaped (cubic or dome-shaped) composed by two pieces. Functionality required a closed box topped by a pierced, removable cover. The attested variety indicates that incense burners were far from being only considered from a functional point of view; indeed, an extreme care was paid to design with an unleashed imagination. Unfortunately, none of the famous zoomorphic specimens is presented here.

Boxes are attested mainly by fragmentary lids belonging to the cylindrical model, showing a separately cast, flower-shaped hold soldered to the lid. They were probably designed as gifts.

The class of objects devoted to personal care provides insight into the more private rooms. Different kinds of belt fittings emerged from excavation, while standardised rectangular ones have unknown provenance. An abundance of small vessels was conceived of to contain liquid or dense substances: perfume bottles and unguent containers, cosmetic mortars where the make-up was prepared and kohl flasks to preserve it, and a mirror to look oneself in. Zoomorphic shapes or peculiar feet are typical features. Among the perfume vessels, twelve bottles are attested against only one fragmentary sprinkler. Again, the number of preserved specimens – and, even more importantly, the morphological variety they show – probably highlights a neat preference toward the former. Almond-shaped bosses cast on relief – common to mortars as well – are entirely decorative features on perfume bottles.

Inkwells can be regarded among the flagship classes of this catalogue for the extraordinary excavated specimens and the general variety attested. Two different inkwells from excavation, one cylindrical and one hexagonal, present a rare internal suspension system. Other documented inkwells are interesting, as well; three cylindrical boxes and as many unrelated lids show clearly how easily the two elements could get separated. A pair of parallelepiped inkwells attest to a further morphological model.

Apparently even simple objects such as mortars present morphological differences in the base and rim, and in the treatment of the outer walls; additional features appeared over time. Almond-shaped bosses or fillets cast on relief perform, for these objects, a functional role providing friction, thus a firmer handling. The finding of tools such as tongs and tweezers during the excavations enriches the scope of functional items.

The cultural influence of the steppes is not limited to the above-mentioned cauldrons: stirrups must have followed suit into the Islamic lands, thanks to the Central Asian mercenaries considered at that time as invincible horsemen.

The series of amulets purchased in Ghazni presents an evocative crescent-shape, with the addition in some cases of a central slot designed to host a stone, clearly recalling the solar symbol.

3.2 Decoration

A number of decorative features makes the presented Islamic metalwork easily identified as medieval Eastern Iranian. Decoration resulted from a well-planned set of symbols, inscriptions, patterns and figures carefully combined to convey beauty in addition to speaking a familiar language to the observer.

Zoomorphic Figure

Animals play either a functional or a decorative role on metalwork. With regard to the functional role, many interesting cast examples can be mentioned. Bird-shaped unguent container no. 388 (Pl. 137) is an animal itself, cast in round as a small sculpture: paws are naturalistic, but also necessary to provide stability for the item; the head is cut on its top to consent the opening. Reclined bird no. 387 and fragmentary fish no. 386 provide stylised examples.

Handles no. 99 (Pl. 41) and no. 334 (Pl. 122a-b), respectively belonging to a ewer and an incense burner, provide two different versions of feline-shape. The first is a simple, sinuous handle with few zoomorphic features added. The head, attached as a protome, is well-made thanks to the engraved details and ears in relief, but the short, curling tail acts as a thumb-rest and could be confused even with an element of vegetal origin. Paws are flattened to fit the ewer

surface; legs are decorated with a stylised pattern, thus depriving it of any realism. The second item, instead, shows a rampant lion: the animal position is realistic and the muzzle, engraved details of the mane, hair and even the ribs provide a naturalistic effect. The earlier date of the latter is unsurprising. The lid of oil-lamp no. 322 (Pl. 117a-b) and the thumb-rest of oil-lamp no. 327 (Pl. 119) are shaped as stylised feline heads, similar to those protruding from the cup-shaped incense burner no. 336 (Pl. 124a-b), providing holds.

Birds offer more varied samples. Three swan-heads emerge from the neck of ewer no. 126 (Pl. 56a-b) for decorative purposes, but a ring-handle with a smaller, hanging bird is soldered to the fourth swan-neck, providing a thumb-rest. The cockerel thumb-rest of oil-lamp ring-handle no. 320 (Pl. 117) is static and slightly flattened, because it is meant to be viewed in profile. On the contrary, the finial topping bowl lid no. 78 (Pl. 33) emanates a lively centrifuge movement through its six rotating birds.

Many are the structural elements of zoomorphic inspiration, such as the junction between handle and body on early, pear-shaped ewers, reminiscent of a flattened bird or gazelle head (nos. 90-91); the spout resembling a bird beak on cylindrical ewers (nos. 116, 118) and globular ones (nos. 121-122). Horseshoe feet support incense burner no. 333 and they are common in lampstand bases as well, joined to the body through stylised, bird-shaped, flat elements on domed tripod bases (nos. 203-205, 207-212) and round knees on polylobed tripod bases (nos. 213-215, 217-222, 224).

On the decorative ground, cast, repoussé or engraved animals are employed on the majority of metalwork. Cast ones usually are added to the objects' surface. Horse helmets applied on stirrups nos. 424-425 at the junction between the arch and the footplate as well as the pair of eagles flanking the thong holder on stirrup no. 425 are perfect examples of an iconography translating the object's function and conceptual value. Lions and bulls, with heads cast in round and bodies in low relief, are applied on the domed pedestal no. 201.

Sitting lions are beaten in relief on the ewers' neck and spout with a frontal muzzle looking at the spectator as if they were posing, performing an apotropaic function (see nos. 108, 116, 115, 117, 118). Big eyes make their muzzles dazed and bodily details, conveyed through punched circles, are meant to restrict their similarity to nature. In fact, more than one scholar has drawn attention to the astrological meaning of this representation: the lion, especially when enriched by a rosette (no. 116), represents the Sun in Leo (its zodiacal domicile), thus embodying the triumph of light.²⁷¹

Felines, dogs and hares run into bands and cartouches in hunting scenes or dispose radially in a roundel (see tray-dish no. 40), while birds of any species are framed statically into roundels. Both quadrupeds and birds often have backward-facing heads.

A very characteristic bird shows a schematic depiction, repeated identically every time, as it was executed through a stencil. The bird is portrayed in profile, looking leftward; the body is round, wing and tail are made of three strips looking upward and downward, originating from a dot. Such figure appears on vase no. 347 and lampstand base no. 285.²⁷²

Other animals, such as elephants and peacocks, appear only in heraldic position, as it occurs on amulets nos. 427, 431.

The presence of fantastic animals is equally common: winged lions on bowl no. 75 and basin no. 184 (Fig. 48), a griffin on tray-dish no. 39 (Pl. 14), a winged gazelle on spoon-fork no. 140 (Pl. 59d), and an animal composed by a rabbit head and bird body on tray no. 2 (Pl. 1). Human-faced species, such as winged or non-winged sphynxes and harpies, recur frequently, framed in

²⁷¹ Allan 2005, 35.

²⁷² An incense burner on exhibition in the Kabul National Museum (without inventory number) bears the same type of bird.

medallions on many objects, especially trays, tray-dishes and basins. Items nos. 8, 44, 178 offer three very different representations of these fantastic species. In the first, the harpy is quite stylised, both the human face and bird body are just sketched (Fig. 49). The second artefact shows a sphynx with a stylised human face; other details, instead, are carefully engraved: the long, feathered wing, the ribs, the muscles and paws of the lion-body, and the crown around its head (Fig. 50). This attention is echoed in the rich, vegetal background behind the figure. In the third case, the movement of the sphynx has much impact on the observer, probably thanks to the repoussé technique; details of the body are even more precise and the human head seems to wear a wig or bonnet (Fig. 51). These three metalworks are probably not distant from each other; chronologically speaking, all can be ascribed to the 12th-13th century. If dating hypotheses are correct, this means that different representations coexisted.

Some sphynxes are seen to have a dragon tail (see Pl. 21); these cases explicitly imply the astrological symbolism of such fantastic animals (see below).



Fig. 48 – Winged-lion on basin no. 184
(Neg. no. 1024/8).

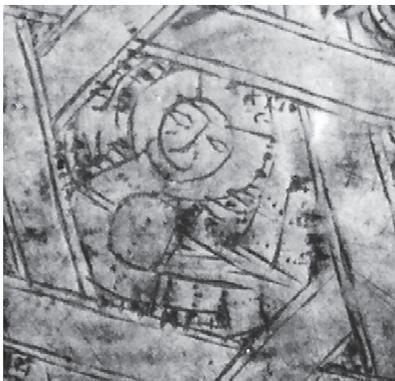


Fig. 49 – Harpy on basin no. 178
(Neg. no. 190/9).



Fig. 50 – Sphinx on tray-dish no. 44
(Neg. no. 615/4).



Fig. 51 – Sphinx on tray no. 8
(Neg. no. 586/1).

Anthropomorphic Figure

Human figures appear far less often than zoomorphic ones; they are portrayed mainly in the seated position and in frontal view, usually framed in roundels.

“Realistic” scenes are rare; most of representations involving a human figure should be interpreted on the symbolic ground, usually referring to some astrological meaning.

Inkwell no. 391 shows three scribes portrayed in profile, performing their tasks. This is also among the few examples of a metalwork – specifically an inkwell – portrayed on an actual metalwork. On lampstand base no. 201, horsemen are portrayed in war or hunting scenes. These representations stand out for the naturalistic taste, provided by the richness of details in the clothes, the horse figure and harness, and in the movement conveyed by the position of the arms and head (see Figs. 52-53).



Fig. 52 – Scene 2 on lampstand base no. 201
(Neg. no. 156/8).



Fig. 53 – Scene 3 on lampstand base no. 214
(Neg. no. 156/6).

A cross-legged human figure between two dragon-headed staves recurs on more than one artefact (nos. 77, 191, 271; Fig. 54). Such representations have called the attention of many scholars, who generally agree on interpreting it with an astrological meaning. According to Gettings, the seated human figure would embody the Sun, the two dragon-headed staves the Moon path, and the dragonheads its nodes.²⁷³ Dragons, in fact, are connected with eclipses, understood in medieval astrology as caused by a monster antagonist of light and life devouring the sun or moon, so they represent a symbol of darkness.²⁷⁴ The position of the human figure's arms varies from one artefact to another. Lampstand dish no. 271 offers the clearest view of the picture: the human figure grasps the staves with both hands, which are topped by animal-heads unusually looking outward. They resemble felines more so than dragons. Also, the man is crowned and a fabric or rag falls on both sides of the platform he is seated on, as he actually was on a throne (Fig. 54). His grasping the dragonheads represents, again according to Gettings, the contact point between the Sun and the Moon, marking the nodes. On basin fragment no. 191 (Pl. 80), the cross-legged man is framed in a polylobed medallion: the shape of the latter precludes the insertion of the two staves, but probably the imagery is the same. In fact, the figure's left hand is on his knee, the other is upright; such position recurs on other metalwork where the human figure appears between the two dragon-headed staves.²⁷⁵

Other representations may be related to the same iconographic landscape. Fragmentary bowl lid no. 77 shows a cross-legged figure with both hands on his knees, flanked by two standing human figures. His hair is dressed in a style that might be called Buddhist (see Pl.33a-b). A

²⁷³ Gettings 1989, 15.

²⁷⁴ See Hartner 1938, 120-122, 131.

²⁷⁵ See Wenzel 2005, figs. 1a-b.

cross-legged human figure holding a scarf (or a bow?) over his head repeats in the panels of bowl no. 75 (Pl. 32). Marian Wenzel hypothesised that the ‘H’-shaped structure composed by the seated figure between the two staves could originate from a representation of the fire-making machine, which required the collaboration of at least two persons and the use of a bow. It was an essential tool in ancient societies, often resorted to also to dispel dramatic events.²⁷⁶



Fig. 54 – Human figure between dragon-headed staves on lampstand dish no. 271 (MAIA, photo by R. Giunta, 2014).

Anthropomorphic details or stylised human figures occur as decorative elements, as well: stylised human faces reduced to hexagonal masks are repoussé in buckler no. 423 (Pl. 158b), framed in roundels. Knobs on oil-lamps’ sides sometimes are employed as heads of engraved human bodies, usually sketched as cross-legged figures (nos. 316, 311, 330); on oil-lamp no. 312 (Pl. 115a), instead, a sort of mask inspired by a human face is engraved below the knob. Quite different is the case of the anthropomorphic boots of Central Asian costume well visible on the oil-lamp belonging to lampstand no. 278 (Fig. 55) and, in a less precise version, in kohl flasks nos. 379, 382 (both Pl. 136).²⁷⁷ Finally, belt buckle no. 352 features two tiny human hands as joints (see Pl. 130).



Fig. 55 – Oil-lamp underside with booted feet from lampstand no. 278 (Neg. no. 188/5).

²⁷⁶ See Wenzel 2005, 149-155.

²⁷⁷ See for comparison a clay vessel shaped as a boot, possibly dated to the 9th century (Abdullaev, Rtveladze, Shishkina 1991, I, 123).

Vegetal Motifs

Ground-covering vegetal motifs composed by spiralling scrolls, possibly budded and foliated, ending in trilobed and five-lobed flowers, are commonly used as backgrounds on Iranian metalwork. Besides the variety of vegetal backgrounds detected, it is interesting to observe how some of them look like stylised, cursory versions: this might be a symptom of lesser quality items or possibly a symptom of later dating; that is to say, items produced in a period when the original model was decaying.

Less common is the use of a single scroll, which has been noticed in different variants on about ten items in this catalogue. Objects belong to any class; what might be interesting is their chronology. Variants consist of a kind of stylised scroll, which could be regarded as a simplified solution, and full-developed kinds that clearly respond to a specific stylistic choice. The first group includes the scroll characterised by highly stylised round “flowers” running on the feet of jug no. 85, around the body on pear-shaped ewer no. 96 (Figs. 56, 57) and around the reservoir opening of oil-lamp no. 296 (Pl. 110b).



Fig. 56 – Stylised, single scroll on jug no. 85.



Fig. 57 – Stylised, single scroll on ewer no. 96.

On the contrary, the scroll running along the flutes of ewer no. 111 is all but simple: dense and populated by trilobed flowers, characterised by round petals that alternate upward and downward, it conveys elegance and delicacy (Fig. 58). The same seems to recur on lampstand dish no. 271 (Pl. 101), box lid no. 339 (Pl. 125b), and perfume bottle no. 360 (Pl. 132). Completely different, but equally well-finished, is the one running below the rim of bowl no. 75: the scroll stretches longer, and features open, bilobed palmettes (Fig. 59). Somehow similar, but more convulsed, is the single scroll framed in the circular band on the bottom of tray-dish no. 37 (Pl. 12a). To this kind belongs the scroll around the opening reservoir of oil-lamp no. 298 (Pl. 111b); the scroll itself becomes almost geometric in its ruffle then opens in palmettes. All the mentioned scrolls share a sustained pace in the wavy movement. The single scroll running on incense burners nos. 335, 337 (Pls. 123, 124a-b, respectively) is particularly thin. Similar to those running on tray-dish no. 44 (Pl. 16a), buckler no. 422 (Pl. 157b) and on many other tray-dishes but with a lesser quality.



Fig. 58 – Single scroll on ewer no. 111.



Fig. 59 – Single scroll on bowl no. 75.

Trilobed flowers are mostly recurrent; this means that a variety of outcomes, petal shapes, sizes, etc. can be identified. For instance, in repoussé trays, trilobed flowers feature peculiar petals in the form of round, perforated pearls. Usually, two round petals and a central elongated one, ending in a curl, compose the flower. It appears soft, refined, up and downward in the best specimens, while it becomes stylised and rapidly executed in others. A specific kind of engraved trilobed flowers with big and round petals occurs on dish no. 50 (Pl. 20): this detail recalls the flowers hemming the arch on the marble tomb of the Ghaznavid Maḥmūd.²⁷⁸

A five-lobed palmette recurs diversely employed, and with slight variations, as a thumb-rest on the oil-lamp from lampstand no. 278 (Fig. 60); as a pattern pierced on each component of lampstand no. 280 (Pl. 106);²⁷⁹ engraved on bowl no. 63 (Pl. 28) and basin no. 169 (Pl. 71a-b); and as an isolated decorative element engraved on mortar no. 402 (Pl. 147). Interestingly, all these items present features that ascribed them to the early period (10th-11th century).



Fig. 60 – Oil-lamp with five-lobed palmette thumb-rest from lampstand no. 278 (Neg. no. 188/3).

Vegetal elements cast in round are usually employed on top of different objects: as holds on box lids (nos. 340-341) or moulded in a three-pointed stylised flower on hemispherical cauldrons' handles (nos. 148-152). A sort of open flower tops the domed upper section of incense burner no. 333, so that it resembles a pomegranate when looked upon in its entirety.

Astrological and Other Peculiar Motifs

Metalworks presented in this catalogue share a number of decorative features that can be regarded as typical of the Eastern Iranian production.

Reckoned as protective and well-wishing for the object's owner, astrological themes are largely spread on Iranian metalwork. The hemispherical basin no. 156 (11th century) has been identified among the earliest cases attested because signs appear in the anti-clockwise order, which was abandoned in later representations.

Other items (bowl no. 51, basin no. 184, and inkwell lid no. 396) ascribed to the second half of the 12th or the beginning of 13th century show zodiac signs without their ruling planets. A pair of addorsed harpies – separated by a headed stave on no. 396 (Pl. 144a) – represents Gemini on the basin and inkwell, while a single harpy does so on the bowl. Virgo appears as a human figure seated in a three-quarter profile beside a plant on the inkwell, while on the other two objects it is represented by a cross-legged crowned figure. A bird holding a scale represents the Libra on the three items. A bearded man – Saturn – seated in profile, portrayed in the act of drawing water from a well, represents the Aquarius through its ruling planet on the bowl and basin (Fig. 61); on the inkwell, a duck replaces the man.

Sagittarius shows some variations: on the bowl, there is a centaur, whose horsetail generates a full-bodied dragon almost dominating over the human chest.²⁸⁰ On the basin, the dragonhead coming out from the horsetail is quite reduced, leaving much space to the centaur depicted in

²⁷⁸ See Giunta 2003, pl. VI/3.

²⁷⁹ The lampstand decoration recurs also on a series of incense burners housed in the Herat National Museum (see Müller-Wiener 2016, Cat. nos. M39-41) and the Linden-Museum of Stuttgart (unknown inventory number).

²⁸⁰ About the Sagittarius and its iconographical evolution, see Fontana 2003, 2018b.

the act of retrieving an arrow to shoot it. On the inkwell, the archer body is reduced to its upper part evolving below in three spirals, the latter of whom generates a dragonhead with open jaws. The presence of dragonheads in the representations of Gemini and Sagittarius is linked to the above-discussed iconography of the lunar nodes: the “head”, al-Jawzahr, and “tail”, al-Nawbahr, of the monster in fact represent the exaltations of these signs. Also, the sphynx with a dragon-headed tail, surrounded by a zodiac on bowl no. 51 (Pl. 21), would represent the Sun, as the sphynx is intended as a solar element linked to the Moon which is embodied by the tail.²⁸¹

Eventually, human busts framed in roundels are engraved on mortar no. 404 (Pl. 148a), alternating with almond-shaped bosses. The meaning could, again, possibly be astrological, since the representation seems to be a simplified version of that portraying Jupiter in Pisces (its domicile) on a Mamluk embroidery.²⁸²

Among the other peculiar motifs there is the punched background, which has been detected on either repoussé or engraved items, usually involving the whole surface. The execution of such a background certainly required a considerable effort and much time. A ground-covering background composed by tiny, punched circles is common on repoussé rectangular trays, but also on bowl no. 75 and buckler no. 423, while in circular and polygonal

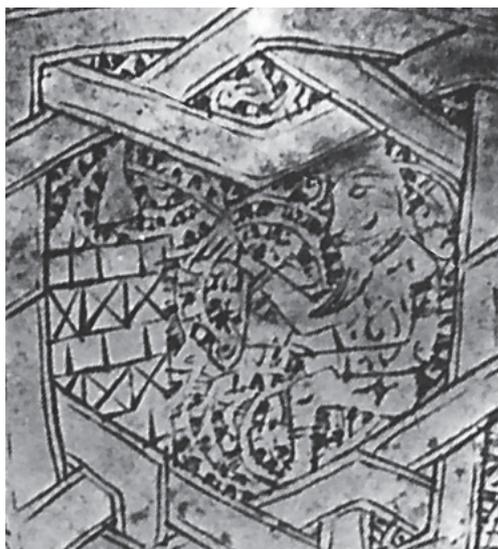


Fig. 61 – Aquarius on basin no. 184
(Neg. no. 1024/8).

trays (nos. 16-18, 26, 48) it is limited to the space of medallions or bands. On jug no. 87, punched circles are bigger and similar to fish scales but limited to specific sections. Punched circles of the kind employed on repoussé objects appear as a background on epigraphical bands of later specimens as well: see globular ewer no. 123, lampstand no. 212, and box lid no. 339.

The dotted background in refined metalwork can be ascribed to the Ghaznavid period thanks to specific features also seen in the marble architectural decoration and epigraphy from Ghazni (see dish no. 50, bowls nos. 52, 63). On ewer no. 104, the dots are again employed as a background appearing in a few spaces resulting from the vegetal decoration on the shoulder.²⁸³

Completely different is the employ of dots as a decorative pattern. They compose circular bands or simple, vegetal stylised patterns or rosettes on early Islamic ewers (see nos. 90-91), and on the foot and shoulder of perfume bottle no. 362, along with the engraved decoration. Typical are the dotted parallel lines punched on the body of cylindrical ewers from Maimana (nos. 100-101) – the same emerged also from Nishapur – and the wall of Maimana basin no. 172, where concentric circular lines on the inside echoes those on the outside. Again, these items belong to the early Islamic period.

The seven-disc rosette recurs from ancient time not merely as a stylised flower representation; its composition recalls six planets revolving around a central Sun thus it should

²⁸¹ See Gettings 1989, 16.

²⁸² Cf. Allan 2005, pl. 3.

²⁸³ A dotted background was typical of decorative vegetal bands or animated scenes on Sasanian metalwork: see for instance a mug in Marshak 1971, pl. T40.

be regarded as a symbolic element.²⁸⁴ As mentioned above, this is quite true when a rosette appears above a lion, meaning the Sun in Leo as seen on the spout of ewer no. 116.

Either punched or chiselled rosettes are particularly diffused in the decoration of high tin bronzes, as isolated elements (no. 141, Pl. 60a-b) or in composed patterns (bowls nos. 61, 67, Pls. 26b, 30, respectively).²⁸⁵ Seven-disc rosettes often are fully inlaid with silver, or on alternating discs with copper and silver (no. 343, Pl. 126a-b), so as to provide points of light on the artefact. Such an employ can be observed on box lid no. 340 (Pl. 125), where rosettes are the only decorative element apart from the flower-shaped hold, and on fragmentary lid no. 78 (Pl. 33), below the hold.

Frequently, rosettes are employed as separators of cartouches (see tray-dish no. 46, candlestick no. 286, box lid no. 343, perfume bottle no. 364).

Rosettes are also drilled on the shoulder of ewer no. 100 and on the polylobed profile of stirrup no. 425 (Pl. 160b); a repoussé version can be seen on the corners of rectangular trays nos. 6, 15 (Pl. 3) and on the bottom of ewer no. 102, where discs are convex (Fig. 35). Probably derived from the classic rosette, is the one composed by pointed pentagonal petals employed to interrupt cartouches on polygonal trays nos. 16-19.

A kind of stylised daisy, possibly a solar element, which differs from a rosette due to the numerous petals, recurs on the underside of cubic incense burner no. 331, in small roundels on pear-shaped ewer no. 96 and on pipe-shaped oil-lamp no. 302. All specimens are ascribed to the early period (10th-11th century).

The 8-petalled flower, already spread on Sasanian silverware,²⁸⁶ makes few appearances on early Islamic metalwork, such as on the bottom of pear-shaped ewer no. 91 (Fig. 62). The flower shows tiny buds at the intersection of each petal. The same detail recurs later in the 12th-13th century, when the 8-petalled (or 12-petalled) flower became an essential feature on the inner bottom of polylobed basins (see nos. 173-178, 182-184, 186-190, Fig. 63), occasionally appearing also on a basin with circular rim (no. 159). Bowl no. 52, whose big central flower includes a tiny, punched rosette at its core, probably attests the passage between the two (Fig. 64).²⁸⁷

The floriated vase is employed as a decorative element on cylindrical (nos. 108, 110) and globular (no. 124; Fig. 65) ewers. On the latter, its scrolls end in daisy-like flowers along with the usual trilobed ones. A sketched vase element is used also as a separator in the epigraphical band of tray-dish no. 48, marking the beginning of a benedictory text. Portrayed vases reproduce exactly the actual ones that were in use at the time, composed by a domed base, pear-shaped body, and high flaring neck (see nos. 345-347). Scerrato reckoned this motif as a sort of Eastern Iranian trademark, attested also in miniatures.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁴ See Allan 2005, no. 36.

²⁸⁵ Punched rosettes can be considered an archaic feature since they already appeared on earlier metalwork: cf. Marshak 1986, pl. 32.

²⁸⁶ See Marshak 1986, pls. 59, 65.

²⁸⁷ The 8-petalled flower recurs also in marble elements from Ghazni (see the basins Inv. nos. IG291, X167 at <http://ghazni.bradypus.net/search?string=X0167> and <http://ghazni.bradypus.net/search?string=ig0291>. See also a stucco tile from Lashkari Bazar in Schlumberger *et al.* 1978, III, pl. 136/2.4.

²⁸⁸ Scerrato 1966, 37.



Fig. 62 – 8-petalled flower on the underside of ewer no. 91 (Neg. no. 594/2).

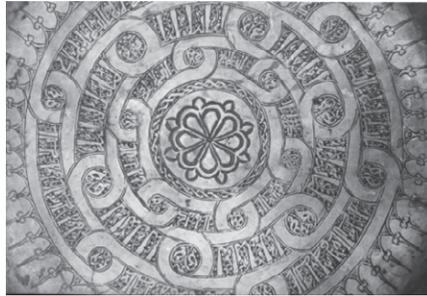


Fig. 63 – 8-petalled flower on the bottom of basin no. 177 (Neg. no. 7940/20).



Fig. 64 – 12-petalled flower on the bottom of bowl no. 52 (Neg. no. 1680/5).



Fig. 65 – Floriated vase on ewer no. 124 (Neg. no. 593/2).

Typical of Samanid metalwork (and pottery), the Solomon knot recurs on many different objects. However, it seems related to specific models, such as pear-shaped ewers with lamp-shaped spout (no. 93, Pl. 39; nos. 98-98bis, Pl. 41); cylindrical ewer spout no. 106 (Pl. 45a); lampstand dish no. 273 (Pl. 102a); lampstand no. 279 (Pl. 105c), on the globular shaft's elements and the dish; pipe-shaped oil-lamp no. 300 (Pl. 111a-b), in a series of eight roundels; and bowl-shaped incense burner no. 337 (Pl. 124b).

The knot usually shows at its centre a tiny dot or a hole (Fig. 66), and in some cases, hooked terminals (see oil-lamp no. 299), which can develop into vegetal palmettes (see lampstand dish no. 273 and oil-lamp no. 300; Figs. 67, 68).

The crescent, often inlaid with copper to stand out on the base metal, is usually set in a roundel to interrupt epigraphical bands or running animals (see trays nos. 3, 4, 20, 24, tray-dish no. 45, jug no. 89, ewers nos. 113, 126, basins nos. 160, 174, 182-183, base of lampstand no. 213, box lid no. 339, mortar no. 413, and buckler no. 421).



Fig. 66 – Solomon knot on globular element of lampstand no. 279.



Fig. 67 – Vegetal Solomon knot on lampstand dish no. 273 (Neg. no. 149/3).

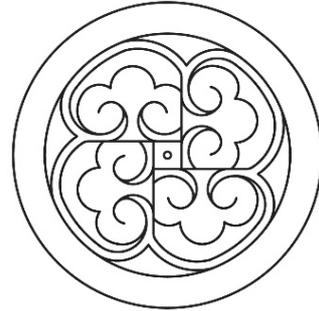


Fig. 68 – Vegetal Solomon knot on pipe-shaped oil-lamp no. 300.

This is among the decorative elements charged with symbolic meaning, as a reference to the astrological theme that enhances the value of benedictory terms expressed by inscriptions. It is noteworthy that most of the amulets are also crescent-shaped, probably by virtue of their protective resonance. The employ of crescent-shaped amulets is attested in Central Asia as well as in Italian Renaissance works of art that portray oriental subjects. With regard to the first case, a crescent-shaped symbol appears above the forehead of a horse in a painted votive table from Khotan.²⁸⁹ For the second case, the horse on the right of the *Adorazione dei Magi* by Gentile da Fabriano, 1423, wears an upturned crescent-shaped amulet on its forehead (Fig. 69).²⁹⁰



Fig. 69 – Gentile da Fabriano, 1423, *Adorazione dei Magi*, detail, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Inv. no. 8364, Florence; after <https://www.uffizi.it/opere/adorazione-dei-magi>.

²⁸⁹ The wooden table from Dandan Öilüq (Khotan), around 7th-8th century, is housed in London, British Museum (Inv. no. 1907, 1111.70); cf. Bussagli 1978, 59, 63.

²⁹⁰ Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi (Inv. no. 8364); cf. *Uffizi* 1980, 284, Cat. no. P683 and bibliography.



Fig. 70 – Andrea Mantegna, 1474, *Arrival of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga*, detail, Camera degli Sposi, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua; after Manca 2006, fig. 48.

Big crescents hang from the harness on the horse chest in the scene *Arrival of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga*, one of the frescos in the Camera degli Sposi at Palazzo Ducale, in Mantua, completed in 1474 by Andrea Mantegna (Fig. 70).²⁹¹

Early examples of the interlaced, six-point star motif were found on 10th-11th century slipware from Samarqand and on the 11th century materials coming from Lashkari Bazar.²⁹² This geometrical, but highly symbolic motif, is employed either as a decorative element (on the underside of bowls nos. 57, 62; on globular ewer no. 124; on the bottom of tray-dish no. 266, basin no. 169 and mortar no. 410; on cauldron no. 150) or as a background design, made by continuous ribbons that create the scheme to insert other elements in (see basins nos. 178, 184, tray no. 23, dish no. 50). In the latter case, it probably recalls the sky, where each “star” takes its place.

A peculiar symbol has been detected on spoon-ladle no. 142 (Pl. 60a-b) and buckler no. 421 (Pl. 157), framed in roundels as a separator in the inscriptions. It is reminiscent of a six-pointed star, but is actually composed by a triangle and a tripartite knot.

3.3 Epigraphy

3.3.1 Writing Styles

The numerous different styles of writing in use in the medieval period in the Eastern Iranian lands would deserve a devoted study and claim for extensive comparison across materials. Few notes are offered here about the scripts detected.

Inscriptions on metalwork usually dispose on a single line, only final letters might sometimes overlap for shortness of space; they are always framed into bands or cartouches. Only artisans' signatures avoid this rule in a few cases (see below). The regularity and plain arrangement of texts often consent to predict and decipher even missing words on a damaged surface.

Kufic and Cursive Scripts

Kufic and cursive scripts often are adopted on the same object, in different positions, to write the same kind of text.

²⁹¹ For an overview of the entire west wall, cf. Manca 2006, fig. 37.

²⁹² Gardin 1963, pl. 21; Allan 1976, I, 183.

The Kufic script on lampstands nos. 279, 285 and pipe-shaped oil-lamp no. 302 had already been recognised as dating back to the Samanid period by Melikian-Chirvani, comparing it to the script adopted on coins from that period (Fig. 71).²⁹³ Its peculiarity lies in the extremely thin line, pointed *mīms*, geometrically knotted *hastae*, letters' upending evolving into volutes, and general minuteness of letters surmounted by horizontal disposing palmettes.



Fig. 71 – Cast of the inscriptions on the shaft of lampstand no. 279 (MAIA, photo by V. Laviola, 2019).

Some high tin bronzes (bowls nos. 52, 63, basin no. 156; Fig. 72) have revealed an interesting Kufic script characterised by sharp apices, pointed round bodies, uprising letters' ending. The epigraphical ground is enriched by chevrons above some letters without any functional reason, occasionally developing leaves and palmettes, and stylised trilobed flowers. The similarity to some early Ghaznavid inscriptions on marble is striking.²⁹⁴ The employ of punched dotted circles to compose an inscription (or pseudo-inscription?) on dish no. 50 comes as a revelation, strongly frustrated by the poor condition that precludes its deciphering. Even if unframed, its own composition forces to tidiness and geometric precision of letters (Fig. 26).



Fig. 72 – Drawing from an inscription on basin no. 156.

Generally, Kufic inscriptions are extremely regular and tidy; enriched in refined items by peculiar features such as '*ayns* in form of a trilobed flower (see basin fragment no. 191, Pl. 80). The lively volute and curling palmettes in tray-dish no. 36 suggests ascribing it within the 12th century if compared to tight Kufic with short apices shown by the majority of tray-dishes. In the

²⁹³ See Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 34-35.

²⁹⁴ See Giunta 2003, 24-26.

Kufic inscription on buckler no. 421 can be observed the common habit of adding a *hasta* to the *wāw* upending so as to obtain, together with articles, regular pairs and display back-to-back apices splitting into two parts, thus becoming vegetal elements (Fig. 73).

Spoon-fork no. 140 and lampstand no. 212 share the same kind of short inscriptions, running unframed, executed in a thin Kufic with tiny sharp ornamental apices (see Pls. 140c, 212b). Both artefacts are of good quality and betray an old stylistic taste, even if they should be ascribed to the late 12th or better 13th century.

On fragmentary candlestick no. 286 and perfume bottle no. 364 a refined Kufic script with triangular *mīms*, uprising *wāws*, and *kāf* ending leftward obliquely bent, can be appreciated thanks to the beautiful silver inlay. Different, but excellently preserved is the script on inkwell lid no. 396: letters are carefully proportioned so that short bodies oppose to tall *hastae* topped by gently rounded apices (see no. 396, Pl. 144c).



Fig. 73 – Kufic cartouche on buckler no. 421 (MAIA, photo by R. Giunta, 2014).

The majority of cursive inscriptions show tall *hastae* slightly enlarging towards the top and fluid stretched letters on the writing line. The insertion of *alif hasta* on *wāw*'s terminal resting on the writing line is common (see for instance bowl no. 76, jug no. 89).

Bold cursive script executed in repoussé on rectangular trays' rim is quite simple and repetitive: additional *hastae* and pearls above letters increase the standardised effect of these inscriptions. The addition of occasional pierced pearls recurs on other items with repoussé inscriptions (see jugs nos. 86, 88).

Cursive script on high tin bronze dish no. 50 is unique: letters' teeth are wavy instead of straight as usual; thin apices appear everted on top of *hastae*, on either the left or right side, instead of beside them; the *tā'* *marbūṭa* overlaps itself. The *wāw* shows a peculiarly small body compared to the large terminal; the *kāf* features an awkward, cut-out, dovetailed upper section and repeats as a chevron above the term *al-sa'āda*. Ligatures convey a trembling effect to the text.

A few words should be devoted to cursive inscriptions running circularly on cylindrical ewers' shoulders: they are designed to occupy as much space as possible; numerous *hastae* enlarging toward the top set a sunburst rhythm as though emanating from the star in relief at the base of the neck. The inscription on ewer no. 116 is more lively than usual, thanks to a few letters disposing on an upper line and sometimes grabbing the previous one as the *ḥā'* in the term *li-ṣāḥibi-hi*, or *hastae* overlapping the following as the first *alif* upon the second one in *al-iqbāl* (no. 116, Pl. 50c). The latter detail recurs in the inscription inside inkwell lid no. 396 (Pl. 144b).

Lampstand base no. 203 shows such a fluid script that the final *lām* of the term *al-iqbāl* is joined through a continuous ligature to the following article's *alif* (no. 203, Pl. 84b).

Examples of animated cursive script occur on bowl lid no. 77, basins nos. 159 (Pl. 68c), 184 (Pl. 78b), and 185. The latter shows regular inscriptions with homogeneous human heads on top of each *hasta* and *tā' marbūṭa*. No. 77 is just a fragment, but enough to testify its original exquisiteness in line with the famous Wade Cup and Bobrinsky bucket:²⁹⁵ human heads sit atop the silver inlaid letters, whose bodies are transformed into animals. Additional fantastic animals, standing and in profile, inhabit the epigraphical ground (Fig. 74).

Cursive *lām-alif* groups suspended above the text or inserted into it with no apparent function occur on bowl no. 53 and basins nos. 163 and 167, in association with number eight-shaped elements and/or five-lobed palmettes.

A sort of twist, possibly inspired by an intertwined *lām-alif*, appears on bowl no. 63, the back of the spoon-bowl in the spoon-ladle no. 142 – both items are in high tin bronze – and the cover of the ewer spout no. 106 (Pl. 45b).²⁹⁶

Pseudo-inscriptions detected in this catalogue usually involve the Kufic script and can be divided into two groups. To the first belong graphic signs slightly mimicking letters (see no. 100, Pl. 42b; no. 122, Pl. 53b; nos. 163, 165, 167, Pl. 70) or believable as such due to being framed in cartouches



Fig. 74 – Animated cursive script on bowl lid no. 77 (Neg. no. 4577/5).

with the typical vegetal background used behind real texts (see no. 23, Pl. 10; no. 341, Pl. 125; no. 342, Pl. 126). The second group includes inscriptions composed by actual letters juxtaposed without any meaning, often in Kufic bands of polylobed basins (see no. 122, Pl. 53c; no. 183, Pl. 77b). Basin no. 169, instead, shows a circular epigraphic band where the same meaningless term repeats; features such as sharp apices, knotted letters and palmettes echoing those in the object central roundel imply a highly cared-for script far from the rapidly executed pseudo-inscriptions (Fig. 75).



Fig. 75 – Cast of basin no. 169 (MAIA, photo by V. Laviola, 2019).

²⁹⁵ The Wade Cup is housed in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Inv. no. 1944.485); the Bobrinsky bucket in the Hermitage Museum (Inv. no. IR-2268). About the latter, see Ettinghausen 1943; about the former, see Rice 1955a; Ettinghausen 1957, 1958.

²⁹⁶ Similar twists are known from the 10th century mausoleum of 'Arab-Āṭā in Tim (Samarqand), Uzbekistan, and 11th century inscriptions from Diyarbakr. See Allegranzi (forth.) with previous bibliography.

3.3.2 Nature of Texts

Benedictory Texts

Benedictory texts are beyond doubt the most common on metalwork. More than one hundred and sixty among the items presented here bear at least one benedictory inscription or more than one. It can consist of a single term, isolated in a cartouche, usually *bi-l-yumn*, “with good fortune”; *al-baraka*, “blessing”, adopted also in alternation with *al-birr*, which can be either interpreted as its shortened form or as a full term meaning “devotion”;²⁹⁷ *al-salāma*, “spiritual integrity”, often shortened in *al-salā*. Otherwise, a single term can be repeated many times, with or without the conjunction *wāw*, in consecutive cartouches or in a continuous band. This occurs mostly on basins (Fig. 76) and ewers (see for instance no. 108, Pl. 46b; no. 111, Pl. 47b); the typically chosen term is *al-tāyīd*, “divine support”. The final *dāl* usually is elongated to reach the height of the article *hastae*, so to convey a regular and homogenous rhythm.

An ordinary *du‘ā* is composed by a sequence of benedictory terms, interrupted by the *wāw* and usually provided with an article; the last two features characterise these texts from a graphic point of view, as well. Only very few among the analysed inscriptions show terms deprived of an article. The inscription on lampstand no. 279 represents the earliest example of a *du‘ā* composed by words split so as to convey a double meaning.²⁹⁸ The order of terms is also peculiar: *yumn* – usually starting the sequence – follows the term *baraka* – usually the second term; *surūr*, “joy”, is split in two parts or replaced by *sirr*, “esoteric knowledge”, according to a custom typical of the esoteric *milieu*. In the inscription of bowl no. 63 (only partially photographed), the term *surūr* appears along with the rarer one *ghibṭa*, “beatitude”. The text on mortar no. 402, instead, is deprived of articles only in its second part, perhaps a shortness of space led the artisan to such a strange decision.

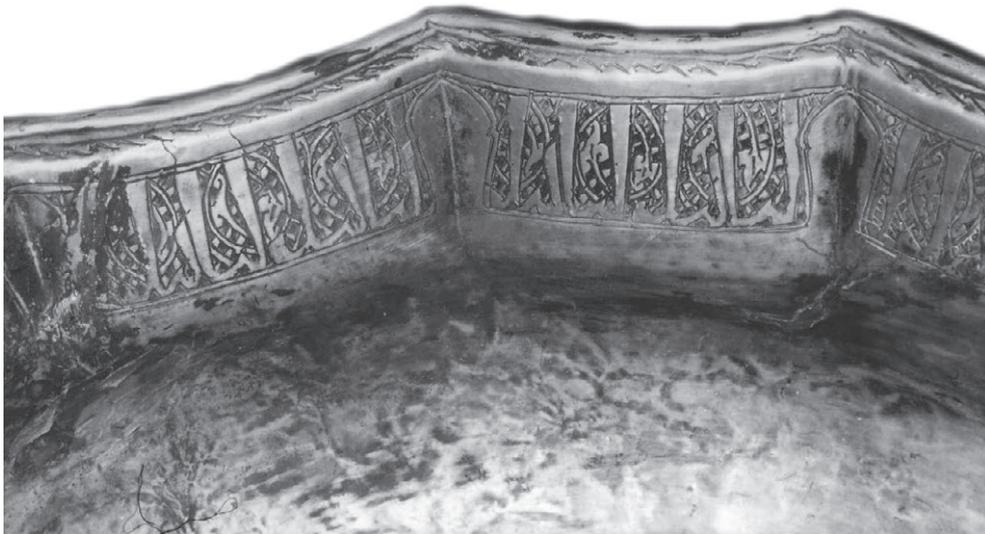


Fig. 76 – Inscription running below the rim on basin no. 177 (Neg. no. 7940/21).

²⁹⁷ The shortened form of the term *al-baraka* probably derives from its splitting in two parts to convey an esoteric meaning. See Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 34.

²⁹⁸ Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 34-35.

Terms *ghibṭa* (bowl no. 63) and *al-ʿadl* (dish no. 50) have been detected one time each, both on early high tin bronzes. This should be considered a clue in support of the chronology already suggested by morphology and decoration.

Apart from intentionally shortened terms, letters are not frequently omitted with the exception of the final *tāʾ marbūṭa* in the term *al-saʿāda*, “happiness”. The term *al-baqāʾ*, “eternal life”, is employed as the last one in twenty-four cases (out of more than one hundred and sixty benedictory sequences). The omission of the final *hamza* was customarily in the medieval period; for this reason, it has not been signalled as an error. The closing formula *li-ṣāḥibi-hi*, “to its owner”, addressing the good wishes to an unknown recipient, occurs only in eighteen texts, ten times in the shortened form *li-ṣā*. Being *li-ṣāḥibi-hi* at the end of benedictory inscriptions, in many cases its absence may be due to the fragmentary status of the text.

Crisis of two benedictory terms generating a new one appear only on bowl no. 76, as already reported by Melikian-Chirvani.²⁹⁹

Maxims

Two kinds of maxims have been detected in this catalogue. The first, and more characteristic, appears on the bowl no. 52, and consists of an esoteric teaching that warns against the risk of talking too much. The importance of such a text relies on being a confirmation of the early dating already hypothesised for this artefact on the basis of the epigraphic features. In fact, Melikian-Chirvani has convincingly identified the cultural origin of the expression in textual sources dating back to the Ghaznavid period.³⁰⁰

The second kind of maxim occasionally appears on metalwork accompanying the traditional good wishes or following a signature to stress the merit of the artisan who made the artefact. Again, bowl no. 52 is involved, bearing part of the maxim attested on a lampstand shaft, probably dating to the 12th century, signed by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Harawī.³⁰¹ The slightly different text on lampstand no. 212 is known from an incense burner, probably dating to the 11th century, excavated in Hulbuk, and signed by ʿAlī b. Abī Naṣr.³⁰² Paying attention to the dating proposed, it seems that maxims were in use throughout the centuries – even after the chronological range here taken into account – instead of being limited to a specific period.

Artisans' Signatures

Metalworks rarely offer information of historical relevance such as the date and place of manufacturing. Artisans' signatures are a little more frequent, or at least not limited to exceptionally precious artefacts. Five signatures are known from items presented in this catalogue, three of which had already been signalled by Melikian-Chirvani.³⁰³ In all cases, the artisan's name is introduced by the word *ʿamal*, “work of”.

Hasan b. Muḥammad b. Sijzī signs a pear-shaped ewer with lamp-shaped spout (no. 96).³⁰⁴ The Kufic inscription, split into two sections, runs vertically and unframed along the neck. This

²⁹⁹ Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 61, 63, fig. 27.

³⁰⁰ Melikian-Chirvani 1977b, 369-370.

³⁰¹ See Mayer 1959, 30 and Laviola 2017d, 6 for further bibliography.

³⁰² See Laviola 2017d, 18 for previous bibliography.

³⁰³ About item no. 96 see Melikian-Chirvani 1971, 139, 143, fig. 7; 1975b, 197-198, pls. XIII-XIV, figs. 9-10; about no. 123 see Melikian-Chirvani 1979a, 27-29, pl. XIV, figs. 18-19; about no. 409 see Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 67, fig. 35.

³⁰⁴ See Laviola 2017d, 86, pl. II.2. Melikian-Chirvani (1975b, 200) reads the *ism* as Ḥusayn, but a closer analysis reveals the absence of the *yāʾ*.

is the only name provided with a *nisba*. Other signatures pointing to the region of Sijistan/Sistan are known; even more interestingly, a series of signed ewers corresponding to the same model comes from Transoxiana.³⁰⁵ Apparently, it was custom in the Eastern area to sign these kinds of ewers.

The remaining signatures detected belong to otherwise unknown artisans; names are too common to provide any further indication or help in dating the artefacts. The *kunya* Abū'l-Faḥ, in Kufic script, appears between two short benedictory texts on globular ewer no. 123 (Pl. 54), precisely on one of the three inscribed flutes alternating with cursive benedictory inscriptions.³⁰⁶ The signature is treated as the other texts on the object and thus integrated in the decoration. The signature of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, again in Kufic, is framed in a cartouche on the flange opposite to the pouring one of cauldron no. 150 (Pl. 63a-b).³⁰⁷ Ḥasan b. Ḥusayn signs mortar no. 409 (Pl. 151). The text runs along the rim starting with the signature and continuing with a benedictory sequence.

A fifth signature, possibly *Sulaymān* or *Ishāq*, is engraved on oil-lamp no. 297. The photographic documentation is not clear enough to read it properly; however, the unframed simple Kufic script and the position on the object identifies it as a signature.

Usually unframed signatures in Kufic are typical of early metalwork and the above-mentioned cases (pear-shaped ewer and oil-lamp) confirm it; later on, artisans' names are interpreted as part of the decorative and epigraphic scheme of the artefact.

Owners' Names

The name Abū Bakr is moulded in negative, running from left to right, on amulet no. 435 (Pl. 165a-b). This, together with the ring on the back, attests that the item was employed as a seal, thus it should read the owner's name. Dots of different sizes on the epigraphical ground probably have no diacritical function.

A further name can be seen to come from jug no. 82, whose owner probably made his own by engraving the name Maḥmūd b. D(...). This short text, only partially preserved, appears outside the epigraphical cartouches where benedictory terms are engraved; it disposes unframed on two lines above a zoomorphic cartouche and a vegetal roundel (Fig. 77).

The cursive script looks incompatible with the object dating, which can be ascribed to the late 12th century. This, together with the absence of any term introducing the name as an artisan signature, leads one to believe that the inscription was added later to the jug.



Fig. 77 – Owner's name on jug no. 82 (Neg. no. 7935/2).

³⁰⁵ See Laviola 2017d, 84, 97.

³⁰⁶ See Laviola 2017d, 95, pl. IV.2 for previous bibliography.

³⁰⁷ See Laviola 2017d, 104, pl. VI.2.

3.4 Chronological Hypotheses

Dated Islamic metalwork are few, but these few provide a reference point for comparison for all the others. Scholars dealing with this material are accustomed to relying on the analysis of morphology, decoration and epigraphy with the addition of chemical analyses to pursue dating clues. It should be said definitively that dating still represents an issue, and we accept that we are moving into the ground of hypothesis.

This catalogue is meant to gather objects comprised from the 9th to the 13th century. Some insurmountable limits have made this task even harder. First, the impossibility to examine the objects directly; second, the poor state of preservation in some cases and the absence of comparable specimens in others. In these few cases, the dating remains uncertain. Metalworks emerged from excavation that present no conclusive features have been ascribed to the 11th-13th century or 12th-13th century; that is to say, to the occupational periods of respectively the Ghazni royal palace and the House of the Lustrewares.

Given the above explanation, some chronological hypotheses are still conceivable, and some objects have proved peculiar enough to allow for a precise dating.

Metalwork from the 9th to 11th Century

Some metalworks can be ascribed to the early Islamic period since their morphology recalls even pre-Islamic shapes. Among them are a mug with a ring-handle (no. 81) and a lion-shaped handle (no. 334). The latter probably belongs to a dish incense burner of Parthian model.³⁰⁸ The naturalistic rendering of the feline would confirm such hypothesis.

To the 9th-10th century should be assigned pear-shaped ewers characterised by stylised zoomorphic elements at the junction between handle and body and by the insertion of pearls in the handle (nos. 90-91). Slightly later, but still within the early 11th century, are the pear-shaped ewers with lamp-shaped spout (nos. 92-98) and the footed cylindrical ewer with a long, tubular spout (no. 120). Incense burner no. 333 with its domed body shaped as a pomegranate can be dated to the early Ghaznavid period as well.

A conclusive contribution to the chronology comes from the epigraphical analysis of a series of artefacts bearing a Kufic script attested on Samanid coins: lampstands nos. 278-280, incense burner no. 337 and vases nos. 345, 347. Further features such as the use of split benedictory terms and typical decorative elements such as the Solomon knot support an attribution to the 10th or early 11th century.

The documented perfume bottles encompass early models, such as no. 355 with its flat, polylobed mouth used within the 9th century, and later ones tracing the morphological and decorative development of this class. During the 10th-11th century, the ovoid model changes into the globular one and abandons the almond-shaped bosses on relief; the opening becomes cylindrical, progressively higher, and flared.

The majority of objects retrieved in Maimana attests to a humble production of raised metalworks, whose manufacturing traces are clearly visible in the junction and sewing, usually hidden with decorative devices in artefacts of a higher quality. They are undecorated or bear a very simple, even naïve decoration, made of engraved geometrical patterns (fishbone) or punched ones. The model of cylindrical ewers with a convex bottom and a metal strip tidying the neck to the handle (nos. 100-101, 103) is attested also from Nishapur and in the Herat National Museum,³⁰⁹ thus it should have had quite a diffusion. The cylindrical cauldron with a

³⁰⁸ Cf. Allan 1976, I, 368.

³⁰⁹ Inv. nos. 02.14.86, 02.25.86; see Müller-Wiener 2016, Cat. nos. M89, 92.

convex bottom (no. 154) – still a known unique specimen – precedes chronologically hemispherical cauldrons, also largely attested in the same site.

With regard to the high tin bronze artefacts, a production dating to the 10th-11th century is largely confirmed not only by hemispherical bowls, but also by basins and cutlery. The numerous specimens attest to a common production and a luxury one, identified on the basis of the decoration. Fourteen objects, all belonging to tableware, represent the first group:

- nine hemispherical bowls (nos. 54-62), one bowl with flat base and hemispherical wall (no. 64), one bowl with flat base and flared wall (no. 67);
- one colander with flat base and hemispherical wall (no. 147);
- one spoon-ladle (no. 141);
- one circular basin with straight wall (no. 162).

The hemispherical shape prevails along with other simple shapes easily obtainable through forging. The decoration typically consists of punched, dotted circles and chiselled discs arranged to compose geometric patterns. None of these artefacts bears inscriptions. Four objects, instead, stand out for their refinement. The shapes are varied: a dish (no. 50), a hemispherical bowl (no. 52), a bowl with a flat base and round wall (no. 63), and a hemispherical basin (no. 156). All show an astonishing decoration. The basin bears the most ancient representation of zodiac signs from the Iranian context. On the other artefacts, the background is dotted or ring-dotted, revealing a continuity in taste with late Sasanian silverware.³¹⁰ Moreover, the objects are all epigraphic: both the Kufic and cursive scripts can be easily recognised as Ghaznavid. Since these metalworks were part of the Rawza Museum collection – or, in the case of the basin, come from Ghazni – they could represent the top production in high tin bronze dating back to the city's golden age.

Among the excavated specimens, cylindrical inkwell no. 390 cannot be later than the early 11th century, taking into account its technological peculiarity (a suspension system passing inside the object) and the epigraphical details in common with the inscriptions of early marble tombs from Ghazni.

Besides the high tin bronzes, some other metalworks of various shapes and functions show a dotted or ring-dotted background, either on the whole decorative ground or just in small portions of it: two footed trays (nos. 47-48), a bowl (no. 75), two ewers (nos. 123-124), an incense burner (no. 335), and a box lid (no. 339). This decorative detail appears across centuries, thus it could be interpreted as a quality mark, a tentative way to recall earlier metalwork even in 12th century ones.

Fillets and frames bearing engraved cuts seem to play a similar role: they appear engraved on objects datable to the 10th-early 11th century – lampstand no. 280, incense burner no. 337, the above-mentioned inkwell (no. 390), vase no. 347 – as on later ones such as bowl no. 53, jug no. 86 and ewer no. 123.

Metalwork from the 12th-13th Century

The 12th-13th century production developed new shapes and continued some earlier ones. Raised objects were especially in vogue, reaching the acme of technical skill that consented to hide junction points with decorative devices such as the sunburst in relief at the base of ewers' necks. Repoussé decorative elements are employed beside engraved motifs. Basins with circular or polylobed rim show, around the central 8-petalled flower on relief, an increasingly richer

³¹⁰ See some examples in Marshak 1986, pls. 20, 32, 44, 53-54, 59, 83, 115, 127.

engraved decoration. The presence of Kufic and cursive benedictory inscriptions on the same object is typical.

The number of trays, tray-dishes and lampstand dishes preserved is noteworthy; a decoration composed by epigraphical bands, real and fantastic animals, intricate vegetal backgrounds and fringe motifs recur on these objects.

Some artefacts can confirm that the high tin bronze production continued into the 12th century, again along two production levels. Five circular basins with straight walls (nos. 163-167) differ significantly from earlier specimens. The engraved decoration includes birds rendered with a sketched design, cursive pseudo-inscriptions or just *lām-alif* groups disposed in concentric bands, roundels and cartouches arranged around the central roundel. The latter usually includes vegetal or geometric patterns. No. 167 was found in Balkh,³¹¹ that could indicate a peripheral production, but provenance of the other basins is unfortunately unknown.

The later luxury production in high tin bronze can be identified in the footed bowl no. 76 and the fragmentary lid no. 77 – both attesting the model of the famous Vaso Vescovali –,³¹² the hemispherical bowl no. 53, jug no. 87, and spoon-ladle no. 142.

A large group of repoussé metalwork belonging to different collections is believed to be issued from a school based in the 12th-century Sistan.³¹³ Ghazni could have been the production centre. Main common features are:

- the thinness;
- the ring-dotted background;
- decorative elements in repoussé realised on a large scale providing a monumental effect (that recalls mould-made relief ceramic) with engraved details;
- the funnelled sections dividing the decorative areas;
- the use of cursive script in the rarely present inscriptions.³¹⁴

Among the objects of this catalogue, many rectangular trays nos. 6-13, 15, bowl no. 75, jugs nos. 86, 88 and buckler no. 423 belong to this production. Possibly polygonal trays (nos. 16-19) derive from the same stylistic tendency.

Other objects already produced in the early Islamic period last into the 12th-13th century with some morphological changes, as in the case of mortars whose base and rim become flaring or protrude horizontally. Mortars become more densely decorated through engraved motifs along with almond-shaped bosses in relief. Cylindrical inkwells definitely adopt external loops, nailed on the box wall and the lid side to fasten one another the two parts.

Generally, the decoration increases in density, sometimes enriched by the inlay, but remains strictly organised into frames of various kind. Fantastic animals appear frequently along with an elevated variety of real ones. Even the human figure recurs. Inscriptions in bands and cartouches stand against intricate vegetal backgrounds, adopting an elevated number of different scripts, included the animated ones.

³¹¹ Melikian-Chirvani 1974b, 142.

³¹² British Museum (Inv. no. 1950,0725.1); see Pinder-Wilson 1951.

³¹³ See Melikian-Chirvani 1975a.

³¹⁴ The absence of inscriptions on 12th-13th century metalwork is unusual.

Chapter 4 – Excavated Metalwork

Islamic metalworks preserved up until today are numerous, but the same cannot be said about metalworks retrieved from official archaeological contexts.³¹⁵ Ghazni excavations returned a good number of items and fragments (about 180). This section gathers some others beyond the most important and intact ones included in the catalogue.³¹⁶ Unfortunately, good pictures are not always available.

Metalworks are presented in relation to the excavated buildings – the Ghazni royal palace and the House of the Lustrewares –, and within by rooms of provenance. A general plan of the Ghazni royal palace (Fig. 78) shows all the rooms involved in the discovery of the metalworks; the darker colour indicates the rooms where important items emerged. Additional figures focus on them, providing a picture, the catalogue number – for those included in it – and the Italian Mission inventory number (Inv.) – for all of them.

It is worthy of mention that especially the western side and part of the southeastern side of the royal palace were brought to light; this explains the concentration of finds in those areas. In absence of any stratigraphy, metalworks cannot represent a dating tool with respect to the architectural development of the royal palace. Still, their contexts of provenance could provide some indications, along with the analysis of pottery and coins, about the chronological phases of occupation.

4.1 Metalwork from the Ghazni Royal Palace

Finds coming from the royal palace should not predate the Islamic period.³¹⁷ It is worthwhile to start this tour across the palace ruins in the southern ivan II, which was the ceremonial part of the building (Fig. 79). Its location opposite to the palace entrance, along with its peculiar structure, provided with a sort of squared apse, led to understand it as the throne hall. Only a fragmentary spoon (no. 131) was found there.

³¹⁵ Charles Wilkinson (Metropolitan Museum of Art), together with Upton and Hauser, carried out archaeological activities in Nishapur from 1935 to 1947 (actually, excavations stopped in 1940 upon the outbreak of World War II; see Wilkinson 1986). Many of the investigated *tapa* date back to the early Islamic period. Non-stratigraphic excavations do not allow the attribution of unearthed objects to a precise chronology. The majority of sites were occupied between the 9th and 13th century at the latest – that is the same time range under analysis in this study. Among other Islamic sites that returned metalworks can be mentioned Susa, which was investigated from the middle of 19th century (excavations led by Roman Ghirshman since 1938; for a list of his publications, see Potts 2012, 1207); Rayy and Istakhr from the 1930s by Schmidt (about Rayy, see Schmidt 1935 and Rante 2015; about Istakhr, see Fontana 2018a, in particular 17-25 for previous bibliography); and Siraf excavated by Whitehouse between 1966 and 1973 (see Whitehouse 1968, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1974). Most of the retrieved metalworks are fragments (handles and finials) or personal objects (Allan 1982a, 13-14). We should also mention the site of Ribat-i Sharaf, a caravansary complex, dating back to the Seljuq period, built on the road between Nishapur and Merv probably by Sharaf al-dīn b. Ṭāhir, governor of Khurasan and vizier of sultan Sanjar b. Malik Shāh (1118-1157). The buildings' complex bears the date 1154-1155, which probably refers to its first restoration. About 57 metalworks, made between the 11th and 14th century, emerged from excavation (Kiani 1981, 5, 8).

³¹⁶ Nos. 127-131, 143-146, 208, 320, 353-354, 377, 384, 386, 390-391, 399, 416, 437-438.

³¹⁷ Other items datable to a period later than the 9th-13th century time range chosen as the focus of this study were found; they have been left out of the catalogue.

Its poor condition prevents from hypothesising a specific dating; no conclusive help comes from the few pottery items retrieved in that area.³¹⁸

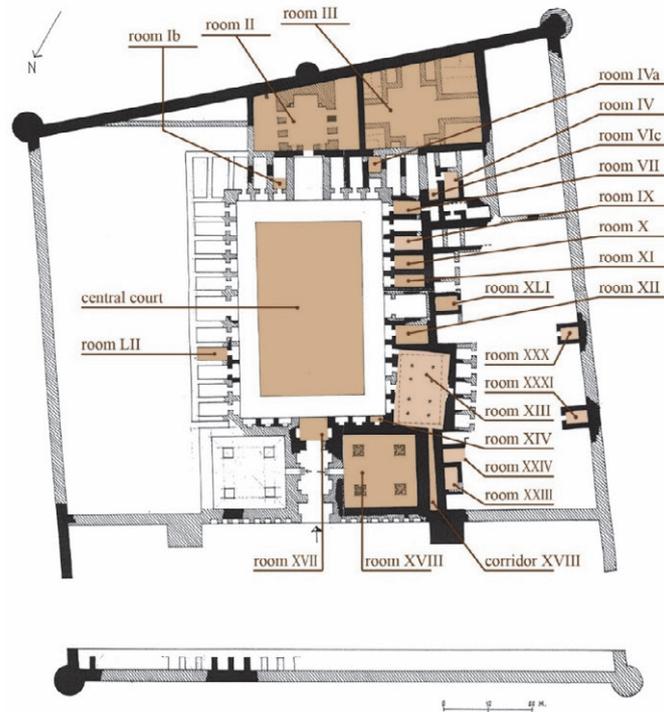
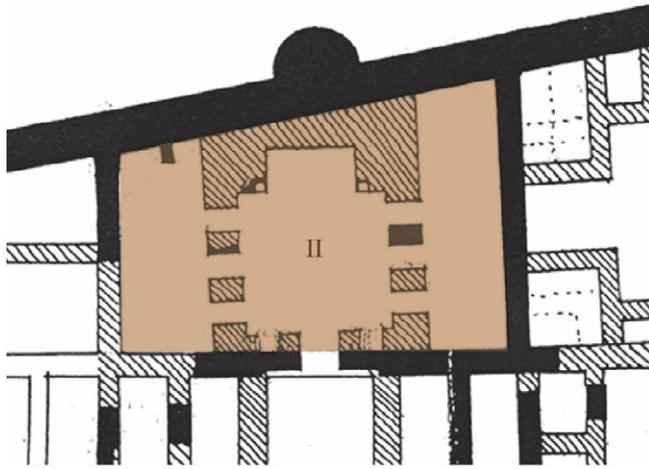


Fig. 78 – Plan of the Ghazni royal palace (MAIA Inv. no. 2256): main areas of provenance of the excavated metalworks. Drawing by G. Ioppolo re-elaborated by C. Passaro and V. Laviola.

In room III, however, occurred the major discovery of two cylindrical inkwells (nos. 390-391, Figs. 80-81), each one showing peculiar features, that represent by far the most precious metalworks emerging from this excavation. Other items related to personal care and ornament – the tweezers no. 417, three finger rings and one beaded earring (see Annex D) – confirm the private function of the area during its main phase. In fact, room III has been identified as the palace's private apartments. Some of the retrieved pottery (slip-painted, dotted *graffita* and fritware) dates back to the late 11th-first half of the 12th century, attesting to the early occupational phase of the area, while other specimens of *graffita* splashed can be ascribed to the re-foundation of the ivan occurred after the middle 12th century. Throughout time, the area was affected by many changes, decaying from its status to the point that a kitchen was installed there and was then even used as a stable. In fact, the majority of pottery finds date back to the late phase with traces pointing even after the Mongol invasion.³¹⁹ So the two inkwells – no. 390 datable to the early 11th century; no. 391 to the 12th century – would be respectively earlier and coeval to the pottery findings.

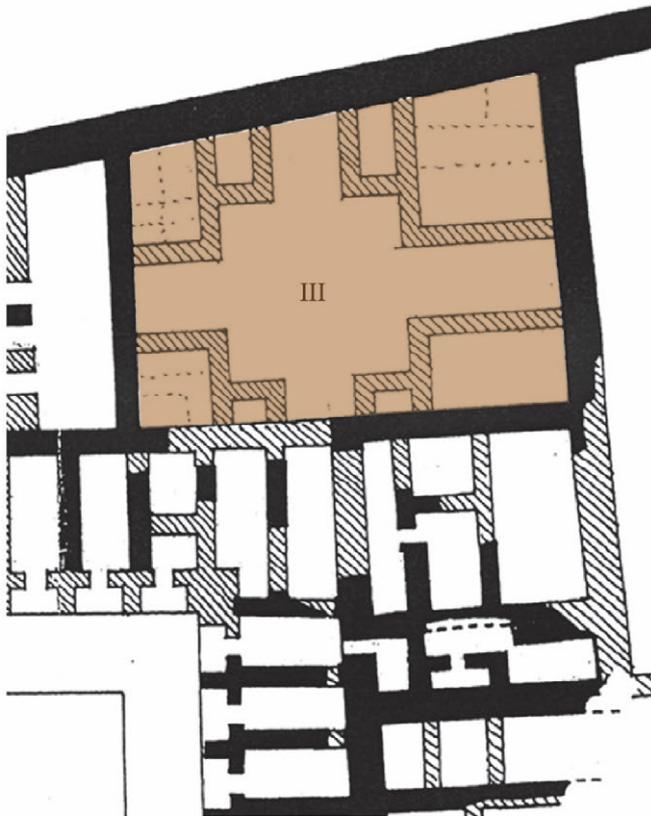
³¹⁸ From the western aisle of ivan II emerged two slip-painted fragments, thus pointing to the 11th century, and lustre tiles dating back to the second half of the 12th century (see Fusaro 2014, 223).

³¹⁹ Fusaro 2014, 225-226.



no. 131 (Inv. C2173)

Fig. 79 – Main metalwork from room II.



no. 391 (Inv. C10)



no. 390 (Inv. C11)



no. 417 (Inv. C4478)

Fig. 80 – Main metalworks from room III.



Fig. 81 – Inkwells nos. 390-391 on the excavation field in 1958 (Neg. no. 593/13a).

Rooms VIa-VII, on the southwestern side of the palace, returned a couple of curious items (Fig. 82): a miniature vessel (no. 437) and a rod (Inv. C5998), whose functions are still unclear. No specific feature comes in help to date them.³²⁰

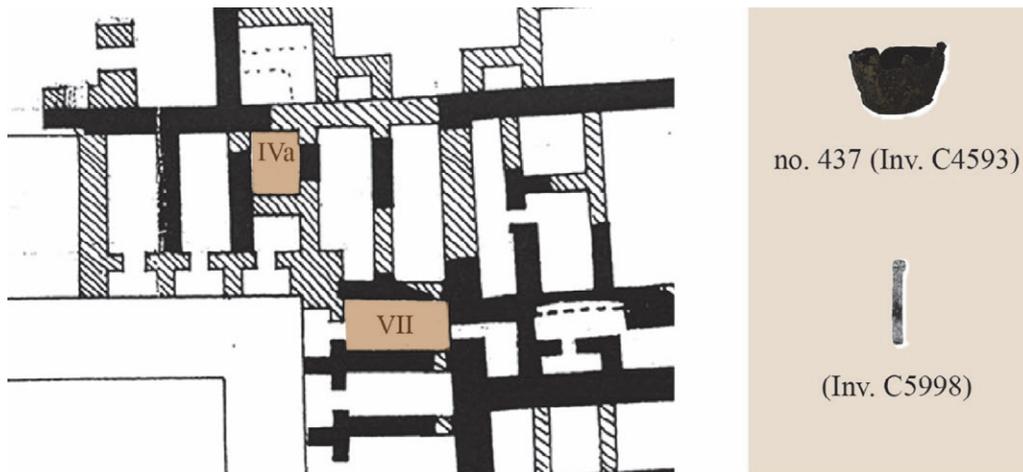


Fig. 82 – Main metalworks from rooms VIa-VII.

³²⁰ Room VII, in particular, could be ascribed to the late 11th-early 12th century on the basis of the pottery finds (slip-painted, *graffita* and dotted pottery, and fritware); see Fusaro 2014, 220.

A series of rooms (X-XII) along the western side of the court returned interesting metalworks of a domestic kind (Fig. 83).³²¹ a colander (no. 146), a miniature tray (no. 438), a fragmentary flange belonging to a cosmetic mortar (no. 377) and a hinge element (Inv. C4080) composed by three flat, geometrical sections. The tray reproduces a renowned model, while both the colander and the cosmetic mortar's flange bear simple engravings that attest to the attention paid to their niceness.

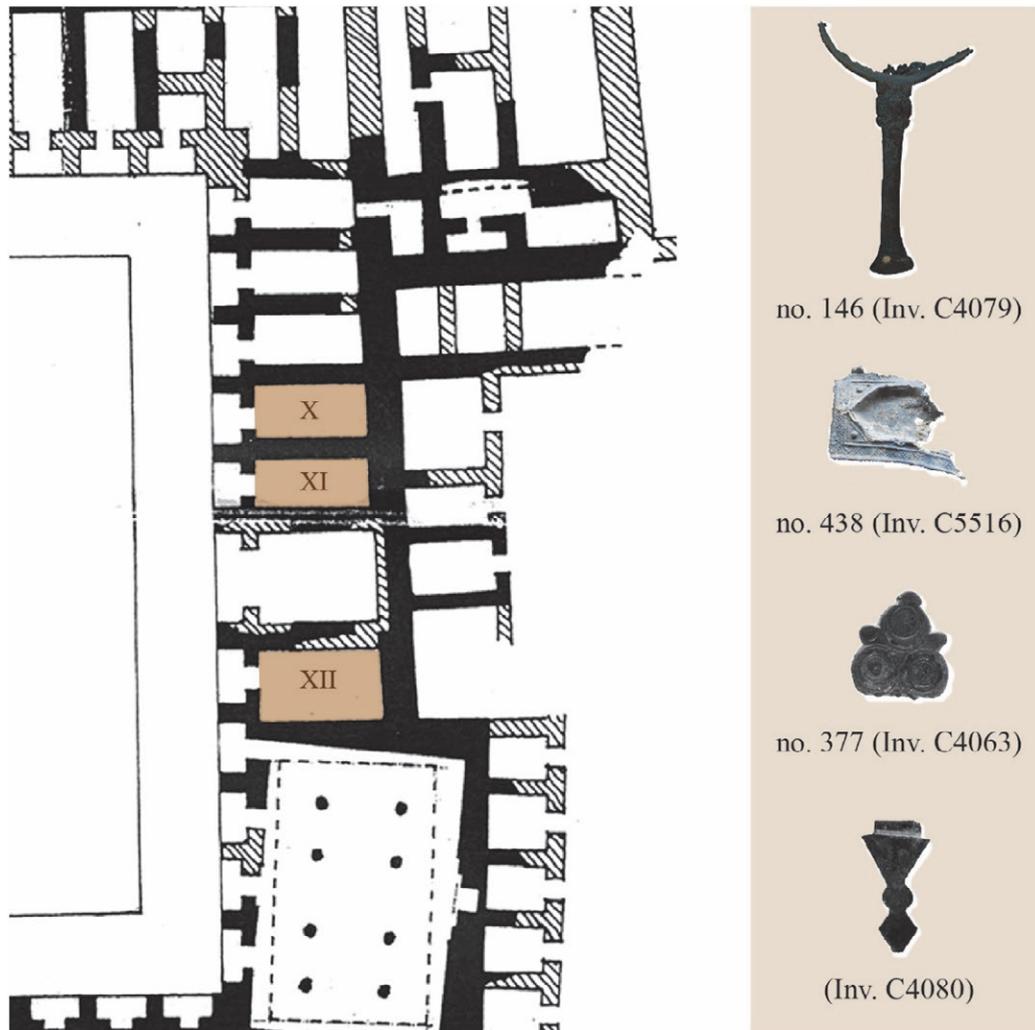


Fig. 83 – Main metalworks from rooms X-XII.

It has been hypothesised that the northwestern area of the palace could have corresponded once to one of the two lateral courts existing in the building before the establishment of the central court. This would make the area one of the most ancient.

From room XLI, lying just behind the western ivan – nowadays occupied by the *ziyāra* of Ibrāhīm – came another belt-fitting element in form of a pierced flower (no. 354; Fig. 84).

³²¹ One fragment of archaic slip-painted pottery emerged from room X suggesting an early dating (see Fusaro, *ibidem*).

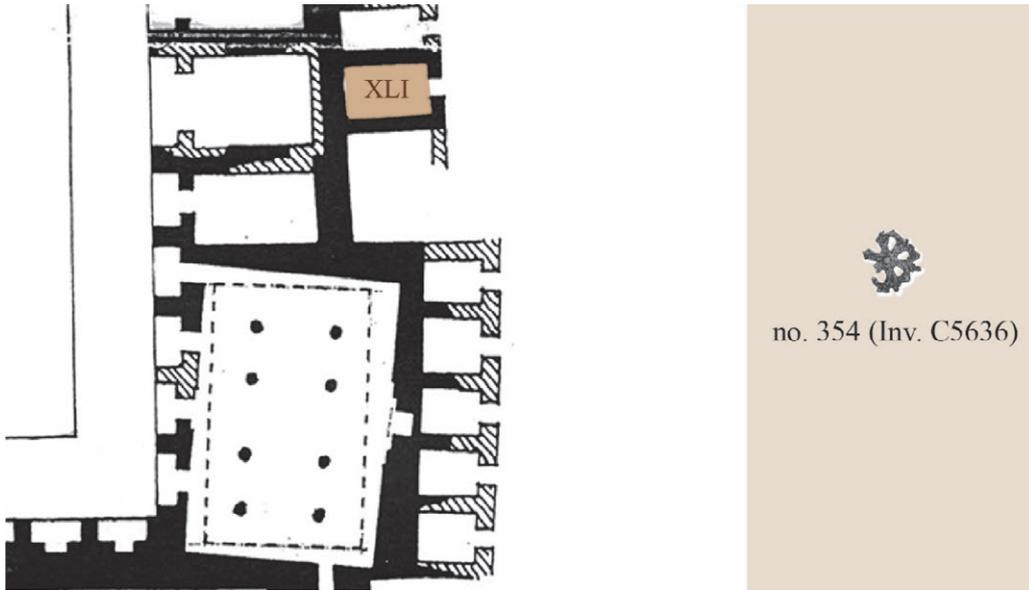


Fig. 84 – Main metalwork from room XLI.

A well-preserved ring-handle topped by a cockerel belonging to an oil-lamp (no. 320; Fig. 85) emerged from room XIV, opening into the northwestern corner of the central court.

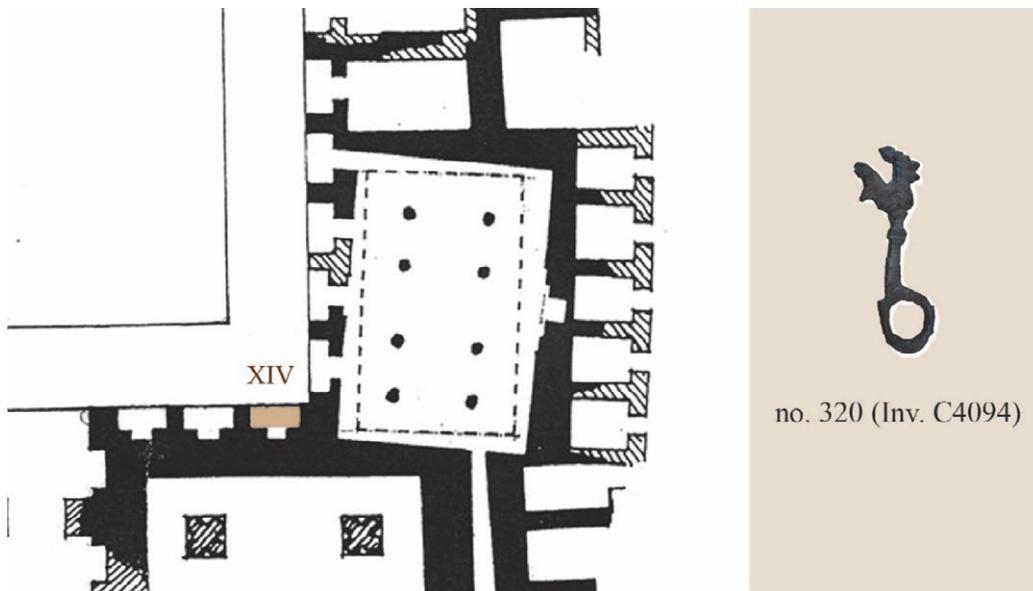


Fig. 85 – Main metalwork from room XIV.

Another fragment related to an illumination device is the lampstand foot no. 208, which came to light from corridor XVIII, a space that probably resulted because of the crooked inclination of the palace wall when the entrance complex was built (Fig. 86). The dating

proposed for the metalwork mentioned above (12th century) can be confirmed by pottery finds, whose homogenous productions (fritware, monochrome moulded and turquoise slipped pottery) precede the second half of the 12th century. This is the period when the use of the corridor presumably stopped.³²²

The palace entrance was composed by two square, domed rooms flanking a central aisle: room XVIII revealed a brick and stucco decoration. From this area also emerged two bracts of a necklace (Inv. C4110), a fragmentary toilet flask (no. 386), and a buckle (no. 353). Dating such items is not easy; an indication could come from slip-painted pottery finds that probably precede the 12th century.³²³ Unfortunately, the poor condition of the bracts prevents the observation of any detail, but the description preserved in the IsMEO documentation (“decorated slightly in relief by a bird assaulting a gazelle and a Kufic inscription”) reveals their original status. Similar items that emerged in Nishapur, made either of silver or copper alloy, present an epigraphic and zoomorphic/astrological decoration.³²⁴

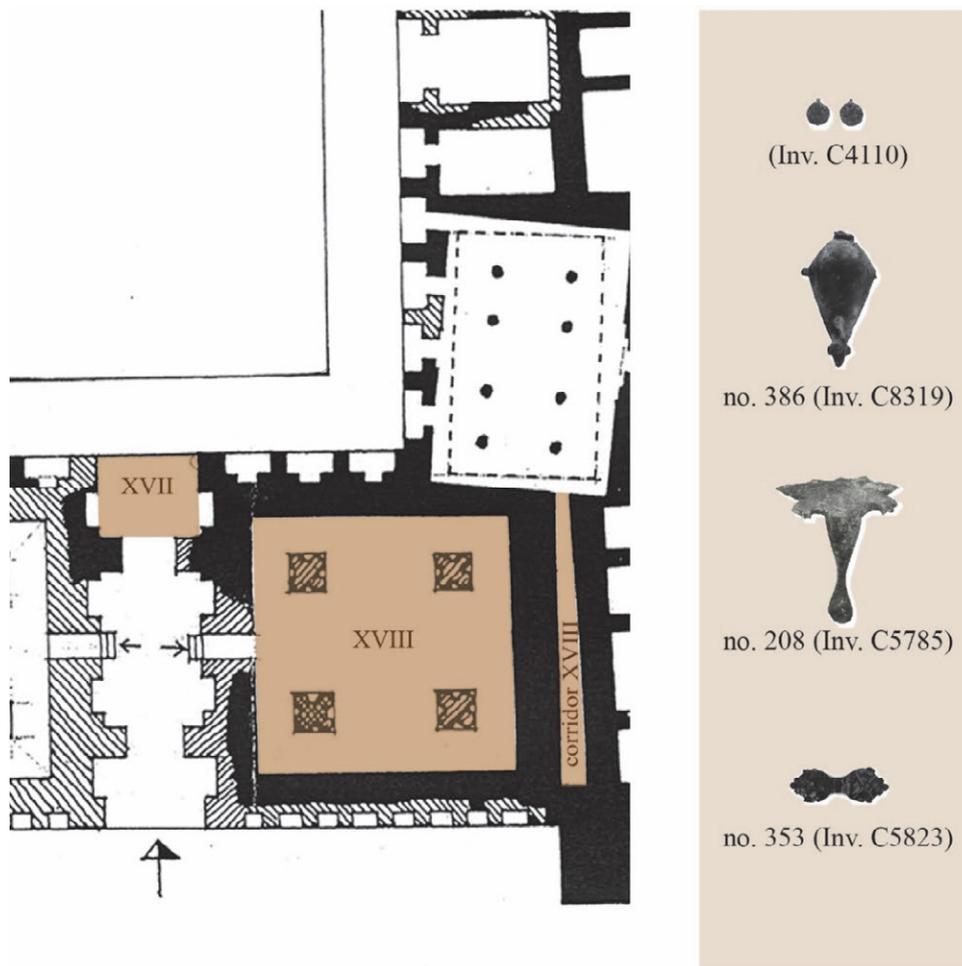


Fig. 86 – Main metalworks from rooms XVII-XVIII and corridor XVIII.

³²² Fusaro 2014, 229-230.

³²³ Fusaro 2014, 227, 229.

³²⁴ See Allan 1982a, nos. 60-61.

From the wide, marble-paved central court came a sickle (Inv. C2021), one of the few intact specimens among the many iron-made functional items retrieved (Fig. 87). Along with it, the court returned a fragmentary spoon (no. 145) that differs in shape from the others found both in the royal palace and in the House of the Lustrewares (see below), because of its ending in a fan-shaped element, while other spoons are usually characterised by thin, pointed handles. No. 352 is the only specimen attesting to a square model of belt buckle, and it is provided with peculiar hinges in form of human hands.

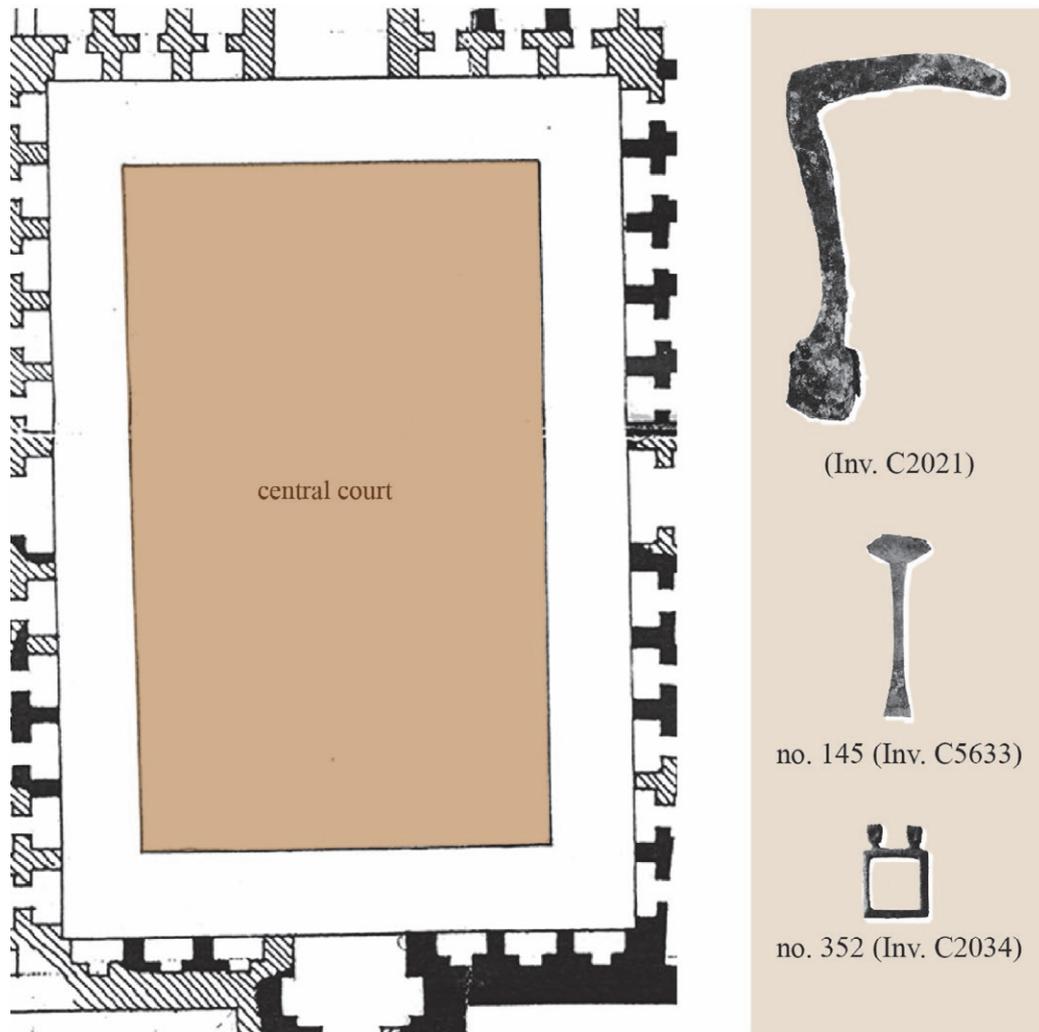


Fig. 87 – Main metalworks from the central court.

From the eastern side of the central courtyard, specifically from room LII, emerged a fragmentary singular tong (no. 416) and a tiny, circular lid provided with a hold (Inv. C5494; Fig. 88).

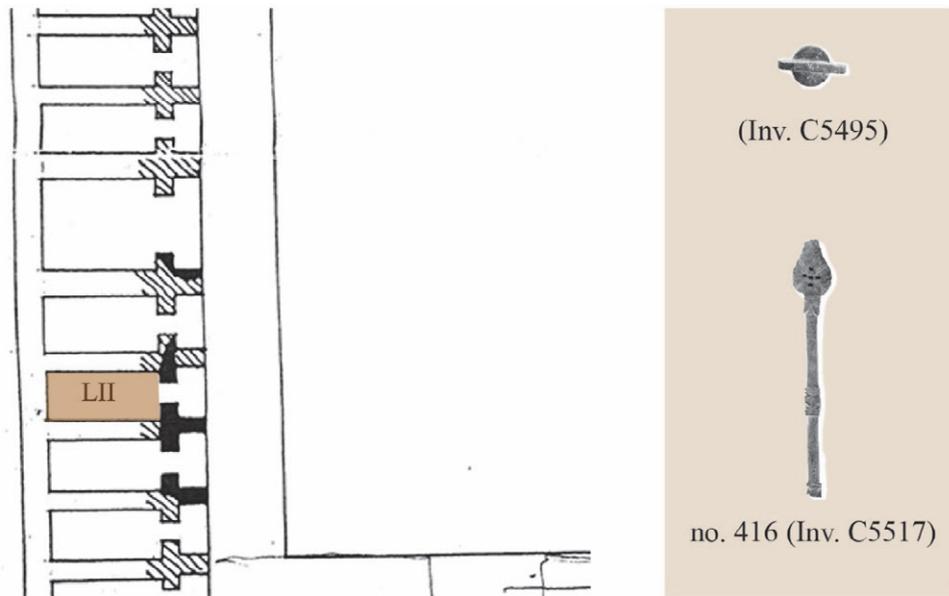


Fig. 88 – Main metalworks from room LII.

To sum up, from the Ghazni royal palace emerged about one hundred items and fragments made of iron; many of these are nails, especially coming from the room XIII which has been identified as the mosque, whose construction has been ascribed by recent studies to Mas‘ūd III b. Ibrāhīm.³²⁵ Three items are made of lead, while fifty-three of copper alloy. The latter figure indicates that many were – or were part of – standard to good quality objects. Among them are some jewels that present features not specific enough to date them (see Annex D).

About thirty of the mentioned items are currently preserved in the storages of the Museo delle Civiltà (Museo d’arte orientale) in Rome, among them being one of the two precious inkwells (no. 390); five, instead, are kept in the Kabul Museum storeroom, while many unfortunately are dispersed.

4.2 Metalwork from the House of the Lustrewares

Items excavated in the House of the Lustrewares should predate the 13th century (Fig. 89), since the building is believed to have been abandoned upon the Mongols’ arrival.³²⁶

Again, the most important metalwork discovery was an inkwell (no. 399), hexagonal in shape, retrieved from the northeastern side of the building, in the room IV that preserved traces of painting on the vaulted ceiling.

Room II, which had direct access to the court, returned four intact spoons (nos. 127-128, 143-144). The other two spoons (nos. 129-130), one of which bearing an engraved decoration emerged from room VIII; lying to the west of the entrance vestibule, the room had already been corrupted by illegal diggings at the start of excavations.

³²⁵ See Giunta forth.

³²⁶ Two coins issued by the Ghurid Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sam (1173-1206) attest that the House was still in use at that time.

Splashed, *champlevé* splashed and *graffita* lustreware found in room VII ascribe it to the second half of the 12th century;³²⁷ to such period should date the kohl stick no. 384, also retrieved there.

Finally, some small items made of copper alloy were found in room XIII along with glass fragments and semi-precious stones, hidden inside three big pottery vessels. The room, which lies on the outer area of the building, was probably added in a later phase, but still it should not date after the Mongol invasion. These valuable finds might indicate that it is coeval with the storages where the lustrewares were found, i.e. rooms II-III.

Among the functional items emerging from the House of the Lustrewares there are two lead washers, which are very similar to the one coming from the royal palace (see Annex D). Ten of the excavated finds are currently preserved in the storages of the Museo delle Civiltà (Museo d'arte orientale) in Rome, two in the storage of the Kabul Museum but many are dispersed.

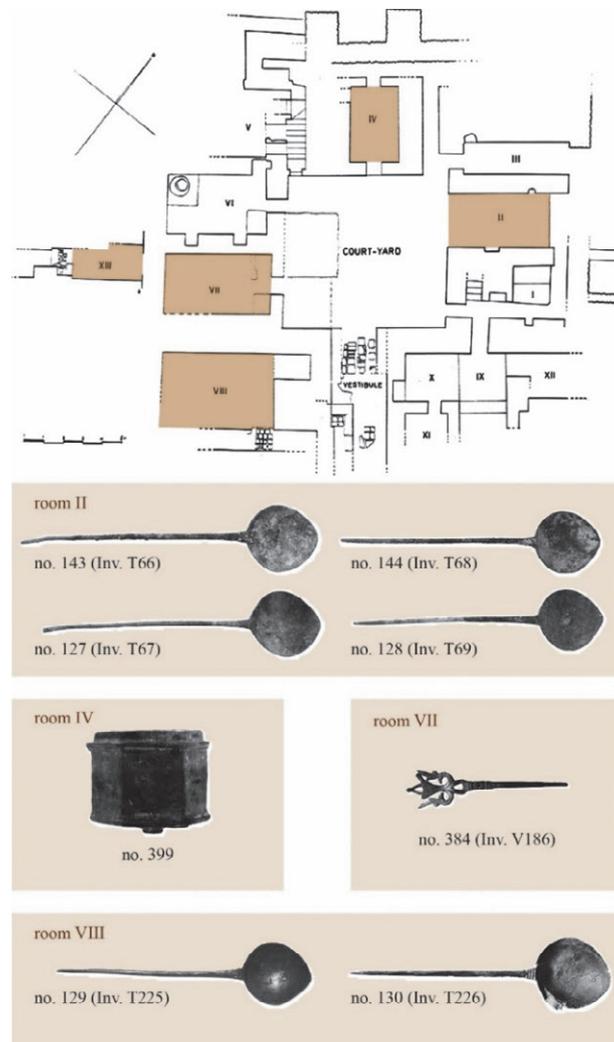


Fig. 89 – Plan of the House of the Lustrewares: main metalworks from rooms II, IV, VII-VIII.

³²⁷ See Fusaro 2014, 25.

FINAL REMARKS

This volume presents a *corpus* of metalworks (439 items and fragments) originating from a specific area, the Eastern Iranian lands, corresponding to present-day Afghanistan, but not coming from one single site.

The unknown provenance represents an issue that anyone who has ever faced the study of metalwork knows well. However – if a trouble shared is a trouble halved – this issue also goes for purchased items usually exhibited in museums, since metalworks coming from excavations are few. Available information about the history of these artefacts and how they reached their final destination are scanty and often anecdotal. Metalworks here presented can be regarded as “pure” collections, devoid of apparent forgeries, and interpolated items are few.

The excavations of the Ghazni royal palace and the House of the Lustrewares returned twenty-four interesting specimens, which have been included in the catalogue. Some of them present rare features, while others enrich this documentation with otherwise unattested models. Also many humble and often fragmentary items emerged from excavation. The latter, if not of great help in dating them, at least establishes a certain provenance. Within the framework of a documentary study, it has been reckoned necessary to show them as well, as their value consists in presenting comparative material for specimens retrieved from other Iranian sites.

Artefacts were documented when they were still preserved in the country of origin, and this is indeed a rarity. The Italian Archaeological Mission spent two decades in Afghanistan, from 1957 to 1978, counting among its activities the documentation of metalwork collections housed in Kabul, Ghazni, Mazar-i Sharif and Kandahar.

The Kabul National Museum housed more than one hundred artefacts, about seventy-eight of which came from Ghazni, as it was the bigger institution. This brought there the about thirty metalworks accidentally discovered in a wall niche, then known as Maimana storage, in 1953. In Kabul, the Italians had the chance to take pictures, while documenting the whole collection in 1958. In the same period (1957-1958), a small group of metalworks was on exhibition in Kandahar “City Hall”; a few years later, in 1964, nine artefacts were photographed in the Mazar-i Sharif Museum. Another important museum was, in those years, still in progress. The Rawza Museum of Islamic Art, in Ghazni, would have been the first archaeological one in Afghanistan conceived for displaying materials retrieved during the excavations and surveys. It was established in 1966, inside a Timurid mausoleum restored for this purpose by the Italian Mission. The metalwork collection started with artefacts found in a local *antiquarium* and grew, thanks to others purchased in the Ghazni bazaar and the excavated finds. In 1976 (the year of documentation), it became the largest collection, counting about two hundred and thirty metalworks. Even if the majority of them had unknown provenance, the local vocation of this museum leads us to believe that they originate from Ghazni or its region. The inauguration of the Museum coincided with the transfer of about one third of excavated finds from Ghazni to the Museo Nazionale d’Arte Orientale in Rome, on the basis of a bilateral agreement between the two countries. Along with the above-mentioned finds, the Museum in Rome (today Museo delle Civiltà) preserves also other metalworks purchased in Ghazni and then donated by members of the IsMEO Mission.

From 1979 until the present, irreparable losses have affected the Afghan archaeological heritage and material culture. With regard to metalwork collections, almost all is lost. The Kabul Museum collection was destroyed in a fire. When the Rawza Museum was closed for security reasons, artefacts were split in storages in Kabul and Ghazni and were thus lost, with the exception of a couple of bowls and two fragmentary basins. What fate befell the smaller collections of Kandahar and Mazar-i Sharif is unknown. The thirty-nine metalworks (twenty-

four of which come from excavation) stored in the Museo delle Civiltà (Museo d'arte orientale) represent the tangible remains of the whole *corpus*. Among them, luckily, there is one of the precious inkwells (no. 390) found in the Ghazni royal palace, an object that stands out for its archaeological importance, but also as a technologically and decoratively unique artefact.

The severe damages suffered find a partial reparation in the photographic documentation that bear witness to the existence of such extraordinary collections, and allow for the study of this important material. Through the IsMEO Mission documentation, it has been possible to recompose the rich metalwork collections as they appeared in the 1960s and '70s. The contribution that over four hundred artefacts and fragments, the majority of which are still unpublished, can provide to our knowledge of the Eastern Iranian production was reason enough to lead a similar study.

Reopening a dusty documentation after about fifty years it has been challenging; even more it was to interpret notes left by the archaeologists, who had unfortunately already passed away. Many questions about the methodology adopted in those years, the choice of photographic shots, the scanty information transmitted, are destined to remain unanswered. Some limitations cannot go untold; the analysis of lost artefacts through a photographic documentation cannot be exhaustive and qualitatively flawless, especially concerning technical issues. Coeval metalwork currently preserved in western and Afghan Museums have come in handy to help fill, as far as possible, this lacuna. Likewise, employed materials have been inferred by pictures and by the established knowledge on Islamic metalworks. In some cases, IsMEO Mission members had written down this information. Autoptic observations were limited to specimens preserved in Rome. Against this background, some general comments can still be made.

The large majority of objects are made of copper alloys; this general definition has been used without any further distinction between bronze and brass, given the impossibility of verifying it. Few tableware objects, a miniature tray and humble items from excavation are made of lead. A certain percentage of this material has been detected also by chemical analyses led on nobler specimens from excavation. Only one object in precious metal appears in the catalogue: a gilded silver spoon-fork (no. 140). Silver is also largely employed in plates on the above-mentioned inkwell preserved in Rome. It is worthy of mentioning that copper and silver were used in the inlay as well. As far as the black and white pictures permit us to observe, the latter technique concerns a small percentage of the specimens presented here (about thirty-six of them are inlaid with copper, twelve with silver, and eight with both metals). The difference in the occurrence of copper inlay and silver was not as relevant as it might be expected. The inlay is employed moderately even on the most refined specimens, it never becomes overwhelming or ground-covering; its role is to underlie some figures or inscriptions and make them shine. From a chronological point of view, the inlay had a major impact on objects datable to the 12th and 13th centuries. Few specimens (such as pear-shaped ewers with a lamp-shaped spout inlaid with copper, the cylindrical ewer no. 104, the sub-globular fluted ewer no. 123, the globular oil-lamp no. 294, and the globular perfume bottle no. 364) confirm, on the other hand, that the technique was already in use, even with silver, in the earlier period as well. Most frequently inlaid objects are ewers, trays and basins (especially those with polylobed rim); small dishes of lampstands; boxes and inkwells.

The niello has been detected in an excellent state of preservation only on silver, thus on objects of the highest quality (see the above-mentioned inkwell and spoon-fork).

The high morphological variety is noteworthy, expressed in particular by some classes such as trays, bowls, ewers, incense burners, inkwells, and generally by the numerous kinds of vanity objects. The research of different shapes responds to functional needs, but it goes beyond it looking for innovative stylistic solutions to satisfy a demanding clientele.

A number of decorative features typical of the Eastern Iranian production can be observed, with an inclination in favour of astrological representations and symbols. Among these, this catalogue boasts the earliest representation of the zodiac on an Iranian metalwork (no. 156). The prominent role of writing in Islamic art is evident. Inscriptions are mainly regarded as a decorative and well-wishing element, and only occasionally as a vehicle of information. Benedictory expressions in fact are so standardised that they render an actual reading unnecessary; the graphic sequence of well-wishing terms pledges, in fact, a positive effect on the recipient through a visual communication as long as some specific criteria are respected. Variations such as the choice of uncommon terms, the presence of shortened or split terms, and the omission of the articles represent clues for specific cultural trends related to the chronological period. Similar features have allowed for the dating of metalworks to the Samanid or Ghaznavid period. Five artisans' signatures have been detected, but only one name (no. 96) includes the *nisba* Sijzī. This geographical reference represents a further confirmation that the metalwork production established in the area of Sijistan/Sistan was developed well enough and aware of its capabilities so as to induce personal signatures.

Objects' chronology must be inferred from features and through comparison with other known metalworks. Single artefacts have been dated relying on peculiar scripts or motifs, or because of a shape soon abandoned in favour of different ones. But in most cases, dating can be very tricky, especially within homogenous productions or in the absence of specific features. Among earlier specimens can be noticed a preference for cast elements, while in the 12th-13th century raised objects spread and decoration increased. Engraved and inlaid details gained importance, even on repoussé metalworks; decorative motifs required a prearranged organization of frames, bands and roundels, so as to obtain a balance between full and empty spaces.

Given the uncertainty surrounding metalwork provenance, it can be interesting to investigate how collections were composed. The few artefacts exhibited in Kandahar "City Hall" came from the city itself and the nearby area, but there was also a stirrup from Ghazni, very similar to another specimen with the same provenance housed in the Kabul Museum. This cannot come as much of a surprise, since a road connected Ghazni and Kandahar already during the ancient period. Metalwork in the Mazar-i Sharif Museum had local or unknown provenance, but the three cauldrons (nos. 148-150), one cylindrical mortar (no. 407) and one sub-globular cosmetic mortar (no. 376) share a typological feature: they all are sturdy, cast objects. The Kabul Museum, thanks to its prestige, boasted the most complete collection, in terms of objects' typologies and models. Many of the best artefacts came from Ghazni.

The Rawza Museum collection had a peculiar composition: it was extremely rich and varied in oil-lamps, lampstands and their components, and cutlery (either excavated or not). Some objects were attested only through chronologically or decoratively marked models. These included incense burners showing early shapes (cubic, bowl-shaped), mortars with almond-shaped bosses in relief, and cylindrical ewers dating back to the 12th century onward. Specific models absent from the other Afghan collections included ovoid jugs (nos. 82-85), pear-shaped ewers with lamp-shaped spout (nos. 93-96), multi-wicked oil-lamps (nos. 325-329), parallelepiped and hexagonal inkwells (nos. 397-399; the hexagonal specimen probably had never been exhibited in the Rawza Museum, but it was housed in Ghazni storeroom). A general preference for small objects related to personal use emerged as well. Moreover, the collection stands out for the high tin bronze production (bowls, spoon-ladles and basins), which was almost entirely housed there. Further high tin bronze bowls and a colander purchased in Ghazni were later donated to the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale. This data probably indicates Ghazni as a production centre. Reasons behind this trend could be manifold. First, tin was a rare and thus expensive material in the Islamic lands; Ghazni was lucky enough to enjoy a tin mine

about 75 km far from the city, and, at least during its golden age, also the economic resources for purchasing what might have lacked. Secondly, even if very few objects can demonstrate a silverware production in Ghazni, historical sources are rich in references to such precious items and the activity of court workshops. The high tin bronze probably spread as a cheaper, and more orthodox, imitation of silver. Still it was a luxury not meant for common people. It is likely to imagine that it had great success among wealthy classes in an area where silverware already had a strong tradition. In fact, most of high tin bronze objects date to the earliest period (10th-11th century). What is most interesting is the existence of a luxury production clearly different from the common one. Some specimens, in fact, present an outstanding decoration, much more elaborate and onerous in terms of artisanship compared with the typical elementary motifs punched or chiselled on common high tin bronzes. Some of these features are reminiscent of Sasanian silverware; specifically, the minutely dotted or ring-dotted background and the big flower framed in the central roundel. Others catch the eye of whomever is accustomed to Ghaznavid art; the dominant role of inscriptions and the peculiar kind of Kufic and cursive scripts, the presence of chevrons, and the single scroll with trilobed flowers running above the text. The provenance of these artefacts from the Rawza Museum or Ghazni itself represents a further confirmation for the cultural milieu in which they originated. Then the high tin bronze production continued, in smaller numbers during the later period, as well.

Another group of objects, composed by some tableware and a buckler (no. 423), share many features that could allow them to be identified as issued by a specific workshop. These raised artefacts were part of different collections but all come from Ghazni. They present a ring-dotted background, funnelled bands and sections isolating decorative areas, motifs in repoussé made on a monumental scale and full of engraved details. Further rectangular trays of unknown provenance, whose model is traditionally ascribed to 12th century Sistan, could be associated with this production. Should we identify in Ghazni such a workshop as the place that inherited and developed the Sistani style? This is just one of the questions that naturally arises along with discovering new data and putting together already known ones.

Another interesting question is what part Ghazni really had in the development of an Eastern Iranian taste. The elevated number of artefacts housed in the Rawza Museum and those said to have come from Ghazni can demonstrate a flourishing local production. Ghazni enjoyed wealth and a favourable position as a capital of the Iranian world; it was also the seat of a dynasty particularly keen on art and culture. Excavated metalworks, in fact, satisfy these expectations, attesting originality, technological peculiarity and masterly use of precious metals, as well.

Documented objects trace an interrupted timeline from the 9th to the 13th century, from the early formative period to later outcomes of an already established art. No traces of the ongoing political decay seem to have affected the metalwork production, whose evolution can be observed in its stages especially in those classes of objects counting numerous items.

This catalogue bears witness to self-sufficient production, typologically well developed and highly varied in morphological and decorative models. There was no need to import metalwork, if not to welcome different cultural influences, since local workshops were active and capable of facing any manufacturing. Prototypes certainly are rooted in the ancient Iranian context: Sasanian metalwork represented the starting point, soon overtaken from the morphological point of view, while some of its decorative marks always remained contemporary and often employed to provide an object with a touch of classic fineness.

The role played by the lands on the east of Khurasan in the development of Islamic metalwork is yet to be fully acknowledged. If there was any need, these metalworks allow us to see straight and closely how great the gap is left by the loss of Afghan collections. In any event, it is indeed an honour to have the chance to study them.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A

Metalwork by Original Location

Names of museums and collections are abbreviated according to the following scheme:

KM	Kabul National Museum
RM	Rawa Museum of Islamic Art, Ghazni
MuCIV-MAO	Museo delle Civiltà (section Museo d'arte orientale), Rome
MSM	Mazar-i Sharif Museum
KCH	Kandahar "City Hall"

Cat. no.	KM	RM	MuCIV-MAO	MSM	KCH	<i>Ghazni storeroom</i>
1	•					
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Cat. no.	KM	RM	MuCIV- MAO	MSM	KCH	<i>Ghazni storeroom</i>
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Cat. no.	KM	RM	MuCIV- MAO	MSM	KCH	<i>Ghazni storeroom</i>
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Cat. no.	KM	RM	MuCIV- MAO	MSM	KCH	<i>Ghazni storeroom</i>
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Annex A – Metalwork by Original Location

Cat. no.	KM	RM	MuCIV- MAO	MSM	KCH	<i>Ghazni storeroom</i>
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Cat. no.	KM	RM	MuCIV- MAO	MSM	KCH	<i>Ghazni storeroom</i>
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Annex A – Metalwork by Original Location

Cat. no.	KM	RM	MuCIV- MAO	MSM	KCH	<i>Ghazni storeroom</i>
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Cat. no.	KM	RM	MuCIV- MAO	MSM	KCH	<i>Ghazni storeroom</i>
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Cat. no.	KM	RM	MuCIV- MAO	MSM	KCH	<i>Ghazni storeroom</i>
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ANNEX B

Concordances

The following tables provide concordances between catalogue numbers and the original numbers assigned to items. Cases are varied: the Kabul National Museum assigned an inventory number (KM Inv. no.) composed by a sequence indicating the year and month of acquisition and a progressive number; items housed in the Rawza Museum of Islamic Art had just a progressive number, probably assigned by the IsMEO Italian Archaeological Mission while documenting them. Different objects can bear the same number.

Excavated and purchased items bear an alphanumerical code assigned by the IsMEO Mission (MAIA Inv. no.), according to the following legend:

C = royal palace excavation

T = House of the Lustrewares excavation

V = House of the Lustrewares excavation

Sp = purchase

Some of the items brought from Ghazni to the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale in Rome were given a museum inventory number beyond that assigned in Afghanistan by the IsMEO Mission; they now appear under the acronym MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. Some other items still bear only the Mission inventory number (MAIA Inv. no.). Objects documented in Kandahar "City Hall" and Mazar-i Sharif Museum had no inventory number.

KABUL MUSEUM		KABUL MUSEUM	
Inv. no.	Cat. no.	Inv. no.	Cat. no.
58-2-16	111	58-2-52	2
58-2-17	114	58-2-53	1
58-2-18	108	58-2-54	158
58-2-19	123	58-2-55	159
58-2-20	124	58-2-56	156
58-2-21	91	58-2-58	42
58-2-22	90	58-2-59	15
58-2-23	119	58-2-60	343
58-2-24	359	58-2-61	51
58-2-25	360	58-2-62	155
58-2-26	361	58-2-63	338
58-2-27	364	58-2-64	75
58-2-28	356	58-2-65	86
58-2-29	355	58-2-66	88
58-2-40	333	58-2-68	422
58-2-41	335	58-2-69	344
58-2-42	403	58-2-71	269
58-2-44	180	58-2-72	77
58-2-45	186	58-2-73	273
58-2-46	173	58-2-74	274
58-2-47	191	58-2-75	339
58-2-48	23	58-2-76	280
58-2-49	9	58-2-81	229
58-2-50	11	58-2-82	212
58-2-51	8	58-2-83	201

KABUL MUSEUM	
Inv. no.	Cat. no.
58-2-85/86	426
58-2-88	388
58-2-89	334
58-2-90	78
58-2-91	230
58-2-92	244
58-2-93	245
58-2-94	246
58-2-95	247
58-2-96	249
58-2-97	248

KABUL MUSEUM	
Inv. no.	Cat. no.
58-2-98	239
58-2-99	224, 262
58-2-101	213
58-2-102	71
58-2-104	72
58-2-105	73
58-2-186	116
58-2-187	395
58-2-188	27
58-2-250	185
58-4-1/2	278

RAWZA MUSEUM	
No.	Cat. no.
4	3
6	22
7	405
8	270
9	115
11	198
12	39
13	40
14	358
21	282
22	211, 241
23	243, 264
24	267
25	231
26	232
28	345
29	347
30	12
32	96
33	89
34	404
36	217
37	83
38	196
40	286
41	174
43	406
44	218
45	219
46	220-221, 425
45	184
47	215
48	203
49	206
50	84
51	367
56	268
57	420

RAWZA MUSEUM	
No.	Cat. no.
58	25
59	165
60	14
61	275
62	54
63	59
66	226
67	223
68	210
70	202
71	341-342
73	434
74	265-266
77	436
78	435
80	348-351
81	132-134, 137-139
82	135, 368-374
84	256, 258-259
89	227
91	397-398
92	385
93	36
95	414
96	94
98	209, 240
99	204
100	408
101	97
104	281
105	283
107	109
114	336
115	233
116	19
117	48
118	82
119	38

RAWZA MUSEUM		RAWZA MUSEUM	
No.	Cat. no.	No.	Cat. no.
120	37	166	176
122	228	169	68
123	92	170	74
124	93	171	190
126	164	172	189
127	166	173	415
128	167	174	194
129	163	175	419
131	162	176	170
132	187	177	112
135	199	178	20
136	47	179	188
138	337	180	26
139	362	181	276
140	363	183	375
142	193	184	331
144	106	186	254
145	118	187	238
146	117	190	392
147	136	192	366
149	387	193	95
150	418	194	412
151	205	195	402
152	81	196	200
153	142	197	87
154	252	198	207, 255
155	253	199	222
156	237	200	53
162	18	201	104
163	43	202	284
164	340	203	277
165	183	204	177

ISMEO ITALIAN MISSION				ISMEO ITALIAN MISSION			
MAIA Inv. no.	MuCIV- MAO Inv. no.	Rawza Museum	Cat. no.	MAIA Inv. no.	MuCIV- MAO Inv. no.	Rawza Museum	Cat. no.
C10			391	C5823			353
C11	8368		390	Sp14			214
C2034			352	Sp15	8388		216
C2173	8310		131	Sp37	5953		17
C4063			377	Sp53	8367		394
C4079	8307		146	Sp56	8370		140
C4279	8319		386	Sp108			69
C4478			417	Sp109			61
C4594	8305		437	Sp111			28
C5516	8314		438	Sp112			79
C5517			416	Sp113			70
C5633			145	Sp114			65
C5636			354	Sp117			32
C5785			208	Sp118			33

ISMEO ITALIAN MISSION				ISMEO ITALIAN MISSION			
MAIA Inv. no.	MuCIV- MAO Inv. no.	Rawza Museum	Cat. no.	MAIA Inv. no.	MuCIV- MAO Inv. no.	Rawza Museum	Cat. no.
Sp119			34	T69	8357		128
Sp128			433	T225	8324		129
Sp129			432	T226	8323		130
Sp130			429	V186	8320		384
Sp132			428		5861		260
Sp133			430		5862		153
Sp134			427		5864		160
Sp137			56		5865/6338		64
Sp138			80		5866/6239		147
Sp141			35		5867/6240		67
Sp142			29		5868/6241		58
Sp145			63		5874		357
Sp146			52		5914		6
Sp147			62		5915		7
Sp149			60		5918		271
Sp150			157		5943		421
Sp151			50		5944		24
Sp152			423		5945		113
Sp153		79	141		5946		393
Sp179			432		5948		225
Sp180			31		5949		261
Sp207			30		5954/6721		57
T66			143		5961		110
T67	8356		127		5964		16
T68			144		5965		272

ANNEX C

Classes and Morphologies

The following schemes summarise the functional classes along with the morphologies attested within each class, highlighting the recurrence of each model. Numbers in square brackets refer, in fact, to the items' quantity. As already stated in the foreword to the catalogue, objects' components that have been assigned to a specific model are included in the corresponding morphology. Specimens whose morphology is unknown due to the lack of any picture or information are counted as "unidentified".

TABLEWARE (nos. 1-147)

<i>Trays [35]</i>	rectangular [16]	
	polygonal [4]	
	circular [8]	straight wall [3]
		flared or curved wall [2]
		polylobed wall [2]
hexapod [1]		
unidentified [7]		
<i>Tray-dishes [13]</i>		
<i>Dishes [2]</i>		
<i>Bowls [30]</i>	hemispherical [11]	
	flat base [8]	round wall [4]
		flared wall [4]
	concave base [1]	flared wall
	footed [9]	flared wall [1]
		round wall [5] + lids [2]
high, straight wall [1]		
unidentified [1]		
<i>Mugs [1]</i>		
<i>Jugs [8]</i>	ovoid [4]	
	pear-shaped [4]	
<i>Ewers [37]</i>	ovoid [3]	
	pear-shaped [6] + handle [1]	lamp-shaped spout [4]
	cylindrical [20]	smooth wall [10] + spout [1]
		fluted wall [6] + spout [1]
		faceted wall [1]
	footed [1]	
	sub-globular [7]	smooth [6]
fluted [1]		
unidentified [2]		
spouts		
<i>Cutlery [16]</i>	mono-functional [13]	spoons
		ovoid spoon-bowl [8] hexagonal spoon-bowl [5]
bi-functional [3]		spoon-fork [1] spoon-ladles [2]
<i>Colanders [2]</i>	ladle-shaped [1]	
	bowl-shaped [1]	

COOKING EQUIPMENT (nos. 148-155)

<i>Cauldrons</i> [7]	hemispherical [6]
	cylindrical [1]
<i>Pots</i> [1]	

ABLUTIONS EQUIPMENT (nos. 156-195)

<i>Basins</i> [39]	hemispherical [1]	
	circular [29]	almost hemispherical [1]
		flared wall [1]
		flared wall and rim [2]
		high straight wall, flared rim [1]
		straight wall [11]
	curved wall, polylobed rim [13]	
unidentified [9]		
<i>Basin stands</i> [1]		

LIGHTNING DEVICES (nos. 196-330)

<i>Lampstands components</i> [91]	bases [30]	domed pedestal [6]	
		domed tripod [10] + foot [1]	
		polylobed tripod [13]	
	shafts and shafts' components [36]	cylindrical [2]	
		hexagonal [1]	
		elements of shaft [26]	globular [14]
			pear-shaped [12]
		composite shafts [7]	
		small dishes [14]	
		unidentified [1]	

Lampstands [9]*Candlesticks* [1]

<i>Oil-lamps</i> [41]	one-wick oil-lamps [35]	flat base [4]	open reservoir [2]	almond-shaped [1]
				globular [1]
		smooth foot [8]	closed reservoir [2]	globular [2]
			open reservoir [1]	cup-shaped
			closed reservoir [7]	globular [2]
				almond-shaped [5]
	faceted foot [12]	closed reservoir	almond-shaped	
	missing foot [7]	closed reservoir	globular [1]	
			pipe-shaped [5]	
			almond-shaped [1]	
	re-composed oil-lamps [4]	closed reservoir	globular [2]	
			pipe-shaped [1]	
			almond-shaped [1]	
two-wick oil-lamps [4]		globular [2]		
		rectangular [2]		
three-wick oil-lamps [1]		rectangular		
unidentified [1]				
ring-handle				

THURIFICATION FURNITURE (nos. 331-338)

<i>Incense burners [8]</i>	cubic [2]
	dome-shaped [2] + handle [1]
	cup-shaped [1]
	bowl-shaped [2]

DOMESTIC SUPPLIES (nos. 339-347)

<i>Boxes [6]</i>	circular lids [6]
<i>Vases [3]</i>	pear-shaped [3]

VANITY OBJECTS (nos. 348-389)

<i>Belt fittings [7]</i>	rectangular [4]	
	square [1]	
	flower-shaped [2]	
<i>Perfume bottles [12]</i>	ovoid [4]	
	globular [8]	smooth [7]
		faceted [1]
<i>Perfume sprinkler [1]</i>		
<i>Cosmetic mortars [10]</i>	hemispherical [9]	
	globular [1]	
<i>Kohl flasks [6]</i>	pear-shaped [5]	
	globular [1]	
<i>Kohl sticks [1]</i>		
<i>Unguent containers [4]</i>	ovoid [1]	
	zoomorphic [3]	
<i>Mirrors [1]</i>		

WRITING EQUIPMENT (nos. 390-401)

<i>Inkwells [12]</i>	cylindrical [3] + boxes [4] + lids [2]
	parallelepiped [2]
	hexagonal [1]

PHARMACY EQUIPMENT (nos. 402-415)

<i>Mortars [12]</i>	cylindrical	flat base, flared rim [8]
		flat base and flat protruding rim [1]
		sloping base, flat protruding rim [1]
		flat protruding base and rim [2]
<i>Pestles [6]</i>	sceptre-shaped [5]	
	flared [1]	

 TOOLS (nos. 416-417)

Tongs [1]

Tweezers [1]

 BUCKLERS OR CYMBALS (nos. 418-423)

Bucklers or Cymbals [6]

 stepped [4]

domed [2]

 HORSE HARNESS (nos. 424-426)

Stirrups [4]

 MAGIC OBJECTS (nos. 427-436)

Amulets [10]

 crescent-shaped [9]

circular [1]

 MINIATURE OBJECTS (nos. 437-439)

Cylindrical vessels [1]

Trays [1]

Dishes [1]

ANNEX D

Excavated Metalwork by Area of Provenance

Annex D presents all the metalwork excavated by the IsMEO Archaeological Mission in the Ghazni royal palace and in the House of the Lustrewares. The most relevant ones (twenty-four items) have been included into the catalogue; some more are discussed in the chapter 4; the others consist in small jewels, tools and fragments, which sometimes are difficult to identify.

The two following tables provide the items' definition and size, the current location, the inventory number given by the IsMEO Mission (MAIA Inv. no.) and the negative number of pictures. The material is specified only when it differs from the copper alloy or it is not limited to it. For those metalworks appearing in the catalogue, the number is stated in the first column.

Finds excavated in the royal palace are sorted according to a clockwise path inside the palace itself, going from the south-western area to the north-eastern one.

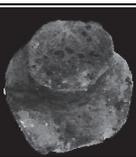
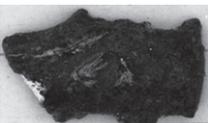
Ghazni royal palace

Private apartments (room III)	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 391	C10	Unknown location	
Cat. no. 390	C11	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8368	
Finger-ring, lost bezel Ø 1.7 cm	C103	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3296/1

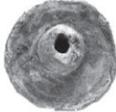
Private apartments (ivan III)	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Washer (iron) Ø 2.5 cm	C4064	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 Digital photo
Cotter pin (iron) L. 5.5 cm	C4065	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 Digital photo
Hinge element (?) (iron) L. 6 cm	C4066	Unknown location	Unavailable
5 nails (iron) L. 6.5 cm; 6 cm; 5.5 cm; 4.5 cm; 4 cm	C4067	Unknown location	Unavailable
Bell-shaped element (iron) Ø 5.4 cm, h. 4.5 cm	C4069	Unknown location	Unavailable
Vessel edge	C4649	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3295/11
Finger-ring with fake square bezel Ø 1.9 cm	C8	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8308	 Neg. no. 3296/1
Private apartments (court III)	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Finger-ring (copper alloy and glass paste) Ø 1.8 cm	C43	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8309	 Neg. no. 3296/1
Beaded earring Ø 1.5 cm	C130	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3295/10
Wire with bulbs	C1043b	Unknown location	Unavailable
Cat. no. 417	C4478	Unknown location	

Private apartments (corridor III)	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Hinge plate (iron) 8.5 × 8.5 cm	C4084	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 Digital photo
Small knife blade (iron) 5 × 1.2 cm	C4085	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 Digital photo
2 nails with flat large head (iron) L. 6.3 cm; 5.5 cm	C4087	Unknown location	Unavailable
Private apartments (ivan II)	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Bell (iron)	C1044bis	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 Digital photo
Cat. no. 131	C2173	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8310	
Chain fragments (iron) L. of link 6 cm	C4106		 Digital photo
Private apartments (room II)	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Fragment of bracelet Ø 4.3 cm	C4108		 Neg. no. 3295/9
Room IV	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Seal-stone finger- ring, lost bezel Ø 2.3 cm	C132	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8304	 Neg. no. 3296/1
Washer (lead) Ø 2.6 cm	C4007	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	Unavailable

Central courtyard	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Spindle-shaped bead L. 2.5 cm, max Ø 0.7 cm	C1854	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8317	 Neg. no. 3295/10
Sickle (iron) L. 15 cm	C2021	Kabul Museum storeroom	 Negg. Nos. 3937/4-5; digital photo
Cat. no. 352	C2034	MuCIV-MAO	
Triangular hold, possibly belonging to a large vessel 6.7 × 3.6, w. 1.2 cm	C3914	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3295/5
Cat. no. 145	C5633	Unknown location	
Arrowhead (iron) L. 8.6 cm	C5988	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	Unavailable Negg. nos. 3939/3-4
Room VI	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Harness stud or button (?) Ø 2.5 cm, h. 1 cm	C5494	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3295/1
Room VII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Rod with triangular section ending in a round plate punched as a rosette 3.5 × 0.4 cm, w. 0.1 cm	C5998	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3938/7

Rooms VII-VIII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 437	C4593	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8305	
Room IX	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Ring	C1042b	Unknown location	Unavailable Neg. no. 3295/11
Four nails (iron)	C2132	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 Digital photo
Pyramidal arrowhead (iron) L. 6 cm	C3998	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8316	 Digital photo
Button (iron) in form of heart-shaped leaf with big flattened peduncle in the centre 3 × 2.6 cm, h. 1 cm	C5991	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3939/1
Plate engraved on the two sides with palmettes patterns 2.6 × 1.2 × 0.25 cm	C5996	Unknown location	 Negg. nos. 3938/3, 4
Clip (?) with semi- circular section with pointed ending Chord 1.2 cm, l. 0.5 cm, w. 0.3 cm	C5997	Unknown location	 Negg. nos. 3941/8, 9

Room X	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 377	C4063	Unknown location	
Cat. no. 146	C4079	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8307	
Cat. no. 438	C5516	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8314	
Room XI	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Hinge element L. 5.4 cm, w. 0.2 cm	C4080	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3295/1
Circular plate (2 fragments), possibly part of a small mirror Ø 6.3 cm, w. 0.4 cm	C4081	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8311	 Neg. no. 3295/9
Room XII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Open bracelet Ø 6.4 cm, 47 gr	C1861	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8315	 Neg. no. 3295/9

Room XLI	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Pear-shaped pendant L. 2.4 cm	C5521	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3295/10
Room XLI	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 354	C5636	Unknown location	
Two convex and very thin foil fragments, with small holes along the edge Max size for each fragment 8 cm, w. 0.5 cm	C5638a-b	Kabul Museum storeroom	 Negg. nos. 3936/5, 6
Room XXX	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Disc with central hole Ø 2.6 cm	C4513	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3295/4
Room XXXI	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Finger-ring Ø 2.5 cm, 7 gr	C4136	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8318	 Neg. no. 3296/1
Washer (lead)	C4475	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3295/8

Room XXIII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Little finger-ring Ø 2 cm	C4105	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3296/1
Bell Ø 1.5 cm, h. 1.5 cm	C4115	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 Neg. no. 3295/1
Small chain with braided links L. 6.5 cm	C5518	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3295/10
Room XXIII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Two ornamental fragments: A) in form of half leaf (2 fr.); B) small plaque with expanded central section A) 2.9 × 1.8 × 0.5 cm; B) 2.7 × 0.9 × 0.5 cm	C6063	Unknown location	 Negg. nos. 3938/1, 2
Room XXIV	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Scissors (iron) Max l. 9 cm	C4091	Unknown location	Unavailable
Fragment of knife blade (iron) Max l. 9 cm	C4092	Unknown location	Unavailable
Bell-shaped element Ø 1.7 cm, h. 1.5 cm	C4102	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 Neg. no. 3295/1
Fragment of chain L. 4.5 cm, Ø 0.4 cm	C4103	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 Neg. no. 3295/9

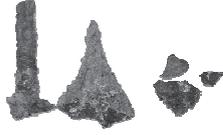
Room XIII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
28 nails (iron)	C6067	Unknown location	 <p>Negg. nos. 3937/6-8</p>
28 nails (iron)	C6068	Unknown location	Unavailable
Room XIV	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Bracelet Ø 5 cm	C4090	Unknown location	 <p>Neg. no. 3295/5</p>
Room XIV	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 320	C4094	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8306	
Room XVIII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
2 bracts of necklace, decorated slightly on relief by a bird assaulting a gazelle and a Kufic inscription (unreadable) Ø 2.2 cm	C4110	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 <p>Neg. no. 3295/10</p>
5 links of chain closed by tiny spheres Ø of each link 1.3 cm	C4111	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 <p>Neg. no. 3295/10</p>
Cat. no. 386	C4279	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8319	

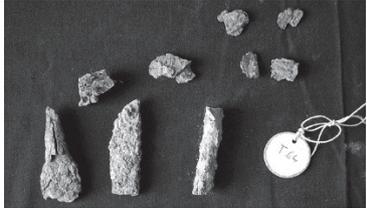
Room XVIII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Two fragments of pierced foil 3.5 × 1.2 × 0.1 cm; 1.5 × 1.2 × 0.2 cm	C5796	Kabul Museum storeroom	 Negg. nos. 3938/1, 2
“Corridor” XVIII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 208	C5785	Unknown location	
Fragment of lampstand foot in form of bird-head (?) Engraved eye. 1.8 × 1.8 × 0.15 cm	C5950	Kabul Museum storeroom	 Negg. nos. 3838/3, 4; 3938/3, 4
Room XVII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Finger-ring with fake rectangular bezel Ø 1.6 cm	C4062	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3296/1
19 fragments of spade (iron) Max h. 17 cm, l. 25.5 cm	C6064	Kabul Museum storeroom	 Negg. nos. 3930/6, 7
Ring (iron) Ø 10 cm, h. 4.3 cm	C6065	Unknown location	Unavailable Negg. nos. 3929/5, 8
Knife handle (iron) L. 9 cm	C6066	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3929/7

Entrance, external front	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 353	C5823	Unknown location	
Room LII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Small lid with hold 2.8 × 1 cm, Ø 1.7 cm	C5495	Unknown location	 Neg. no. 3295/1
Antechamber LII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 416	C5517	Unknown location	
Unknown provenance	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Pierced foil	C566	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	Unavailable

House of the Lustrewares

Room IV	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 399	Unavailable	Unknown location	
Room II	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Flat vase (lead and copper)	T62	Unknown location	 Negg. nos. 711/10; 1143/6
Knife blade (iron) L. 16 cm	T65	Kabul Museum storeroom	 Digital photo 2004
Cat. no. 143	T66	Unknown location	
Cat. no. 127	T67	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8356	
Cat. no. 144	T68	Unknown location	
Cat. no. 128	T69	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8357	

Room VII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 384	V186	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8320	
Horseshoe (iron) L. 3 cm	V187	Unknown location	Unavailable
Room VIII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Cat. no. 129	T225	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8324	
Cat. no. 130	T226	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8323	
Room XIII	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Disc (restored)	V199/7	Unknown location	Unavailable
Disc Ø 1.9 cm	V199/10	Unknown location	Unavailable
Foil	V199/14	Unknown location	Unavailable
Ring Ø 0.7 cm	V199/15	Unknown location	Unavailable
Foil (iron)	V199/16	Unknown location	Unavailable
Nail (iron)	V199/17	Unknown location	Unavailable
Bell Ø 1.8 cm	V213/1	MuCIV-MAO without Inv. no.	 Unavailable
Washer (iron)	V213/3	Unknown location	Unavailable
Washers (lead)	V215/8	Unknown location	Unavailable
Washers (lead) Ø 2.9 cm	V215/9	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8322	 Digital photo
Outside towers 1-2	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Heart-shaped hinge element (iron) L. 2.5 cm	T235/1	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8337	 Digital photo

Outside towers 1-2	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Heart-shaped hinge element (iron) L. 2.5 cm	T235/2	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8338	 Digital photo
Foot fragment with sole L. 1.7 cm	T235/3	MuCIV-MAO Inv. no. 8339	 Digital photo
Unknown provenance	MAIA Inv. no.	Current location	Photo
Knife blade (iron) L. 20 cm	T63	Unknown location	Unavailable
Knife blade (iron) L. 15 cm	T64	Kabul Museum storeroom	 Digital photo 2004

INDICES

Benedictory Terms and Formulas

Benedictory terms are enlisted in Arabic alphabetical order without the article for easiness of reading, notwithstanding the article usually precedes them. Taken into account the state of preservation of items and the available photographic documentation, the benedictory terms that has been possible to detect are necessarily partial.

Interrupted or shortened terms have been included as well. The mentioned terms can repeat more than one time in the same item.

Arabic term	English translation	Cat. nos.
اقبال	prosperity	4, 6-13, 17, 21, 22, 24, 46, 51, 76, 77, 86, 88, 89, 116, 124, 126, 160, 184, 201, 203, 260, 264, 270, 271, 311, 338, 339, 358, 367, 391, 395, 396, 400, 405, 409, 413, 419, 421, 422
اله / الة		110, 124, 271, 272
باقية	eternity	160
بر	devotion	5, 20, 40, 45, 108, 110, 113, 124, 177, 182, 197, 214, 225, 269, 286, 332, 343, 346, 364, 390, 401, 405, 408, 413, 418
بركة	blessing	5, 8, 22, 24, 36, 39, 40, 46-48, 50, 52, 82, 92, 104, 110, 116, 119, 123, 124, 140, 156, 177, 184, 191, 200, 201, 212, 216, 255, 263, 267, 272, 279, 280, 286, 335, 338, 361, 365, 391, 396, 401, 402, 405, 409, 413, 420, 421
بقاء	eternal life	4, 9-12, 22, 50, 87, 116, 156, 160, 191, 201, 270, 272, 338, 391, 396, 405, 409, 419
تأيد	divine support	89, 108, 111-114, 142, 160, 175, 177, 178, 180, 181, 182, 184, 186, 197, 198, 231, 233, 239, 344, 346, 363, 402, 413
تامة	plenitude	46, 76, 89, 184, 396, 409
د		161, 413, 418
دافعة	impetus	116
دو		2, 124, 364
دوا		11
دوالة	fortune	88, 89, 124, 160, 271, 364, 400

Arabic term	English translation	Cat. nos.
دوامة	endurance	77, 116, 160, 181, 191, 332
دولة	fortune	6-13, 18, 22, 24, 46, 51, 76, 77, 82, 86, 116, 156, 160, 184, 203, 214, 216, 360, 264, 270, 272, 307, 311, 338, 339, 367, 391, 395, 396, 402, 405, 409, 413, 418, 419, 421, 422
راحة	comfort	51, 159, 160, 184, 191, 396
رحمة	mercy	51, 184, 279, 338
رياضة	self-restraint	396
زياد	increase	173
زيادة	increase	396
سد		307, 391
سا		271, 402
سار		271
سالة		271
سر	esoteric knowledge	24, 124, 279, 307
سرور	joy	52, 63, 140, 156, 203, 215, 279, 280, 402
سعادة	happiness	7, 22, 44, 50-53, 76, 89, 116, 124, 156, 160, 161, 176, 184, 195, 201, 203, 264, 270, 271, 272, 279, 338, 339, 346, 391, 396, 400, 405, 409, 419
سلا		42, 222, 339, 360, 391
سلامة	spiritual integrity	22, 41, 44, 46, 50-53, 76, 82, 116, 140, 156, 160, 176, 184, 191, 195, 201, 212, 214, 216, 264, 267, 270-272, 279, 312, 335, 339, 346, 360, 365, 391, 396, 400, 401, 405-407, 409, 419, 421
سلتامة	spiritual integrity	76
(سلامة + تامة)	and plenitude	
شاكرة	gratitude	25, 159, 184, 407
شفاعة	prophetic intercession	22, 24, 51, 76, 116, 159, 161, 176, 184, 201, 271, 400, 407
شكرة	thankfulness	25, 46, 159, 161, 184, 222, 272, 405
شكرامة	thankfulness and	76
(شكرة + كرامة)	prestige	
صاكة	silence	116

Arabic term	English translation	Cat. nos.
عا		6, 9-11, 18, 191
عافية	wellness	6-11, 13, 44, 46, 51, 116, 159, 160, 184, 191, 222, 271
عالية	sublimity	169
عدل	righteousness	50
عز	glory	4, 6-13, 21, 24, 46, 51, 76, 77, 86, 88, 89, 116, 124, 126, 160, 183, 184, 201, 203, 260, 264, 270, 271, 311, 338, 339, 358, 360, 367, 391, 395, 396, 400, 405, 409, 413, 419, 421, 422
عسا / عشا		124
علو	elevation	184
عناية	solicitude/care	116, 159, 160, 173, 421
غاية	intensity	3, 396
غبطة	beatitude	63
غنا	wealth	184, 421
فائدة	spiritual benefit	184
قادرة	capability	4, 51
قرا	hospitality	116
كة		2, 140, 177, 364
كر		201
كرامة	prestige	159, 160, 184, 213, 269, 307, 308, 391, 409
نجمة	fortune	338
ناصرة	that which makes victorious	51, 116
نصرة	victory	22, 51, 116, 156, 279, 313, 365, 402, 405
نعمة	grace	50, 116, 156, 184, 191, 279, 338, 409
يمن	good fortune	2, 22, 36, 40, 41, 45-48, 50, 52, 82, 83, 104, 110, 116, 123, 124, 140, 156, 184, 201, 206, 212, 215, 216, 228, 229, 232, 263, 267, 269, 272, 279, 280, 286, 309, 316, 332, 335, 338, 343, 364, 390, 391, 396, 397, 398, 401, 409, 420, 421

Closing Formulas

Arabic formula	English translation	Cat. nos.
البقاء دائما	eternal life perpetually	396
البقاء دائما لصاحبه	eternal life perpetually to its owner	116
البقاء لصاحبه	eternal life to its owner	4, 12, 22, 160, 191, 201, 270, 272, 391, 409, 419
البقاء لصا	eternal life to its ow(ner)	396
لصاحبه	to its owner	8, 13, 46, 184, 214, 264, 279, 280
لصا	to its ow(ner)	87, 422

Maxims

Arabic formula	English translation	Cat. nos.
احفظ لسانك لا(ل)تقول فتبتلا ان البلا(ء) موكل بالمنطق لكل اجل كتاب لكل عمل ثواب	<i>Curb your tongue do not talk in fact the scourge is responsible for the speech every moment is inscribed, every work is rewarded</i>	52
لكل عمل رجال و لكل اجل كتاب	<i>To every work [its] accomplisher, every moment is inscribed</i>	214

Published or Quoted Items

The distinction between items already published or just quoted by other scholars is specified in catalogue entries. The following index is designed to provide a faster consulting. 'Quoted' refers to those metalwork only called in for comparison by other scholars without providing a complete description.

Published Items

Cat. no.	References
6	Di Flumeri Vatielli 1993b.
8	Ettinghausen 1957, 344, fig. 32; Scerrato 1961, 160-161, no. 169; Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 54-57, pl. VII, fig. 2.
9	Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 60-61, pl. XI, fig. 6.
11	Scerrato 1961, 161, no. 170; Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 61, fig. 8.
12	Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 58-59, pl. IX, fig. 4.
15	Scerrato 1961, 161, no. 171.
22	Melikian-Chirvani 1974a, 45-46, pl. XIV, fig. 17.
39	Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 61, fig. 23.
40	Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 61, figs. 21-22.
45	Scerrato 1959b, 106, no. 8, fig. 17.
51	Scerrato 1961, 161-162, no. 172; Rowland 1966, no. 103.
57	Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 304, no. 4, pl. 49b.
58	Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 302, no. 2, pl. 48b.
64	Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 302, no. 3, pl. 49a.
66	Scerrato 1964, 686, no. 5, pl. 8, fig. 17.
67	Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 308-309, no. 7, pl. 51a.
75	Scerrato 1961, 159-160, no. 168; Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 63, pl. XVI, fig. 12; 1982b, fig. 61.
76	Melikian-Chirvani 1977a, 191-193, pl. 7; 1982a, 61, 63, fig. 27.
77	Scerrato 1961, 162-163, no. 173; Melikian-Chirvani 1977a, 198-200, pl. 9b.
88	Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 68-69, pl. XXI, fig. 18.
89	Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 62, fig. 31.
93	Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 201, pl. XV, fig. 11.
96	Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 199-201, pls. XIII-XIV, figs. 9-10.
100	Scerrato 1964, 699, no. 11, pls. XVIII-XIX, figs. 33-36.
101	Scerrato 1964, 700, no. 12, pls. XX-XXI, figs. 37-38.
103	Scerrato 1964, 700, no. 13, pl. XXI, fig. 39.
105	Scerrato 1959b, 104-105, no. 6, figs. 14-15.
108	Scerrato 1961, 152, no. 157; Rowland 1966, no. 109.
111	Rowland 1966, no. 108.
114	Scerrato 1961, 151, no. 156, pl. LXII; Rowland 1966, no. 106.
116	Scerrato 1961, 150-151, no. 155.
121	Scerrato 1964, 699, no. 10, pls. XVI-XVII, figs. 30-3
122	Scerrato 1964, 696-699, no. 9, pls. XII-XV, figs. 25-29.
123	Melikian-Chirvani 1979a, 27-29, pl. XIV, figs. 18-19.
124	Melikian-Chirvani 1979a, 26-27, pl. XIII, fig. 17.
125	Scerrato 1961, 150, no. 154.
140	Di Flumeri Vatielli 2018.
147	Di Flumeri Vatielli 2003a, 307, no. 6, pl. 50b.
151	Scerrato 1964, 687, no. 7, pl. X, figs. 21-22; Allan 1976, II, 608.
152	Scerrato 1964, 687, no. 6, pl. IX, figs. 18-20; Allan 1976, II, 608.

- 154 Scerrato 1964, 700, no. 14, pl. XXII, figs. 40-41.
 156 Ettinghausen 1957, 338, figs. 10, 14; Ivanov 1970, no. 5; Allan 1976, II, 603-604; Scerrato 1981, figs. 1a-h.
 168 Scerrato 1964, 701, no. 19, pl. XXVII, fig. 47.
 169 Scerrato 1964, 700-701, no. 16, pls. XXIV-XXV, figs. 44-45a.
 171 Scerrato 1964, 701, no. 21, pl. XXVIII, figs. 48-49.
 172 Scerrato 1964, 700, no. 15, pl. XXIII, figs. 42-43.
 173 Scerrato 1961, 157-158, no. 166.
 175 Scerrato 1959b, 103-104, no. 5, figs. 12-13.
 181 Scerrato 1959b, 102-103, no. 4, figs. 9-11.
 184 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 61, fig. 26.
 185 Scerrato 1961, 158-159, no. 167.
 195 Scerrato 1959b, 101, no. 2, figs. 6-7; Allan 1976, II, 766, fig. 60.
 198 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 56, fig. 16.
 201 Scerrato 1961, 156-157, no. 164, pl. LXII; Rowland 1966, no. 107; Allan 1976, II, 713, fig. 48.
 203 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 56, fig. 15.
 212 Scerrato 1961, 155, no. 163.
 215 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 56, fig. 14.
 224 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 56, fig. 13.
 242 Scerrato 1961, 155, no. 163.
 278 Scerrato 1961, 163-164, nos. 174-175; 1964, 684-686, nos. 2-3, pls. VI-VII, figs. 11-15.
 279 Scerrato 1964, 678-684, no. 1, pls. I-IV, figs. 1-10; Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 34-35, fig. 10.
 280 Scerrato 1961, 155, no. 162, pl. LXI; Rowland 1966, no. 104; Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 192-194, pls. VII-VIII, figs. 3-4; 1982a, 34, fig. 9.
 303 Scerrato 1964, 696, no. 8, pl. XI, figs. 23-24.
 307 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 57.
 311 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 60, figs. 19-20.
 317 Scerrato 1959b, 106-107, no. 9, fig. 18.
 332 Scerrato 1959b, 99-101, no. 1, figs. 1-5; Allan 1976, II, 750.
 333 Scerrato 1961, 153-154, no. 160; Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 32, fig. 7.
 334 Allan 1976, I, 368, II, 839, fig. 83.
 335 Scerrato 1961, 154, no. 161, pl. LXIII; Rowland 1966, no. 105; Allan 1976, II, 748.
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 338 Allan 1976, II, 764, fig. 59.
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 346 Scerrato 1959b, 102, no. 3, figs. 8a-b; Allan 1976, II, 776, fig. 62.
 347 Melikian-Chirvani 1975b, 203-204, pls. XVIII-XIX, figs. 14-15.
 355 Allan 1976, II, 596, fig. 21.
 356 Scerrato 1961, 152, no. 158.
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 361 Allan 1976, II, 598, fig. 22.
 365 Scerrato 1959b, 105-106, no. 7, fig. 16.
 376 Scerrato 1971a, figs. 1-2.
 388 Allan 1976, II, 834.
 390 Scerrato 1959a, 39; 1959b, 96-97; 1966, 62, fig. 16; Allan 1976, I, 289-291; Laviola 2017b, figs. 2, 4-7.
 391 Scerrato 1959a, 39; 1959b, 39, 96-97; 1966, 62; Allan 1976, II, 728, no. 7; Laviola 2017b, figs. 3, 8-12; Graves 2018, 108, 119-124, figs. 3.20-3.22.
 396 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 69, fig. 39.
 399 Laviola 2017b, figs. 13-15.
 403 Rice, Rowland 1971, pl. 180; Allan 1976, II, 664, fig. 37.
 405 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 67, fig. 34.
 409 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 67, fig. 35.
 411 Scerrato 1964, 686, no. 4, pl. VIII, fig. 16.
 413 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 69, figs. 36-37.
 418 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 70, fig. 42.

- 424 Scerrato 1959b, 107, no. 10, figs. 19-21; 1971b, 457, no. 3, pls. III-V, figs. 6, 8-9.
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 426 Scerrato 1971b, 458, pl. VI, figs. 13-14.
 427 Scerrato 1972b, 6, 23, figs. 6a-b, pl. I c-d.
 428 Scerrato 1972b, 8, 23, figs. 7a-b, pl. I e-f.
 429 Scerrato 1972b, 8, 23, figs. 8a-b, pl. II a-b.
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 432 Scerrato 1972b, 9, 24, fig. 10, pl. II e.
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 439 Scerrato 1964, 705, no. 31, pl. XXIX, figs. 50-50a.

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- 1 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 61, fig. 29.
 4 Melikian-Chirvani 1975a, 54, pl. VI, fig. 1.
 5 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 62, fig. 30.
 8 Fischer 1978, 313, fig. 6.13.
 75 Tabbaa 1987, 98, figs. 1c, 6.
 116 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 118, fig. 45a.
 120 Melikian-Chirvani 1974b, 130, fig. 8.
 140 Scerrato 1966, 50; Di Flumeri Vatielli 2010, fig. 35.
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 162 Melikian-Chirvani 1974b, 141, fig. 28.
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 184 Scerrato 1981, 232, fig. 2.
 299 Grube 1981, fig. 325.
 308 Di Flumeri Vatielli 2010, fig. 39.
 334 Rice, Rowland 1971, pls. 202-203.
 355 Rice, Rowland 1971, pl. 181.
 359 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 29, fig. 5.
 361 Rice, Rowland 1971, pl. 182.
 388 Rice, Rowland 1971, pl. 204.
 390 Di Flumeri Vatielli 2010, 70, fig. 69.
 396 Scerrato 1959a, fn. no. 38; Rice, Rowland 1971, pls. 200-201; Scerrato 1981,
 238, fns. nos. 16, 42, fig. 3.
 407 Scerrato 1983, fig. 6.1.
 409 Melikian-Chirvani 1974a, 78, pl. XVI, fig. 20; Scerrato 1983, fig. 6.14.
 411 Scerrato 1983, fig. 6.12.
 423 Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, 70.
 425 Rice, Rowland 1971, pls. 195-196; Melikian-Chirvani 1982c, figs. 68-69.

Photographic Negatives

The following list of negatives is related to black and white pictures taken in Afghanistan by members of the Italian Archaeological Mission from 1957 to 1978. The acronym FB refers to the name of Francesca Bonardi, photographer of the Italian Mission during the years 1960, 1966-1972.

Cat. no.	Pl.	Neg. no.
1	1	175/2; 586/4
2	1	175/14; 586/13
3	2	7942/12
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8	4	175/4; 586/1
9	4	152/14; 593/16
10	4	7942/11
11	5	152/16; 593/16
12	5	7938/4
13	5	7930/12
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20	8	7939/8
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26	11	7939/11
27	11a	167/14; 609/8
	11b	167/15; 609/6
36	12	7945/6
37	12a	7935/6
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38	13a	7935/3
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39	14	7946/10
40	14a	7946/13
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41	15	159/12
42	15a	150/10; 603/6
	15b	150/13; 603/8
43	16	7944/7
44	16a	159/4; 615/4
	16b	159/1
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46	17a	178/1; 604/1
	17b	without Neg. no.
47	18a	7949/16
	18b	7949/17
48	18	7932/15
49	19a	7931/17
	19b	7931/18
50	20	1682/3

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51	21	168/9; 620/9
52	21a	1680/4
	21b	7930/6
53	22a	7940/6
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54	22	7936/7
55	22	7936/7
56	23a	7931/15
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59	25	7936/8
60	25a	9634/3
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61	26a	7931/12
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62	27a	7930/5
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63	28a	1679/6
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65	29a	7931/6
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66	30	186/12
68	30	7944/16
69	30	7931/8
71	31	158/2
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75	32a	175/12; 586/12
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76	33	7938/2
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83	35	7938/8
84	35	without Neg. no.
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86	36	152/12; 593/12
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88	37	152/13; 593/13
89	37a	7934/11
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90	38	179/9; 529/9
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101	43a	188/16
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102	43	without Neg. no.
103	43	184/8
104	44a	7940/10
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105	45a	without Neg. no.
	45b	without Neg. no.
106	45a	7933/12
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107	46a	7941/8
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108	46a	154/12
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112	48	7939/8
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116	50a	179/5; 592/5
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120	51	4574/2
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128	57	1169/5
129	57	without Neg. no.
130	57	without Neg. no.
131	57	1422/2; 3295/3
132	57a	7946/11
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134	57a	7946/12
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135	58	7939/13
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145	61	3938/7, 8
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178	75	190/8
180	76a	150/3; 603/2
	76b	150/7; 603/4
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183	77a	7944/9
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184	78a	1024/2-FB
	78b	1024/6-FB
186	79	167/16; 609/4
187	79	7949/6
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193	80	7933/5
194	80	7939/5
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215	89a	1026/8-FB; 3944/8
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216	90a	171/8-FB; 1212/8
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223	93	7936/12
224	93	without Neg. no.
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236	95	7946/17
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The volume presents the Islamic metalwork collections documented by the IsMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan (1957-1978), largely still unpublished today and sadly lost for the majority. The approximately 439 artefacts and fragments, datable to the chronological range between the 9th and 13th century, attest to a rich and varied production that deserves to be part of the scholarly discussion on Islamic medieval metalwork. The study offers a catalogue organised in 14 functional classes as well as a morphological, decorative and epigraphic analysis of the artefacts. Moreover, the analysis of the finds emerged from the excavations in Ghazni and those allegedly coming from the same site confirms the role played by the city as an important production centre.

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