

ISLAMIC PORTABLE OBJECTS IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

TREASURIES OF THE LATIN WEST

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## Abstract

Over the last 1,300 years Europe and the Islamic world have confronted each other. The dynamic and even tense relationship between them has caused cultural interchanges which are clearly marked on both. The present study focuses on portable Islamic objects in European church treasuries and, therefore, belongs to the large field of research of East-West interaction.

A corpus of Islamic artefacts still or formerly in the possession of the medieval church treasuries of Europe has not as yet been the subject of a wholly comprehensive examination, and the present study is intended to contribute to this as yet largely unexplored field.

The scope of this study is confined to the Middle Ages, namely from the mid 7th century until ca.1300, with the exception of medieval Spain which is dealt with up to the fall of the Nasrids in 1492. It examines East-West interactions only from one side of the coin, namely Islam in the West, and is restricted to the Latin West. Unlike former approaches, this study does not discuss the impact or the influence that these artefacts had on the art of the West, but tries to answer how Islamic artefacts reached the Latin West and what the attitude towards them in the ecclesiastical sphere was.


The body of the thesis is divided into three main parts. In the first part the principal different 'routes' by which Islamic objects reached the Latin West are examined. The

objects are classified into five groups. The first chapter deals with Islamic vessels which were brought by pilgrims as souvenirs from the Near East. The second one focuses on the exchange of royal presents. The third one examines the accounts referring to the dispersion of the Fatimid treasury. In the fourth chapter the question of booty and of the trophies of the Crusaders is discussed. In the fifth chapter the Mediterranean domain is represented as a melting pot. Here borders between east and west were blurred, and Islamic objects became desirable items in western markets.

In the second part the attitude towards Islamic objects in church treasuries is discussed. This part is arranged into three chapters. The first one discusses the different types of "Christianization" that Islamic objects went through while forming part of a church treasury. It mainly deals with their mountings and the "new" Christian associations conferred upon them. The second chapter considers the factors which contributed to the acceptance of Islamic objects in medieval church treasuries. Aspects like precious material, clarity, radiance, exoticism, magic and healing power are examined. The last chapter presents the medieval treasury as a museum and aims at demonstrating when and how Islamic objects were shown in public. The second part is followed by a summarized conclusion.

The third part is a descriptive catalogue. The objects are classified according to material: rock crystal, glass, ivory, metal and varia.

"I hereby declare that the work contained within this thesis was entirely composed by myself."



Avinoam Shalem

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- I. "The Fall of al-Madā'in: Some Literary References Concerning Sasanian Spoils of War in Mediaeval Islamic Treasuries," *Iran* 32(1994), 77-81.
- II. "Fountains of Light: The Meaning of Medieval Islamic Rock Crystal Lamps," *Muqarnas* 11(1994), 1-11.



## Acknowledgments

This present study is a product of a long-continuing interest in the use of precious Islamic objects in a medieval Christian context. The research took shape during my second academic year as a scholarship student at the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich. During this time I mainly focused on Islamic ivories in European church treasuries. Later, as my interest grew, other artefacts were included. However the vast material I was faced with forced me to exclude textiles from this study and to confine myself to portable Islamic objects in the church treasuries of the Latin West.

Along the way I have benefitted from the kind help and assistance of many people and institutions, in particular: Professor Rudolf Kuhn from the History of Art Faculty of the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich who discussed with me some parts of the thesis and helped in the translation from Latin into English, Dr. Thomas Lersch from the Zentral Institut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich, Dr. Jens Kröger and Dr. Almut von Gladiß from the SMPK in Berlin, Dr. Angelika Grepmaier Müller from Munich, Dr. Renate Baumgärtel from the Diözesanmuseum in Bamberg, Professor Dietrich Kötzsche from the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin, Dr. Ingeborg Krueger from the Rheinischen Landesmuseum in Bonn, Dr. Géza Jászai from the Westfälischen Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte in Münster, Dr. Helga Hilschenz-Mlynek from the Kestner

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### Note on transliteration

The system for transliteration from Arabic used here is essentially that of the Encyclopaedia of Islam, with the following modifications: foreign words, proper nouns, names of places and of historic personages that have entered the language or have a generally recognized English form are anglicized, *j* replaces *dj*, *q* replaces *k* and subscript dots are omitted.

## Introduction

Over the last 1,300 years Europe and the Islamic world have confronted each other. The dynamic and even tense relationship between them has caused cultural interchanges which are clearly marked on both. Political circumstances and cultural atmosphere were probably the main reasons behind the willingness of one culture to let the values and ideas of the other impinge upon its own sphere. This study, which focuses on Islamic objects in European church treasuries, belongs to the large field of East-West interaction. In fact all the Islamic artefacts discussed in this study are "archaeological" evidence for an East-West relationship. However, in order to define the scope of this study, some points should be stressed. First, this research is confined to the Middle Ages, namely from the establishment of Islamic hegemony in the East (mid 7th century) until the disappearance of the crusaders from the Levant (ca.1300), with the exception of medieval Spain which is dealt with up to the fall of the Nasrids in 1492. Second, it examines East-West interactions only from one side of the coin, namely Islam in the West, and, more than that, it is restricted to the Latin West. Third, unlike former approaches, this study does not discuss the impact or the influence that these artefacts had on the art of the West, but tries to answer how Islamic artefacts reached the Latin West and what the attitude towards them in the ecclesiastical sphere was.

The large number of medieval Islamic artefacts which are kept, or are known to have been kept, in church treasuries of the Latin West necessitated further limitations on the breadth of the present study. Textiles and glazed pottery vessels, the so-called *bacini*, were excluded, and the controversial group of Sasanian or early Islamic glass and metalwork was also omitted from this study. In addition, the principal intention was to include in the catalogue objects which have "two lives", namely objects which were intended to function in a specific Islamic context and were later re-used in a Christian setting.

The body of the thesis is divided into three main parts. In the first part the main different 'routes' by which Islamic objects reached the Latin West are examined. The objects are classified into five groups, each of which is discussed in a separate chapter. The first chapter deals with Islamic vessels which were brought by pilgrims as souvenirs from the Near East. The second one focuses on the exchange of royal presents. The third one examines the accounts referring to the dispersion of the Fatimid treasury. In the fourth chapter the question of booty and of the trophies of the Crusaders is discussed. In the fifth chapter the Mediterranean domain is represented as a melting pot. Here borders between east and west were blurred, and Islamic objects became desirable items in western markets.

In the second part the attitude towards Islamic objects in

church treasuries is discussed. This part is arranged in three chapters. The first one discusses the different methods of "Christianization" that Islamic objects went through while forming part of a church treasury. It mainly deals with their mountings and the "new" Christian associations conferred upon them. The second chapter considers the factors which contributed to the acceptance of Islamic objects in medieval church treasuries. Aspects like precious material, clarity, radiance, exotic elements, magic and healing power are examined. The last chapter presents the medieval treasury as a museum and aims at demonstrating when and how Islamic objects were shown in public. The second part is followed by a summarized conclusion.

The third part is a descriptive catalogue which for reasons of clarity is placed at the end of this study. The objects are classified according to material: rock crystal, glass, ivory, metal and varia -- a term which includes carved precious stones, leather and a few ceramics. The catalogue provides the reader with the basic information on each object: material, measurements, provenance, date, present location and related literature. Apart from the carved and painted ivories which are well documented and illustrated by Kühnel, Cott and Ferrandis, the objects are described and illustrated, and in the case of some major pieces a stylistic analysis is added. Ivories which do not appear in the above-mentioned corpora of Kühnel, Cott or Ferrandis, are accompanied by all the information available and are also

illustrated. Despite efforts to the contrary, six objects are not illustrated. These are objects nos. 20,33,37,88,274,283 in the catalogue.

PART ONE: FROM THE EAST TO THE WEST: THE MIGRATION OF ISLAMIC  
OBJECTS TO THE LATIN WEST

CHAPTER ONE: BLESSED MEMENTOES FROM THE NEAR EAST: SMALL  
BOTTLES WITH SANCTIFIED SUBSTANCES

A. Introduction

Among the most attractive artefacts of the early medieval era are the *ampullae*, vessels containing some sanctified substance; the best known among them are the circular flat metal flasks filled with earth, oil or water which were carried by pious pilgrims from the holy sites of the Near East to their homeland in the West.

The vessels have been studied principally by André Grabar,<sup>1</sup> Kurt Weitzmann,<sup>2</sup> Joseph Engemann<sup>3</sup> and Lieselotte Kötzsche-Breitenbruch.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, these artefacts provide art historians with a large spectrum of the artistic "language", so to speak, of the *loca sancta*, namely the lands of Syria, Palestine and Egypt between the 4th and 6th centuries. But on the other hand, they also enrich our knowledge of the relic cult and religious rituals in the sacred places of the Near East during the early Middle Ages.

A "real" relic was probably the most desirable object a pilgrim would like to have had. But the high price demanded for them left the layman no option but to acquire less



expensive relics. These were mainly fluid fragrant substances with which the holy relics were anointed. These sacred substances were collected shortly after the ritual into little containers and sold for a reasonable price as a source of blessing from the holy sites.

The cult of taking sanctified substances from holy places was practised in the Near East by Christians and Jews before the rise of Islam and continued almost without interruption after the Muslim conquest. Moreover, as will be shown below, it was soon to be practised by Muslims.

Of great interest to this discussion are fluid sanctified substances like oil, unguent, water and even sand. These substances were sold to pilgrims in little containers manufactured for this purpose in local workshops. It is quite probable that from the 8th century on, Muslim craftsmen in different artistic centres of the Near East started to take part in the manufacture of these *ampullae*.

Many little Islamic bottles, mainly made of rock crystal and carved in different shapes, are preserved in the treasuries of European churches and cathedrals. The valuable material they were made of was probably one of the reasons for their being used in a sacred Christian setting, and their transparency made them preferable to other vessels to serve as relic containers. They are generally regarded as Fatimid scent bottles which lost their secular function in favour of a sacred one as soon as they reached the medieval treasuries.

It is the aim of this chapter to raise the question whether in fact sacred oil or unguent and other sanctified substances were carried in these bottles and whether it is possible thereby to see in these little bottles evidences for the continuation of the tradition of bringing *eulogia*, namely tangible blessing, from the holy sites.<sup>5</sup>

## B. The content

### Sanctified fragrant oil

The habit of anointing relics with oil has its own long tradition in the Near East. One of the earliest accounts appears in Genesis (28:18), in which it is related that Jacob poured oil over the top of the stone which he used as a pillow while dreaming of the Heavenly Ladder in Bethel. But ceremonies and special processions, in which holy relics were anointed and in which sanctified oil was then poured into little containers as tangible blessing, started to take place during the Byzantine period, chiefly after the extensive building activities of Constantine at the holy sites.<sup>6</sup> This rendered possible a significant increase in the number of pilgrims, and thereby the demand for small containers accordingly increased.

The two most important relics in early medieval Jerusalem were the pierced stone (*Even Hashtiya*) and the rock of Golgotha. The first was venerated by Jews, and the latter by

Christians. The Bordeaux pilgrim (A.D.333) mentions an annual Jewish custom of anointing this pierced stone in the Temple area. His account probably refers to the Fast of Ninth of Ab, in which Jews mourn the destruction of the Temple. Though we do not know when this procession was started and when it ended, it has been suggested that small glass bottles dated to the 6th and the early 7th century served during this procession for the transportation of sanctified substances—probably sanctified oil from the pierced stone.<sup>7</sup> We learn about the Christian custom of acquiring holy oil in the church of the Holy Sepulchre from the anonymous writer who accompanied Antoninus of Piacenza on his pilgrimage (ca.570). He describes a different process of obtaining sanctified oil. According to him the oil was not poured on the relic itself but was brought in *ampullae* and left nearby in order to be consecrated by sheer proximity to the sacred object.<sup>8</sup> The *ampullae* were placed in the Atrium of the Rock (Golgotha) probably near the relics of the True Cross which were displayed during Easter Week.

The processions in the Holy Sepulchre apparently carried on after the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem. Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, describes in his *Amphilochia* (written between 867 and 878) how once a year the threshold stone of the Tomb in the Holy Sepulchre was perfumed by the patriarch.<sup>9</sup> Moreover the *Muthir al-Ghiram* (1351) indicates that already in the time of `Abd al-Malik similar processions of perfuming relics took place in the Dome of the Rock:<sup>10</sup>

"Each day fifty and two persons were employed to pound and grind down saffron, working by night also, and leavening it with musk and ambergris, and rose-water of the Jūrī rose. At early dawn the servants appointed entered the Bath of Sulaimān ibn `Abd al Malik, where they washed and purified themselves before proceeding to the Treasure Chamber (al Khazānah), in which was kept the (yellow perfume of saffron called) Khulūk. And, before leaving the Treasure Chamber, they changed all their clothes, and putting on new garments, made of the stuffs of Marv and Herat, also shawls (of the striped cloths of Yaman), called `Asb; taking jewelled girdles, they girt these about their waists. Then, bearing the jars of the Khulūk in their hands, they went forth and anointed therewith the stone of the Rock, even as far as they could reach up to with their hands, spreading the perfume all over the same. And for the part beyond that which they could reach, having first washed their feet, they attained thereto by walking on the Rock itself, anointing all that remained thereof..."<sup>11</sup>

The application of *khulūq* or *khalūq* (a thick substance composed of saffron and other oily fragrant unguents) was common practice in early Islamic period. According to al-Tabarī (d. 923), it was the command of the `Abbasid caliph al-Mahdī that the Ka`ba should be anointed with saffron ointment.<sup>12</sup> Ibn Jubayr, who visited Madina in 1184, says that the upper part of the wall enclosing the Mosque of Madina "...is daubed with an unguent of musk (*taḍmīkh al-*

*musk*) and other perfumes to a depth of a half span, and blackened, cracked, and accumulated by the passage of time."<sup>13</sup> The same description of the perfumed wall in Madina is given by the 14th-century Moorish traveller Ibn Battūta.<sup>14</sup> Such rituals were also practised by the Fatimids. During the plentitude ceremony in Egypt, namely the yearly ceremony of June in which the rise of the Nile was read on the scales of the Nilometer of the Rauda Island, saffron mixed with rose water was used for perfuming the walls and the column of the Nilometer.<sup>15</sup>

Another method of obtaining sanctified oil was to collect it into little containers after it had been touched with relics of saints. Wilhelm Gessel recently discussed the function of the oil sarcophagi from Apamea.<sup>16</sup> These three 6th-century reliquary-sarcophagi found in 1934 shed light on this special cult of sanctifying oil. Two of the reliquaries, the reliquary of Sts. Cosmas and Damian (Brussels, The Royal Museum of Art and History, Ap. 118) and that of St. Theodore (Damascus, The National Museum) are hewn out of white marble and are still in a good state; the reconstruction of the third sarcophagus was rendered possible by putting together some fragments of green marble pieces found at the site. On the upper part of their lid is a wide opening. This opening leads into a channel which runs downwards and terminates in a chalice-like receptacle carved on the narrow side of the sarcophagi. Through this upper opening oil was poured and was

collected later in the chalice-like receptacle.<sup>17</sup>

Though we do not know how oil was sanctified in Hebron, Christian pilgrims marvelled at the smell of balsam with which the bodies of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their wives were anointed.<sup>18</sup> Franciscan pilgrims, like Frescobaldi and Gucci, who travelled to the Holy land in 1384, mention that sanctified oil was sold in Hebron to Jewish, Christian and Muslim pilgrims. The oil is said to have come from the saintly bodies of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their wives buried there.<sup>19</sup> This account is important not only because it demonstrates that this custom was adopted by Muslims, but because Hebron was known in the Middle Ages as a production centre of fine glass; a fact of which Frescobaldi himself was aware.<sup>20</sup> The sacred bottles sold in the market of Hebron were most probably products of a local glass workshop.<sup>21</sup>

A no less widespread custom was that of taking oil from lamps, and sometimes even wax from fragrant wax-candles, which were burning in the tombs of the saints and which were then used as a source of blessing. The earliest account of this custom is related by the anonymous writer who accompanied Antoninus of Piacenza (ca.570). He describes how oil was taken as a sanctified substance from a bronze lamp burning above the burial place of Jesus.<sup>22</sup> And 700 years later, Marco Polo tells us that Kubilai Khan asked Messer Niccolo and Messer Maffeo to bring him sanctified oil from the lamp that burns above the sepulchre of Christ.<sup>23</sup>

This practice was also adopted by Muslims. The *Muthir al-Ghiram* (1351) indicates that already in the time of `Abd al-Malik pilgrims used to take sanctified oil from the lamps of the Dome of the Rock:<sup>24</sup>

"On the authority of Abu Bakr ibn al Hārith, it is reported that, during the Khalifate of `Abd al Malik, the Sakhrah was entirely lighted with (oil of) the Midian Bān (the Tamarisk, or Myrobalan) tree, and oil of Jasmin, of lead colour. (And this, says Abu Bakr, was of so sweet a perfume, that) the chamberlains were wont to say to him: 'O abu Bakr, pass us the lamps that we may put oil on ourselves therefrom, and perfume our clothes'; and so he used to do, to gratify them."<sup>25</sup>

Taking oil from lamps (*qanādīl*), chiefly from those which were hung in tombs of saints, had a particular meaning to the medieval Islamic mind. The lamps in such shrines were regarded as small containers in which the pious souls of the saints took shelter. Therefore the lamps in tombs of Muslim saints were regarded as reliquaries, and the oil within them as a relic symbolizing their 'spiritual being'.<sup>26</sup>

Another source of sanctified oil was oil which miraculously dripped from holy relics. 14th-century pilgrims frequently mention the miracle of the icon of St. Mary of Serdinale (Seidenaya) near Damascus.<sup>27</sup> Many marvellous stories were related about this icon. One of them says that the wood-painted icon with the image of the Virgin became

flesh, and that oily drops continuously came out of it. The liquid was regarded as having the virtue of calming tempests when throwing into the sea, and therefore, as Frescobaldi describes, it was given to pilgrims in small phials, which they carried with them back home.<sup>28</sup>

### Balsam and chrism

Many *ampullae* of balsam and chrism are mentioned in the medieval inventories of church treasuries: 3 crystal ones in Augsburg, 5 little bottles and 2 vases with chrism in Bamberg, 2 little bottles with chrism in Merseburg, 2 little glass bottles with balsam in Staffelsee, a vase with sacred chrism in Wilten, 3 little bottles with chrism in Halberstadt,<sup>29</sup> a crystal vessel with balsam in Canterbury and many other *ampullae* with blasam and chrism in Barling (Essex), Salisbury and St. Paul's Cathedral in London.<sup>30</sup>

The balsam and the chrism, both aromatic resinous substances, which naturally exude from various trees of the genus *Balsamodendron* (known also as *Commiphora*) and were then mingled with oil, were exported in the Middle Ages from the Near East, mainly from Arabia.<sup>31</sup> The best known and one of the most expensive of these fragrances was the *true balsam* or the *balsam of Mecca*. According to Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) the price of a pint of balsam reached 1000 *denarii*; the basic cost of living in the second century AD in Roman Syria was approximately 120 *denarii* for a year.<sup>32</sup> These expensive oily



perfumes were less frequently used in a profane context than in a religious one such as baptism, confirmation and unction or, as was mentioned above, as fragrant oil for lamps in sacred places and for anointing holy relics. Many medieval legends evolved around these oily aromatic liquids. Most such legends associated them with Paradise. More than that, in the Christian context, Christ himself is the source of all pleasant smells.<sup>33</sup> A pre-Christian apocryphal text written by an anonymous Jew tells us that the origin of that fragrant sacred oil is a specific tree in Paradise, the Tree of Mercy.<sup>34</sup> In the Hebrew version of the *Letters of Prester John*,<sup>35</sup> a well-known 12th-century narrative, the main source for the chrism is the sacred tree which is said to be found in Prester John's idyllic land. The chrism which issues from that tree is regarded as the blessed saliva of Christ. It is taken with the permission of the Pope by two patriarchs who send it directly to the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Later it is sent to the Pope in Rome and from there it is distributed all over the world.<sup>36</sup>

But apart of the above-mentioned traditions and marvellous legends, literary sources of the late Middle Ages, mainly the accounts of 14th-century Christian pilgrims, verify that the balsam (henceforth termed the Balsam) was regarded as a relic and was taken as a sanctified substance solely from a place called Matarieh (10 kms. north of Cairo). This was a complex of buildings with a walled garden and a sacred spring, called the Virgin Fountain. Tradition tells that the Holy Family

rested at this site on their flight to Egypt, before entering Cairo. The Virgin, who was thirsty, asked her child Jesus for water. He struck the ground with his feet, and thereupon a fountain sprang up. Later the Virgin washed the clothes of Jesus in this spring and spread them out to dry on shrubs, and since then those shrubs have always produced the Balsam.<sup>37</sup>

The earliest account, to the best of my knowledge, about this specific "Garden of Balsam" is that of William of Tyre.<sup>38</sup> But this sacred site was probably visited by pilgrims even earlier, and its Balsam was probably sold in different markets of other important pilgrimage centres. As early as the 8th century, Hugeburc the nun tells how Saint Willibald, who travelled to the Holy Land between 724-730, bought balsam from Jerusalem and carefully kept it with him in a flagon.<sup>39</sup>

The place was visited according to Arnold of Lübeck by Christians and Saracens.<sup>40</sup> Hence, even the popular story of how water of this fountain tasted bitter to any Saracen suggests that the latter wished to drink the water of Matarieh.<sup>41</sup> Some pilgrims went into detail while describing the actual method of gathering the Balsam into little phials. Gucci (1384) who bought such a small phial for two gold ducats describes it as big as a quarter of a small glass.<sup>42</sup>

These literary sources suggest that balsam and chrism were regarded as relics and not only as fragrant perfumes. Therefore little bottles with these substances were highly

venerated in a Christian sacred setting.

### Sacred water

The main source of sacred water for Christian pilgrims was the river of Jordan. But water was taken from many other places, among them the Pool of Siloam near Jerusalem, the birthplace of St. Menas in Egypt or the above-mentioned well in Matarieh. In fact water as a source of blessing was taken by Christians and Muslims from holy shrines and tombs of saints in the Near East. The abundance of this kind of sanctified substance, in comparison to balsam and sanctified oil, brought about a situation in which water as such was carried by pilgrims in inexpensive containers used by them during pilgrimage. These were mainly waterskins or relatively large globular bottles with flattened sides, straight neck and two handles, made of cheap materials like leather, unglazed pottery or colourless glass usually called canteens or pilgrim flasks.

However the most sacred water for Muslims was the Zamzam water of the sacred well in the sanctuary of Mecca. Muslim pilgrims drank this water as health-giving and carried it home. According to tradition this well, also called the well of Ismā`il, was miraculously uncovered in the desert by the angel Gabriel in order to save the life of Hagar and her son Ismā`il after they were evicted by Abraham.<sup>43</sup> Medieval Chinese geographers describe, in second-hand accounts, how

Zamzam water was taken by travellers in little bottles. Chau Ju-Kua, who wrote on the Chinese and Arab trade in the 12th and 13th centuries says: "In this country [Mecca]<sup>44</sup> there is holy-water which can still the wind and waves. The foreign traders fill opaque glass bottles with it, and when they suddenly get in rough sea they still it by sprinkling this water on it."<sup>45</sup>

Earth, milk of the Virgin and manna

Earth, like water, was taken as a sanctified substance from holy shrines and the tombs of saints. The solid character of this substance derived from its being mingled with small stones and crushed rock. It was most probably taken in small caskets or other containers with large openings, like the well-known reliquary wooden casket with scenes from the life of Christ in the Museo Sacro in the city of the Vatican. But sanctified sand and finely ground stones were sometimes kept in small bottles. A tiny crystal bottle in Poitiers (cat. no.3, fig.3), the crystal pendant from Quedlinburg (cat. no.63, fig.63) and the so-called "Chenou bottle" (cat. no.65, fig.65) are said to enshrine milk of the Virgin. According to Niccolo of Poggibonsi, who visited Bethlehem around 1350, this relic was taken from the grotto under the church of St. Nicholas in Bethlehem, where the Virgin remained hidden for 40 days. A legend tells how her milk stained the rock of the grotto. The relic called "milk

of the Virgin" was a white dust taken from the side of this cave.<sup>46</sup>

Sacred earth was taken also by Muslims. Medieval Chinese sources describe how earth was taken from the tomb of the Prophet. The earth was to be rubbed on the chest if the patient was in agony in order to ensure a resurrection.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately we lack proper descriptions of how and in which vessels it was taken by Muslim pilgrims.

Sometimes, earth was even sanctified by fluid holy substances. Two 13th-century, probably Syrian, enamelled glass bottles in the treasury of the cathedral of St. Stephen in Vienna (cat. nos.96,97, figs.96,97) are said to enshrine earth stained with the blood of the innocent children of Bethlehem. The sanctified earth might have been put within them in the Near East, maybe in Bethlehem itself, and therefore it was later transferred to the west in these Islamic vessels.

Manna was also one of the substances sought after by Christian pilgrims. Its major source was the monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai. The Piacenza pilgrim (ca.570) says:

"Between Sinai and Horeb is a valley where from time to time there comes from the sky the dew which they call manna. It solidifies, and becomes like lump of gum, and they pick it up, and have casks full of it in the monastery. From these they fill little flasks which they give as "blessings", and they gave us five pints. They also drink this as liqueur, and gave us some, which we drank".<sup>48</sup>

A priest who was sent by the Pope in 1279 to Egypt in order to discuss the matter of Christian prisoners there, brought back with him some "wonders" from Egypt, among which was a glass jar with manna.<sup>49</sup>

In the 14th century this monastery was frequently visited by pilgrims and travellers who took the usual mainland route from the port of Alexandria via Sinai to Jerusalem. They describe how manna was sanctified by sheer proximity or by being touched by the relics of St. Catherine. The description of Niccolo of Poggibonsi suggests that the manna was sanctified in a method similar to that of the above-mentioned oil sarcophagi of Apamea:

"... out of the mouth [of St. Catherine] comes that holy manna. Under the mouth is a gold cup with a silver spout, which penetrates into the other part of the tomb, where the holy manna drips and becomes like oil...".<sup>50</sup>

However Frescobaldi (1384), who claims that manna "issued from the ears of St. Catherine", describes how phials with this sacred manna were taken as sanctified substances by pilgrims.<sup>51</sup>

### C. The vessels

#### General description of the different bottles

Most small Islamic rock crystal bottles are preserved in the church treasuries of the Latin West. Their length

measures roughly 5-10 cm.; the longest one (12.5 cm.) is the cylindrical bottle from Borghorst (cat. no.5, figs.5,5a). The bottles are classified according to the different form of their bodies into four groups:

(1) Twelve bottles have a cylindrical body chiefly decorated with delicate carving of heart-shaped or lanceolate leaves (cat. nos.1-11, figs.1-12), while two of them bear Arabic benedictory inscriptions (cat. nos.10,10a, figs.10,11).

(2) six bottles have the form of a molar tooth (cat. nos.12-17, figs.13-18).

(3) five bottles are in the form of a fish (cat. nos.26-30, figs.26-30).

(4) three others have a heart-shaped flattened body (cat. nos.39-41, figs.39-41).

The accentuated rims and the smooth bands which frequently appear on their bodies suggest that the bottles were once mounted, probably with precious metal bands; the little bottle from Arras (cat. no.13, fig.14) might still retain its original mounting of gilded sheets studded with precious stones.

All of them are easy to carry. The accentuated rims around the lower part of the necks of bottles of groups one, two, and four suggest that they were to be hung with the help of a string wrapped around their necks, between these rims. The fish-shaped bottles of group three could easily be mounted as pendants with the help of a fitting round the neck and a stopper which is screwed into the tube of the fitting and

which has a ring for suspension.

Date, provenance and function of the bottles

The six bottles with scutiform feet, sometimes called the molar-tooth bottles, are the earliest ones among the little rock crystal bottles. All of them share the same form; a four-faceted body with a short neck. On each facet is a scutiform rock crystal, slightly concave and carved in high relief, forming a foot with a pointed base. Most of these rock crystal vessels are preserved in different church treasuries in North Germany and North France. They are all elaborately mounted with gold, silver and precious stones and a few of them still enshrine holy relics.<sup>52</sup>

Taking into consideration the mounting of these bottles as an indication for the dating, the cross of Theophano from Essen, dated ca. 1050, can serve as a *terminus ante quem*. But the many little glass bottles sharing the same form and measurement, a large number of which were excavated in Samarra<sup>53</sup> and are datable to the 9th and to the 10th century, allow us to date the rock crystal bottles to the same centuries. Of the same type is the little glass bottle from the Art Museum of Düsseldorf, the Hentrich Glass Collection, no. P.1973-78 (fig.152).<sup>54</sup>

A pre-Fatimid dating for such rock crystal objects was already suggested by Kurt Erdmann who suggested arranging them chronologically in six different stylistic groups,



extending over the period from the 9th century until at least the middle of the 11th century.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the account by al-Bīrūnī of the expensive rock crystal vessels in the treasury of Muhammad ibn Tāhir, the last Tāhirid governor of Khurāsān (deposed in 873),<sup>56</sup> or the account of al-Sūlī, who considered the `Abbasid caliph al-Rādī as one of the great rock crystal collectors of his time,<sup>57</sup> hint at the existence of pre-Fatimid rock crystal carving centres.

It is the lack of absolute evidence which makes it preferable to leave these rock crystal bottles unassigned to a specific manufacturing centre. But we may assume that places like Fustat, Alexandria, and even Baghdad and Basra might be their place of origin.

It is difficult to determine which sanctified substance was carried in these bottles. However the unique form of their feet probably had a meaning associated with the special sanctified substance held within. A less well-known group of *eulogia* are the glass pilgrim bottles studied by Dan Barag.<sup>58</sup> These are small hexagonal, octagonal or square bottles of brown, greenish and blue glass, blown in moulds and thereby producing an *intaglio* design on the surface of the vessels. Two forms are characteristic- a bottle and a jug. The bottles have a short wide neck and a wide inward-folded rim. The jugs have handles and long necks. They are dated to the 6th and the early 7th century. It is probable that they enshrined holy oil from sacred sites, mainly from Jerusalem and the vicinity, and that they were carried by

Christian and Jewish pilgrims. Barag organized them in three main groups, according to the different symbols which they bear. The first group is the Christian one, the second is the Jewish, and the third is the "unassigned" group containing vessels decorated with symbols which could be accepted by Jews as well as by Christians.<sup>59</sup>

A frequently-used motif is that of lozenges, which appear in a certain limited number of forms. The motif is depicted on the facets of the bottles and jugs from all three of the above-mentioned groups (fig.153). Though it might be argued that these lozenges are purely decorative, some scholarly efforts have been made to suggest a symbolic meaning for them.<sup>60</sup> The meaning of these symbols, however, is still obscure and no satisfactory and clear-cut explanation has been suggested. Yet these stamped lozenges do recall the curved scutiform feet which appear on each of the four facets of the rock crystal bottles. The two-dimensional lozenges on the glass bottle were deeply carved on the rock crystal bottle and appear almost as a free three-dimensional form on each side of the square bottle.

Like the Byzantine metal *ampullae* which Grabar interpreted as *encolpia*, namely as amulets, which bring luck to their owner and assured his safe return journey, these little bottles might also be regarded as amulets to be worn with the help of a string around the neck or to be hung from the pilgrim's belt. The accentuated rims around the lower part of the necks of such bottles might have served this purpose

well. These *ampullae*, enshrining fragrant sacred oil, were probably presented to the churches shortly after the pilgrims' return as *ex-votos*.

The fish-shaped bottles in church treasuries fall into two distinct groups.<sup>61</sup> In the first one the body of the fish is flattened, its two grooved fins lie flat against its body, and a ring base decorated with sloping grooves represents its missing tail (cat. no.27, fig.27). In the second group the body of the fish is smooth and bulbous, the fins and its bisected tail project from its body, and elliptical bulges on the lower part of its belly suggest that bottles of this group were meant to be kept in a horizontal position (cat. nos.26,28-30, figs.26,28-30).

It is difficult to date these two groups of bottles. The decoration on the bodies of the flattened fish, i.e. grooved fins and slits, recalls that of the fish of the rock crystal lamp from San Marco (Tesoro no.50). But the date of the latter (4th century) has not been satisfactorily proven,<sup>62</sup> and the bowl is most likely of a later period.

The *terminus ante quem* for fish-shaped bottles of the second group is the first half of the 11th century- the suggested date for the cross from Borghorst, on which a fish-shaped bottle of this group is mounted. Yet it is unknown how much time might have elapsed between its making in the East and until its arrival in the West.

Most scholars accept that these kinds of bottles were

manufactured in Egypt, probably because it has long been conventional to describe medieval Islamic rock crystals as Fatimid; this is chiefly based on the accounts by Arab historians of the large amount of rock crystal vessels in the Fatimid treasury,<sup>63</sup> and on three crystals which bear inscriptions assigning them to Fatimid Egypt. These are the ewer from St. Marco with the name of the caliph al-`Azīz-billāh (cat. no.57, fig.57), a ring-shaped object in Nuremberg with the name of the caliph al-Zāhir (cat. no.72, fig.72) and a ewer in Florence with a title associating it with a Fatimid dignitary at the court of the caliph al-Hakim (996-1021).<sup>64</sup>

Indeed small bottles, very similar to the crystal ones, were manufactured in ancient Egypt. These are mainly small colourless glass bottles in the form of a fish called *bolti*.<sup>65</sup> This fish, which has curious breeding habits, was regarded by the Egyptian as a potent symbol of eternal life, and therefore these small bottles, whatever content they carried, were most probably amulets which secured the lives of their owners.<sup>66</sup>

Amulets in the form of a fish were and are frequently used in the Near East. The vast symbolism and different meaning associated with that motif in both higher and lower social levels of Christian, Muslim and Jewish societies made this motif very popular. Among the Christian elite it was mainly regarded as a symbol of Christ and of a pious soul, while in the learned Muslim class it was associated with Paradise and

water of life.<sup>67</sup> In the popular mind of the three above-mentioned Near Eastern communities it was mainly regarded as a symbol for luck, prosperity, fertility and as a talisman against the evil eye.<sup>68</sup>

Fish-shaped rock crystal bottles were probably made in the Near East, presumably in Egypt, during the Fatimid or pre-Fatimid period, and were used as amulets which probably enshrined sanctified substance. The flattened bottles were to be hung as pendants, and the bulbous ones were probably meant to be placed horizontally in a house.

The cylindrical and the heart-shaped flattened bottles form the largest group of small rock crystal bottles in church treasuries. Both groups are characterized by the motif of the lanceolate leaf which, though slightly varied, decorates their bodies. On the bottle from Cologne (cat. no.1, fig.1) the lanceolate leaf is rigidly stylized and its tendrils curl inward, while on the heart-shaped bottle from Essen (cat. no.40, fig.40) the motif is carved to form a fantastic plant, and the bisected lanceolate leaves somehow recall the typical Sasanian double-winged motif.<sup>69</sup> The motif of a lanceolate leaf frequently appears on Islamic rock crystals, mainly on fine tableware like plates, cups and ewers, which were most probably manufactured for royal use during the zenith of rock crystal carving in Egypt. This climax in the development of rock crystal carving occurred, according to Erdmann, during the first hundred years of the

Fatimid rule.<sup>70</sup> Therefore these bottles should also be of Fatimid origin. Yet other centres active in the same centuries in Iran and Mesopotamia should not be disregarded as possible origins for such bottles.

As for their function, it is very tempting to see in this motif of a leaf a symbol hinting at a fragrant substance kept within, and therefore to regard these small bottles as containers for the Balsam of Matarieh.

#### D. Conclusion

The above-mentioned literary sources suggest that many small containers with sanctified substances were carried with pilgrims from the Near East to the West. We may assume that containers of cheap materials were most likely to be exposed to the danger of being destroyed, while other containers of precious materials, especially those which could not be easily melted, were carefully kept. This is probably one of the reasons why most of the small Islamic containers in church treasuries are of rock crystal.

Unfortunately, for various reasons which are broadly discussed in Chapter Six, it is difficult to trace the previous history of each bottle before it reached a particular treasury. Cautious speculations about the former history of the small bottle from the convent of Marienberg in the Tyrol (cat. no.9, fig.9) and that from the convent at Arras (cat. no.13, fig.14) hint that the former was brought

in the 12th century by Graf Ulrich II von Tarasp after one of his campaigns against "Saracens", and that the latter was carried by Alvis le Vénérable, Bishop of Arras, who accompanied King Louis VII on a crusade to the Holy Land in 1147.

The generally accepted idea that these bottles were originally scent bottles probably derived from the similarity between their shapes and the shape of a typical ancient Near Eastern perfume flask (*unguentarium*). The latter was a small container mainly made of glass, having a tapering body and a short neck. Indeed, some cosmetic containers of rock crystal (*billawr*), like kohl jars and mixing vessels, are mentioned in the Geniza letters as forming part of the utensils used by medieval Egyptian Jewish women for beauty care.<sup>71</sup> But their low price (one *dinār*) suggests that these were made of crystal of a very low grade.

Nevertheless, the above-mentioned literary sources clarify that perfumes were used not only for profane functions but also in sacred rituals, and that most of the sanctified substances were perfumed. For that reason the "perfume" bottles which are mentioned in medieval church inventories were most probably bottles with sanctified fragrant substances brought by pilgrims. The Christian legends referring to the origin of all fragrant substances and of balsam might hint that almost any little bottle containing a fragrant substance which had been brought from the East was to be regarded as a sacred object in the West, particularly

over the Alps, where the legend of the *Sainte Ampoule*, with which St. Remi anointed King Clovis I, was prevalent.

Only two small bottles in church treasuries bear Arabic inscriptions (cat. nos.10,10a, figs.10,11). This suggests that this kind of bottle was less preferable among 10th- and 11th-century pilgrims; it is worth mentioning that during the crusades and later, in the 13th and 14th centuries, many enamelled glass vessels, ivory caskets and metalwork, decorated with Arabic inscriptions, reached church treasuries in the West. However, small bottles with Arabic inscriptions conferring blessing were most probably used as amulets in the Fatimid period. According to al-Maqrizī a huge amount of glass amulets bearing the names of the Fatimid imams was found in 1433 in the region of Tannīs.<sup>72</sup>

Another group of small containers, which is excluded from this discussion, consists of crystals in the form of a crouching lion (cat. nos.31-34, figs.31-34). Though part of them have circular borings, which run from their chests to their hindquarters, it is unknown whether all of them were originally used as containers; the boring might be a later western addition to provide a proper space for a relic. Some perforated rock crystal figurines in the shape of a cock and lion are mentioned in the Geniza letters as being used as vessels for storing a kohl stick.<sup>73</sup> But the six little rock crystal lions in the Diocesan Museum of Bamberg, which have no borings and which serve as elaborate feet for crystal stands (cat. nos.34,34a, figs.33,34), suggest that these were



figurines used for decorative purposes.

In sum, then, the vessels discussed above might be an echo of the long tradition associated with the holy sites and of the continuation of the cultural phenomenon of bringing oil as *eulogia* even after the Islamic conquest. The fact that they are of rock crystal strongly suggests that they are a group of expensive *ampullae* for pilgrims of high rank, namely noblemen and prelates, who acquired such valuable mementoes or even received them as presents during their visits to holy places in the Near East.

- 1.A. Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte (Monza - Bobbio)* (Paris, 1958).
- 2.K. Weitzmann, "Loca Sancta and the representational arts of Palestine," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28(1974), 31-55; *idem*, *Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian art, third to seventh century*, exhibition catalogue, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1979, where many of these ampullae were exhibited).
- 3.J. Engemann, "Palästinensische Pilgerampullen im F. J. Dolger-Institut in Bonn," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 16(1973), 5-27.
- 4.L. Kötzsche-Breitenbruch, "Pilgerdenken aus dem Heiligen Land," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Ergänzungsband 11(1984), 229-46. See also D. Barag and J. Wilkinson, "The Monza-Bobbio Flasks and the Holy Sepulchre," *Levant* 6(1974), 179-187.
5. See s.v. "Eulogia" in K. Wessel (ed.), *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst* (Stuttgart, 1971), 427-33.
- 6.J. Wilkinson, "Christian pilgrims in Jerusalem during the Byzantine period," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 108(1976), 84.
7. The bottles have been thoroughly studied by Dan Barag, "Glass pilgrim vessels from Jerusalem. Part I," *Journal of Glass Studies* 12(1970), 35-63, and "Glass pilgrim vessels from Jerusalem. Parts II and III," *Journal of Glass Studies* 13(1971), 45-63. For the account of the Bordeaux Pilgrim see *ibid.*, part I, 54.
8. *Ibid.*, "Glass pilgrim vessels from Jerusalem. Part I," 47.
- 9.J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusade* (Warminster, 1977), 146.
10. Translated into English by G. Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems* (London, 1890), 146.
11. *Ibid.*, 146.
12. Al-Tabarī, *The early 'Abbāsī empire*, translation by J.A. Williams of the *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk* (Cambridge, 1989), vol.2, p.78 (483).
13. For the Arabic text see Abu 'l-Husayn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, ed. by William Wright and revised by M.J. de Goeje (Leyden, 1907), 191. The English translation is taken from R.J.C. Broadhurst, *The travels of Ibn Jubayr* (London, 1952), 199.

- 14.H.A.R. Gibb, *The travels of Ibn Battūta A.D. 1325-1354* (Cambridge, 1958), 165.
- 15.W. Popper, *The Cairo Nilometer. Studies in Ibn Taghrī Birdī's Chronicles of Egypt:I* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951), 71-3.
- 16.W. Gessel, "Das Öl der Märtyrer. Zur Funktion und Interpretation der Ölsarkophage von Apamea in Syrien," *Oriens Christianus* 72(1988), 183-202.
- 17.*Ibid.*, figs.1,2.
- 18.See the account of Saewulf (1101-1103) in J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099-1185* (London, 1988), 110.
- 19.T. Bellorini and E. Hoade, *Visit to the holy places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384 by Frescobaldi, Gucci and Sigoli* (Jerusalem, 1948), 68, 122-3.
- 20.*Ibid.*, 68.
- 21.See the article of Rachel Hasson, who discusses this question of small glass bottles which were taken by pilgrims as mementos from the Holy Land, "Islamic glass from excavations in Jerusalem," *Journal of Glass Studies* 25(1983), 109-113.
- 22.Wilkinson, *Jerusalem pilgrims before the Crusades*, 83; Barag, "Glass pilgrim vessels from Jerusalem. Part I," 47 and note 67, where other legends associated with this ceremony of consecrating oil are mentioned. For the cult of taking wax, see Gessel, "Öl der Märtyrer," 189.
- 23.Marco Polo, *The Travels*, translated by Ronald Latham (London, 1958), 36.
- 24.Translated into English by Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, 147.
- 25.*Ibid.*
- 26.Nuha N. N. Khoury, "The Mihrab Image: Commemorative Themes in Medieval Islamic Architecture," *Muqarnas* 9(1992), 18-9.
- 27.Bellorini and Hoade, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 84 (Frescobaldi), 141 (Gucci); *idem*, *Fra Niccolo of Poggibonsi, Libro d'Oltramare or A Voyage beyond the Seas* (Jerusalem, 1945), part II (the English translation), 78-9. Fra Niccolo of Poggibonsi travelled to the Holy Land between 1346-1350.

28. Bellorini and Hoade, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 85. A similar legend is that of the Rock of Oil near Medina. According to Islamic tradition oil oozed from it for the Prophet. However this was probably a one-time miracle. See Broadhurst, *The travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 206; Gibb, *The travels of Ibn Battūta*, 181.

29. B. Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse* (Munich, 1967), 15, 18, 61, 91, 108, 151.

30. O. Lehmann-Brockhaus, *Lateinische Schriftquellen zur Kunst in England, Wales und Schottland vom Jahre 901 bis zum Jahre 1307* (Munich, 1955), vol. 1, pp. 45, 241, 276, vol. 2, 510-12.

31. On this subject see N. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh* (London, 1981).

32. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 154-6.

33. For the meaning of perfume in Christian religious contexts see B. Kötting, "Wohlgeruch der Heiligkeit," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Ergänzungsband 9 (1982), 168-75.

34. Gessel, *Öl der Märtyrer*, 197.

35. E. Ullendorff and C. F. Beckingham, *The Hebrew Letters of Prester John* (Oxford, 1982).

36. *Ibid.*, 62-5.

37. Bellorini and Hoade, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 53-4 (Frescobaldi), 106-8 (Gucci), 197-8 (Sigoli); *idem*, *Fra Niccolo of Poggibonsi*, 93.

38. William Archbishop of Tyre, *A History of deeds done beyond the sea*, trans. and annot. by E. A. Babcock and A. C. Krey (New York, 1943), vol. 2., p. 354.

39. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusade*, 132.

40. Cited by N. Daniel, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe* (London, 1975), 214.

41. See the account of Sigoli (1384) in Bellorini and Hoade, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 197.

42. *Ibid.*, 107.

43. *EI1* s.v. "Zamzam".

44. Chau Ju-Kua, *On the Chinese and Arab trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries*, translated and annotated by F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill (St. Petersburg, 1911), 113, note 2.

45. *Ibid.*, 111 (the quotation is taken from Chou K`ü-fei). See also E. Bretschneider, *Medieval researches from eastern Asiatic sources* (London, 1888), vol.2, p. 303 (a 16th-century account).
46. Bellorini and Hoade, *Fra Niccolo of Poggibonsi*, 55, note 1.
47. F. Hirth, *Die Länder des Islām nach chinesischen Quellen* (Leiden, 1894), 33-4.
48. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before Crusade*, 87.
49. Cited by Daniel, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe*, 223.
50. Bellorini and Hoade, *Fra Niccolo of Poggibonsi*, 106-7.
51. Bellorini and Hoade, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 58.
52. Other bottles of the same form and measurement are scattered in different museums. Six bottles are in the Islamic Museum of Cairo (once part of the Harari collection), one bottle is in the Benaki Museum in Athens and one bottle formerly belonged to the collection of F.R. Martin in Stockholm.
53. C.J. Lamm, *Die Ausgrabungen von Samarra, Das Glas von Samarra* (Berlin, 1928), 73-4.
54. For the extensive literature on this bottle see A. von Saldern, *Glassammlung Hentrich, Antike und Islam*, catalogue of the Art Museum of Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf, 1974), cat.no.419.
55. K. Erdmann, "'Fatimid' rock crystals," *Oriental Art* 3(1951), 142-6, mainly p.145.
56. This account was translated by P. Kahle, "Bergkristall, Glas und Glasflüsse nach dem Steinbuch von el-Berūnī," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 90(1936), 339-40.
57. Abū Bakr Muhammad b. Yahyā al-Sūlī, *Akhbār ar-Rāḍī wal Muttakī from the Kitāb al-Awrāk*, ed. by J. Heyworth Dunne (London, 1935), 20.
58. See above, note no.7.
59. Barag, "Glass pilgrim vessels. Part I," figs. A,B,BB.
60. For a discussion of their meaning, mainly that they are a stylised representation of books, see *ibid.*, 43-4.

61. There is a third group of fish-shaped rock crystal bottles to which a flask in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (CA-9993) and a flask in the British Museum in London (no.1953 2-182) belonged. The bottles are relatively elongated, the fish is carved in a naturalistic way, and the decoration on its body consists of stylized lanceolate leaves. The latter suggests that this group should be associated with the large group of cylindrical rock crystal bottles with lanceolate leaves.

62. R. Gallo, *Il Tesoro di S. Marco e la sua storia* (Venice, 1967), pl.62, fig.106; H.R. Hahnloser (ed.), *Il Tesoro di San Marco* (Florence, 1971), cat. no.8, pl.IV; *Der Schatz von San Marco in Venedig*, exhibition catalogue, Römisch-Germanisches Museum in Cologne (Milan, 1984), cat. no.2.

63. Ahmad ibn `Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-mawā`iz wa'l-i'tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-āthār* (the Būlāq edition, repr. in Beirut, circa 1970), vol.1, 414-16; see also P. Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 89(1935), 329-62. See the account of al-Qādi al-Rashīd in Ghada Hijjawi Qaddumi, *A Medieval Islamic Book of Gifts and Treasures: Translation, annotation and commentary on the Kitāb al-Hādāya wa al-Tuḥaf* (Ph.D., Harvard University, 1990), 249.

64. D.S. Rice, "A datable Islamic rock crystal," *Oriental Art* 2(1956), 85-93.

65. Dorothy W. Phillips, "Fish tales and fancies," *The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, new series, 2,6(1944), 184-89; Elizabeth Riefstahl, "A unique fish-shaped glass vial in the Brooklyn Museum," *Journal of Glass Studies* 14(1972), 11-4.

66. Riefstahl, "A unique fish-shaped glass vial," 13-4.

67. F.J. Dölger, *ΙΧΘΥΣ: Das Fisch-Symbol in frühchristlichen Zeit*, 5 vols. (Rome and Münster, 1910-43); I. Scheftelowitz, "Das Fisch-Symbol im Judentum und Christentum," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 14(1911), 1-53, 321-91; Lieselotte Wehrhahn-Stauch, "Christliche Fischsymbolik von den Anfängen bis zum hohen Mittelalter," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 35(1972), 1-68; Lois Drewer, "Fisherman and Fish Pond: From the Sea of Sin to the Living Waters," *The Art Bulletin* 63(1981), 533-47. In the Islamic sphere the important story is that in Sūrah 18: 61, which tells of the search of Moses for the origin of all living water on earth. It is related that the fish, which Moses intended to have for breakfast, came back to life as soon as it reached the living water of Paradise. See also Eva Baer, "Fish-Pond Ornaments on Persian and Mamluk metal vessels," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 31(1968), 14-27.

68. Scheftelowitz, "Das Fisch-Symbol," 343-56, 376-82; Z.H. Hirschberg, "The fish in the mosaics of the synagogue of Naro and in contemporary Jewish folklore in Tunisia and Tripolitania," *Eretz-Israel, E.L. Sukenik Memorial Volume*, 8(1967), 303-11 (Hebrew).

69. For an example see the 7th-century bronze plate in the Islamic Museum in Berlin-Dahlem (I. 5624), *Museum für Islamische Kunst Berlin*, catalogue 1979 (Berlin, 1979), cat. no.119, fig.31.

70. Erdmann, "'Fatimid' rock crystals," 145.

71. S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society IV* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1983), 223-6.

72. Cited by C.J. Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten aus dem Nahen Osten*, (Berlin, 1929-30), vol.1, p.488 (no.19).

73. Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, vol.IV, p.224.

## CHAPTER TWO: EXCHANGE OF ROYAL PRESENTS

A. General discussion

Delegations of diplomats, embassies and even individuals were sent by their rulers to other royal courts, in both East and West. Some of these missions had a clear political character, like signing a truce or offering an alliance. Others, mainly those commissioned by individuals or by less official persons, were undertaken either to satisfy a very human curiosity to learn of other places or to promote what they believed to be the right faith. The exchange of presents was part of an unwritten diplomatic code. Indeed gifts were regarded as tokens of alliance, friendship and, in some cases, even as tribute.<sup>1</sup>

The account of the lavish visit which the queen of Sheba paid to King Solomon, bringing with her "camels laden with spices, great quantity of gold and precious stones,"<sup>2</sup> was probably a prototype for Muslims and Christians of how a 'grandiose' royal visit should look. Furthermore, it might be suggested that for Christians any visit of a Muslim embassy evoked the memory of the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem who offered the infant Christ gold, frankincense and myrrh- the wealth and perfumes of Arabia.

If we are allowed to use a modern term to define these royal presents, we might call them 'exotica'. According to literary sources, which are discussed below, these were rare



and precious commodities like fine textiles, costly objects of gold, silver and precious stones, mechanical devices, spices, perfumes, exotic fruits and even wild animals.

The sources tell us how eager kings were to receive these presents, and even how specific requests for certain commodities or animals were made. These presents were royal attributes par excellence, and their being possessed by a member of the royal family was probably a proof that the latter was accepted into the "Family of Kings" who rule this earth.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately most of the literary sources do not go into details when describing the Islamic objects received by Christian delegations, and therefore it is quite impossible to identify specific royal presents among the precious Islamic objects in church treasuries. On the other hand, those traditions which claim some objects to be presents from Muslim rulers, cannot be verified. And though some of them probably echo particular events, they seem to be first and foremost legends invented in the course of time.

For these reasons, attempts will be made in this chapter to surmise from available evidence what the typical Islamic royal presents were. This will enable us to speculate on particular objects in church treasuries. However, some extraordinary presents, which were described in relatively greater detail by medieval writers, will be separately discussed.

B. Harun al-Rashid and Charlemagne: presents from the `Abbasid court to the Carolingian one, and the alleged traditions concerning some 'presents of Harun al-Rashid' in church treasuries

The puzzling question of the silence of Arabic sources, in contrast to Christian ones, about a number of reciprocal delegations between the Frankish kingdom and the `Abbasid court, has not yet been satisfactorily solved, and it is probably a matter that awaits documentation not available at present. Most scholars have explained these diplomatic relations as a result of common interests on both sides; mainly these based on the desire to weaken the power of their enemies, the Byzantine empire and the Umayyads of Spain.<sup>4</sup>

However, as early as 765, a delegation was sent by Pepin the Short, the father of Charlemagne (d.768), to the `Abbasid court of al-Mansūr (754-775). Pepin the Short tried to create at that time an alliance between the Franks, the Pope and the `Abbasids against Umayyad Spain and Constantinople. This delegation, loaded with costly presents, returned in 768 and disembarked at the port of Marseilles. Unfortunately none of the presents was described.<sup>5</sup>

Better-known accounts are those referring to the diplomatic contacts between Harun al-Rashid and Charlemagne. According to Einhard (770-840) who wrote *The Life of Charlemagne* between 829-836, an embassy was sent by Charlemagne in 797 or 799 to the East with presents to the

Holy Sepulchre.<sup>6</sup> The aim of Charlemagne was probably similar to that of his father in 765, namely to create an alliance with Harun al-Rashid against the Umayyads in Spain and the Eastern Roman Empire. But, in addition to that, Charlemagne asked that the Holy Sepulchre should be assigned to his jurisdiction.<sup>7</sup> Harun al-Rashid sent some of his men to accompany the Carolingian embassy on their way back. One of them was Ibrāhīm ibn al-Aghlab from Egypt. Though the two Carolingian ambassadors Sigismund and Lantfrid died during this journey, the embassy reached Aachen probably in 801. They brought to Charlemagne "costly gifts, which included robes, spices and other marvels of the lands of the Orient."<sup>8</sup> Einhard adds that a few years earlier Harun al-Rashid sent to Charlemagne the only elephant he possessed, and Notker the Stammerer, probably the Monk of Saint Gall (840-912), says that in addition to the elephant- Abu'l-`Abbās- some monkeys, balsam, nard, unguents of various sorts, spices, scents and a wide variety of medicaments were presented.<sup>9</sup>

Two other envoys from the `Abbasid court to Aachen are mentioned in Latin sources. The first one probably arrived in 806, at Treviso, accompanied by a Persian emissary called `Abdallāh. Among the presents were vestments and a unique black tent, huge in size and of excellent workmanship.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the tent, a water-clock and candelabra were mentioned in the *Annales regni Francorum* covering the period of 741-829.<sup>11</sup> The second embassy reached Aachen in 831. It was sent by al-Ma'mūn (813-833), the son of Harun al-Rashid.

But presents were not mentioned. The embassy was sent back by King Louis, son of Charlemagne without even being accepted to his presence.

In the year 906, Queen Bertha of Rome, a granddaughter of prince Lothair, a grandson of Charlemagne, sent an embassy and many precious presents to the `Abbasid caliph al-Muktafi (902-908) with an offer of marriage.<sup>12</sup> Though this event was mentioned by medieval Arab writers, the embassy of Queen Bertha was not followed by an `Abbasid one.

#### The so-called Oliphant of Charlemagne

Though probably a Fatimid carved ivory piece, the oliphant in the treasury of the Palatine Chapel in Aachen (cat. no.109) is associated with Harun al-Rashid and Charlemagne. On the one hand, elephants' tusks were highly sought-after objects in medieval church treasuries, since they belonged to the large group of objects which we may call 'marvels of nature'. These 'marvels' were and still are preserved in church treasuries. Inventories inform us of many ivory tusks (*cornua eburnea*)<sup>13</sup> and of other bizarre items like horns of the mythical unicorn (actually tusks of the narwhal), claws of the legendary griffin (antelope horns), bezoar chalices which were said to change their colour as soon as poison was poured into them, shells of a unique form, coconuts, ostrich eggs and other perishable marvels like special plants or fruits. Hence, the thin line which in fact distinguishes

between nature and art was probably one of the reasons why 'marvels' as such were collected in medieval treasuries. But on the other hand, an ivory tusk was, and still is, a unique and expensive present. Moreover, in Middle Ages, these were rare items, and therefore were regarded as proper royal presents.

The account of a trading fleet which arrived every three years in the kingdom of Solomon, loaded with gold and silver, ivory, apes and baboons, indicates that ivory was regarded in ancient times as one of the goods to be presented to a king.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, according to the prophet Ezekiel (6th century B.C.), the famous kingdom of Tyre used to exchange her goods against ivory tusks.<sup>15</sup> Thus, it is likely that in the early medieval period ivory tusks were regarded as a royal present or at least as a precious form of tribute. This assumption is well embodied on the lower register of the 6th-century imperial diptych from the Louvre (the so-called 'Barberini Diptych'); figures dressed in 'oriental' clothes pay homage to their sovereign by bringing presents, and among them is a figure holding an elephant's tusk (fig.154).<sup>16</sup>

In the later Middle Ages, the oliphant, namely a signal horn made of an elephant's tusk, was regarded not only as a royal attribute but also as a symbol of a courageous knight. This latter concept probably emerged around the 12th century, when the epic of Roland and his famous oliphant was widespread.<sup>17</sup>

To sum up, generally speaking, ivory tusks were regarded

in medieval times as a royal present or as an attribute of the noble. This might partially explain how in the course of time a Fatimid oliphant in the treasury of Aachen was traditionally regarded as the oliphant of heroic Charlemagne and also as one of the exotic presents of Harun al-Rashid.

#### The so-called Chessmen of Charlemagne

Traditions referring to the rock crystal chessmen from the treasury of Osnabrück (cat. no.18, fig.19), the ivory chessman from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (cat. no.124) and the ivory chessman from the National Museum of Florence (inv. no.63C)<sup>18</sup> as being presented by Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne might originate from the fact that chess was also considered during the Middle Ages in the Latin west as a typical exotic royal present.

Its name, i.e. chess, derived from the Persian word *shāh* (king), and the fact that 'king's game' was synonymous with chess suggests that it was played by kings as well as by every person aspiring to be associated with the educated elite.<sup>19</sup>

According to medieval Arab writers the game of chess (*shatranj*) had its origin in India, and from there it spread east and west.<sup>20</sup> The Arabs probably acquired their knowledge of the game during their conquest of Persia. This assumption has been discussed by Kühnel who has suggested that the above-mentioned ivory chessman from the Bibliothèque

Nationale in Paris bears testimony to it. He has pointed to the name of the craftsman Yūsuf al-Bāhilī, which is incised on the bottom of the chessman, as hinting at the connection of the craftsman to the Bāhila tribe. The tribe was influential at the Umayyad court, and key figures of this family were the generals `Abd al-Rahmān ibn Rabī`a and Qutayba ibn Muslim, who secured the extension of Islamic rule to the east, namely to the Caucasus, central Asia and even northern India.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to games of pure chance like backgammon and trictrac, chess is a game of a true skill; though sometimes it was played with dice, which, according to the different combinations of numbers, settles the movements of the figures.<sup>22</sup> According to al-Mas`ūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab* (ca.890), the game was played with different forms of boards, each of which had a special meaning.<sup>23</sup> For example, 'zodiacal' chess, which was regarded as having affinity with the heavenly bodies, was played on a circular chessboard, and 'organic' chess was played on a seven-by-eight squares board with twelve pieces, six against six representing the six senses of a human body.<sup>24</sup> But the dominant characteristic of this game, namely its being based on a player's considered decision, philosophically symbolized the free will of man in contrast to the fatalism represented by games of pure chance.<sup>25</sup>

It is unknown whether and when different Islamic terms referring to chess migrated to the west. However, Latin



sources mention this game as early as the first half of the 11th century, though it was probably played even earlier in the Latin West.<sup>26</sup> Since most of the earliest Latin sources at our disposal are of Spanish origin, most scholars accept the assumption that chess penetrated Europe via Muslim Spain. But other 'routes' should not be disregarded, namely through Italy and even via a northern route crossing Russia and the Nordic countries.<sup>27</sup>

At any rate, the game soon became an attribute of the royal and the noble, and was a pastime of kings and even clergy.<sup>28</sup> At the very beginning of the 11th century we hear that Otto III (died 1002) played chess.<sup>29</sup> The agate and chalcedony chessmen, which were probably mounted before 1014 on the pulpit of Heinrich II (cat. no.43), suggest that the game was known at the Ottonian court. One of the earliest European accounts to mention this game appeared in an 11th-century book written by the Jewish physician of King Alfonso VI, in which the Seven Liberal Arts are compared to the seven skills of a perfect knight. One of them was playing chess (*scacis ludere*);<sup>30</sup> it is worth mentioning that in this book astronomy was compared with playing chess, and therefore it is plausible that Islamic concepts of associating chess with the heavenly bodies might have been introduced to the west. The book of Alfonso X, *Libro de Acedrex, Dados e Tablas* (Book of chess, dice and board games), which was completed in 1283 and largely deals with chess, attests how proud kings were to possess the knowledge of playing chess.<sup>31</sup>



Other medieval sources, namely bequests, mention chess as a royal possession. A most probably 13th-century account tells that King Pepin presented in 764 to the abbey of Moissac a crystal chess set which, to judge by its material, was probably of Islamic origin.<sup>32</sup> Ermengaud I, Count of Urgel, gave his chessmen to the convent of St. Giles (probably at Nîmes) in 1008 or 1010, and Countess Ermessind, sister-in-law of Count Ermengaud, presented crystal chessmen to the same convent at Nîmes in 1058.<sup>33</sup> Ponce Hugo, Count of Ampurias, gave crystal and jasper chessmen to the cathedral of Gerona in 1309.<sup>34</sup> The rock crystal chessman which is mounted on the lidded-cup reliquary in the treasury of Münster (cat. no.24, fig.24) was given, according to a Latin inscription incised on the crystal's mounting, by Otto III (died 1002).

Chess sets were a common present among kings. Though not necessarily Islamic chessmen, the earliest account of a present as such tells of a chess set, made of walrus tusks, which was sent from Greenland to Harald Haardraad of Norway (1040-1067).<sup>35</sup> A chess board and chessmen of jasper and crystal, probably of eastern workmanship, were among the presents which Edward I (ruled 1272-1307) received on the occasion of his marriage with Eleanor of Castile,<sup>36</sup> and an ivory chessboard and chessmen "of Saracenic workmanship" was given by Joan of Ponthieu, the mother of Eleanor of Castile, to Henry III (ruled 1216-1272); this ivory chess set was carried by his sister Isabella to Germany, probably as a part

of her dowry, on her marriage with the Emperor Frederick II in 1225.<sup>37</sup>

A better-known present of chessmen is that which the Old Man of the Mountain (Shaykh al-Jabal, leader of the Assassins) sent to King Louis IX around 1250. These were rock crystal chessmen scented with ambergris which was fastened by delicate gold filigree.<sup>38</sup>

The above-mentioned Latin sources make it clear that chess was regarded as an attribute of royalty or at least of a person of high rank. Thus, some traditions identifying Islamic chessmen in church treasuries as royal presents, and moreover as relating to the famous presents sent by Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne, are quite understandable.

No trace of any medieval chess board has yet been discovered. Therefore it is likely that most of them were made of pliable material such as cloth or leather. Indeed, al-Mas`ūdī mentions a red-leather chess board,<sup>39</sup> and al-Maqrīzī describes a chess board (*ruqā'*) in the Fatimid treasury made of gold brocade (*ḥarīr mudhahhab*).<sup>40</sup> However, it is tempting to see a small group of ivory caskets, which were probably made in the 12th century in Sicily, as special group of chess boxes. These caskets, among which a better-known one is the oval casket from the treasury of York (cat. no.211), are decorated with incised dots and circles arranged in geometric patterns and painted with black, red and occasionally green substances.<sup>41</sup> Their decoration is identical with that which appears on some ivory chessmen.<sup>42</sup>

Yet the lack of medieval literary sources referring to chess boxes makes this no more than an assumption.

In sum, The accounts about back-and-forth envoys between the `Abbasid and the Carolingian courts attest how important, at least from the Christian point of view, were the friendly relationship between the two around the 9th century. However, according to western sources available at present, it seems that the Carolingians lost their interest in this alliance already by the mid of the 9th century. The reasons for this change in the Carolingian political stance might be the consolidation of the Marwānid hegemony in Spain under the iron rule of `Abd al-Rahmān II (r.822-852) and the unity achieved with the establishment of the caliphate in Spain by `Abd al-Rahmān III (r.912-961). This relatively stable situation in Spain might have caused the Carolingians and the Ottonians to change their tactics and to seek alliance with Umayyad Spain, as will be shown below.

The Carolingian-`Abbasid relations, mainly focusing on Harun al-Rashid and Charlemagne, rapidly developed into a legend, and Latin sources probably exaggerate when describing the different sorts of presents and their quantity. That is probably why some Islamic precious objects in church treasuries in the Latin West are traditionally considered as presents of Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne.<sup>43</sup>

C. The transmission of Islamic presents to the Latin West from the Ottonian period (ca. 950) until the First Crusade (1095)

Although, during the period under discussion, the Iberian Peninsula was largely under Islamic control, excluding the northern territories of Catalonia, Aragon, Navarre, Castile, León and Galicia, while Sicily and, for short periods, some parts of South Italy, which already at the beginning of the 10th century had fallen into the hands of the Aghlabids, were under Fatimid rule, only a few documents referring to delegations and, in particular, to exchanges of presents between Islam and the Latin west, are at our disposal.

The first literary source is that of al-Maqqarī (1577-1632) according to whom Ordoño IV, King of Galicia, visited Cordova in 962 and was received by al-Hakam II, who gave him a silk robe and a golden belt decorated with rubies and pearls.<sup>44</sup>

Another account is that of the 10th-century monk Widukind who wrote the history of the Saxons. His description, though a general one, refers to different foreign delegations to the court of Otto I. Among them a Saracenic one is mentioned, and some of the presents mentioned here appear to be typical 'oriental marvels': glass and ivory objects, carpets, balsam and exotic animals like camels, monkeys and ostriches.<sup>45</sup>

His account probably refers to a delegation which was sent from Cordova by the caliph `Abd al-Rahmān III (912-961).

Medieval literary sources tell of a delegation of `Abd al-Rahmān III which was sent around the mid-10th century to Otto I. For some unknown reason, this delegation remained captive for three years. However, in summer 954, an embassy of Otto I was sent to Spain. The head of this one was the monk Johannes from Gorze. He was accompanied by another monk, called Garaman, a merchant from Verdun who was called Ermenhard, and a Spanish priest from the captive delegation of `Abd al-Rahmān III. After a journey of three months they arrived at Cordova, carrying some presents to the caliph. But they were kept in captivity until 956, and were released as soon as a Christian official of `Abd al-Rahmān returned in March 956 from a short mission to the Ottonian court.<sup>46</sup>

Some other sources inform us about another direct contact between the Ottonian court and Muslim Spain, but, unfortunately, presents are not mentioned. This was made by Ibrāhīm ibn Ya`qūb who was sent from Spain to Germany and who probably met Otto I in 961 or 965/6 in Magdeburg.<sup>47</sup>

Though the above-mentioned sources refer to direct contacts between the Latin West and Muslim Spain, the material that we possess concerning this subject is still scanty, and there were probably other direct connections, perhaps with Islamic Sicily or even with Fatimid Egypt and `Abbasid Baghdad.

However, one of the most controversial assumptions concerning the question of Islamic precious objects in the treasury of the Ottonian kings is that which claims that the

marriage of Otto II with the Byzantine princess Theophano in 972 was the major source of such presents.<sup>48</sup> Marriages between royal houses in medieval times were another form of signing an alliance, and the dowry of the bride included luxury objects similar to those sent by embassies. It is worth mentioning that al-Maqqarī says that an embassy was sent by Charlemagne to `Abd al-Rahmān I, asking for alliance with him by marriage.<sup>49</sup> Though the request was rejected, one cannot avoid speculating about the possible cultural interactions resulting from such a marriage. The dowry which Theophano brought to the Ottonian court was probably rich and included luxury objects, part of which were presumably of Islamic origin, like rock crystal vessels, textiles, perfumes and so on. Indeed many Islamic objects in church treasuries over the Alps are traditionally said have been given by members of the Ottonian royal house and they have been broadly discussed by Wenzel.<sup>50</sup> But his suggestion of assigning almost any Islamic object in church treasuries of the Ottonian domain to the dowry of Theophano would be a similar tendency to the traditional one which associates Islamic objects with Harun al-Rashid and Charlemagne. However, the case of the dowry of Theophano sheds light on an indirect possible route through which Islamic presents reached the Latin West, namely via the Byzantine Empire.

The important role of the Byzantine Empire in general and Constantinople in particular as cultural bridges to the Latin West is a large subject which is beyond the scope of this

discussion.<sup>51</sup> However the existence of a large amount of Islamic luxurious objects in the royal Byzantine treasury is attested by al-Qādī al-Rashīd (ca.1052-1071) in his *Kitāb al-Hādāya wa al-Tuḥāf* (Book of Gifts and Treasures [Curiosities]). He informs us about the numerous exchanges of envoys between the Byzantine court and the Islamic ones, mainly the Fatimid in Cairo and the `Abbasid in Baghdad.<sup>52</sup> His detailed accounts of all sorts of presents, and their quantities, demonstrate both how rich the Byzantine treasury was with Islamic luxury objects, and how many precious Byzantine items were kept in the `Abbasid and Fatimid treasuries. Therefore, luxury Islamic commodities might have reached the Latin West not only as part of royal dowries but also as presents carried by Byzantine diplomatic delegations. This channel of transmission was probably effective well before the direct and enduring interaction between the Byzantine Empire and the West which started with the First Crusade.

In addition to that, as far as the Ottonians are concerned, the migration of Islamic presents through Italian channels should also be considered. Wars against Byzantine and Muslim strongholds in South Italy and Sicily, which lasted until the very end of the 11th century, when the Norman conquest of these regions was completed, brought about an alliance between the Ottonians, the Pope in Rome and the Lombards. Otto II (died 983), Otto III (died 1002) and Henry II (died 1024) took an active part in these wars,<sup>53</sup> and

therefore some Islamic objects might have fallen into their hands as booty. But some other Islamic goods might have been brought as presents to their courts by their allies. Such a present was sent by Pope Benedict VIII to Henry II (ruled 1002-1024). It was a golden crown studded with precious stones which had belonged to the wife of the Muslim Amir of Sardinia and which fell into the hands of the Christians in 1016, when this island was recaptured.<sup>54</sup> Pope Benedict VIII might even have brought some other Islamic goods to Germany in 1020, when he came to spend a month in Bamberg. Other presents might have been donated to the royal Ottonian treasury by Melus (Ismahel), the Apulian prince, and his brother-in-law Dattus, who took refuge in the court of Henry II after they had been defeated by the Byzantines in 1018.<sup>55</sup>

#### D. Exchange of presents during the Crusades (1095-1365)

The almost continuous conflicts in Syria and Egypt during the Crusade period brought about a situation in which crusaders played an important role in bringing a diplomatic balance in the Middle East. Some attempts at alliances were made by Syrian and Egyptian rulers who sent artefacts of excellent workmanship to European kings, local princes and persons of high rank in order to win their favour.

According to Geoffrey de Vinsauf, who wrote about the itinerary of Richard Coeur de Lion (1157-1199) to the Holy



Land, a present was given by Saladin to Hubert Walter, Bishop of Salisbury.<sup>56</sup> This bishop accompanied King Richard on his crusade, and in a party held in Jerusalem in 1192 he was offered this present.<sup>57</sup>

Another present was sent by Saladin to Henry of Champagne. In a treaty signed between Saladin and Richard Coeur de Lion on the eve of the latter's departure to Europe in 1192, it was stated that this count was to rule the Frankish territories. On 2 September of that year, an envoy was sent by Henry of Champagne to Saladin to confirm the treaty.<sup>58</sup> Ibn al-Athīr tells that "he [Henry of Champagne] asked him [Saladin] for the gift of a robe of honour, and said: 'You know that to put on the *qabā* and the *sharbūsh* is not approved of among us, but I would put them on if they came from you, because of the regard I have for you.' Saladin sent him sumptuous robes of honour, among them a *qabā* and a *sharbūsh*, and he wore them in Acre;"<sup>59</sup> the *qabā* is a kind of robe, and the *sharbūsh* is a tall triangular cap.<sup>60</sup>

The most valuable object which was offered, probably as a present, to a Christian ruler during this period, was the huge ruby called *al-ḥāfir* (the hoof). This ruby was mentioned by al-Maqrīzī as the Jewel (*al-jauhar*) of the Fatimid treasury.<sup>61</sup> Al-Qalqashandī (1355-1418) describes this ruby as having the shape of a crescent and as weighting 11 *mithqāl* (50 grams). It was sewed onto a silk, and around it were *qudub* (baguettes?) of metallic-green emeralds (*zumrūdh dhubābī*). He added that it was used by the Fatimid caliphs

solely during festivals, in royal processions, and that it was hung on the forehead of the caliph's horse.<sup>62</sup> Saladin, who seized the treasury of the last Fatimid caliph al-Ādid, found there this ruby and other famous precious stones.<sup>63</sup> Soon after, in 1179, the stone was given to William II of Sicily.<sup>64</sup>

Unfortunately it is unknown how it reached Sicily, and the only meeting, to my knowledge, between an envoy of William II and Saladin was after the fall of Jerusalem in 1187. It was a personal meeting between Saladin and the admiral of a fleet, despatched by William II to give a support for the Palestine seaports.<sup>65</sup> However, William II later gave it to Abū Ya`qūb Yūsuf the Almohad (ruled 1163-1184).<sup>66</sup>

The crusade of Frederick II to the Holy Land (between 1228-1230) was not a military expedition. On the contrary, it was a friendly diplomatic visit and, indeed, a successful one, for it resulted in the truce of 1229 which delivered Jerusalem to the Franks. His good relations with the Ayyubid Sultan of Egypt, al-Kāmil, had already begun in 1226, when the latter sent an envoy to Frederick's court, probably to create an alliance with the king against his brother al-Mu`azzam (died 1227).<sup>67</sup> Different sources tell of the many presents bestowed upon Frederick II. In 1228, when Frederick II stayed in Nablus, al-Kāmil sent him precious presents among which were textiles, precious stones and wild and exotic animals.<sup>68</sup> Other objects sent by al-Kāmil were an

Indian lute and a mechanical device of a tree with silver leaves and small birds, which sang with the vibration of the leaves.<sup>69</sup> A further embassy of al-Kāmil's brother and bitter rival, al-Ashraf (died 1237), arrived at Friuli in 1232. The envoys brought to Frederick II a planetarium. It was made of gold and studded with precious stones and was said to be worth 20,000 marks. In this mechanical device, which functioned also as a clock, heavenly bodies moved by a complicated hidden mechanism.<sup>70</sup>

The presents which were given to King Louis IX during his crusade (between 1249-54) to the Holy Land, are splendidly described by John of Joinville, who accompanied the king on his crusade. The presents were sent by the Old Man of the Mountain, leader of the Assassins.

"Among other costly gifts the Old Man sent the king he included a very well-made figure of an elephant, another of an animal called a giraffe, and apples of different kinds, all of which were of crystal; with these he sent gaming boards and sets of chessmen. All these objects were profusely decorated with little flowers made of amber [probably ambergris] which were attached to the crystal by means of delicately fashioned clips of good fine gold. I might add that when the envoys opened the caskets containing these gifts, so sweet a scent arose from them that the whole room was filled with perfume."<sup>71</sup>

Precious stones and garments were sent also to the wife of

King Louis IX by al-Mu`azzam on the occasion of the birth of their son at Damietta.<sup>72</sup>

Muhyi al-Dīn ibn `Abd al-Zahīr (1233-1293), who was secretary to the Mamluk Sultans Baibars and Qalawūn, says that gifts were sent in return by Baibars to the king of Cyprus after signing a truce (probably in May 1279). But unfortunately none of the presents were mentioned.<sup>73</sup>

#### E. Discussion of the evidence

Though it is likely that many other precious presents were given by Muslim amirs and even by the wealthy bourgeoisie on less official occasions, yet were hardly recorded, and though there must be more evidence which has not yet come to light, we may conclude that the typical oriental presents demonstrated Islamic workmanship at its best. They included superb textiles, big vessels of precious metals, rarities like ivories and crystals and mechanical devices. Western rulers were proud of these presents and, whether during their life or after their death, donated them to churches. Unfortunately it is almost impossible to follow the 'history' of these objects in their Christian setting. Two reasons may be suggested for this. First, because church inventories generally mention the Christian donors while omitting their Islamic 'past'. Second, many of them were probably looted and vandalized in the course of time.

Traditions seem to focus on famous figures or on better-known historical events. Therefore, some Islamic objects are assigned to Harun al-Rashid or Charlemagne, Saladin and King Louis IX.

The fact that the Byzantine empire, Spain, Sicily and South Italy should be regarded as cultural bridges to the Latin West, suggests that some Islamic goods might have reached royal courts in Europe through these channels, whether as part of presents of Byzantine, Lombardic or Spanish envoys or as a royal dowry like the one of Theophano.<sup>74</sup>

This chapter focuses on the migration of Islamic presents to the West. Thus to avoid the appearance of a distorted picture, it must be kept in mind that royal presents were also sent from West to East.

Nevertheless, though it is possible that medieval sources exaggerated when describing oriental presents, these accounts shed light on the medieval popular concept of 'marvels of the East'.

1. For a discussion of diplomatic gifts see *EI2*, s.v. "Hiba" (especially the article of C.E. Bosworth); most of the presents sent from the west to the east were regarded by Muslim rulers as tribute. The reaction of al-Mu'izz, who was asked by a Byzantine envoy, admitted to the Fatimid court in 957-8, to send an ambassador to the Byzantine court in return, illustrates this latter aspect. He said: "People send ambassadors to other people for one of the following two reasons: either because they are in need of something or because they have an obligation toward the person [to whom they send the ambassador]." See S.M. Stern, "An Embassy of the Byzantine Emperor to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz," *Byzantion* 20(1950), 247-8.

2. Kings I, 10:2.

3. On this concept see O. Grabar, "The painting of the Six Kings at Qusayr `Amrah," *Ars Orientalis* 1(1954), 185-7.

4. F.W. Buckler, *Harunu'l-Rashid and Charles the Great* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1931); W. Björkman, "Karl und der Islam," in: *Karl der Große, Lebenswert und Nachleben*, ed. Wolfgang Braunfels I (Düsseldorf, 1965), 673 and specially 680-2.

5. Buckler, *Harunu'l-Rashid*, 9; see also H. Pirenne, *Mohammed und Karl der Große* (repr. Frankfurt am Main, 1985), 116. Tradition relates that a Byzantine shroud, the so-called "Suaire de Saint Austremonne", now in the Musée Historique des Tissus in Lyons (Inv.904.III.3 (27.386), was one of the presents sent to Pepin the Short which was presented by him in 761 to the abbey of Saint-Calmin in Mozac (Puy-de-Dôme). The silk was in fact a gift to Pepin from Constantine V. For an illustration see Marielle Martiniani-Reber, *Soieries sassanides, coptes et byzantines Ve-XIe siècles*, Lyon, Musée Historique des Tissus (Paris, 1986), cat. no.96 (with extensive bibliography).

6. L. Thorpe, *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer: Two Lives of Charlemagne* (London, 1969), 70.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. Thorpe, *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer*, 145-6. Though it is unknown whether Notker the Stammerer is accurate in mentioning these gifts as part of the presents of 801, I choose to cite this account because it demonstrates what were at that time typical royal presents from the East.

10. "*Tentoria atrii mirae magnitudinis et pulchritudinis*" - see Buckler, *Harunu'l-Rashid*, 36.

11. Thorpe, *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, 184, note 39.
12. M. Hamidullah, "Embassy of Queen Bertha of Rome to Caliph al-Muktafi Billah in Baghdad," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 1(1953), 272-300.
13. For a list of church inventories of the Latin West in which oliphants are mentioned see E. Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen VIII-XIII. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1971), 85-8.
14. Kings I, 10:22. Parrots (פָּרָדִים) and not baboons appear in the Hebrew text.
15. Ezekiel, 27:15.
16. W.F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz, 1976), 47, no.48, pl.26.
17. The so-called Saracenic oliphants are discussed in Chapter Five. For their meaning as an attribute of a hero see D. Ebiz, "The Medieval Oliphant, Its Function and Meaning in Romanesque Secular Art," *Explorations, A Journal of Research at the University of Maine at Orono* 1(1984), 11-20.
18. For the ivory piece in Florence see Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, cat. no.14. The tradition is probably a late one; the chessman belonged to the collection of Carrand. See also G. Curatola (ed.), *Eredità dell'Islam - Arte islamica in Italia* (Milan, 1993), cat. no.5.
19. The modern literature dealing with chess is large. See mainly H.J.R. Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford, 1913); C. Wilkinson, "Chessmen and Chess," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 1(1943), 271-79; Hans and Siegfried Wichmann, *Schach, Ursprung und Wandlung der Spielfigur in zwölf Jahrhunderten* (Munich, 1960); Antje Kluge-Pinsker, *Schach und Trictrac, Zeugnisse mittelalterlicher Spielfreude in salischer Zeit* (Sigmaringen, 1991). For an extensive bibliography on the subjects including Indian, Iranian and Arabic medieval sources see Sylvia Powels, "Zur Geschichte des Schachspiels bei Indern und Arabern," in: *Hokhmot banta betah, Studia Semitica Necnon Iranica*, eds. by M. Macuch, C. Müller-Kessler and B. Fagner (Wiesbaden, 1989), 201-12.
20. The game was actually known in Greek antiquity as being invented by Palamedos, see *EI1*, s.v. "shatrandj".
21. Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 50-1, cat.no.17. See also *EI2*, s.v. "Al-Bāhili" and "Kutayba b.Muslim".

22.EI1, s.v. "Shatrandj". For the different medieval methods of play see F. Rosenthal, *Gambling in Islam* (Leiden, 1975), 37-40.

23.Al-Mas`ūdi, *Murūj al-dhahab*, trans. by Aloys Sprenger as *El-Mas`ūdi's historical Encyclopedia "Meadows of gold and mines of gems,"* (London, 1841), vol.1, pp.171-4; see also *The Meadows of Gold, The Abbasids*, translated and edited by P. Lunde and Caroline Stone (London, and New York, 1989), 395-8.

24.Lunde and Stone, *The Meadows of Gold*, 395.

25.*Ibid.*, 398; for the meanings associated with chess see T. Burckhardt, "The Symbolism of Chess," *Studies in Comparative Religion* 3/2(1969), 107-12.

26.Helena M. Gamer, "The earliest evidence of chess in western literature: the Einsiedeln verses," *Speculum* 29(1954), 734-50.

27.*Ibid.*, 744 (note 27), 749.

28.Murray, *A History of Chess*, 429-442. For references to chess being played by clergymen see *ibid.*, 408-9.

29.Cited by Wilkinson, "Chessmen and chess," 279.

30.Powels, "Zur Geschichte des Schachspiels," 209-10.

31.J.T. Wollesen, "Sub specie ludi... Text and Images in Alfonso El Sabio's Libro de Acedrex, Dados e Tablas," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 53(1990), 277-308.

32.Murray, *A History of Chess*, 403.

33.These donations are cited by Murray, *A History of Chess*, 405-6; cited also by Gamer, "The earliest evidence of Chess in western literature," 738-9.

34.Murray, *A History of Chess*, 404.

35.A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der romanischen Zeit IV*(Berlin, 1926), 7. Cited by Gamer, "The earliest evidence of chess in western literature," 739.

36.T.H. Turner (ed.), *Manners and Household Expenses of England in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries*, the Roxburghe Club (London, 1841), pp.lxix.

37.*Ibid.*, note no.2.



38. Joinville, *The Life of Saint Louis*, in Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. by M.R.B. Shaw (London, 1963), 278-9.

39. Lunde and Stone, *The Meadows of Gold*, 396.

40. Ahmad ibn `Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-mawā`iz wa'l-i`tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-āthār* (the Bulāq edition, repr. Beirut, ca. 1970), vol.1, 415. See also P. Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 89(1935), 354.

41. R.H. Pinder-Wilson and C.N.L. Brooke, "The Reliquary of St. Petroc and the Ivories of Norman Sicily," *Archaeologia* 104(1973), 285-6.

42. See the ivory chessman in the Islamic Museum in Berlin, Dahlem (I.4670) or that in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (49.36); Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, cat.nos.9,10.

43. For a list of the presents associated with Harun al-Rashid and Charlemagne, see Buckler, *Harunu'l-Rashid*, 42, note 1. It should be mentioned that the Islamic 14th-century enamel beaker from Chartres is also allegedly regarded as present of Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne (cat. no.99).

44. D.P. de Gayangos, *The History of Muhammadan dynasties in Spain*, a version adapted from the *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* of al-Maqqarī (London, 1840), vol.II, 159.

45. A. Bauer and R. Rau, *Quellen zur Geschichte der sächsischen Kaiserzeit. Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*, vol.8, ed. by Rudolf Buchner (Darmstadt, 1971), 164-5.

46. The story of the delegation of Otto I is broadly discussed by Robert Holtzmann, *Geschichte der sächsischen Kaiserzeit* (Munich, 1941), 169-74.

47. P. Engels, "Der Reisebericht des Ibrāhīm ibn Ya`qūb (961/966)," in: A. von Euw and P. Schreiner (eds.), *Kaiserin Theophanu, Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends*, I(Cologne, 1991), 413-22.

48. H. Wenzel, "Das byzantinische Erbe der ottonischen Kaiser-Hypothesen über den Brautschatz der Theophano," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 40(1971), 15-39; *idem*, "Alte und altertümliche Kunstwerke der Kaiserin Theophano," *Pantheon* 30(1972), 3-18; *idem*, "Das byzantinische Erbe der ottonischen Kaiser-Hypothesen über den Brautschatz der Theophano," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 43(1972), 11-96; *idem*, "Byzantinische Kleinkunstwerke aus dem Umkreis der Kaiserin Theophano," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 44(1973), 43-86; for discussions on the

different aspects of this problem see A. von Euw and P. Schreiner (eds.), *Kaiserin Theophano, Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends*, 2 vols. (Cologne, 1991).

49. De Gayangos, *Muhammadan dynasties in Spain*, vol.2, 85.

50. See note no.48.

51. On this subject see mainly A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes* I (Brussels, 1935); *idem*, vol.II (Brussels, 1950) and vol.III (Brussels, 1935); A. Grabar, "Le succès des arts orientaux à la cour byzantine sous les Macédoniens," *Münchener Jahrbuch des bildenden Kunst* 2(1951), 32-60; see also *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol.18 (1964) which includes articles dedicated to this subject, especially the article of M. Canard, "Les Relations Politiques et Sociales entre Byzance et les Arabes," pp.35-56.

52. All these accounts were gathered by M. Hamidullah, "Nouveaux documents sur les rapports de l'Europe avec l'Orient musulman au moyen âge," *Arabica* 7(1960), 281-300.

53. R. Holtzmann, *Geschichte der sächsischen Kaiserzeit*, 474-8.

54. *Ibid.*, 474.

55. The famous present that Melus gave to Heinrich II is a star mantle, the so-called "Sternenmantel Kaiser Heinrichs II"; Renate Baumgärtel-Fleischmann, *Ausgewählte Kunstwerke aus dem Diözesanmuseum Bamberg* (Bamberg, 1983), 12-16. Though this mantle was probably made in Regensburg around 1020, silks decorated with cosmological patterns were frequently used in medieval Islam, part of which were probably manufactured in the Andalusian textile centre of Almeria. See Annabelle Simon-Cahn, "The Fermo Chasuble of St. Thomas Becket and Hispano-Mauresque Cosmological Silks: Some Speculations on the Adaptive Reuse of Textiles," *Muqarnas* 10(1993), 1-5. Therefore, it is plausible that Melus transmitted some Islamic ideas to the Ottonian court while commissioning this chasuble.

56. Geoffrey de Vinsauf's *Itinerary of Richard I and others to the Holy Land*, in: *Chronicles of the Crusaders* (London, 1848), 335.

57. See also S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* III (Cambridge, 1951, repr. in Penguin Books, 1991), 73.

58. M.C. Lyons and D.E.P. Jackson, *Saladin, The politics of the Holy War* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), 360.

59. Translated by F. Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (repr. London, 1984), 242.

60. *Ibid.*, note 1.

61. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 414; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 338.

62. Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 338, note 3; for the explanation of the name of this kind of emerald see M. Clément-Mullet, "Sur la minéralogie arabe," *Journal Asiatique* 11(1868, 6th series), 66.

63. See Muhammad ibn `Ali (Ibn Tiqtaqa), *Al-Fakhrī*, trans. by C.E.J. Whitting (London, 1947), 259.

64. Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 338-9, note 3.

65. Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, 288; see also *EII*, s.v. "Saladin".

66. Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 338-9, note 3.

67. D. Abulafia, *Frederick II: A medieval emperor* (London, 1992), 170-1.

68. E.H. Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (repr. Dusseldorf and Munich, 1964), 169; cited by Eva Baer, *Ayyubid metalwork with Christian images*, supplements to *Muqarnas*, vol.IV, (Leiden, 1989), 44, note 22.

69. Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich (Ergänzungsband)*, 69; Baer, *Ayyubid metalwork*, 45.

70. Baer, *Ayyubid metalwork*, 45; Abulafia, *Frederick II*, 266-7.

71. Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 278-79.

72. Cited by Baer, *Ayyubid metalwork*, 44, note 23.

73. Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, 315-6.

74. For example, an embassy of King Alfonso II of Asturias and Galicia (ruled 791-842) brought tributes to Charlemagne. One might speculate whether some Islamic goods were among these tributes. For this embassy see Buckler, *Harunu'l-Rashid*, 19; Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne* in: Thorpe, *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, 70.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE DISPERSION OF THE FATIMID TREASURY

During the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Mustansir (1036-1094), monetary resources were in such a devastated state that, between the years 1061-1069, many of the riches in the Fatimid treasury had to be sold at a great loss, while the rest was plundered or even set on fire by Nāsir al-Dawla.

The contemporary detailed source about that event is that of al-Qādī al-Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr who probably himself held office in the treasury or at least relied on a well-informed person.<sup>1</sup> Later sources, like that of al-Maqrīzī (1364-1442), also give us full details of the event but they mainly draw upon the work of al-Qādī al-Rashīd.<sup>2</sup>

The amount of precious objects which reached the Mediterranean markets with the selling of the Fatimid treasury was probably enormous. Egyptian merchants (like the frequently mentioned Fakhr al-`Arab) were the first to handle these commodities.<sup>3</sup> According to al-Qādī al-Rashīd the market places were filled with these goods, and, later, because of the looting, golden wares were unfortunately melted.<sup>4</sup> At any rate, al-Qādī al-Rasīd added that "...wealthy merchants transported some of [the precious items] to the other capitals and to all countries, [as] they became beautiful adornments and treasures for their kings as well as ornaments and objects of pride for their kingdoms."<sup>5</sup> Courts of rulers in Muslim Spain and Sicily and, of course, the Byzantine royal court in Constantinople were among the places where

these Fatimid treasures were offered. Therefore, it seems that many luxury objects in church treasuries of the Latin West were originally, at least until 1061, in the possession of the Fatimids. Since the quantity of superb Islamic rock crystal and glass objects in church treasuries is enormous, the discussion here is focused on rock crystal and glass vessels in the Fatimid treasury.

#### A. Rock crystal vessels

The amount of different kinds of rock crystal (*billawr*) vessels in the treasury was substantial. They are divided into two main groups: the smooth (*majrūd*) and the decorated ones (*manqūsh*)- most probably the engraved ones. On numerous occasions crystals and crystal-glasses (*muḥkam*) are mentioned together. Generally speaking, the *muḥkam* vessels were less expensive glass versions of vessels of carved precious stones. For example, the red *muḥkam* vessels were intended to imitate carved rubies while the green ones imitated carved emeralds. In the case of crystals, *muḥkam* glass was colourless, probably made of a thick glass and decorated with the typical patterns which appear on crystal vessels. Such glass vessels have survived and are scattered in different museums.<sup>6</sup>

Al-Maqrīzī mentions that 18,000 objects of crystal and *muḥkam* were taken out of the palace, probably to be sold in the bazaars of Cairo.<sup>7</sup> Another circa 17,000 peculiar

containers (*ghulāf min al-khayāzir*) were most probably bamboo boxes or cases which held crystal pieces and which were covered inside with layers of silk.<sup>8</sup> Another 36,000 *muḥkam* and crystal pieces, the forms of which are not described, were sold for 36,000 *dīnārs*, and, therefore, these were probably tiny objects of less expensive crystal or glass.<sup>9</sup> A large amount of small *fuqqā`a* jugs (*kīzān al-fuqqā`a*) made of rock crystal were also taken from the palace.<sup>10</sup> These were probably small spherical or sphero-conical containers with short necks and small spouts which were usually used to hold bubbly liquids.<sup>11</sup> Much rock crystal tableware is mentioned: 90 basins (*ṭisht*, probably washbasins) and 90 ewers (*ibrīq*) of clear fine crystal,<sup>12</sup> a unique drinking bowl or goblet (*qadaḥ*) which, although undecorated, was sold for 220 *dīnārs*,<sup>13</sup> a carafe (*khurdādī*) and a small jug (*kūz*) which were sold for 360 and 210 *dīnārs* respectively,<sup>14</sup> another carafe and a bowl (*bāṭiya*) on which the name al-`Azīz billāh was carved (these two are separately discussed), a large bottle or jug (*qāṭarmīz*) with cut relief decoration and another one which has two additional *marūqatayn* (sauce-boats?),<sup>15</sup> an undecorated *dakkūja(?)* or *balūja(?)* (translated by Kahle as "Kruke", a kind of jug),<sup>16</sup> a large jar (*kūz zīr*)<sup>17</sup> and a group of lidded bowls (*sakārij*).<sup>18</sup>

This evidence stresses the love of Fatimid rulers for rock crystal and their preference for it as far as tableware was concerned. Many medieval traditions and legends refer to rock crystal and they are discussed at length in Chapter Seven.

But the account of al-Qazwīnī (ca.1203-1283) about rock crystal is worth mentioning in this context, since he discusses the connection between rock crystal and royal tableware. He says that kings prefer to use rock crystal vessels because of the strong belief that if a person drinks out of them he will never suffer thirst.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, the pure and translucent qualities of this substance probably made it preferable to other materials for tableware. In addition to that, the absence of any serious rock crystal carving industry in the West before the end of the 12th century<sup>20</sup> explains the appeal which these vessels had as soon as they reached Europe.

Accounts referring to smooth (*majrūd*)- i.e. undecorated-crystal vessels in the treasury again raises the question whether undecorated and faceted rock crystal vessels in European church treasuries are of Fatimid or of much later European origin. The majority of them have pear-shaped bodies, large necks and tall straight handles. This type of vessels was published for the first time in 1910 by Sarre and Martin in the catalogue of the *Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst in München*, where they are assigned with reserve to Fatimid Egypt.<sup>21</sup> But shortly after, in 1930, the suggestion of von Falke of assigning them to 13th- and 14th-century rock crystal manufacture in Burgundy was quickly accepted.<sup>22</sup> More recent researches, mainly based on late medieval literary sources, suggest that other European centres, like Paris and Venice, manufactured carved precious stones and rock crystals

in particular.<sup>23</sup>

However the account of al-Maqrīzī about the large amount of undecorated crystal vessels in the Fatimid treasury, the small undecorated and faceted rock crystal bottles which were bought by Ralph Harari in Cairo,<sup>24</sup> and the rock crystal jug from the Hermitage Museum (cat. no.62, fig.62), the shape and the handle of which are similar to those of 'European' crystal vessels, suggest that at least some of them were made in Fatimid Egypt.

#### B. Glass vessels

The numerous glass vessels in the Fatimid treasury were mainly the above-mentioned *muhkam* ones. The term can be translated literally as sophisticated glassware- probably cut glass vessels imitating carved ones of precious stone. This type of vessels was largely discussed by Kahle who has translated this Arabic term as "Kunstglass" and suggested that other terms like *zujāj fir`awnī*, *abgīna* and "Baghdad Glass" refer to this costly glass.<sup>25</sup> Kahle has provided us with the informative account of Nāsir al-Dīn al-Tūsī (1201-1274) who describes the technical methods of its manufacture.<sup>26</sup> According to him, the glass was left for an extended time in the fire because this ensured that the glass will be lucid, transparent and lacking any air bubbles. Later it was polished with onyx and even adorned with incised decorations. Al-Tūsī adds that no one produces glassware such



as this at present, namely in the 13th century.

The term *zujāj fir`awnī*, which can be translated literally as Egyptian (Pharaonic) glass, though not necessarily attesting that it was solely made in Egypt, probably referred to transparent cut glass vessels. The description of al-Qādī al-Rashīd of a goblet (*jam*) in the treasury of the Umayyad caliph Marwān ibn Muhammad (744-749), which was made of *zujāj fir`awnī*, makes it quite clear that the term referred to thick cut glass vessels. According to him, the goblet was "one finger (*iṣba`*) thick (*ghulḏuhu*) and one-and-a-half spans (*shibr*) wide (*fathuhu*), engraved in relief (*nabit*) with a representation (*ṣūrah*) of a crouching lion in the middle, faced by a kneeling man, who aims his arrow (*sahm*) at the lion."<sup>27</sup> Al-Tīfāshī (died 1253) in his book on minerals-*Kitāb Azhār al-Afkār fī Jawāhir al-Aḥjār*- provides us with some more information about its colour. He says that the colour of *zujāj fir`awnī* is similar to that of the most valuable diamond, namely the yellowish diamond (*al-mās al-zaytī*).<sup>28</sup> The same description can be found in the *Kitāb maṭāli` al-budūr* of al-Ghuzūlī (died 1412), who probably relied on al-Tīfāshī.<sup>29</sup> Yet it is unknown whether this term might have even hinted at a type of an early Roman glass, as Oleg Grabar has suggested.<sup>30</sup> However, the above-mentioned literary sources indicate that this was a yellowish, extremely translucent thick glass, apparently decorated with cut relief.

Moreover, it is probable that terms like "glass of Iraq"

or "glass of Tyre", which the 12th-century traveller Ibn Jubayr used while describing the rock crystal lamp in the sanctuary of John the Baptist in the Great Mosque of Damascus, are further terms referring to objects made of thick transparent glass which also imitated rock crystals;<sup>31</sup> the so-called "Hedwig Glasses" (cat. nos.83-95, figs.84-95) are probably made of this type of *muḥkam* glass.

The term *abgīna* referred to thick transparent green glass vessels which imitated precious objects of emerald. Nāsir-i Khusraw in his *Safar-nāma* (ca.1050) mentions that in the bazaars of Cairo one may find a unique transparent and very clear glass (probably without any air bubbles) which resembled emerald (*zabarjad*). He calls this type of glassware *abgīna* and adds that they were sold there on weight.<sup>32</sup> Vessels such as this might include the transparent green glass bowl in the treasury of San Marco in Venice (cat. no.78, fig.78) or even the green glass bowl, the so-called "Sacro Catino", at Genoa, which was regarded for centuries as a real emerald (this vessel is discussed in Chapter Four).

However, the most expensive *muḥkam* glass was the red-ruby glass- the so-called *al-adhrak*- about which al-Bīrūnī (died ca.1050) gives the following information.<sup>33</sup> He says that the price of this artificial ruby almost reached the price of a real one.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, citing al-Kindī (897-961), he adds that the price of a piece of *al-adhrak* which has a deep clear red colour of a pomegranate (*rumānī*) might cost 1000 *dīnārs* because no one is able today (according to al-Kindī) to

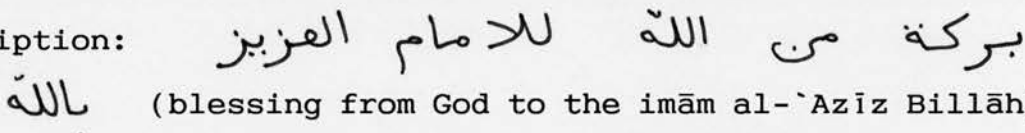
produce such colour.<sup>35</sup> This last remark suggests that the transparent red-ruby glass bowl in the treasury of San Marco in Venice, which is probably of this type (cat. no.79, fig.79), should be dated earlier than to the 10th century.

The opaque turquoise glass bowl in the treasury of San Marco (cat. no.77, fig.77) was probably no less expensive and is a further type of *muḥkam* vessel which might once have been kept in the Fatimid treasury (this turquoise glass bowl is separately discussed).

Another term which sometimes appears in connection with glassware is the term *mīnā*. This term has been discussed in detail by Aga-Oglu.<sup>36</sup> However, it seems that in the account of the Fatimid treasury it refers to any melted substance which, after it cools, creates a shiny glazed layer.<sup>37</sup> The *mīnā* plates (*ṣuḥūn mīnā*) which were mentioned among other rock crystal vessels were probably made of glass, and Aga-Oglu has even suggested that these were glass plates which imitated millefiore glass.<sup>38</sup> Another 28 *mīnā* trays (*ṣīnīya*) covered with gold in cubes were given to the Fatimids by the King of Rūm (the emperor of Byzantium).<sup>39</sup> The Byzantine origin of these trays makes it probable that the term *mīnā* refers in this case to *cloisonné* enamel decoration. But the description that the trays were covered with gold in cubes causes some difficulties. And it is possible that these trays were covered with golden nets or even made of little square pieces of glass inlaid into a firm golden grid like that of

the so-called Cup of Khusraw. Some mirrors and the feathers of the golden peacock in the treasury are mentioned as being made of *mīnā* glass.<sup>40</sup> It is probable that the mirrors and the feathers of the peacocks were also decorated with enamel. However Aga-Oglu has suggested that the term *al-zujāj al-mīnā* (*mīnā* glass) might signify translucent enamel as distinguished from opaque enamel.<sup>41</sup>

C. The rock crystal ewer of the Fatimid caliph al-`Azīz Billāh

This pear-shaped ewer in the treasury of San Marco in Venice (cat. no.57, fig.57), which bears the Arabic inscription:  (blessing from God to the imām al-`Azīz Billāh) referring to the caliph al-`Azīz (ruled 975-996), probably reached the treasury of San Marco after the dispersion of the Fatimid treasury. Indeed two vessels of superb rock crystal which bear the name of al-`Azīz Billāh are mentioned as being part of the goods acquired from that treasury. The first one was a carafe (*khurdādī*), which might be the medieval Arabic term for this kind of pear-shaped ewer, and the second one was a bowl or a pot (*bāṭiya*).<sup>42</sup> The fact that they were seen by someone in Tripoli, probably in one of the markets, illustrates how objects from the Fatimid treasury changed hands and moved from Egypt in different directions. This person even described the bowl as holding circa 3 litres

while the carafe holds 4 litres. According to his description the carafe was huge; the one in San Marco holds circa 1.5 litres. Therefore, Kahle has suggested that there must have been other crystals bearing the name of al-`Aziz Billāh and the biggest pieces have probably disappeared. It is reasonable that many crystals have disappeared. But since the biggest Islamic rock crystal vessel known so far measures 35 cm. long and 17 cm. wide (cat. no.67, fig.67), it may be suggested that the person who saw the carafe in Tripoli embellished his account.

Whether the ewer from San Marco was the one in Tripoli is a matter which cannot be solved. But since most scholars accept that the majority of the precious objects in the treasury of San Marco were brought to Venice after the sack of Constantinople in 1204, the ewer probably somehow reached the Byzantine royal treasury and later was presented to the treasury of San Marco.<sup>43</sup>

#### D. The rock crystal ewer in the Louvre

This ewer (cat. no.60, fig.60), which belonged to a group of Fatimid pear-shaped rock crystal ewers (cat nos.57-62, figs.57-62), was presented to the Louvre in 1793. Before then, it was kept in the treasury of St. Denis, and, though it was mentioned for the first time in 1505, it has been more than once identified with the account of Abbot Suger of St. Denis about a *lagena* (flagon) which he received from Count

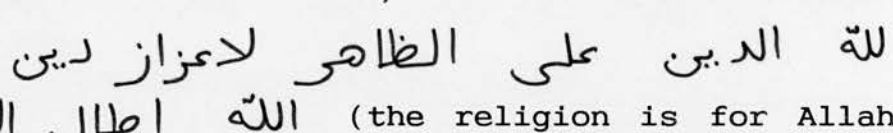
Thibaut: "Lagenam quoque praeclaram, quam nobis comes Blesensis Theobaldus in eodem vase destinavit, in quo ei rex Siciliae illud transmiserat, et aliis in eodem officio gratanter apposuimus" (We also gladly added to the other vessels for the same office an excellent gallon vase, which Count Thibaut of Blois had conveyed to us in the same case in which the King of Sicily had sent it to him).<sup>44</sup>

Though Abbot Suger did not mention the material of this vase, the fact that he mentioned it with other vessels of carved precious stones suggests that the vase was also made of precious stone. Moreover, Abbot Suger mentions that the vase was presented to the Abbey in its case. This evidence calls to mind the account of al-Maqrīzī, who speaks about bamboo cases (*ghilāf khayzurān*) for rock crystal vessels in the Fatimid treasury.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, it is possible that the vase was of rock crystal and that it was given to Count Thibaut in its original case. However, the term *lagena*, which usually refers to big vessels, causes difficulty, and therefore, we cannot certainly identify the rock crystal ewer in the Louvre with that which was given by Roger II to Count Thibaut. On the other hand, the elaborate golden lid of the ewer, which recalls Fatimid filigree decoration and which is attributed to an 11th-century South Italian workshop,<sup>46</sup> suggests that the vessel had been kept in a royal treasury in South Italy or Sicily before it reached the abbey of St. Denis.

In sum, the ewer in the Louvre was probably kept in the

Fatimid treasury until the dispersion of those treasures around 1069. Later it reached one of the Norman courts in South Italy or Sicily and there it received its golden lid. Whether by Count Thibaut or by some other person, it was presented to the abbey of St. Denis, where it was kept until 1793.

#### E. The crescent of al-Zāhir

Another rock crystal piece which was most probably kept in the Fatimid treasury is the so-called "crescent of al-Zāhir" (cat no.72, fig.72). This ring, which has been carefully studied by von Karabacek, is made of two identical curved pieces fastened to each other, and it bears a Kufic inscription:  (the religion is for Allah [only], `Alī al-Zāhir li-`izāz dīn Allāh, God will prolong his life).<sup>47</sup>

Though the exact function of this ring is unknown, Lamm has suggested that it was mounted on a spear or on a bridle, namely as a decorative emblem on a head of the royal horse.<sup>48</sup> The use of a crescent (*hilāl*) as a decorative royal emblem in general and on a royal horse in particular is a Sasanian custom which was adopted by Muslim rulers,<sup>49</sup> and the famous ruby in the form of a crescent, the so-called *al-ḥāfir*, in the Fatimid treasury was used for that purpose (the object is discussed in Chapter Two). But crescents (*aḥilla*)

are also mentioned by al-Maqrīzī as part of the decoration of standards (*a`lām*) of the Fatimids.<sup>50</sup> These were mounted on spears (*rumḥān*).<sup>51</sup> The fact that this rock crystal piece bears a blessing for the Fatimid caliph al-Zāhir (1021-36) suggests that it is more likely that it was mounted on a spear carried during royal processions; it is worth mentioning that the Fatimid rock crystal pommels which are kept at present in church treasuries (cat. nos.35-38, figs.35-38) might originally have been mounted on spearheads.

Though this rock crystal piece was probably kept in the Fatimid royal treasury, it is unknown when it left the treasury. It might have been sold between 1061-1069, but it could have fallen into the hands of the Ayyubids with the fall of the Fatimids in 1171. However, no later than 1350 the piece was in Venice, since, according to Hahnloser, it was mounted on the reliquary in 1350 in a Venetian workshop.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps it reached Venice after the sack of Constantinople in 1204. However, later it was somehow transferred to Vienna, where it was mentioned for the first time in 1758 in an inventory of the *Geistliche Schatzkammer*.<sup>53</sup> It was kept there until 1887, the year it reached the *Germanisches Nationalmuseum* in Nuremberg.

#### F. The turquoise glass bowl in the Treasury of San Marco

Though the written history of the opaque turquoise glass bowl from San Marco (cat. no.77, fig.77) cannot be traced



further back than the end of the 16th century, when in 1571 it was first mentioned as "*Un scudellotto di color turchino, non si sa di che materia sia, ha il friso attorno ornato di granate, delle qual granate di esse mancano*" (a bowl of turquoise colour, the material of which is unknown, has around it a frieze of garnets of which some garnets are missing),<sup>54</sup> it is quite probable that it has a longer history. This perhaps goes back to a period spanning approximately another 600 years, from the moment it was made in one of the glass manufacturing centres of the East until it was cited in the above-mentioned inventory.

The bowl, which bears the word 'Khurāsān' (خراسان), written in Kufic letters and carved in relief under its foot,<sup>55</sup> is generally thought to have been made in Iraq during the 9th century.<sup>56</sup> But recent studies, based on excavations in Iran, mainly in Nishapur, tend to suggest that there were other centres for producing carved minerals and cut glass vessels in Iran during the `Abbasid period.<sup>57</sup>

Its five-lobed shape recalls the fluted Sasanian silver cups or even the four-lobed Chinese porcelain bowls.<sup>58</sup> The decoration of the stylized running animals, which frequently appeared on 9th- and 10th-century Islamic cut glass objects, and the name of Khurāsān, might suggest that it is of Iranian origin, made during the 'Revival' of Sasanian motifs in the 10th century.<sup>59</sup>

The mounting consists of several plaques of different materials and artistic techniques.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, it prevents

us finding out when this object was mounted, and we are left with the engraving of La Mottraye of 1727 as the irrefutable *terminus ante quem* for the mounting.<sup>61</sup>

According to tradition the bowl was presented to the Signoria of Venice in August 1472 by Agi Mohammed (*Hājjī Muḥammad*), a member of one of the delegations which were sent to Venice by Uzun Hasan (died Jan. 1478), the Turkoman ruler whose powerful 15th-century state comprised Armenia, Mesopotamia and Persia.<sup>62</sup> Though the Venetians tried to create an alliance with Uzun Hasan in order to weaken the Ottomans, and Venetian and Persian ambassadors visited Persia and Venice during the 15th century,<sup>63</sup> unfortunately, a turquoise bowl was not mentioned during that century as being accepted as a present from the Turkoman ruler. Besides, the traditional story seems to appear for the first time by Gradenigo in the 17th century.<sup>64</sup> This might hint that the bowl reached the Treasury of San Marco in a different way. Moreover, in an inventory of the Treasury, dated to 5th September 1325, a small turquoise dish with gilded silver mounting is mentioned (*scutelam unam de turchese varnitam argento deaurato*).<sup>65</sup> This description, though of a carved dish of precious stone, seems to refer to the glass turquoise bowl. Thus it is quite probable that the vessel reached Venice before the above-mentioned event of 1472.

Al-Qādī al-Rashīd informs us of a small superb turquoise bowl (*zibdiyyah*), which could hold one Syrian *raṭl* and which

was looted from the *Khurāsāni* pilgrims during the riot of 1022 in Madina.<sup>66</sup> He adds that later the bowl was brought to Palestine by `Azim al-Dawla, who was one of the soldiers in Ramla (this person was probably appointed as the *Amīr al-Ḥājj* of this pilgrimage),<sup>67</sup> and right after this it was taken by Sadīd al-Dawla, `Ali ibn Ahmad ibn al-Dayf, the governor of Syria . As soon as the latter was killed, it passed into the hands of the Fatimid caliph al-Zāhir.<sup>68</sup>

The story narrated by al-Qādī seems likely to be associated with the bowl from San Marco. Though al-Qādī speaks of a turquoise and not of a glass turquoise bowl, we might consider that the bowl looted in Madina was erroneously regarded as a real turquoise one; this assumption is quite acceptable, taking into consideration the close relationship between Islamic medieval cut glass and cut stone workshops, which probably was the cause of the long scholarly controversy over the substance of the San Marco bowl.<sup>69</sup> Its content of one Syrian *raṭl*, namely circa 1500 gr., is approximately equivalent to the content of the bowl from San Marco.<sup>70</sup> The fact that it was looted from Khurāsānian pilgrims, who might have brought this precious vessel in order to sell it or, more probably, to present it to one of the holiest shrines, be that in Madina or in Mecca, might be the reason behind the word *Khurāsān* carved under the foot of the bowl of San Marco. *Khurāsān*, and particularly Nishapur, were regarded by Arabic writers, like al-Tha`ālibī (died 1038), al-Tifāshī (died 1253), al-Ghuzūlī (died 1412) and

ʿUtārid ibn Muhammad (probably 9th century), as the main source from which the best turquoise (*fīrūzaj*) could be obtained,<sup>71</sup> If the Khurāsānian pilgrims had wished to sell this bowl, the name of Khurāsān might have served as camouflage, namely to conceal the fact that it was made of opaque-coloured glass and not out of the famous Khurāsānian turquoise. If they wished to donate it, the name of Khurāsān might have been carved in order to commemorate the pilgrims of Khurāsān as the donors of this valuable gift.<sup>72</sup>

In the absence of information as to the exact day when ʿAli ibn Ahmad al-Dayf was killed, it would be difficult to say when the turquoise bowl reached the Fatimid treasury. But the fact that he was put to death by the intrigues of the sister of al-Hākim, Sitt al-Mulk (died 1024),<sup>73</sup> allows us to suggest that the vessel reached the treasury during the two-year span from 1022 to 1024.

Its sojourn in the Fatimid treasury was, therefore, short, namely until 1061. Al-Qādī al-Rashīd and al-Maqrīzī fail to mention any turquoise vessel among the precious objects in the Fatimid treasury. It is possible that the bowl was already given as a present before 1061. But, since the source upon which both drew is a knowledgeable person who probably held office in the treasury,<sup>74</sup> the bowl might have been identified by him as a coloured cut glass one and would thus have fallen into the large and less valuable category of the *Muḥkam* vessels.

Like other rock crystal vessels in the West the bowl might have also first reached Constantinople; it was most probably believed to be a precious one of real turquoise. After the sack of Constantinople in 1204 it was probably presented to the treasury of San Marco, where it could have been recorded as a real turquoise bowl in the inventory of 1325.

1. Al-Qādī al-Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-Dhakhā'ir wa'l-Tuḥaf*, ed. by M. Hamidullah (Kuwait, 1959), a work unavailable to me; see also G.H. Qaddumi, *A medieval Islamic book of gifts and treasures: Translation, annotation and commentary on the "Kitāb al-Hādāya wa al-Tuḥaf"* (Ph.D, Harvard University, 1990), mainly pp.249-63.

2. Ahmad ibn `Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-mawā'iz wa'l-i'tibār fi dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-āthār* (the Bulāq edition, repr. Beirut, circa 1970), vol.1, 414-16 (henceforth al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*); the account has been translated and annotated by P. Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 89(1935), 329-62.

3. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 414,415.

4. Qaddumi, *Book of gifts and treasures*, 250.

5. *Ibid.*, 250.

6. For a discussion on the correlation between glass and crystal objects see K. Erdmann, "Die fatimidischen Bergkristallkannen," *Wandlungen christlicher Kunst im Mittelalter* (Baden Baden, 1953), 189-205. Many *muḥkam* objects are discussed by P. Oliver, "Islamic Relief Cut Glass: A Suggested Chronology," *Journal of Glass Studies* 3(1961), 9-29.

7. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 414; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 346.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 415; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 355.

10. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 414; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 344.

11. Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 344, note 4; see also A. Ghouchani and C. Adle, "A Sphero-Conical Vessel as *Fuqqā`a*, or a Gourd for "Beer", " *Muqarnas* 9(1992), 72-92.

12. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 415; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 351.

13. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 414; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 345.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 416; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 357, 359.

- 16.Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 357, note 6; Al-Maqrizī, *Khiṭāṭ*, vol.1, 416.
- 17.Al-Maqrizī, *Khiṭāṭ*, vol.1, 416; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 359.
- 18.Al-Maqrizī, *Khiṭāṭ*, vol.1, 416; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 358.
- 19.Cited by Lamm, *Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten*, 509, no.138.
- 20.G. E. Pazaurek, "Mittelalterlicher Edelsteinschliff," *Belvedere* 9(1930), 146; Susanne Brugger-Kock, "Venedig und Paris - die wichtigsten Zentren des hochmittelalterlichen Hartsteinschliffs im Spiegel der Quellen," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 39(1985), 3-39.
- 21.F. Sarre and F.R. Martin, *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst in München 1910* (repr. London, 1984), pls. 162 and 165.
- 22.O. von Falke, "Gotisch oder fatimidisch?" *Pantheon* 5(1930), 120-28; *idem*, "Gotische Kristallgefäße in Istanbul," *Pantheon* 14(1934), 208-10; A. Loewenthal, "Les grands vases de cristal de roche et leur origine," *Gazette de Beaux Arts*, six series, vol. 11, no.1(1934), 43-48; for different approaches which do not reject the Fatimid possibility see C.J. Lamm, *Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten*, vol.1, 184-5; H. Wenzel, "Die Monolithgefäße aus Bergkristall," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 8(1939), 281-5.
- 23.Brugger-Koch, "Venedig und Paris,".
- 24.Lamm, *Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten*, vol.2, pl.78, 7-11; Lamm himself has pointed to the existence of such vessels as one of the arguments for possible manufacture of smooth and faceted vessels in Fatimid Egypt; see *ibid.*, vol.1, p.184.
- 25.Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 341, note 2.
- 26.*Ibid.*
- 27.Qaddumi, *Book of gifts and treasures*; 46, see also p.305, note 8.
- 28.Ahmad ibn Yūsuf al-Tifāshī, *Azhār al-Afkār fī Jawāhir al-Aḥjār* (Cairo, 1977), 106.
- 29.Al-Ghuzūlī, *Maṭālī` al-budūr fī manāzil al-surūr* (Cairo, 1882-83), vol.II, p.151.
- 30.Qaddumi, *Book of gifts and treasures*, 305, note 8.

31. Abu` l-Muhammad ibn Djubayr, *Rihla* (Leiden, 1907), 273; for the English translation see R.J.C. Broadhurst, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr* (London, 1952), 284.
32. Ch. Schefer, *Sefer Nameh: Relation du voyage de Nassiri Khosrau*, the Persian manuscript with a French translation (repr. Amsterdam, 1970), 151-2; cited by Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 341, note 2.
33. P. Kahle, "Bergkristall, Glas und Glasflüsse nach dem Steinbuch von el-Berūnī," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 90(1936), 352.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*, 353.
36. M. Aga-Oglu, "The origin of the term *mīnā* and its meaning," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 5(1946), 241-56; see also P. Kahle, "Bergkristall, Glas und Glasflüsse," 349-52.
37. K. Röder, "Das *Minā* im Bericht über die Schätze der Fatimiden," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 89(1935), 363-71.
38. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 414; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 345; Aga-Oglu, "The origin of the term *mīnā*," 251.
39. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 415; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 352.
40. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 415, 416; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 352, 358.
41. Aga-Oglu, "The origin of the term *mīnā*," 254.
42. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 414; in modern Arabic the term *batiya* refers to a pitcher or to a jug. However, Kahle has translated it as "Kumme" (bowl), see "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 345.
43. The question of Islamic booty during the sack of Constantinople is discussed in Chapter Four.
44. E. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger, on the abbey church of St.-Denis and its treasures* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1979), 78-9.
45. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 416; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 358.



46. *Le trésor de Saint-Denis*, Musée du Louvre, exhibition catalogue (Paris, 1991), cat no.26, especially p.167.

47. J. von Karabacek, "Ein römischer Cameo aus dem Schatz der Aijübiden-Sultāne von Hamāh," *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien* 129(1893), 11-2; *idem*, "Zur orientalischen Altertumskunde, IV: Muhammedanische Kunststudien," *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien* 172(1913), 5-10.

48. Lamm, *Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten*, vol.2, 213.

49. EI2, s.v. "Hilāl".

50. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol.1, 416; Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 360, and p.338 note 2.

51. Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 338 note 2 (Kahle cites the account of al-Qalqashandī).

52. H.R. Hahnloser, "Ein arabischer Kristall in venezianischer Fassung aus der Geistlichen Schatzkammer," *Festschrift, Karl M. Swoboda, zum 28 Januar 1959* (Wien, Wiesbaden, 1959), 133-40.

53. *Ibid.*, 135.

54. R. Gallo, *Il Tesoro di S. Marco e la sua storia* (Venice, 1967), 208.

55. Until 1952 this Arabic inscription was erroneously interpreted as "Bar Allao" (Opifex Deus), *ibid.*, 207, 211. Nevertheless, the practice of inscribing the bottom of an Islamic object with the name of its place of manufacture is relatively uncommon. There are only few examples: a 14th-century lustre-painted bowl from the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin (I.4181), and a fragment in the Victoria and Albert Museum (C1606-1921), both inscribed with the name "malāqa", which is usually translated as Malaga. A later example is that of an 18th-century ceramic fragment with the name "Sivas" inscribed under its base, see: Jean Soustiel, *La Céramique Islamique* (Fribourg, 1985), 378, no.85.

56. On this bowl see mainly: M. Conway, "The Blue Bowl in the Treasury, S. Mark's, Venice", *The Burlington Magazine* 26(1914), 140-5; Lamm, *Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten*, pl.58,23; R.J. Charleston, "A group of Near Eastern glasses," *The Burlington Magazine* 81(1942), 217, fig.4; K. Erdmann, "Die fatimidischen Bergkristallkannen," 194, fig.54; *idem*, "Opere islamiche," in: H.R. Hahnloser (ed.), *Il Tesoro di San Marco II* (Florence, 1971), cat.no. 117; Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 206-

12; *Der Schatz von San Marco in Venedig*, exhibition catalogue in the Römisch-Germanisches Museum of Cologne (Milan, 1984), cat.no. 28.

57.Oliver, "Islamic Cut Glass: A Suggested Chronology," 9-29, fig.7; R. Ettinghausen and O. Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250* (Harmondsworth, 1987), 235, fig.247.

58.For a closely related example see the four-lobed Chinese dish which was found in 1971 in Sirāf: D. Whitehouse, "Excavations at Sirāf," *Iran* 10(1972), pl.9. Many Chinese T'ang wares reached places like Nishapur, Baghdad and Samarra already at the end of the 9th century. Therefore, it is probable that these luxurious porcelain vessels were imitated by Muslim potters, or even by glass makers who might have tried to achieve that effect by producing opaque and relatively thick cut glass vessels, similar to the opaque turquoise bowl from San Marco. For sources on the large import of Chinese ware by the `Abbasids, see P. Kahle, "Chinese porcelain in the lands of Islam," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 1(1953), 219-26; *idem*, "Islamische Quellen zum chinesischem Porzellan," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 88(1934), 1-45.

59.Grabar and Ettinghausen, *The Art and Architecture of Islam*, 235.

60.*Der Schatz von San Marco*, 219, pl. in p. 220.

61.*Ibid.*, fig.28a. Though in some earlier inventories the bowl is described as being mounted, it is uncertain whether these records relate to the present mounting.

62.Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 207.

63.On this subject see *EI*1, s.v. "Uzun Ḥasan".

64.Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 207.

65."One bowl [made out] of turquoise mounted with gilded silver", Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 211, and for the inventory see *ibid.*, 278.

66.Qaddumi, *Book of gifts and treasures*, 199, no. 253.

67.On this high post see A. `Ankawi, "The Pilgrimage to Mecca in Mamlūk Times," *Arabian Studies* 1(1974), 146-70, mainly pp.151-7.

68.Qaddumi, *Book of Gifts and treasures*, 200.

69.Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 208-12; Conway, "The Blue Bowl," 140-5.

70. Though this unit of weight varies with different Syrian cities and periods; *raṭl* in medieval Damascus was 1.85 kg., while in Aleppo it was 2.273 kg., I chose the 11th-century *raṭl* from Aleppo (1.5 kg.), the so-called *Zahiri-raṭl*, as the most appropriate one. On the Syrian *raṭl* see W. Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte (Handbuch der Orientalistik)*, Ergänzungsband 1, Heft 1 (Leiden, 1955), 30.

71. Al-Tha`ālibī, *Laṭā'if al-ma`ārif*, ed. by Ibrāhīm al-Abyāri and Hasan Kāmil al-Sayrafī (Cairo, 1960), 192-3; translated by C.E. Bosworth as: *The Book of Curious and Entertaining Information, The Laṭā'if al-ma`ārif of Tha`ālibī* (Edinburgh, 1968), 131-2; al-Tifāshī, *Azhār al-Afkār*, 142-5; see also E. Wiedemann, "Über den Wert von Edelsteinen bei den Muslimen," *Der Islam* 2(1911), 352. The accounts of al-Ghuzūlī and of `Utārid ibn Muhammad are cited by Lamm, *Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten*, 515, nos.160-1.

72. For the high price which a real turquoise bowl might have cost see Wiedemann, "Über den Wert von Edelsteinen," 352.

73. *EI2*, s.v. "Djarrāḥids".

74. Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," 329-30.

## CHAPTER FOUR: TROPHIES, BOOTY AND SPOILS OF WARS AGAINST 'SARACENS'

### A. Crusades in the Near East (ca. 1095-1365)

The wars of the Latin West against 'Saracens'- as they were called in the west-<sup>1</sup> started long before the Council of Clermont in November 1095, during which Pope Urban II called on the European powers to take the Cross and to go to Jerusalem. On the one hand, crusades against Saracens in Spain began as soon as the Umayyad conquest was ended, around 713. On the other hand, during the 10th century, the Ottonians carried on wars against Byzantine and Arab strongholds in South Italy, and they even took part in the fight for *Fraxinetum* (La Grade Freinet in the Provence), which was captured by the Umayyads of Spain probably by the end of the 9th century.<sup>2</sup> As far as South Italy and pre-Norman Sicily are concerned, literary sources hardly mention Islamic objects which fell into hands of Latin Christians. In medieval Spain the situation was totally different, and the question of Islamic booty and trophies of wars in Spanish medieval churches is separately discussed in part C of this chapter. However, at least according to literary sources, most Islamic booty was taken during the battles of the crusaders in the Near East, namely from the First Crusade (around 1095) until the last Crusade of 1365 which started and ended with the sack of Alexandria.

### The objects

Very few Islamic objects in church treasuries of the Latin West are traditionally regarded as the trophies or booty of crusaders. It is likely that there must have been some more Islamic objects which for different reasons and in the course of time were lost or whose Islamic origins were forgotten.

Though it has not yet clearly been unravelled from where and how the griffin of Pisa reached the Latin West, this huge metal object is probably the most celebrated Islamic trophy of all (cat. no.263, fig.126). Suggestions for its place of manufacture, though not necessarily indicating the place from where it was looted, remain controversial.<sup>3</sup> Marilyn Jenkins has lately suggested that the griffin was probably brought with other large cast bronze objects looted during the expedition of the Pisans and the Genoese to al-Mahdiyya in August 1087.<sup>4</sup> She relays the informative evidence (dated 1088) of the Italian chronicler Marangonis, and brings into the discussion the Latin inscription on the facade of the Duomo of Pisa which stresses that the Duomo was erected (ca.1063) to commemorate victory over Saracens.<sup>5</sup> One might expect the church to have borne some Muslim trophies at this time; it has been noted that the term *aeramentorum*, which has been translated by Jenkins as "cast bronze objects", might also refer to jewellery or arms.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, another Latin inscription on the facade of the Duomo mentions the large

amount of booty looted by the Pisans after the conquest of the Balearic Isles in 1114, among which were splendid garments and vestments, silver vases, ivories and crystals.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it is possible that the griffin was brought by the Pisans from the Balearic Isles. Nevertheless, the two above-mentioned Latin inscriptions on the facade of the Duomo and the fact that the griffin was installed until 1828 on top of the east gable of the building, make it clear that it was ostentatiously displayed by the Pisans as a trophy.

Another famous spoil of the crusades is the so-called 'veil of Saint Anne', which belonged to the cathedral of Apt (Vaucluse, France).<sup>8</sup> This huge cloth (310 cm. long) had been kept in the treasury of this cathedral in a flagon, and, probably before 1930, when it was taken out to be examined, had crumbled and broken into pieces. A copy of it was made around 1933, which more than once has been mistakenly taken as the original. However, the names of the ninth Fatimid caliph al-Musta`lī (1094-1101) and of his powerful wazīr al-Afdal suggest that the textile was manufactured between these years in the [royal] exclusive factory at Damietta (*fī ṭirāz al-khāṣṣa bi-Dimyāṭ*), as the inscription reads.<sup>9</sup> This cloth is believed to be a trophy of the First Crusade. Elsberg and Guest have noted that the bishop of Apt as well as Raimbaud de Simiane and Guillaume de Simiane- lords of Apt- took part in the First Crusade.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the cloth might have been brought by one of them to Apt. Nonetheless, no medieval

sources have yet been found to affirm this tradition.

Though the origin of the so-called "Sacro Catino" at the cathedral of Genoa has not yet been carefully studied, this object was almost undoubtedly booty from the First Crusade. It is a relatively flat hexagonal bowl with a small round base and a large opening. It has two little handles and a simple decoration on its inner side, which cannot be accurately described from the available illustration (fig.155). Though made of a transparent green glass, the bowl was long regarded as a real emerald. Its form is unique, and no parallels have so far been found. Scholars have suggested that perhaps the bowl was made in Alexandria during late Roman period.<sup>11</sup> Freshfield, who was able to handle it, has suggested that the bowl might be of Sasanian or Egyptian origin.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, emerald (*zumurrud*) was highly praised in the medieval Islamic world, and, its high price made it an exclusively royal material.<sup>13</sup> But during the Fatimid period, glass vessels called *muḥkam* were quite well known. These thick glass vessels, imitating vessels of carved precious stones, were later polished and even carved with a gem-cutter's wheel to give the impression that they were of real precious stones (for a discussion see Chapter Three). Since the Sacro Catino is made of a green-coloured glass which is described as "thick, transparent, and rich in colour," it might be suggested that the vessel is a Fatimid *muḥkam* piece, the so-called *abghīne*. This type of vessels imitates green

emerald- *zumurrud rayḥāni* (emerald which has a green colour like that of basil).<sup>14</sup> Its unique hexagonal form might even have recalled carved emerald pieces, which are usually faceted.

The bowl is said to have been presented to the cathedral of Genoa by Guglielmo Embriaco, commander of the Genoese during the First Crusade. In contrast to the tradition about the above-mentioned cloth from Apt, this tradition could be associated with the account of William of Tyre about the sack of Caesarea around 1100, during the First Crusade:

"In the same chapel [in the mosque of Caesarea] was found a vase of brilliant green shaped like a bowl. The Genoese, believing that it was of emerald, took it in lieu of a large sum of money and thus acquired a splendid ornament for their church. They still show this vase as a marvel to people of distinction who pass through their city and persuade them to believe that it is truly an emerald, as its color indicates."<sup>15</sup>

The fact that William of Tyre is apparently sceptical about the 'emerald' vase, suggests that he suspected that the vessel in the mosque of Caesarea was a *muḥkam* piece. Embriaco, unlike the near-eastern learned inhabitants, was probably not able to distinguish between a *muḥkam* piece and a real emerald vessel and paid a large sum for it.<sup>16</sup>

A small cylindrical rock crystal bottle in the treasury of the Benedictine convent of Marienberg in the Tyrol (cat.



no.9, fig.9) was probably brought as booty from the Near East by Count Ulrich II von Tarasp (died 1177). This Count, who founded the convent in 1146, took the cross and fought "contra Saracenos" in the Near East. Moreover, according to Goswin- a prior of the convent of Marienberg (1374)- Count Ulrich II brought from the Orient some ornaments for the decoration of the convent.<sup>17</sup>

### The literary sources

Unfortunately, most of the literary sources on the wars of the crusaders in the Near East do not go into details about the different sorts of objects plundered by Christians. Therefore, it seems impossible definitely to associate Islamic objects in the Latin West with evidence referring to booty. Hence, it should be kept in mind that in some cases silver and gold objects were melted, whether to be reused or else, simply, to bear the costs of the crusade itself. For instance, William of Tyre tells that after the fall of Antioch in June, 1098, the plunder was so big that "it was impossible to count or measure the gold and silver, the gems, silks, and valuable garments, to say nothing of utensils, most excellent both in workmanship and material."<sup>18</sup> And he added that in order to restore the former Christian position in that city "gold and silver taken as spoils from the enemy were brought for making candelabra, crosses, chalices, inscriptions from Holy Writ, and all other things necessary

for the service of the church. Silken stuffs were also offered for priestly vestments and altar covering."<sup>19</sup>

The fate of the booty taken from the Dome of the Rock after the capture of Jerusalem in 1099 is vague. According to Ibn al-Athīr (1160-1233): "The Franks stripped the Dome of the Rock of more than forty silver candelabra, each of them weighing 3,600 drams, and a great silver lamp weighing forty-four Syrian pounds, as well as a hundred and fifty smaller silver candelabra and more than twenty gold ones, and a great deal more booty."<sup>20</sup> According to Latin sources, during discussions concerning immediate administrative matters of the new Christian rule of Jerusalem, a question was raised—whether Tancred should keep all the plundered treasures in the treasury of the new Frankish kingdom. But, in contrast to the large amount of booty mentioned by Ibn al-Athīr, Latin sources mention only eight huge silver lamps which were taken from the Dome of the Rock.<sup>21</sup> It is impossible to find out where truth lies, but we may suspect that some of the silver and gold lamps and candelabra from the Dome of the Rock were also melted.

Beside the Byzantine and oriental goods which King Richard Coeur de Lion looted from Cyprus in May 1191,<sup>22</sup> the account of Geoffrey de Vinsauf, who wrote about the itinerary of King Richard to the Holy Land, tells of the riches which fell into the hands of the Frankish army in 1192, during a raid on a

Turkish caravan which was passing near Galatia (Asia Minor).  
 "...gold and silver; cloaks of silk; purple and scarlet robes, and variously-ornamented apparel, beside arms and weapons of divers forms; coats of mail...costly cushions, pavilions, tents... basins, bladders, chess-boards; silver dishes and candlesticks..."<sup>23</sup>

Another interesting anecdote is that concerning the lost pulpit of the Great Mosque at Damietta. Ibn Wāsil (1208-1298) says that during the Fifth Crusade, probably in 1219, when the captured city of Damietta was handed over to al-Malik al-Kāmil, the Franks and the governor of Damietta- amir Shujā` al-Dīn- were divided by disagreement about a specific point.

"At that time of the peace the Franks found that they had at Damietta some enormous masts for their ships, and they wanted to take these away with them to their own land. Shujā` ad-Din refused permission for this, so they sent messages to al-Malik al-Kamil complaining about it and saying that these masts were their own property, and that according to the terms of the treaty they should be free to take them. Al-Malik al-Kamil wrote to Shujā` ad-Din commanding him to hand over the masts, but he persisted in his refusal: 'The Franks took the pulpit from the Great Mosque of Damietta,' he said, 'and cut it up and sent a piece to each of their kings: let the Sultan command them to return the pulpit, and the masts will be theirs.' The Sultan did write to the Franks about this, referring them to what Shujā` ad-Din said, and the

Franks, unable to return the pulpit, gave up their claim to the masts."<sup>24</sup>

Though Ibn Wāsil did not described the pulpit, the fact that it was looted and then divided by the Frankish forces suggests that it was of splendid workmanship; it was probably a fine *minbar* made of carved wooden panels inlaid with ivory.

#### B. The sack of Constantinople (1204)

It will not be far from the truth to say that the sack of Constantinople in 1204 was the second major occurrence, following that of the dispersion of the Fatimid treasury around 1060, in which a large amount of splendid artefacts reached the Latin West. The astonishment with which Robert de Clari describes the spoils gathered after three days of pillage (April 13-15), precisely illustrates this point.

"And when the booty was brought thither, which was so rich and contained such wealth of gold and of silver and of cloth of gold, and so many rich jewels, that it was a fair marvel to behold the great riches that had been brought thither-- then, never since the world was established was so great wealth, or so noble, or so magnificent, either seen or won-- no, not in the days of Alexander, or of Charles the Great, or before, or after. Nor do I believe, of my own knowledge, that in the fifty richest cities of the world could there be so much wealth as was found in the booty of Constantinople. For the Greeks also bore witness that two-thirds of all the

wealth of the world was in Constantinople, and that the other third was scattered throughout the world."<sup>25</sup>

Holy shrines and the palaces of Blachernae and Boucoleon were stripped of their treasures, which included not only Byzantine goods but also precious works of art that had survived from ancient Greece. Gold and silver vessels, jewels and luxurious cloths, and even forty big chalices, which were looted from the altar of the church of Hagia Sophia, were mentioned among the booty of the crusaders.<sup>26</sup> According to a treaty signed between the Venetians and the French barons, one quarter of all the booty was to be reserved for the future emperor while the rest was to be equally divided between the Venetians and the crusaders.<sup>27</sup> As a matter of fact, most of the goods went to the hands of the Venetians. First, because of the vast sum which the crusaders owed Venice and which was, therefore, deducted from their share.<sup>28</sup> Second, because the Venetians carefully collected the priceless objects and sent them to Venice, while other European crusaders vandalized them.<sup>29</sup> Roman, Byzantine, Sasanian and Islamic vessels in the treasury of San Marco, part of which still retain their Byzantine mountings, are a testimony to the pillage of 1204.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the crystal phial with the Holy Blood which, according to Robert de Clari, was looted from the Holy Chapel of the Boucoleon,<sup>31</sup> might be the so-called "Reliquario del Sangue miraculoso" in the treasury of San Marco (cat. no.47, fig.47); the reliquary was probably mentioned for the first time in the inventory of

the treasury of 1283.

But, of course, many other vessels, whether stolen by German or French men of all ranks, or divided among them according to the treaty, later reached the Latin West.<sup>32</sup> And, since the clerks who fought in Constantinople claimed their shares, just as the knights did,<sup>33</sup> part of the goods might have been given directly to the treasuries of their churches.

This is probably the case of the treasury of the cathedral at Halberstadt, which is rich in precious Byzantine works of art and reliquaries.<sup>34</sup> Among the reliquaries, the Fatimid rock crystal bottle (cat no.52, fig.52) or even the Sasanian or early Islamic glass cup in which relics of Charlemagne are enshrined,<sup>35</sup> might have been brought after the sack of Constantinople by Konrad of Krosigk, bishop of Halberstadt (1202-8), who took part in the Fourth Crusade.<sup>36</sup>

The accounts of the numerous French knights and dignitaries who took part in the sack<sup>37</sup> leave the impression that at least some Islamic objects in church treasuries of France and Belgium were brought by them. The treasury of Saint Denis in Paris was probably enriched after this sack. And one may suggest that the Cup of Khusraw- the so-called "tasse de Salomon" in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (no.76 in the inventory of 1634)- might have also reached the West after the sack of Constantinople.<sup>38</sup> This late Sasanian object was kept until 1791 in the treasury of Saint Denis in Paris. Tradition tells us that the Cup of Khusraw was among

the presents which were given by Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne, and that Charles the Bald presented it later to the treasury. But such accounts were usually invented in order to bestow an aura of importance and mystery upon an object (see the discussion in Chapter Two), and the earliest western source in which this object was mentioned is the *Grandes Chroniques de France* of the 14th century ("hanap d'or pur et d'emerandes fines et fins grenez [grenats] si mervielleusement ouvré que en tos les roiaumes du monde ne fut ainques ovre si soutilte").<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, an interesting account is that of Ibn Zafar (1104-70), who describes in his *Sulwān al-muṭā`* an object in the Byzantine treasury which recalls the Cup of Khusraw. This was a drinking crystal bowl decorated with gold, silver and (fine, coloured?) glass (*al-zujāj al-muḥkam*), on which the portrait of the Sasanian king Shāpūr was carved and by which Shāpūr, who went incognito to Constantinople, was recognized.<sup>40</sup> This literary source suggests that the Cup of Khusraw could have reached the treasury of Saint Denis via Constantinople; if so, this was probably after the sack of 1204.

### C. Trophies or Booty? Islamic artefacts in Spanish medieval church treasuries

#### Preface

The Islamic objects in the church treasuries of medieval

Spain are perhaps best understood as trophies of war. In contrast to the lands beyond the Alps, where Islamic objects enjoyed the aura of exotic vessels from the Holy Land, though they were sometimes brought by knights who took the cross and fought against the infidels, the lasting wars in Spain, and the continuing hope of pushing the Muslim invaders southward, created a situation in which almost every looted object was regarded by the Christians as a further symbol of the liberation of the Iberian Peninsula.

The *Poem of the Cid*, Rodrigo of Vivar, which is beyond question the most celebrated saga of the Christian reconquest of Spain, has plenty of descriptions of the booty taken during victorious wars against the infidels. These include chests full of silver and golden coins,<sup>41</sup> rich garments,<sup>42</sup> banners,<sup>43</sup> costly tents,<sup>44</sup> saddles and swords<sup>45</sup> and so on. These spoils were usually shared among the soldiers, probably as salary. But part of the booty, as related in the *Poem of the Cid*, was sent directly to the church. The reason behind these endowments can be explained by the following prayer which El Cid made before leaving Castile for a mission: "...I do not know whether I shall return to it in all my life. O Glorious Virgin, protect me as I depart, and help and succour me night and day. If you will do this and my good fortune holds, I shall endow your altar with rich gifts and I make a solemn promise to have a thousand masses sung there".<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, the fact that part of the plunder taken after the battle in Valencia, among which were probably the



Islamic war drums which El Cid had vowed to give to Bishop Jerome of Valencia for hanging them up in the church,<sup>47</sup> was sent to the bishop as promised,<sup>48</sup> hints at the presentation of booty as trophies of war.

Beside literary sources, such as the epic of El Cid, historical accounts clearly attest how booty was divided right after a victorious battle among warriors, some of whom were clergymen of high rank. James I, king of Aragon, who took the city of Valencia from the hands of the Moors in 1238, informs us that "...much good and fine silken and cotton cloth...rich silks and many other valuable stuffs..." were shared among the bishops, the barons and the Archbishop of Narbonne.<sup>49</sup> This account might explain, as Dorothy Shepherd has suggested,<sup>50</sup> the existence of Islamic textiles in the tomb of Saint Bernard Calvo, Bishop of Vich (1233-1243), who accompanied King James I during the siege of Valencia. Moreover the carved ivory pyxis in the treasury of the cathedral of Saint-Just in Narbonne (cat. no.127) might be one of the luxury objects which the Archbishop of Narbonne obtained after the above-mentioned battle. Though made in Cuenca for one of the heirs of the Dhu `l-Nūnids (probably for Ismā`il ibn al-Ma`mūn) the pyxis might have reached Valencia as part of the hoard of this dynasty, which, between 1031-1085 and almost without any interruption, controlled Toledo and Valencia - and even Cordova for a very short period.

The silver casket of Hishām II (cat. no.266, fig.129) was probably among the spoils which fell into the hands of the Catalan mercenaries who fought in Cordova between May and July 1010 on behalf of Muhammad al-Mahdī. A contract between the Catalan counts and Wādih, the governor of La Marca Superior, certified that the booty from Cordova would be divided among the Catalans. Therefore it is quite probable that it was donated as a trophy to the cathedral of Gerona, where it is now kept.

The Nasrid metal lamp (cat. no.276, fig.140), which was confiscated after the fall of the Nasrid kingdom in 1492, entered the possession of Cardinal Cisneros and after his death became part of the treasury of the Alcalá de Henares. According to a 13th-century poem, ivory caskets which were looted from al-Mansūr (around 1002) were displayed as trophies on the altar of the church of San Pedro de Arlanza.<sup>51</sup> Other precious objects even reached France. The booty captured by Raymond II of Rouergue around 1000 was donated to the church of Ste. Foy in Conques,<sup>52</sup> and part of the plunder which was taken after the defeat of the king of Denia and the Balearic Isles was sent directly to the Abbey of Cluny.<sup>53</sup>

Many Islamic items, some of which are still kept in the treasuries of Spanish churches, are reputed to be trophies of war. The so-called "veil of Hishām" (Madrid, the Royal Academy of History) which was found in a casket under the

altar of the church of San Esteban de Gormaz in Soria, is believed to have been kept in that church as a trophy of war.<sup>54</sup> The large embroidery, the so-called "Banner of Las Navas de Tolosa", which is traditionally reputed to have been taken by Alfonso VIII from the Almohads after the decisive battle of 1212, is hung in the Monastery of Las Huelgas near Burgos.<sup>55</sup> According to tradition the rectangular carved box which was made for the daughter of `Abd al-Rahmān III (cat. no.130), was presented around 950 to the Cloister of Santo Domingo at Silos by Fernán González, count of Castile (931-970). Indeed Fernán González fought against `Abd al-Rahmān III at the battle of Simancas in 939, but the many legends of his valiant exploits which emerged after his death and in which he was called the 'illustrious count' of Castile might be the real reason for the account associating him with this ivory box.<sup>56</sup>

Attributes of power and dominion like crowns and thrones, as well as banners, arms and armour with royal insignia, were probably the most celebrated trophies. These items conclusively demonstrated that the Muslim foe was defeated and that Christian sovereignty prevailed once more. The chequered history of the bells of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela illustrate this atmosphere in the Christian and Muslim domains. The bells, undoubtedly symbols of Christian faith, were looted by al-Mansūr in 997, brought to Cordova, and functioned as lamps in the mosque there. In 1236, when

Cordova was returned to the hands of the Christians, the bells were carried back by Muslim prisoners to Santiago.<sup>57</sup> Another example is that of the so-called 'Sword of Boabdil' - the sword of Muhammad XII, one of the last Nasrid sultans. The sword, which was taken after the battle in Lucena in 1483, was probably regarded by the Castilians as a symbol of the forthcoming defeat of Granada, the last Muslim stronghold.<sup>58</sup>

Of no less importance were the luxury ivory caskets which were looted by Christians from the royal palaces in the main capitals of the Islamic kingdoms in Spain. These precious objects, which are lavishly decorated with carving, which were coloured and sometimes even set with gems,<sup>59</sup> were originally regarded as one of the most valuable presents for a member of the royal family. The fact that most of them usually bear the names of the royal personages or court dignitaries for whom they were made brought about a situation in which these boxes were considered, as soon as they fell in the hands of the Christians, as symbols *par excellence* of triumph over the Islamic enemy.

An interesting case is that of the casket from Pamplona (cat.no.133). The inscription on this casket attests that it was made for `Abd al-Malik, son of al-Mansūr, in 1004, the year of his capture of Leon. Therefore it might be regarded as a triumphal casket. In the Middle Ages the casket was kept in the Benedictine monastery of Leyre, where it was used as a container for the relics of the two martyred sisters of

Huesca, Nunilona and Alodia, who were beheaded in 851 at the order of `Abd al-Rahmān II. The memory of the two sisters was probably revived at the end of the 11th century, more precisely in 1096, the year Huesca was retaken. The fact that this triumphal casket was chosen as a reliquary for Nunilona and Alodia might thus appear as more than mere coincidence.

The two ivory caskets from Burgos and Madrid

Two rectangular caskets with a hipped cover, which were made during the *Taifa* period in the provincial centre of Cuenca, might illustrate a more significant episode of alteration of function, and are therefore a case in point. The first casket is now in the Archaeological Museum in Burgos (cat. no.134, figs.156,157), and the second one is in the Archaeological Museum of Madrid (cat. no.136, figs.158, 158a).

From the stylistic point of view these caskets belong to a group of carved ivories among which are two containers and some fragments:

A cylindrical pyxis in Narbonne (cat. no.127) which was made for the Dhu`l-Nūnid sovereign Ismā`il ibn al-Ma'mūn.

A rectangular casket with flat lid in the Louvre (no.2775).<sup>60</sup>

Three carved plaques which probably once belonged to a casket and which are now mounted on the so-called relic casket "arqueta de las bienaventuranzas" (cat. no.135); the

carved inscription on one of the fragments attests that it was made for Ismā`il ibn al-Ma'mūn, like the above-mentioned pyxis from Narbonne.

Three other carved plaques each of which originally formed a facet of a casket; the first one is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (no.4075/1857),<sup>61</sup> the second one was formerly in the collection of Adolphe Stoclet in Brussels,<sup>62</sup> and the third is in the collection of Viuda de Bosch in Barcelona.<sup>63</sup>

Though the casket from Burgos and the one from Madrid are the only signed ones - the first is signed by the carver Muhammad ibn Zayyān and the second by his son (or his brother) `Abd al-Rahmān- it is likely that the whole group of ivories was manufactured in the workshop of the Zayyān family in the city of Cuenca, and that, according to the inscriptions on three items of this group, they were all made for potentates of the Dhu`l-Nūnid dynasty. The first inscription is the one on the casket from Madrid (cat. no.136, figs.158,158a) which states that the casket was made to the order of Ismā`il ibn al-Ma'mūn around 1049-50. Ismā`il was governor of Cuenca and the heir presumptive to the throne of Toledo. He died before his time, and the throne was left to his son Yahyā al-Qādir who came to power in 1075, as soon as his grandfather al-Ma'mūn had died. The second inscription is carved on a fragment of a plaque mounted on the "arqueta de las bienaventuranzas" (cat. no.135), and it refers to Ismā`il ibn al-Ma'mūn as well. The third inscription is the

one on the pyxis from Narbonne (cat. no.127) and it states that the box was made for the *ḥājib* Ismā`īl, *Qā'id al-Quwwād*, probably the same Ismā`īl ibn al-Ma'mūn; though the inscription on the casket from Burgos (cat. no.134, figs.156,157) does not bear the name of the dedicatee, for whom it was made in the year 1026, it has been suggested that either Abū Bakr Ya'īsh ibn Muhammad ibn Yā'īsh al-Asadī (reigned in Toledo until ca.1030) or `Abd al-Rahmān al-Midrās ibn Dhi'l-Nūn, the father of al-Zāfir, ruler of Toledo, was the dedicatee.<sup>64</sup>

#### The peculiar style and iconography of the caskets

After the destruction and the plunder of Madinat al-Zahra in 1010 and the collapse of the Caliphate of Cordova around 1031, ivory carvers from the royal workshops probably found asylum in Cuenca under the rule of the Dhu `l-Nūnids during the *Taifa* period. The style of the ivories from Cuenca differs in many respects from those made for the Umayyad house in Cordova and Madinat al-Zahra.<sup>65</sup> The general method of carving in the Zayyān workshop in Cuenca keeps the traditional technique of ivory carving in Spain, namely deep carving which is restricted to two main levels, while leaving the lower surface undecorated and smooth. But in comparison with the former carved ivories, the upper level is flat, the carving is less soft, there is a simplification of forms and the ornament is repetitive. These factors create a peculiar

style which is rigid and even 'archaic', so to speak. This is probably the reason why some scholars have described this style as less lively, as dry and even senile, and indeed have suggested that the ivories from Cuenca are a testimony to the decline of ivory manufacture in Spain.<sup>66</sup>

From the iconographical point of view, some further distinctions should be made. First and foremost the obvious royal banquet motif, which frequently appears on the caskets from Cordova, is missing. The iconographic programme mainly consists of a delicate arabesque of half-palmette leaves and of confronted birds, antelopes and fabulous creatures. Human figures rarely appear and they are solely to be found on the two rectangular caskets under discussion- the caskets from Burgos and Madrid.

Four bowmen and one horseman appear on each of the two large panels, namely the front and the back panels, of the casket from Burgos (figs.156,157). A bowman bending his bow is depicted on each edge of the upper and the lower bands, and a horseman, attacked by a wild animal from behind, appears in the centre of the lower band. The warriors are all dressed in a short tunic and wear what is likely to be a helmet which covers the forehead and the nape of the neck. They are all girded with daggers. A quiver for holding arrows is attached to the girdle of the bowmen, and the horseman is armed with a dagger and a round shield.

Similar figures are depicted on one of the narrow facets of the casket from Madrid (fig.158a). Two spearmen, each



stabbing a lion which devours a defenceless lying figure, and two bowmen who take aim at gazelles, are depicted on the upper and the lower panels of the frame of this facet.

Hunting scenes are usually associated in a general sense with royalty and with courtly art, and for that reason alone they might be found on royal caskets as such. But these 'archaic' representations of warriors, dressed in an oriental manner, might have had a further meaning in Islamic Spain, mainly in Toledo, which was always remembered as the capital of the vanquished Visigothic kingdom.

#### The symbolism of the caskets' decoration

The history of the Arab conquest of Spain was enlivened by different mythical stories, most of which are political in nature. These stories were probably invented by the Arabic-speaking population in order to legitimize their right to rule Spain.<sup>67</sup> One of these myths is the story of the sealed house in Toledo, which was narrated by various Arab writers.<sup>68</sup> The principal version, slightly altered in different accounts, relates that when Mūsā ibn Nusayr captured the city of Toledo he found there two important buildings. The first one was the House of Kings (probably the palace), where luxurious treasures were kept, among them the Table of Solomon and the 24 crowns of the 24 former kings of the Visigothic kingdom. The second house was sealed by 24 locks each installed in succession by newly-enthroned

Visigothic kings. Once, so goes the tradition, a spell which protected the Visigothic kingdom from its disastrous end, was left locked in this house. In the course of time the story was forgotten, and only the ritual of installing a new lock on the door of this house remained. Through this specific act each king demonstrated that he was willing to keep the long-traditional custom not to enter the sealed house. Roderic, the 25th king, broke this tradition. Entering the house, he found there pictures of Arabs riding horses. An inscription, which was found in the same house, explained the enigmatic depiction in a most fatal way: whenever this house shall be opened, those who are depicted will invade the country. And so it was; in the same year the Arabs invaded Spain.

One of the earliest accounts of this legend is to be found in the controversial book *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamālik* of Ibn Khurradādhbih (ca.820-911), who says that turbaned horsemen holding bows were depicted in the sealed house.<sup>69</sup> Other earlier writers like the 9th-century Iranian authors Ibn al-Faqīh and Ibn Qutayba (828-889) repeated almost the same details of this account.<sup>70</sup> A slightly different version of the Andalusian historian Ibn al-Qūtiyya (died 977) claims that these were statues of turbaned horsemen.<sup>71</sup> Al-Qādī al-Rashīd (late 11th century) tells the same anecdote in the *Kitāb al-Hādāya wa al-Tuḥaf*<sup>72</sup> and adds that the Arab warriors wore turbans and sandals and that they hold bows, arrows and swords.<sup>73</sup> Almost the same account is repeated by Abū Ja'far ibn `Abd al-Haqq al-Khazrājī al-Qurtubī in his

*Kitāb al-iktifā' fī'l-akhbār al-khulafā'* (datable 1174-75).<sup>74</sup> According to him the same Arab figures were portrayed on a scroll of parchment and they held in addition spears with fluttering pennons.<sup>75</sup> Ibn Khallikān (1211-82) in his famous biographical dictionary, under the account on Mūsā ibn Nusayr, indicates that the Arab horsemen were depicted on the walls of a locked marble chest (*tābūt min al-rukhām*)<sup>76</sup> which was found in the sealed house. The Arabs wore turbans and skin coats, held bows and spears and were girded with daggers.<sup>77</sup> Al-Maqqarī (1577-1632) in his book on al-Andalus also mentions a chest (*tābūt*) which was found in the sealed house and on which Arab warriors were depicted. The warriors were dressed with skins of animals (*firā'*), and instead of turbans had locks of coarse hair. They were riding horses, were girded with swords, and held spears in their hands.<sup>78</sup>

These various versions attest that the legend was quite popular. Moreover it was most probably known in Toledo, the locale of the story itself and the place where the memory of the former Visigothic kingdom was kept green.<sup>79</sup>

Though written at least a century after the manufacture of the above-mentioned ivory caskets from Cuenca, the 13th-century account of Ibn Khallikān might hint that from the 13th century onwards, as the account of al-Maqqarī certifies, a version prevailed which claimed that the fatal spell was enshrined in the sealed house of Toledo in a chest (*tābūt*), the walls of which were decorated with depiction of Arab warriors. Therefore the two royal ivory caskets from Burgos

and Madrid might promptly have called to mind this myth.

The Dhu `l-Nūnids, for whom these caskets were made, probably tried to revive this legend for several reasons. This story first and foremost legitimized Islamic rule in Spain. The choice of Toledo as their capital helped the Dhu `l-Nūnids on the one hand to establish their links with the glorious past of this particular province and on the other hand to associate their rule with the heroic days of Tāriq ibn Ziyād and Mūsā ibn Nusayr, the conquerors of al-Andalus.

The specific function of these caskets is still unknown. They were probably used as containers for some valuable substance; the inscription on the pyxis from Narbonne (cat. no.127) states that it was made for the treasury (*khizānah*) of Ismā`il. But concomitant with their function, whatever that was, the caskets from Burgos and Madrid, with their peculiar iconography, might have been regarded as symbols of Islamic power in Spain in general and of the authority of the Dhu `l-Nūnids in Toledo in particular.

#### The caskets in a Christian setting

It is as yet impossible to discover when and under what circumstances the casket from Burgos fell into the hands of the Christians. The first documentary reference to the casket appears in 1440 in an inventory of the Benedictine abbey of S. Domingo in Silos, in which it is said to house some relics of the 11,000 Virgins of Cologne. But since it was restored

in 1150 by an enameller in that abbey, it is quite probable that it reached the treasury earlier. Intended to enshrine the relics of S. Domingo, the founder of that abbey, the casket was "Christianized" by the enameller. Two champlévé copper plaques with enamels were mounted on the casket. One plaque, representing S. Domingo with a Benedictine mantle and accompanied by two angels, is attached to one of the narrow sides of the casket. Another plaque, depicting the Lamb in a medallion with the Alpha and Omega and surrounded by two fabulous birds, is mounted to the flat top of the lid. Some other enamelled straps and strips of engraved and gilded copper are mounted on the casket's corners.

The casket from Madrid was formerly kept in the treasury of the cathedral of Palencia. The 12th-century gilded copper strips with enamels, which are mounted on the casket's corners, might hint that the casket was used in its new Christian setting in that same century.

Ivory containers in general and rectangular caskets with truncated pyramidal lids in particular, like the caskets under discussion, were frequently used as relic containers in church treasuries. The form of the latter probably recalls the classical form of Christian reliquaries - a rectangular flat-bottomed container with a lid with four sloping sides. These Christian reliquaries might be called "miniature sarcophagi", as Marie-Madeleine Gauthier named them,<sup>80</sup> because their form might be a stylized shape of the ancient sarcophagus, in which relics of saints were originally kept.

Basset speculates whether the story of the sealed house is a medieval popular version of Roderic's opening of a church treasury in Toledo.<sup>81</sup> Thus the later Arabic accounts, which claim that the fatal spell was enshrined in a marble chest, suggest that a marble sarcophagus, decorated with battle scenes, was kept in that treasury. This sarcophagus could have been a late Roman one, which was kept in the treasury as an authentic sarcophagus of Christian saints or martyrs, and which later became in the medieval popular imagination the chest in which the spell was found.<sup>82</sup> Hence, the peculiar form and the marble-like impression of the ivory caskets from Burgos and Madrid might have evoke the memory of the marble chest in the sealed house.

Unfortunately it is unknown whether the stories which were associated with Islamic objects in their original sphere migrated and were told in the new Christian milieu. Nevertheless, kept in the treasuries of the churches of Silos and Palencia, the caskets from Burgos and Madrid, with their royal character and their superb appearance, were most likely regarded as important spoils and symbols of triumph over the infidels, and might even have embodied through their long and adventurous history two major events - the capture and the liberation of the Iberian Peninsula.

1. *EII*, s.v. "Saracens".
2. F. Keller, "Der Einfall der Sarazenen in die Schweiz," *Mittheilungen der antiquarischen Gesellschaft in Zürich* 11(1856), 1-30. For the literary source about the Saracens in the Provence see the account of Luidprand of Cremona (920-972) in: A. Bauer and R. Rau, *Quellen zur Geschichte der sächsischen Kaiserzeit (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters)*, ed. by Rudolf Buchner, vol.8, Darmstadt, 1971), 250-3.
3. See the attached bibliography in the catalogue (no.263); specially the discussion of Anna Contadini in G. Curatola (ed.), *Eredità dell'Islam, Arte islamica in Italia*, exhibition catalogue, Palazzo Ducale, Venice (Milan, 1993), 128-30.
4. M. Jenkins, "New evidence for the history and provenance of the so-called Pisa Griffin," *Islamic Archaeological Studies* 5(1978), 80.
5. *Ibid.*, 79.
6. Curatola, *Arte islamica in Italia*, 129.
7. *Ibid.*, 131, note.10.
8. H.A. Elsberg and R. Guest, "The veil of Saint Anne," *The Burlington Magazine* 68(1936), 140-5; *The Arts of Islam*, exhibition catalogue at the Hayward Gallery, London (London, 1976), cat. no.8.
9. *Ibid.*, 145, note 2.
10. *Ibid.*
11. M. Conway, "The Sacro Catino at Genoa," *Antiquaries Journal* 4(1924), 11-18, and especially pp.16-17; C. Marcenaro, *Il Museo del Tesoro della Cattedrale a Genova* (Milan, 1969), 6, Tavola I; T.E. Haevernick, "Zu einigen antiken Gläsern in Kirchenschätzen," *Trierer Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst des Trierer Landes und seiner Nachbargebiete* 36(1973), 113-16; I.M. Botto, "Region: Liguria, Genova," *Bulletin de l'Association Internationale pour l'Histoire du Verre* 9(1981-1983), 109-111 (I would like to express my thanks to Dr. Ingeborg Krueger from the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn who drew my attention to recent literature referring to this object).
12. *Ibid.*, 17.

13. Ziva Vesel, "Émeraude Royale: Le zumurrud et le zabarjad chez les auteurs iraniens," *Yād-Nāma, in memoria di Alessandro Bausani*, ed. by Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti and Lucia Rostagno (Rome, 1991), vol.2, pp.99-107; for its high price see E. Wiedemann, "Über den Wert von Edelsteinen bei den Muslimen," *Der Islam* 2(1911), 351-2; see also M. Clément-Mullet, "Sur la minéralogie arabe," *Journal Asiatique* 11(sixième série, 1868), 64-7.

14. Clément-Mullet, "Sur la minéralogie arabe," 66.

15. William Archbishop of Tyre, *A History of deeds done beyond the sea*, trans. and annotated by E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey, (New York, 1943), vol.1, 437. It is worth mentioning that according to the diary of Nāsir-I Khusraw (circa 1047), another unique vessel was kept in the mosque at Caesarea. It was a "vase made of marble, that is like to Chinese porcelain, and it is of a size to contain a hundred Manns weight of water (about 34 gallons)." See *Nāsir-I Khusrau, Diary of a journey through Syria and Palestine* (Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society), trans. by G. Le Strange (London, 1893), 20.

16. A big piece of green glass which was long regarded as the "biggest emerald in the world" is kept in the treasury of Reichenau. See H. Wenzel, "Das byzantinische Erbe der ottonischen Kaiser - Hypothesen über den Brautschatz der Theophano," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 43(1972), 81-2.

17. Goswin, *Registrum Monasterii montis sanctae Mariae ordinis sancti Benedicti*, ed. by B. Schwitzer, *Chronik des Stiftes Marienberg, Tirolische Geschichtsquellen*, II(Innsbruck, 1880), 59,61 (a work unavailable to me); the account was cited by K. Atz, "Ein paar wichtige Nachträge zur Kunstgeschichte Tirols," *Der Kunstfreund* 8(Bozen, 1892), 64.

18. William Archbishop of Tyre, *A History of deeds done beyond the sea*, vol.1, 294.

19. *Ibid.*, 296-7.

20. Translated by Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (repr. London, 1984), 11.

21. S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, 1951, repr. in Penguin Books, 1991), vol.1, 290.

22. Richard of Devizes, *Crusade of Richard Coeur de Lion, (Chronicles of the Crusades* [London, 1848]), 39.

23. Geoffrey de Vinsauf's *Itinerary of Richard I and others to the Holy Land* (*Chronicles of the Crusades* [London, 1848]), 307.



24. Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, 265-6.
25. Robert de Clari, *The History of them that took Constantinople*, translated by E.H. Stone, *Three Old French Chronicles of the Crusades* (Seattle, Washington, 1939), 226.
26. *Ibid.*; Villehardouin, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, in: *Joinville and Villehardouin, Chronicles of the Crusades*, translated by M.R.B. Shaw (London, 1963), 92; as for the forty chalices which were mentioned by the anonymous Russian historian, see *Der Schatz von san Marco in Venedig*, exhibition catalogue, Römisch-Germanisches Museum in Cologne (Milan, 1984), 71.
27. Villehardouin, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, 88.
28. *Ibid.*, 94.
29. S. Runciman, *A history of the Crusaders*, vol.3, 123.
30. For the question of the Sasanian vessels in the treasury of San Marco see A. von Saldern, "The so-called Byzantine glass in the Treasury of San Marco," *Annales du IVE Congrès International d'Etudes Historiques du Verre*, Ravenna-Venice, 1967 (Lüttich, 1969), 124-32.
31. Robert de Clari, *The History of them that took Constantinople*, 227.
32. Villehardouin, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, 95.
33. Robert de Clari, *The History of them that took Constantinople*, 236.
34. O. von Falke, "Der Halberstädter Domschatz," *Pantheon* 18(1936), 265-9.
35. *Ibid.*, fig.5.
36. *Ibid.*, 269.
37. Villehardouin, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, 29-31.
38. See mainly C.J. Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten aus dem Nahen Osten* (Berlin, 1929-30) vol.I, pp.187-8, vol.II, pl.64,3 (with extensive literature); Blaise de Montesquiou-Fezensac and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis* (Paris, 1977), 62-3, pl.46; *Le trésor de Saint-Denis*, Musée du Louvre, exhibition catalogue (Paris, 1991), 80-2, cat. no.10.

39. *Le trésor de Saint-Denis*, 80.
40. Cited by Lamm, *Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten*, vol. I, p. 499 (no. 95).
41. *The Poem of the Cid*, trans. by Rita Hamilton and Janet Perry (London, 1975), 29.
42. *Ibid.*, 47.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*, 117.
45. *Ibid.*, 65.
46. *Ibid.*, 33.
47. *Ibid.*, 111.
48. *Ibid.*, 117.
49. Cited by Dorothy G. Shepherd, "A twelfth-century Hispano-Islamic silk," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 38(1951), 61.
50. *Ibid.*, 62.
51. It was mentioned by E. Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen VII-XIII Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1971), 5. This literary source is given by José Ferrandis, *Marfiles Arabes de Occidente* (Madrid, 1935), vol. 1, p. 21 (see also Chapter Eight, note 25).
52. For the complete account see Chapter Seven.
53. Cited by R.A. Jairazbhoy, *Oriental Influences in Western Art* (Bombay, 1965), 43.
54. A.F. Kendrick, "Textiles," *The Burlington Magazine*, Monograph-II. *Spanish Art* (1927), 60-1; F.L. May, *Silk Textiles of Spain, 8th-15th century* (New York, 1957), 14-7; *Al-Andalus, The Art of Islamic Spain*, exhibition catalogue, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1992), cat. no. 21.
55. For recent literature and bibliography, see *Al-Andalus*, cat. no. 92.
56. R. Fletcher, *The Quest for El Cid* (London, 1989), 59.
57. D.P. de Gayangos, *The History of Muhammadan dynasties in Spain*, a version adapted from the *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* of al-Maqqarī (London, 1840), vol. II, 196; cited by Jerrilynn D. Dodds,

"The Great Mosque of Cordoba," *Al-Andalus*, exhibition catalogue, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1992), 18.

58. *Al-Andalus*, cat. no.63.

59. The many drill-holes which appear on carved ivory containers are most probably remnants of inlay in precious stones.

60. Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, cat. no.47.

61. *Ibid.*, cat. no.45.

62. *Ibid.*, cat. no.44.

63. *Ibid.*, cat. no.46.

64. J. Beckwith, *Caskets from Cordoba* (London, 1960), 30; Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 47, note 1, where the suggestions of Lévi-Provencal and Ferrandis are cited.

65. For a stylistical discussion on the ivories from Cuenca see M. Sánchez, "Plaquitas y bote de marfil del taller de Cuenca," *Miscelanea de Estudios Arabes y Hebraicos* 36, part 1(1987), 45-100.

66. Beckwith, *Caskets from Cordoba*, 30.; R. Ettinghausen and O. Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250* (Harmondsworth, 1987), 153.

67. For an example, see the story of the daughter of the Christian governor who was kidnapped by the Visigothic king and because of whom the Arab conquest of Spain was started: P. de Gayangos, *The history of the Muhammadan dynasties in Spain* (London, 1840), vol.1, appendix, p.xlv; or the story of the spell which was found engraved on a colossal column and which was the reason why the Muslims refrained from invading the land of the Franks: *ibid.*, vol.1, p.289.

68. R. Basset, "La maison fermée de Tolède," *Société de Géographie et d'Archéologie de la province d'Oran* 18(1898), 42-58.

69. *Ibid.*, 43.

70. *Ibid.*, 43. The account of Ibn Qutayba appears in the *Aḥādith al-Imāmah wa'l-siyāṣah*, which has been attributed by some scholars to Ibn al-Qūtiyya (died 977); for the translation of this account see de Gayangos, *Muhammadan dynasties*, vol.1, appendix E, p.lxxiv.

71. Basset, "La maison fermée," 44.

72.G. H. Qaddumi, *A medieval Islamic book of gifts and treasures: Translation, annotation and commentary on the Kitāb al-Hādāya wa al-Tuḥaf* (Harvard University, 1990), 177 (caption 212).

73.*Ibid.*

74.De Gayangos, *Muhammadan dynasties*, vol.1, appendix D, p.xliii-iv.

75.*Ibid.*, p.xliv.

76.Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān wa-anbā' abnā' al-zamān*, ed. by Ihsan Abbās (Beirut, 1968-72), vol.5, p.327.

77.*Ibid.*, 328; for the English translation see *Ibn Khallikān's Biographical Dictionary*, trans. by M.G. de Slane (first published Paris, 1842, repr. Beirut, 1970), vol.3, pp.482-4.

78.Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ghusn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*, ed. by Muhammad Muḥī al-Dīn `Abd al-Hamīd (Cairo, 1949), vol.1, p.232; for the English translation see De Gayangos, *Muhammadan dynasties*, vol.1, p.263.

79.For the different Christian accounts of this legend see Basset, "La maison fermée," 49-55.

80.M.-M. Gauthier, *Highways of Faith* (London, 1987), 12-3.

81.Basset, "La maison fermée," 56-7.

82.See for instance the 4th-century sarcophagus which was found in La Molina (Province of Burgos): H. Schlunk, "Zu den frühchristlichen Sarkophagen aus der Bureba (Prov. Burgos)," *Madrid Mitteilungen* 6(1965), figs.8,9.

## CHAPTER FIVE: ISLAMIC LUXURY ARTEFACTS FOR WESTERN MARKETS

A. Trade routes and commodities, 650 - ca.1300

While earlier chapters have discussed 'indirect ways' in which Islamic artefacts were brought to the West, namely as relic containers, royal presents or booty, it seems that, during the Middle Ages, numerous Islamic artefacts were brought directly to the markets of the Latin West as eastern luxury goods. Of course these traded luxury commodities, expensive as they probably were, cannot be compared with priceless rock crystal or other carved precious stone vessels nor with unique precious metal or carved ivory objects, all of which probably reached the West through the three above-mentioned ways. In the first place, however, these were mostly textiles, which are excluded from the present study. At any rate, these luxury items, though sometimes made of inexpensive or at least less expensive materials than precious stones or metals, were very attractive to a western clientele. They were mainly very colourful or shiny artefacts like blown glass vessels, enamelled glassware, lustre ceramics or objects made of perishable materials such as leather. However, in some circumstances, though made out of precious material like ivory, they were sold for a relatively reasonable price. In this case, as shown below, it was quantity rather than quality that dictated the price.

In order to attack in a fruitful way the enormous field,

both in space and time, of Islamic art and trade with the West from the rise of Islam until the fall of the crusader strongholds in the Levant, around the end of the 13th century, an effort should be made to identify at least the main trade routes and, if possible, the luxury merchandise which was traded. The different trade routes explain how Islamic goods reached the West and might sometimes hint at specific artefacts which were brought west. This task, however, is also a giant one, and therefore it should be stressed that this brief introduction on trade routes and commodities serves only to give a basic understanding of the context of the different groups of artefacts discussed in this chapter.

The main arena of trading activities between Islam and the Latin west was the Mediterranean basin. The economic unity of the Mediterranean countries in the Middle Ages was not only the result, as Goitein has explained,<sup>1</sup> of the monotheistic religious belief of these communities, which indeed defined them as different from other communities like those of China, Japan and India, but also simply because they shared the same geographical sphere and therefore were tied to and influenced by each other. It would be wrong in certain circumstances to use the terms East and West or even South and North when describing the migration of Islamic objects to western markets. For the Normans of Sicily, for instance, the city of al-Mahdiyya was a closer trade centre than those of Genoa or Pisa, and Islamic goods from the far west, namely al-Andalus,

could have reached western markets in Southern France or Italy faster than markets in Cairo. Moreover, one can speak of international Mediterranean marketing centres like those of Constantinople, Venice and Alexandria where goods from all Mediterranean regions, Flanders (in the late Middle Ages), the Near East, East Africa and even China and India could have been obtained.

Pirenne's thesis that the Mediterranean trade between East and West, which had continued almost without interruption during Roman antiquity and the early Byzantine era, was severely damaged by the Arab conquests of the 7th century has been challenged more than once.<sup>2</sup> And though the commercial ties between Venice and Egypt before the 13th century are not that well documented, it seems that despite the call for prohibition of trade with the Muslims, made from time to time by the popes and the Byzantine emperors, Venetian vessels did visit the port of Alexandria. The Venetian cargo ship which left Alexandria (ca.827) with the body of St. Mark hidden in a barrel of pickled pork, suggests that commercial links with the East continued.<sup>3</sup>

With the rapid Arab conquest of North Africa and a great part of Spain by the end of the 7th and the early 8th century, the conquest of Carthage in 698, the control of coastal areas in Sardinia and Corsica at the beginning of the 8th century, the continuing attacks on Sicily and particularly the capture of the Strait of Messina in 843, the Byzantine hegemony of the Mediterranean Sea was shaken.

However in this turbulent period merchants chose overland trade avoiding sea transport as much as possible. Eastern goods were carried, then, from Constantinople across northern Greece up to Epirus, from there crossing the sea to Apulia, and along the Italian coast of the Adriatic till Venice, from whence they later reached North Europe. Another route, which started in Syria or Egypt, went to Ifriqiya (Tunisia) where one could have chosen whether to cross the sea to Sicily or to continue to Spain in order to trade with Gaul.<sup>4</sup>

During the Carolingian period, another active trade route from the East to the West existed, in which the Vikings in Scandinavia and Russia were intermediaries. This route probably started to operate as soon as 'Abbasid rule in Baghdad was firmly established, probably at the end of the 8th century, when Harun al-Rashid ascended the throne. Merchandise was carried from Baghdad to the north, along the western coast of the Caspian Sea, up the Volga via Bulgar and Staraya Ladoga, which lies at the mouth of this river to the Baltic Sea.<sup>5</sup> Eastern silks, hoards of silver coins (*dirhams*), glassware, all of which have been excavated in the northern Baltic countries, and probably also spices and other dry victuals, were imported.<sup>6</sup>

However, at this early stage trade with the East was mainly controlled by kings and the church.<sup>7</sup> The West was interested in the silver currency of the Arabs, but spices and a few luxury goods, mainly silks, were also brought to the West. It should be mentioned that some silks were



specially manufactured in the royal embroidery workshops (*ṭirāz*) for export to Christian countries, since on these silks, as on the imported papyri, an invocation to the Trinity was applied.<sup>8</sup>

Before the establishment of the Latin Kingdoms in the Levant at the beginning of the 12th century, which mark a revolutionary phase in the pattern of medieval trade in the Mediterranean world, during the 10th and 11th centuries small cities like Salerno Naples and Amalfi started to play an important role in Mediterranean trade.<sup>9</sup> While Venice, in these centuries, was making capital using Byzantine trade privileges in the Levant, these cities had direct trade relations with the Arabs, first with the Aghlabids of Tunisia and later with the Fatimids. Amalfi emerged among these cities as the leading commercial centre of Christian Europe in the western Mediterranean.<sup>10</sup> The earliest piece of evidence on trade ties between Amalfi and North Africa goes back to the 9th century, when we hear of the Amalfitan merchant Flurus.<sup>11</sup> But the main source on trade routes and merchandise during these centuries, though restricted to Jewish trade activities in the Mediterranean, are the Geniza Letters.<sup>12</sup> According to the letters, the exported Islamic goods were mainly spices and textiles, which were carried by caravans from Cairo to Kairoun and then shipped to Sicily or other ports in South Italy (the East imported in turn raw materials like wood, iron, cotton, olive oil from South Italy, salt from Venice and slaves).<sup>13</sup> Amalfi had direct

trade ties not only with Sicily and North African ports but also with Alexandria and Cairo. Moreover some evidence suggests that, after the Fatimid conquest of Egypt, Amalfitan colonies existed in Cairo, Jerusalem and probably in Antioch.<sup>14</sup> It is, therefore, possible that at the end of the 10th and the 11th centuries, when close trade connections between the West and the Fatimids existed, eastern luxury goods were shipped by Arab and Christian vessels to Amalfi or even by Venetian ships to Venice and Constantinople- at least so long as a truce between Fatimid Egypt and Byzantium endured.

The Crusading period (1095-1291) brought changes in the medieval trade of the Mediterranean. The importance of Amalfi as an international commercial centre declined, whether because of the emergence of the northern Italian naval cities of Pisa and Genoa or because of the Norman conquest of Amalfi, which caused the city to lose her privileges in Constantinople. However the major difference was the Christian monopoly of the Levantine ports of Palestine and Syria which gave the West direct access to the Near East.

Tyre, Beirut and Acre became the main gates of the Levantine trade. Oriental goods like spices and perfumes, which were brought by Arab sailors from mercantile centres on the shores of the Indian Ocean, were transported through Arabia to these Levantine sea ports. Silks from China, pearls from the Persian Gulf, musk and rhubarb from central Asia and muslins from Mosul were first gathered in Baghdad and later

were sent with other local goods to these crusading sea ports. Damascus and Aleppo served also as inland markets from which merchandise like fine textiles and Syrian camels'-hair cloth were transported in order to be shipped to the West.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the fact that Egypt was an enemy of the crusading Kingdoms and although the papacy prohibited trade with Egypt, some oriental merchandise still reached the West through this route and was even traded for raw materials like wood and iron, which the East acquired for making arms. For instance, in 1226 the merchandise of a Lombard cargo ship was confiscated; it included seven huge elephant tusks which had been brought from Egypt.<sup>16</sup>

Another important trading centre of the Crusading period was Norman Sicily. Since this island lies in the heart of the Mediterranean, it served as an interchange point for shipping and travelling. Merchandise from the East, mainly from Egypt, and from Muslim Spain, was unloaded there and later shipped in other directions, probably to the major North Italian communes of Pisa and Genoa. Among the eastern imported goods which were carried through the ports of Sicily were glazed pottery vessels, the so-called *bacini*. The importation of these artefacts started already at the beginning of the 11th century. *Bacini* were usually shipped from the sea ports of Tunisia, but their origins were Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and even Spain. The massive demand for these ceramics suggests that they were imported for daily use, maybe to replace the wooden tableware used until then in the West. However, the

bulk of them were inserted for decorative purposes on the exterior facades of many North Italian churches.<sup>17</sup> Other oriental goods, which were diffused into the West via North African trade, were spices, dye materials, precious stones, coral, textiles, rugs, and perfumes.<sup>18</sup>

Norman Sicily also developed its own luxury products by employing skilled craftsmen. Roger II raided Thebes in 1147 and brought back with him its silk workers.<sup>19</sup> In the same year he raided Corinth, and it seems possible that he carried off with him Corinthian glass makers.<sup>20</sup> During the reign of William II, the royal embroidery workshop was run by a Muslim, and numerous 'Saracenic' carved elephant tusks, ivory caskets and painted ivories are probably the product of Norman Sicily; these are discussed below.

With the capture of Antioch by the Mamluks in 1268, the fall of Acre in 1291, and, above all, the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258, trade with the Levant suffered a crisis.<sup>21</sup> Moreover the strict embargo imposed in the third decade of the 14th century, which prohibited even Jewish merchants from trading with the East, was a further shock.<sup>22</sup> However, the 13th- and 14th-century caravanserais built by the Seljuks along major trade routes in Anatolia were to serve merchants, who kept trade between East and West alive during these centuries.<sup>23</sup> By the mid-14th century Mediterranean commerce started to recover. Inland caravans were, therefore, directed first to Tabriz and then went through Little Armenia to the Black Sea, from which merchandise was shipped by Venetian

vessels to important Mediterranean trade centres. Other ports in Cyprus and Crete became busy reloading points for the east-west trade (probably because of the embargo on direct trade), and new commercial ties between Catalan merchants and Mamluk Egypt were even established.<sup>24</sup>

This brief prologue illustrates the intricate pattern of medieval Mediterranean trade. It seems that trade between East and West continued in the Middle Ages almost without interruption and even increased with the establishment of the crusading kingdoms in the Near East.<sup>25</sup> To a certain extent, these trade links created a unity between Europe, Byzantium, North Africa and the Near East. This was probably one of the main reasons in creating a Mediterranean atmosphere and maybe, in some circumstances, even a Mediterranean artistic language, in which oriental, Byzantine and Latin elements amalgamated.

The medieval picture of a united Mediterranean becomes even more complicated as we come to consider those areas in which Arab craftsmen lived and worked in a Christian milieu. This category includes first and foremost places in the West like Spain, South Italy and Sicily, but it also relates to the Latin kingdoms in the Near East. For example, Ayyubid metalwork with Christian images, though it constitutes a somewhat incoherent group, might reflect at least the manufacture of Islamic goods for well-to-do Christians if not a *modus vivendi* between Muslims and Christians in Ayyubid

Syria.<sup>26</sup> This might also apply to a pair of 13th-century enamelled beakers in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore (nos.47.17, 47.18) which are decorated with Christian images.<sup>27</sup> Eastern enamelled glass vessels appear in numerous European 14th-century inventories, in which they are usually mentioned as "acrische" or as glass "à la façon de Damas".<sup>28</sup> This suggests that, in the 14th century, Islamic enamelled glassware was quite well known in the West.

It must be mentioned here that the anonymous Templar of Tyre says that in the 13th century Saracenic craftsmen were employed by the military orders of St. John and the Templars,<sup>29</sup> and William of Tyre even mentions the tribe of Banū Zarra from Antioch who were famous for making armour and whose influential member Firuz was on friendly terms with the Frankish lord of Antioch.<sup>30</sup>

Hence some Islamic artefacts were undoubtedly commissioned by Knights and high-ranking prelates. For instance, one might mention the golden brooch which bears the inscription "Made by Sa`ad the goldsmith for the Christian Sir Kiliam" [Guillaume],<sup>31</sup> the Mamluk bronze chalice which bears a *naskhi* inscription stating that it was made for a priest from the convent of the Holy Sepulchre (London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 761-1900),<sup>32</sup> the Mamluk basins made for Hugh IV de Lusignan (cat. no.260, fig.123) and for Elizabeth von Habsburg-Kärnten (cat. no.261, fig.124), and many other pieces of late Mamluk metalwork bearing western coats of arms.<sup>33</sup>

In the West, the most famous artefact to illustrate a Mediterranean unity is the mantle of Roger II of Sicily (reigned 1130-1154).<sup>34</sup> But the less well-known robe and stocking made for William II of Sicily (reigned 1166-1189), bear Arabic inscriptions with the names of the Muslim embroiderers and their Christian employers.<sup>35</sup> On top of this, the 12th-century painted ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and the painted ceiling of Cefalù Cathedral,<sup>36</sup> the Norman painted ivories decorated with Christian images,<sup>37</sup> the numerous carved ivory croziers,<sup>38</sup> the three ivory arms of a processional cross (Paris, The Louvre, O.A. 5944, O.A. 5945, and Madrid, Archaeological Museum, no.1875),<sup>39</sup> the portable altar from the church of San Millán de la Cogolla (Madrid, Archaeological Museum),<sup>40</sup> the metal peacock from the Louvre signed in Arabic by its maker `Abd al-Malik al-Nasrānī, i.e. "the Christian" (MR 1569),<sup>41</sup> and the metal peacock from Cagliari which bears on its chest an incised Maltese cross (Pinacoteca Nazionale, no.1445),<sup>42</sup> raise the question whether we should not consider some of these 12th and 13th-century artefacts as the product of marranos (converted Muslims) working in Spain, South Italy and Sicily. In any case, whatever the religious belief of the craftsmen was, the unique character of these 'Mediterranean' artefacts sheds light on the peculiarity of the objects discussed below.

## B. The so-called Saracenic oliphants

About seventy-five oliphants, that is carved ivory horns, are scattered in different museums, church treasuries and private collections all over the world. According to medieval church inventories, however, it seems that there were many other *cornua eburnea* (ivory horns), which were probably lost or perished through the course of time.<sup>43</sup> All oliphants measure about 50-70 cm. in length, while the large openings measure between 5-13 cm. in diameter. The decoration on their bodies mainly consists of hunting scenes, wild animals and fantastic creatures. The majority of them were manufactured during the 11th and the 12th centuries and they can be roughly divided into three groups. The first group of circa 30 oliphants - the so-called 'Saracenic' oliphants - were probably made by Arab craftsmen or at least by western workshops strongly influenced by Fatimid motifs. The second group, which consists of circa 20 oliphants, is the Byzantine one - although these were not necessarily made in Constantinople, but more likely in South Italy, perhaps in Salerno or Amalfi. The third group is made up of the remainder of the oliphants, each of which differs from the other and, therefore, until further similar oliphants come to light, each should be regarded as unique.

The oliphants have been relatively neglected *via-à-vis* the other products of medieval secular arts. They were first studied as a group in 1860 by Bock, who discussed their



medieval religious and profane functions at length.<sup>44</sup> But it was not until 1929 that the first comprehensive study was made by von Falke,<sup>45</sup> who organized them into four stylistic groups: a Fatimid group which he assigned to Egypt; a group assigned to Italy which imitates Fatimid motifs; a European group (excluding Italy) which is also influenced by Islamic motifs and designs; and a Byzantine group which was not necessarily made in Constantinople. Approximately thirty years later, Kühnel suggested that von Falke's first three groups were manufactured by 'Saracenic' craftsmen working in South Italy, probably in Amalfi.<sup>46</sup> Kühnel specifically used the term 'Saracens' in order to stress that these oliphants are the unique product of Arab ivory workshops active in the West.<sup>47</sup> This large group of Saracenic oliphants was further discussed by Kühnel in his posthumous publication of the Islamic ivories in 1971.<sup>48</sup> However, von Falke's fourth group, namely the Byzantine group, has been almost ignored, though it has been generally accepted that many of the Byzantine oliphants were also manufactured in South Italy, probably in Amalfi.<sup>49</sup> More recently, Ebitz has discussed the meaning and function of oliphants in Romanesque secular art and has suggested that many of the so-called "Saracenic oliphants" were made in Venice.<sup>50</sup>

#### I. Re-classification - stylistical examination and provenance

Kühnel proposed a useful grouping for the Saracenic

oliphants based on the different patterns of their decorations: oliphants with smooth bodies and bands of decoration around their mouth pieces and their large openings; oliphants decorated with vine roundels or medallions enclosing mainly wild and fabulous animals; and oliphants whose bodies are decorated with narrow vertical bands inhabited with wild and fabulous animals (fig.159).<sup>51</sup> However, it must be pointed out that Kühnel's classification is not a stylistic one. Furthermore, a few oliphants which were not discussed in his article of 1959 were included in his comprehensive catalogue of Islamic ivories. This has caused confusion because, although these additional oliphants recall the Fatimid style of the Saracenic oliphants, and thus correspond to his useful classification, it is quite clear that they were made in the West between the 11th and 13th centuries, most probably by Christian craftsmen. For this reason they should be regarded as western copies of Saracenic oliphants and should be excluded from this discussion.<sup>52</sup>

In order to classify the Saracenic oliphants stylistically, two points should be examined: the method of carving and the motifs. Having taken these two points into consideration, two groups can be defined: oliphants with lace-like decoration and those with smooth bodies and narrow decorative bands circling their lower and upper zones.

#### Oliphants with a lace-like decoration

The first large group consists of thirteen oliphants

decorated with inhabited scrolls or with inhabited vertical bands, namely the second and third groups of Kühnel.<sup>53</sup> The decoration of these oliphants is dense and carved in two panels. The cut is straight and deep, the background left undecorated, and the surface smooth. This method of carving conveys the impression of a thick perforated cloth or of a heavy lace embroidery. A few human figures, wild animals and fabulous creatures such as griffins and harpies appear on these oliphants. Narrow bands of arabesque decorate the raised belts on the upper and lower parts of their bodies.

These oliphants have been associated with four rectangular ivory caskets with truncated pyramidal covers and with a small ivory case. The four caskets are in the Islamic Museum of Berlin-Dahlem (K 3101), the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (17.190.241), the treasury of St. Servatius Cathedral in Maastricht (no.27) and the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (CB 9621). The small ivory case is in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (17.190.236).<sup>54</sup> It therefore seems possible that these ivories are the product of a single workshop specializing chiefly in decorating oliphants. However, though the method of carving and the repertoire of motifs closely recall 11th-century Fatimid art, Kühnel suggested that these ivories were made in the West. He rejected the possible Islamic provenance because no ivory horns are mentioned in medieval Islamic texts nor represented in Islamic art. He also pointed out that there were some variations of Fatimid motifs which he suspected to be the

result of western influence.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, Kühnel attributed this workshop to Amalfi, basing himself on the Mediterranean trade contacts of the city with the Islamic world and on the dedicatory inscription "TAVR. FI. MANS." (Taurus filius Mansonis), which appears on the above-mentioned small ivory case from the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Tauro was probably a member of the prominent Mansone family from Amalfi. Of course the dedicatory inscription does not necessarily indicate that the case was made in Amalfi, and Ebitz, stressing this point, has suggested Venice - a no less active medieval trade centre - as the provenance for these oliphants and caskets.<sup>56</sup> Ebitz's argument is, however, mainly based on a reconstruction of a Fatimid-influenced ivory book cover which he assigns to Venice.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, this reconstructed book cover consists of several ivory plaques of different styles and therefore cannot be attributed to the same ivory workshop which he assigns to Venice; indeed, in the Middle Ages, it was common practice to re-use materials for adorning a new artefact.

One of the ivory plaques of this reconstructed book cover closely recalls the carving of the oliphants (Biblioteca Apostolica, the Vatican, no.1163). The plaque was recorded in 1756 as being in the Camaldolese monastery of San Michele,<sup>58</sup> but it is not known from where or how it had reached the monastery. Though the theme carved on this plaque is Christian - Christ enthroned - the method of carving is similar to that of the oliphants (fig.160). This similarity

is particularly stressed while comparing the wings of the angels of this plaque with those of the birds of the oliphants. The wings consist of long straight feathers and of solid limbs which are attached to the bodies and decorated with tiny scratches. These tiny scratches are the typical decoration of this group of oliphants and they usually appear on the bodies of the animals.

A similar method of carving, and similar scratches, appear on two other ivory plaques. The first is an ivory from the Rabenou Collection in New York, which has been associated by Bergman with the series known as the Salerno ivories (fig.161).<sup>59</sup> The second ivory is mounted on one of the facets of the so-called Farfa Casket (1071-1075) from Monte Cassino (fig.162).<sup>60</sup> The Latin inscription that runs around the borders of the Farfa Casket identifies the donor of this object as Maurus, merchant of Amalfi.<sup>61</sup> The fact that the subject matter carved on these ivories is Christian should not impede us from assigning them to this group of Saracenic horns and caskets. As a matter of fact, a Maltese cross appears on the shield behind the cameleer, depicted on the back of the above-mentioned ivory casket from Berlin (K 3101), and another Maltese cross appears on the oliphant from Auch (cat. no.115). This might hint that this large group of Saracenic ivories were made by Arab or even by converted Muslim craftsmen for a Christian clientele. The fact that the ivory from the Rabenou Collection, the one mounted on the Farfa Casket and the ivory case from the Metropolitan Museum

bearing the name of a member of the Mansone family, are all linked to South Italy, especially to Salerno and Amalfi, supports Kühnel's suggestion concerning the South Italian origin of these oliphants.

#### Oliphants with smooth bodies and narrow decorative bands

The second group is smaller and consists of nine oliphants.<sup>62</sup> Although four of them bear carved decoration on their bodies which was most probably carved later by western craftsmen, all nine oliphants were originally decorated with narrow carved bands circling their lower and upper zones, while their bodies were left smooth. The decoration on their bands is usually cut at an oblique angle and consists either of arabesques organized in triangles, or of running wild animals on an arabesque background. The bodies of the animals are usually decorated with an elegant rinceau, which runs along the length of their bodies, and deep scratches on their chests mark their chest bones. It is worth mentioning that no human figures or fabulous animals appear on these oliphants.

This method of carving combined with the repertoire of animals running after one another evokes late `Abbasid and Fatimid wood carvings. Therefore, it seems that this group of oliphants might be the earlier of the two and that it is datable to the early 10th and the 11th centuries. Their origin is unknown, but the fact that the bodies of four oliphants of this group were re-carved in the West, probably in South Italy, suggests that it is possible they were

brought from the East to the West bearing decorative bands on their lower and upper zones. Ebitz has demonstrated that the decoration on the body and on the upper and lower zones of the oliphant from the Musée de Cluny (cat. no.118) were carved by two different workshops at different times.<sup>63</sup> This is probably true of the other three oliphants: from the Frühchristlich- Byzantinische Sammlung in Berlin-Dahlem (no.586), from Baltimore (cat. no.112) and from the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh (no.1956.562).<sup>64</sup>

One may, of course, argue that the different methods of carving on each oliphant does not necessarily prove that the oliphants reached the West with decorated bands on their lower and upper zones. Kühnel even suggested that the oliphant from Cluny was decorated by two different South-Italian workshops.<sup>65</sup> But, unlike the oliphants with lace-like decoration, on which some western influences were noticed, the style of the decoration of these oliphants is Islamic par excellence. However, if these oliphants are to be attributed to Fatimid Egypt, further discussion, supported by new evidence and medieval sources, is required.<sup>66</sup>

## II. Did the Fatimids have ivory horns?

Kühnel justified his suggestion concerning the western origin of the Saracenic oliphants on the following facts: first, medieval Arabic sources fail to mention ivory horns, second, not one medieval oliphant has been found in the East,

and third, there are very few representations of oliphants in Islamic art.<sup>67</sup> These should be re-examined in an attempt to establish whether or not there was a specific medieval Arabic term for oliphant.

Indeed Arabs have special names for a horn-type blowing instrument. The *sūr* and the *nāqūr* both mentioned in the Qur'ān and traditionally regarded as being blown on the Day of Resurrection by the two angels *Munkar* and *Nakīr*, probably refer to conical instruments,<sup>68</sup> but their material is not described. Another term often used is the *qarn* which refers to any crescent-shaped horn. This term probably derived from the Hebrew term *qeren* which refers solely to the horns of animals. The latter was, therefore, probably not used to specify an elephant tusk.

It is likely that the general Arabic term *būq* for a conical wind instrument, whether crescent-shaped or straight, and irrespective of its material, was also used for an ivory blowing horn. This term, which probably derived from the Greek βουκάλυνη or the Latin *buccina*, might hint that this type of instrument was introduced to the Mediterranean Arabs by their western neighbours.

As a matter of fact, Nāsir-i Khusraw in his *Safar-nāma* (ca.1050) mentions that in the bazaars of Cairo he saw elephant tusks which were brought from Zanzibar.<sup>69</sup> But since he did not mention any decoration on them, these tusks were more than likely sold as the raw material for carved ivory wares. However, his account attests that elephant tusks were



to be found in Fatimid Egypt. In medieval times tusks were mainly imported from East Africa, especially from Zanzibar, Somaliland and Madagascar. They were usually shipped to Oman, from whence they were later sent to India and China.<sup>70</sup> They were also probably carried through the mainland to Egypt. Ivory tusks reached Cairo and Alexandria either to be used by Muslim or Coptic ivory craftsmen or to be transferred to different Mediterranean ivory carving centres.<sup>71</sup>

Despite the fact that in order to transform an elephant tusk into a blowing horn one should only hollow it and drill its pointed head to create a proper mouthpiece, the existence of elephant tusks in Fatimid Egypt does not necessarily prove that oliphants were used by the Fatimids. Nevertheless, Kühnel's argument concerning the lack of visual representations of oliphants in Islamic art might be explained in two ways: oliphants were either made in the East for export to the West, or they were rarely used, perhaps even only for a short period, in a Fatimid royal context.<sup>72</sup>

*Būqāt* (the plural of *būq*) are mentioned by al-Maqrīzī (1364-1442) as being among the riches of the Fatimid treasury during the reign of al-Mustansir (1036-1094).<sup>73</sup> Since the Arabic term *nafīr* was frequently used from the 11th century onwards as referring to straight conical trumpets,<sup>74</sup> the *būqāt* may have been horn-shaped instruments made, perhaps, out of elephant tusks.

Two other unique wind instruments were mentioned by Ibn al-Tuwayr, a late Fatimid and early Ayyubid historian.<sup>75</sup> The

first were called 'trumpets of peace' (*abwāq al-salām*) which were used by the Fatimids during the Nile ceremonies.<sup>76</sup> The use of the Arabic term *abwāq* (another plural form of *būq*) suggests that these trumpets were horn-shaped. The second instrument, *al-gharbiyya* or *al-gharība*, was sounded on new year ceremonies, as soon as the caliph neared the palace gate and his face became visible.<sup>77</sup> This term is interesting because it can be translated as "the marvel" or "the occidental". Thus, this suggests that the instrument was rare at least in the eastern part of the Islamic world and that its possible origin was in the West. In fact this term is similar to the term "oriental" used in the West as referring to any exotic item from the East. It might, therefore, be suggested that the *al-gharbiyya* was an ivory horn which in the 11th century was popular in the West and hardly known in the East.

It is worth mentioning that in the Mamluk period, when interactions with the West in general and with crusaders in particular were intensive, horns appear on Mamluk blazons and became an attribute of the nobility.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, according to Qalqashandī (1355-1418), in the Mamluk investiture ceremony of an amir, a blowing horn and a flag were presented to him (*ummir bi'l-būq wa'l-'alam*).<sup>79</sup> The presentation of a blowing horn in Mamluk investiture ceremonies is reminiscent of the medieval western idea of horns of tenure, which were given as a symbol of the transfer of land.<sup>80</sup> But it is unknown whether the Mamluk horns were

made of elephant tusks. The only Islamic ivory horn which has so far come to light is a side-blown horn from Pate.<sup>81</sup> This horn is 215 cm long and is made of two elephant tusks attached to each other. Its faceted body is smooth, and a band of *naskhi* inscriptions decorates the upper zone, around its large opening. The horn was usually sounded on special royal occasions. Though it is datable to the late 17th century, it is traditionally said to be a copy of an earlier lost ivory horn.<sup>82</sup> And as the carved *naskhi* inscriptions around its large opening recall typical Mamluk *naskhi* inscriptions, it is possible that the ivory horn from Pate copied a Mamluk one.

In sum, though many of the oliphants were made in the West, probably in South Italy, it is possible that a few of them were carved in the East. These were probably oliphants from the second stylistic group, namely oliphants with smooth faceted bodies and narrow decorative bands on their upper and lower zones. The fact that these horns do not bear any Arabic dedicatory inscriptions, such as usually appear on costly ivory objects, suggests that they were mainly made for export. However, there is a faint possibility that they were occasionally used in a Fatimid royal context.

### III. Function and meaning

The Saracenic oliphants are hollowed, and their narrow

ends are bored. This suggests that they were initially made as blowing horns. They are blown like trumpets, but the sound obtained is limited to one, two or three tones only. Although some medieval accounts describe how oliphants were in exceptional circumstances used as drinking horns, albeit that it was quite difficult not to spill the drink,<sup>83</sup> these were extraordinary events which probably relate to late medieval legends associating horns with the magic power of changing water into wine and also with the Holy Grail.<sup>84</sup> However, though initially made to be blown - probably during hunting activities as their decorations might suggest - Ebitz believes that they were rarely used. He has explained that their huge size made them inconvenient to use on the hunt and added that the fact that most of them are well preserved suggests that they were used solely during ceremonial occasions.<sup>85</sup> His last argument is unconvincing because their excellent state might be explained by the fact that most of them reached medieval treasuries soon after they had been made. Numerous 11th- and 12th-century church inventories mention oliphants,<sup>86</sup> and it seems, therefore, that the secular phase of the oliphants was short.

The oliphants are indeed difficult to carry, and their dominant characteristic is of an ostentatious prestigious object. Moreover, the fabulous and wild animals carved on them convey the impression of courage and power. This suggests that they bore some meaning, and therefore references to oliphants in medieval sources should be

discussed.

Generally speaking, in the Middle Ages, elephant tusks were regarded as a royal attribute, and this topic is discussed in Chapter Two. But the name oliphant appears for the first time, to the best of our knowledge, in the *Chanson de Roland*.<sup>87</sup> This song was probably written around the end of the 11th century (1098-1100) and was very popular in the Latin West during the 12th and the 13th centuries, the time most oliphants were made. It is, therefore, a key source for understanding their meaning.

As a matter of fact it has been suggested that *olifan* derives from the Arabic *al-bīqān* (plural of *al-būq*) and that the generally regarded derivation from vulgar Latin *elephantu* ("elephant, ivory") might be a folk etymology.<sup>88</sup>

However, the oliphant of Roland was a signal horn. The *Chanson* emphasises the unique sound of the oliphant, which was to be recognized from a distance.<sup>89</sup> After the death of Roland in Roncevaux in 778, the oliphant was said to have been taken by Charlemagne like a holy relic and to have been given to the church of St. Seurin in Bordeaux.<sup>90</sup> Roland became a hero who fought against Saracens, and his oliphant was the symbol of the hero fighting against infidels. Ebitz has demonstrated how the Normans, who were familiar with oliphants, were attracted by this *Chanson*.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, the song was written down in Anglo-Norman by the mid-12th century.<sup>92</sup> It is quite possible that during the Crusades the oliphant was regarded as the attribute of the valiant knight.

Since it seems that the majority of the oliphants were made mainly in South Italy, they were probably commissioned by the Normans. The Saracenic oliphants, more accurately the oliphants with lace-like decoration, were most probably also made for Norman noblemen.

Nevertheless, the fact that Byzantine and Saracenic oliphants were decorated with 'oriental' motifs might hint at an unknown legend or a mystery associating the origin of the oliphants with the East. As a matter of fact, another 12th-century epic, *Aspremont*, relates that the oliphant, the famous sword Durendal and the horse Veillantif, were spoils taken by Roland after he had defeated a Saracen king, called Aymes.<sup>93</sup> The Arabic names of Roland's sword, horse and, perhaps, also oliphant<sup>94</sup> thus suggest that these famous attributes of his were regarded as Saracenic spoils, and that, perhaps for that reason, they were decorated with oriental motifs.

#### IV. Oliphant in medieval church treasuries

Oliphants (*cornua eburnea*) are recorded in many medieval church inventories of the Latin West.<sup>95</sup> The richest treasuries with oliphants were these of Bamberg (three), Speyer (seven), Edinburgh (three), Exeter (six), Westminster in London (three), Salisbury (four), Winchester (nine), Limoges (four) and Lüttich (six). Many oliphants are already mentioned in 11th and 12-century inventories, suggesting that

they were given to churches quite soon after they were made. However, the reasons behind each donation remains unclear. It is possible that many of them were given as tenure horns, namely as a symbol of the transfer of land. The oliphants in York, the so-called Nigel's Horn, Blackburn's Horn, a horn in the Victoria and Albert Museum (no.7953-1862) and the Byzantine one in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (no.57.581) were probably given as tenure horns.<sup>96</sup> Thus, it is tempting to see some of them as being given to confirm the grant of Norman-conquered land to a specific bishopric. This was indeed the case of some oliphants in the cathedral of Carlisle, which were mentioned as being given to its treasury by Henry I (died 1135) as a symbol for a grant of land in Inglewood Forest.

Some other oliphants may have been presented as relic containers. The Byzantine oliphant from Angers is traditionally said to have been brought from the East by Guillaume de Beaumont, Bishop of Angers (died 1240), with relics of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.<sup>97</sup> This is not surprising because many of them sooner or later, no matter what their former use was, served to hold relics.<sup>98</sup> Of course, some of them, like the legendary oliphant of Roland, were displayed as trophies or even for decorative purposes in churches. Though not necessarily Saracenic, an oliphant was mentioned as being hung over the altar of the cathedral of Canterbury.<sup>99</sup>

However, as already mentioned, they were associated with

famous brave figures like Roland (cat. no.110),<sup>100</sup> Charlemagne (cat. no.109), El Cid,<sup>101</sup> and other valiant knights. In some places they were even associated with St. Cornelius and St. Hubertus whose attributes are horns.<sup>102</sup>

Their most emphasised feature was the peculiar or even magic sound they produced. This was already stressed in the *Chanson de Roland* - the origin of the western idea of oliphant - wherein Roland's oliphant is said to have had an individually recognizable sound.<sup>103</sup> But, generally speaking, the peculiar sound of horns was normally associated with a unique power which causes something to appear or to happen. The Jewish horn *shofar*, which is usually made of a curved ram's horn, and which in ancient times was used to mark wars and special religious feasts, is blown up to the present day on the Day of Atonement. Its blast is traditionally believed to cause the Gates of Heaven to be opened and thus to enable prayers of repentance to approach God. The magic power of the sound of the *shofar* was also known from the story of the conquest of Jericho (Joshua,6), in which it is related that the sound of seven ram's horns caused the town walls to collapse. In northern mythology the Gods were said to be awakened by the sound of a horn.<sup>104</sup> Hence, in the medieval popular song *Le Pélerinage de Charlemagne*, the palace of the Emperor Hugon of Constantinople was adorned with two figures of smiling youths, each holding an ivory horn. As soon as a strong wind was blowing, the horns sounded, and the palace began to rotate.<sup>105</sup> Another popular late medieval legend was



the legend of Gog and Magog. In some of its versions it was related that Alexander the Great installed two horns on the metal gate, behind which Gog and Magog were enclosed. The horns, resounding with the wind, caused Gog and Magog to believe that Alexander and his army were there, guarding the exit.<sup>106</sup> This legend, associating the sound of horns with Gog and Magog, who, according to Christian and Jewish apocalyptic literature, will manifest themselves immediately before the end of the world (Rev. 20), recalls the widespread idea of the two trumpets of the Last Judgment. In many medieval Christian representations of this scene, two angels blow huge horn-shaped trumpets, which are most probably oliphants (fig.163).<sup>107</sup>

It should be pointed out that some oliphants were actually used as blowing horns in medieval monasteries. Tradition tells that the Byzantine oliphant from Angers was given to the Abbey of St. Florent-le-Vieille by a Norman nobleman, who promised that a raid for plunder or any other Norman attack could be avoided if the sound of his oliphant was heard. He explained that the attacking Norman forces would recognize the unique sound of his oliphant and withdraw in fear.<sup>108</sup> Some oliphants were even blown on the mourning days of the Passion, particularly on the last three days before Good Friday, when the ringing of bells was forbidden.<sup>109</sup> But, unfortunately, the meaning of sounding oliphants on these special days is not known.

## V. Conclusion

The Saracenic oliphants are classified in two stylistic groups. The first group consists of oliphants and caskets decorated with a lace-like pattern. These were probably made in South Italy for a Christian or even for a Norman clientele. The second group is slightly earlier than the first and consists of oliphants with smooth bodies and narrow decorative bands on their lower and upper zones. These oliphants might have been made in the East, probably in Egypt, and, though they were made probably for export, a few of them might rarely have been used in Fatimid royal ceremonies. This group might have reached the Latin West as early as the beginning of the 11th century, probably as goods sent through the well-established trade route between Egypt and Amalfi before the Crusades.

In the late 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, an oliphant was a sought-after item in the Latin West, which any valiant knight was proud to have. It was associated with the oliphant of Roland and became an attribute of a hero. This might explain the existence of some copies of Saracenic oliphants. The obvious examples among these copies are the oliphants from the Kestner Museum in Hanover,<sup>110</sup> the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg,<sup>111</sup> the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna,<sup>112</sup> and the four small oliphants from Berlin, Paris, Dresden and New York.<sup>113</sup>

Their secular phase was short, and most of them soon

reached church treasuries. Though they were mainly used as relic containers, they were regarded as exotic items, and many legends were told about their peculiar magic sound. These legends and traditions associating them with famous figures fostered their popularity in the West. Therefore, rare as they were, their impact on the arts of the West was probably no less important than that of Islamic textiles.

### C. Painted ivories from Norman Sicily

Over two hundred ivory objects with painted or incised decoration, among which are rectangular caskets with flat or pyramidal truncated lids, cylindrical ones with flat lids, some oval caskets, combs and croziers, are probably the product of different workshops of Norman Sicily. The ivories have been thoroughly studied by Cott<sup>114</sup> and Ferrandis,<sup>115</sup> and more recently by Pinder-Wilson and Brooke.<sup>116</sup> Pinder-Wilson and Brooke have classified them into seven stylistic groups,<sup>117</sup> and, after a lengthy discussion, have suggested that they are a testimony to the intensive production of ivories of Norman Sicily, namely from the establishment of the Norman Kingdom by Roger II in 1130 until it was transferred to Frederick II in 1197.

The Normans who completed the capture of Sicily around 1090 treated the Muslims who resided there with tolerance for more than two centuries. They allowed them to keep as usual their tight commercial links with Islamic Spain, North Africa

and Egypt. Thus, Sicily, which geographically has the advantage of lying at the heart of the Mediterranean basin, became an almost global trade centre, encouraged by the Norman connection, so to speak, with the north Italian communes like Pisa, Genoa and Savona, and even with the lands over the Alps. Ibn Jubayr, who visited Sicily around 1185, during the reign of William II, describes the prominent role of Muslims in the commercial life of Norman Sicily. He says that King William II was admired for the use he made of the industry of the Muslims.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, he says that Muslims dominated the economic sphere in Palermo, that there was a small number of Muslim craftsmen in Messina, and, above all, that the royal embroidery workshop was run by the Muslim embroiderer Yahya ibn Fityan.<sup>119</sup>

The intensive manufacturing of painted ivories in Norman Sicily probably had the commercial intention of meeting a widespread demand. While, until then, Islamic carved ivory objects were made for the royal court, these ivories could have been obtained at a wealthy social level. As noticed by Pinder-Wilson and Brooke, the caskets are made out of thin sheets of ivory, elementarily secured by ivory pegs and gilded metal clasps, painted in a "summary fashion with unstable pigments".<sup>120</sup> The pigments were mixed with water. Black was used for outlines and inner details, while mainly red and green washes covered the black-circumscribed areas. Gold was extensively used, probably for its attractive quality praised by all. Though the specific functions of

these caskets are not known, some *naskhi* inscriptions, which usually appear on the edges of the lids of caskets in group III, suggest that some of them were used as bridal or jewel caskets.<sup>121</sup> Some other caskets decorated with incised dots and circles might have been used as caskets for ivory chessmen, as was suggested in Chapter Two.

Though more than half of them are kept in church treasuries of the Latin West, it seems that the rest, which are at present in public and private collections, were also formerly kept in medieval church treasuries. It must be pointed out that the richest church treasuries with painted ivories are in Italy, Spain and Germany. The existence of painted ivories in Italy requires no explanation. However, their presence in Spain might be explained, on the one hand, by the well-established trade route between Sicily and Islamic Spain already before the Norman conquest, or, on the other hand, by the royal connection between the House of Hauteville and the royal houses of Castile and Navarre. Elvira, the first wife of Roger II (1130-54), was the daughter of Alfonso VI of Castile, and Margaret, the wife of William I (1154-66), was the daughter of Gracia IV Ramirez King of Navarre. The many painted ivories in German church treasuries were most likely brought by the Hohenstaufen, who ruled Sicily from 1197 until the death of Conradin in 1268.

Though it seems that many of them were in ecclesiastical possession already in the late Middle Ages, some caskets

might have been initially made for Christian religious purposes. Seven caskets are decorated with Christian subjects. The casket from the Victoria and Albert Museum (cat. no.178) which once belonged to the cathedral in Bari, is decorated with two priests wearing long ecclesiastical vestments and holding cross-staves. A casket in Veroli (cat. no.193) bears two medallions; each encloses a bust of a nimbed figure, probably a saint, who holds a book. According to Cott, a cross is depicted on one of the books. A medallion on a casket in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo (cat. no.198) bears three standing nimbed figures clothed in long ecclesiastical vestments. The central figure raises his hand in blessing while holding a book in his other hand. The figure on the left holds a scroll and a cross, and the figure on the right holds his hands together. These figures were identified by Di Marzo as Christ flanked by St. Stephen and Laurence, and as Christ with St. Paul and Peter by Diez.<sup>122</sup> The oval casket from Trent (cat. no.209) bears three Maltese crosses on its dome-shaped lid and birds with Maltese crosses on their heads. Two nimbed figures appear on the cylindrical casket from Troia (cat. no.218). A bust of a nimbed figure (probably a bishop) wearing a long ecclesiastical vestment and a mitre on his head, raising his right hand in blessing and holding a crozier in the other, appears on a cylindrical casket from the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan in Madrid.<sup>123</sup> Three medallions on a casket from the Museo Nazionale in Florence (no.85) enclose three nimbed figures.

A standing figure wearing a long vestment appears in the upper medallion. Two half-length figures appear in the two lower medallions. According to Cott, one of them holds a cross and a flowering branch while the other holds a censer.<sup>124</sup>

These caskets with Christian subjects, and the croziers, all of which are associated with the painted and incised ivories of Norman Sicily,<sup>125</sup> suggest that these artefacts might have been ordered for ecclesiastical uses.

However, some slight variations in the decoration of the painted ivories of Norman Sicily, in comparison to Islamic decoration in general, have been noticed by Pinder-Wilson and Brooke. According to them, the composition is sparse, and the motives are sometimes organized over the surface with little attempt at balance or pattern.<sup>126</sup> The Christian subjects, however, verify a close link to the Byzantine art of the same period.<sup>127</sup> All these details probably illustrate some of the characteristics of Islamic artefacts made by craftsmen working in a Christian milieu, where cultural borders were seemingly blurred.

#### D. The Hedwig glasses

This unique group consists of sixteen cut glass beakers, some fragments and at least another three glasses, which are mentioned in late medieval inventories but whose present location is unknown (cat. nos.83-95, figs.84-95).<sup>128</sup> They

are all made out of thick, slightly bubbly, transparent, smoky topaz or colourless glass, and their decoration was probably executed on the wheel. All beakers are conical and have a projecting footrim, but they are of varying dimensions; the largest one is that in the Rijksmuseum (14.7 cm.), the smallest is one of the two from Namur (8 cm.). Apart from the undecorated beaker from Hinnenburg (cat. no.88), all the rest can be divided into two main groups. The first group consists of beakers decorated with an eagle, a lion, a griffin or a fantastic plant (Tree of Life[?]). The second group consists of beakers decorated with geometrical motifs: crescents(?), horns(?), and eye-like symbols enclosing a diamond or a rhombus.

Since three of them are associated with the very same vessel with which St. Hedwig (d.1243) transformed water into wine, these glasses became known as Hedwig glasses.

The origin of Hedwig glasses has aroused much controversy over the last hundred years.<sup>129</sup> Though these glasses do not bear any Arabic inscription, and despite the fact that none of them, not even fragments, have been found in the Near East, they are usually attributed to Egypt and dated between the end of the 10th and the 12th centuries. This dating has been based mainly on the existence of a glass industry in Egypt from ancient times and throughout the Islamic period, and on the similarity between Hedwig glasses and Fatimid rock crystal vessels, which was stressed by Schmidt in 1912.<sup>130</sup> A few years later Hedwig glasses were included in the



monumental catalogue of Lamm on Near Eastern glass and carved precious stones,<sup>131</sup> and indeed only in 1966 was this theory shaken by Shelkonikov.<sup>132</sup> Shelkonikov has argued that these glasses are of Russian origin. His suggestion was based on fragments of a further Hedwig glass excavated in 1960 in Novogrudok near Minsk. But while all Russian glassware contains potassium instead of sodium, which is to be found in Near Eastern glasses, examination of the Hedwig glasses from Novogrudok and the one in the Corning Museum revealed that they lack any potassium and that they are made of normal soda-lime glass.<sup>133</sup> Therefore it seems that the fragments of Hedwig glasses and even the gold-painted glass fragments found in Novogrudok were imported luxury glassware. However, a Byzantine origin for them has been recently suggested. In 1979, Joseph Philippe argued against an Islamic origin but suggested that they were made by Greek glassmakers residing in Fatimid Alexandria.<sup>134</sup> Another Byzantine attribution is that of Wenzel, who suggests that Hedwig glasses were among the goods brought with Theophanu to the Ottonian court in 972;<sup>135</sup> his theory has already been discussed in Chapter Two. However it causes difficulty because it means one has to accept the mid-10th century at the latest as their date of manufacture, which seems unlikely, at least for the glasses with geometrical motifs. At any rate his theory does not confront the problem of their ultimate origin.

Indeed, medieval Islam was familiar with cut glass vessels imitating more costly vessels of rare gemstones. The general

term for such glassware was "sophisticated glass" (*al-zujāj al-muḥkam*).<sup>136</sup> A perfect specimen of *muḥkam* glassware is the Buckley ewer from the Victoria and Albert Museum, which shares the same form and motifs as Fatimid rock crystal ewers.<sup>137</sup> But this term probably also refers to Hedwig glasses, the thickness and the high relief cut decoration of which convey the impression of vessels made out of carved precious stones.

In fact the similarity between Islamic relief cut glass vessels and Hedwig glasses is noticeable. There is the technique of raised ridges used for outlines, the grooves for the mane and paws of the lions, the same carving of the animals' eye, and sometimes even a flat spreading foot which recalls the footrim of the Hedwig glasses. However, the style of carving of Islamic relief cut glasses is less rigid and the composition is less dense.<sup>138</sup> Relief cut glasses are generally attributed to Iran or Iraq and dated, though without certainty, to the 9th or 10th century.

In any case the similarity between the latter and the Hedwig glasses, the existence of a special Arabic term for cut glass vessels imitating carved vessels of rare gemstones, and the existence of sodium rather than potassium in the Hedwig glasses from Novogradok and Corning, all combine to suggest a Near Eastern origin.

Unfortunately the documentation available at present does not mention the origin of these glasses. But a letter sent in 1224 by Jacques de Vitry, bishop of Acre (ca.1216-1226),

might serve as the earliest piece of evidence for Hedwig glasses and, therefore, as a *terminus ante quem* for the group. Jacques de Vitry, who left the monastery of Oignies in 1213 and joined the 5th Crusade, is traditionally regarded as the founder of the treasury of Oignies, which was enriched by his valuable gifts. In his letter of 1224 he mentioned some relics which were sent from Acre to Oignies. On his return in 1226 these relics were mounted at his commission. Three of these relics were mounted between the years 1228 and 1230 by a certain Brother Hugo. Since these signed mountings of Brother Hugo are similar to the mountings of the two Hedwig glasses in Namur (formerly in the treasury of Oignies, cat nos.93,94, figs.93,94), it might be suggested that the glasses were brought during the Crusading period from Syria to Oignies.<sup>139</sup> It should be mentioned that the fragmentary Hedwig glass from Novogradok was found in a house dated to the second half of the 12th century.<sup>140</sup> This might also suggest the end of the 12th century as the latest date for these glasses.

The possible relation between the Hedwig glasses from Namur and Jacques de Vitry, bishop of Acre, leaves the problem of their origin open. However, a relation between Hedwig glasses and the Crusades has been also suggested by Koch. Two fragments of another Hedwig glass excavated between 1959 and 1961 in Weibertreu Castle, near Weinsberg (Baden-Württemberg), have been associated by him with Konrad III (1138-1152), who took part in the Second Crusade of 1147-

1149.<sup>141</sup> The link with the crusading kingdoms in the Levant is tempting. If we consider that these glasses were commissioned at the special request of wealthy crusaders, this might explain why none of them has been found in the Near East and might even settle the question about the lack of Arabic inscriptions. This theory also suggests the 12th or, at the latest, the beginning of the 13th century as their probable date of manufacture. And, as Gray has mentioned,<sup>142</sup> for political reasons, these glasses are more likely to be Syrian or Iraqi rather than Egyptian. They were, therefore, made in one of the Syrian glass centres, like Tyre and Damascus, or brought by trading caravans to the Mediterranean crusading ports in the Levant from other glass centres in Mesopotamia.

The ultimate provenance of Hedwig glasses remains, though, untraceable and is a matter that awaits further archaeological discoveries and documentation not available at present.

1.S.D. Goitein, "The Mediterranean Mind in the High Middle Ages (950-1250)," *Amalfi nel Medioevo, Convegno Internazionale 14-16 Giugno 1973* (Salerno, 1977), 179-92, especially p.179.

2.H. Pirenne, *Mohammed und Karl der Große* (rep. Frankfurt am Main, 1985); R.S. Lopez, "Mohammed and Charlemagne: A Revision," *Speculum* 17(1943), 14-38; S.B. Lund, "Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric," *The Scandinavian Economic History Review* 1(1935), 5-39; C. Cahen, "Commercial Relations between the Near East and Western Europe from the VIIth to the XIth Century," in: *Islam and the Medieval West*, ed. by Khalil I. Semaan (Albany, 1988), 1-25; R. Hodges and D. Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the origins of Europe, Archaeology and the Pirenne thesis* (London, 1983).

3.For a general discussion of the commercial relation of Venice with the Levant see L. Buenger Robbert, "Venice and the Crusades," in: *A History of the Crusades*, ed. by K.M. Setton, vol.5, *The Impact of the Crusades on the Near East*, ed. by N.P. Zacour and H.W. Hazard (Madison, Wisconsin, 1985), 379-451, especially p. 394.

4.Cahen, "Commercial Relations," 5.

5.Hodges and Whitehouse, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 115-22.

6.*Ibid.*; B. Spuler, "Trade in the Eastern Islamic Countries in the Early Centuries," in: *Islam and the Trade of Asia*, ed. by D.S. Richards (Oxford, 1970), 11-20, especially p.17. See also C.J. Lamm, *Oriental Glass of Medieval Date Found in Sweden and the Early History of Lustre-Painting* (Stockholm, 1941); A.M. Watson, "Back to Gold--and Silver," *The Economic History Review*, second series, 20(1967), 1-34, especially p.4.

7.Hodges and Whitehouse, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 171.

8.Lopez, "Mohammed and Charlemagne," 23, note 4.

9.R.S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages 950-1350* (Cambridge, U.S.A., 1976), 63-70.

10.A.O. Citarella, "The relations of Amalfi with the Arab World before the Crusades," *Speculum* 42(1967), 299-312; idem, "Patterns in Medieval Trade: The Commerce of Amalfi before the Crusades," *The Journal of Economic History* 28(1968), 531-55.

11.U. Schwarz, *Amalfi im frühen Mittelalter (9-11 Jahrhundert), Untersuchungen zur Amalfitaner Überlieferung* (Tübingen, 1978), 28.

- 12.S.D. Goitein, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders* (Princeton, 1973); A.O. Citarella, "A puzzling question concerning the relations between the Jewish communities of Christian Europe and those represented in the Geniza documents," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91(1971), 390-97.
13. See also S.D. Goitein, "Medieval Tunisia, The Hub of the Mediterranean," repr. in Goitein's *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden, 1968), 308-28, especially pp.319-322.
14. Citarella, "Relations of Amalfi with the Arab World," 311, note 85.
15. Buenger Robbert, "Venice and the Crusades," 401-2; see also H.C. Krueger, "The wares of exchange in the Genoese-African traffic of the twelfth century," *Speculum* 12(1937), 57-71.
16. *Ibid.*, 442.
17. For the trade of the *bacini* see D. Abulafia, "The Pisan *Bacini* and the Medieval Mediterranean Economy: a Historian's Viewpoint," in: *idem, Italy, Sicily and Mediterranean, 1100-1400* (London, 1987), 287-302 (where further literature on this subject is to be found); for the basic survey on the Pisan *bacini*, though unavailable to me, see G. Berti and L. Tongiorgi, *I bacini ceramici medievali delle chiese di Pisa* (Rome, 1981).
18. Krueger, "Genoese-African Traffic," 62-71; D. Abulafia, *The Two Italies: Economic Relations between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes* (Cambridge, 1977), especially pp.42-5.
19. *Ibid.*, 80.
20. Gladys R. Davidson, "A medieval glass-factory at Corinth," *American Journal of Archaeology* 44(1940), 324.
21. E. Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1983).
22. *Ibid.*, 44.
23. K. Erdmann and H. Erdmann, *Das anatolische Karavansaray des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1961-76).
24. Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 56, 38-41, 32-33; see also D. Abulafia, "Catalan Merchants and the Western Mediterranean, 1236-1300: Studies in the Notarial Acts of Barcelona and Sicily," *Viator* 16(1985), 209-42; S.Y. Labib,

*Handelsgeschichte Ägypten im Spätmittelalter, 1171-1517* (Wiesbaden, 1965).

25. It is worth mentioning that by the end of the 13th century, when the compass with the pivoting magnetic needle was in general use, the traffic of trade substantially increased, see Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 7.

26. R.A. Katzenstein and G.D. Lowry, "Christian Themes in Thirteenth-Century Islamic Metalwork," *Muqarnas* 1(1983), 53-68; E. Baer, *Ayyubid metalwork with Christian images* (Leiden, 1989).

27. E. Atil, *Renaissance of Islam, Art of the Mamluks*, exhibition catalogue, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. (Washington, 1981), cat. nos. 44, 45.

28. M. Piendel, "Hab und Gut eines bayerischen Ritters im 14. Jahrhundert," in *Festschrift für Max Spindler* (Munich, 1969), 204; W. Pfeiffer, "'Acrische' Gläser," *Journal of Glass Studies* 12(1970), 67-9; C.J. Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten aus dem Nahen Osten* (Berlin, 1929-30), vol. 1, p. 494, nos. 67, 68.

29. Cited by B.Z. Kedar, "The subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant," in: *Muslims under Latin rule 1100-1300*, ed. by James M. Powell (Princeton, New Jersey, 1990), 153.

30. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey, *A History of deeds done beyond the sea, William Archbishop of Tyre* (New York, 1943), vol. 1, 241-42.

31. Baer, *Ayyubid metalwork*, 43, note 13.

32. *Europa und der Orient 800-1900*, exhibition catalogue (Berlin, 1989), cat. no. 4/89, fig. 689.

33. R. Ward, "Metallarbeiten der Mamluken-Zeit, hergestellt für den Export nach Europa," in: *Europa und der Orient*, pp. 202-9.

34. See mainly H. Fillitz, *Die Schatzkammer in Wien, Symbole abendländischen Kaisertums* (Salzburg and Vienna, 1986), 171, cat. no. 8; T. al-Samman, "Arabische Inschriften auf den Krönungsgewändern des heiligen römischen Reiches," *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 78(1982), 31-4; G. Curatola (ed.), *Eredità dell'Islam* (Milan, 1993), cat. no. 95 (with extensive bibliography).

35. Al-Samman, "Arabische Inschriften," 10-31.

36. See mainly U. Monneret de Villard, *Le pitture musulmane al soffitto della Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Rome, 1950); A. Simon-Cahn, *Some Cosmological Imagery on the Ceiling of the Palatine Chapel in Palermo* (Ph.D., Columbia University, 1978); M. Gelfer-Jørgensen, *Medieval Islamic Symbolism and the Paintings in the Cefalù Cathedral* (Leiden, 1986).

37. These caskets are discussed below.

38. See note 125.

39. E. Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen VIII-XIII Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1971), cat. nos. 48, 49.

40. *Ibid.*, cat. no. 50.

41. *Arabesques et jardins de paradis*, exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre, Paris (Paris, 1989), cat. no. 119 (with extensive literature).

42. Curatola, *Eredità dell'Islam*, cat. no. 42.

43. Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 85-8.

44. F. Bock, "Über den Gebrauch der Hörner im Alterthum und das Vorkommen geschnitzter Elfenbeinhörner im Mittelalter," *Mittelalterliche Kunstdenkmale des österreichischen Kaiserstaates*, ed. by G. Heider and R.V. Eitelberger II (Stuttgart, 1860), 127-43.

45. O. von Falke, "Elfenbeinhörner: I. Ägypten und Italien," *Pantheon* 4(1929), 511-17; *idem*, "Elfenbeinhörner: II. Byzanz," *Pantheon* 5(1930), 39-44.

46. E. Kühnel, "Die sarazenischen Olifanthörner," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 1(1959), 33-50.

47. *Ibid.*, 46.

48. Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 6-19, and cat. nos. 52-81.

49. T.D. Kendrick, "The Horn of Ulph," *Antiquity* 11(1937), 278-82; H. Swarzenski, "Two Oliphants in the Museum," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 60(1962), 27-45; *idem*, "Les Olifants," *Les Monuments historiques de la France* 12(1966), 6-11. For the suggestion that the Byzantine oliphants were manufactured in Amalfi see R. P. Bergman, *The Salerno Ivories* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1980); H. Fillitz, *Zwei Elfenbeinplatten aus Süditalien* (Bern, 1967), 16-20.

50. D.M. Ebitz, "Fatimid Style and Byzantine Model in a Venetian Ivory Carving Workshop," *The Meeting of two worlds, Cultural Exchanges between East and West during the period of*



*the Crusades*, ed. by V.P. Goss (Michigan, 1986), 309-29; "Secular to Sacred: The Transformation of an Oliphant in the Musée de Cluny," *Gesta* 25/1(1986), 31-8; "The Medieval Oliphant, Its Function and Meaning in Romanesque Secular Art," *Explorations, A Journal of Research at the University of Maine at Orono* 1(1984), 11-20.

51.Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 15-7, cat. nos.52-58 (with smooth bodies), 59-75 (with inhabited medallions), 76-81 (with vertical inhabited bands).

52.*Ibid.*, cat. nos.56-8, 63-5, 71-5.

53.*Ibid.*, cat. nos.60, 61, 66-70, 76-81.

54.For these ivories, see *ibid.*, cat. nos. 82-6.

55.Kühnel, "Die sarazenischen Olifanthörner," especially p.40.

56.Ebitz, "Fatimid Style and Byzantine Model," 314-5.

57.*Ibid.*, figs.52,53.

58.*Ibid.*, 311, note 12.

59.Bergman, *The Salerno Ivories*, fig.159.

60.For an illustration of this facet see G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art I*(London, 1971), fig.216.

61.R.P. Bergman, "A School of Romanesque Ivory Carving in Amalfi," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 9(1974), 164-6.

62.Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, cat. nos.52-55, 59, 62. For the three other oliphants, see the oliphants from the Musée de Cluny (cat. no.118), the Frühchristlich- Byzantinische Sammlung in Berlin-Dahlem Museum (no.586) and in the British Museum (OA+ 1302). The latter (length- 51 cm, large opening- 8.5 cm.) is a twin oliphant to the one at Aachen and was long regarded as a fake. Another fragment of an oliphant in the Musée de Cluny in Paris (Cl.13061) belongs to this group.

63.According to Ebitz, drills around the upper part of the oliphant, just below the raised band of rosettes, suggest that a basket-weave band, similar to the basket-weave bands on the lower zone of the oliphant, originally adorned the upper zone. This band was probably re-carved by a western craftsman who decorated the oliphant's body with the Christian scene of the Ascension; see Ebitz, "Secular to Sacred," 32.

64. A clear difference in method of carving between the body and the lower and upper zones can be seen on the oliphants from Cluny and Baltimore. However, some minor differences between the style of carving on the body and the lower and upper zones of the oliphant from Edinburgh were observed by Kühnel. Kühnel suggested that the body was carved in the West by an artist who copied the decoration of oliphants with inhabited medallions, see *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 56, cat. no.62; the oliphants from Edinburgh and Berlin are discussed by Ebitz, "Secular to Sacred," figs.1,9.

65. Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 19.

66. Indeed von Falke suggested Fatimid Egypt as a possible provenance for Saracenic oliphants. But he assigned to Fatimid Egypt oliphants with inhabited medallions or with inhabited vertical bands (the second and third groups of Kühnel's useful classification). See von Falke, "Elfenbeinhörner. I.," 511-14.

67. Kühnel mentioned a 13th-century bronze candlestick in the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul on which a rider who sounds a horn-shaped instrument is depicted, see *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, fig.31. A better example can be found on the carved ivory casket from Maastricht (cat. no.138), where a bearded figure with a turban and a long kaftan sounds a horn-shaped instrument, which is most probably an oliphant. However, this casket belongs to the the group with the lace-like decoration which was probably manufactured in the West.

68. Sura LXXIV:8; LXXVIII:18. For the traditional accounts see EI2, s.v. "Munkar wa-Nakir".

69. C. Schefer, *Sefer Nameh: Relation du voyage de Nassiri Khosrau*, The Persian manuscript with a French translation (repr. Amsterdam, 1970), 149.

70. Chau Ju-Kua, *On the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, tr. and annotated by F. Hirth and W.W. Rockhill (St. Petersburg, 1911), 126-7, note 5. See also Marco Polo, *The Travels*, tr. by R.E. Latham (London, 1958), 299, 301-2.

71. EI2, s.v. "Ādj".

72. The possibility that ivory horns were made in Egypt for export purposes has not been rejected by Ralph Pinder-Wilson, see EI2, s.v. "Ādj".

73. Ahmad ibn `Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-mawā`iz wa'l-i'tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-āthār* (the Bulāq edition, repr. in Beirut, circa 1970), vol.1, 415.

74. *EI2*, s.v. "Būḳ".

75. This source was not available to me, and I rely on the translation by Paula Sanders, *The court ceremonial of the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt* (Ph.D., Princeton University, New Jersey, 1984).

76. *Ibid.*, 188.

77. *Ibid.*, 154.

78. For a discussion about these Mamluk horns, which were formerly described as 'trousers', see L.A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry: A Survey* (Oxford, 1933), 19-22; M. Meinecke, "Zur mamlukischen Heraldik," *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 28/2(1972), 213-87; W. Leaf, "Not trousers but trumpets: A further look at Saracenic Heraldry," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 114 (1982), 47-51.

79. Al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-a`shā* IV (Cairo, 1914-28), 70; cited by Leaf, "Not trousers but trumpets," 51; Leaf has associated the pair of horns motif which appear on Mamluk blazons with Saracenic oliphants of the first stylistical group. But it must be pointed out that these oliphants are Fatimid and clearly not Mamluk ones, and that though "influenced by the work of Egyptian craftsmen", they were most probably made in the West.

80. A good example of this type of horn is the horn of Ulph which, according to tradition, was given to the Minster of York by Ulph with all his lands. See Kendrick, "The Horn of Ulph," 278-82; J. Cherry, "Symbolism and survival: medieval horns of tenure," *Antiquaries Journal* 69(1989), 111-18.

81. J. de Vere Allen, "The Siwas of Pate and Lamu: two antique side-blown horns from the Swahili coast," *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 8(1976), 38-47.

82. *Ibid.*, 40-1.

83. E.K. Heller, "The Story of the Magic Horn: A Study in the Development of a Medieval Folk Tale," *Speculum* 9(1934), 38-50.

84. *Ibid.*

85. Ebitz, "The Medieval Oliphant," 13.

86. Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 85-8.

87. J.A. Bellamy, "Arabic Names in the *Chanson de Roland*: Saracen Gods, Frankish Swords, Roland's Horse, and the Oliphant," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107(1987), 275-76.
88. *Ibid.*
89. *The Song of Roland*, tr. by G. Burgess (London, 1990), 85 (cap.1768).
90. *Ibid.*, 146 (cap.3685).
91. Ebitz, "The Medieval Oliphant," 15-7.
92. *Ibid.*, 16.
93. Bellamy, "Arabic Names in the *Chanson de Roland*," 273-74.
94. *Ibid.*, 272-76.
95. Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 85-8.
96. All these oliphants are mentioned by Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 13.
97. Ch. Urseau, "Olifant d'ivoire," *Le Musée Saint-Jean d'Angers* (Angers, 1924), 70-1; *Ornamenta Ecclesiae, Kunst und Künstler der Romantik*, exhibition catalogue, Schnütgen Museum (Cologne, 1985), cat. no.H13a.
98. Some of them retain drills around their large openings which suggest that they were once covered by lids.
99. Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 85.
100. The Byzantine oliphant in Toulouse and the Saracenic one in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (cat. no.110) are traditionally regarded as the oliphants of Roland. For the oliphant from Toulouse see mainly L. Golvin, "L'Olifant de Toulouse," *Archéologia* 124(1978), 54-63.
101. A smooth elephant tusk is hanging next to the alleged rein of the Cid's horse in the Cappila del Lagarto at the cathedral of Seville. See J. von Schlosser, *Die Kunst und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance* (Leipzig, 1908), 16.
102. Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 9.
103. *The Song of Roland*, 85 (cap.1768).
104. Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 6.

- 105.M. Schlauch, "The Palace of Hugon de Constantinople," *Speculum* 7(1932), 500.
- 106.A.R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1932), 83-5. An illustration, though probably of a later date, appears in the *Daqā'iq al-Ḥaqā'iq*, which was completed on April 1272 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS pers. 174, Folio 100v), see M. Barrucand, "The miniatures of the *Daqā'iq al-haqā'iq* (Bibliothèque Nationale Pers. 174): a testimony to the cultural diversity of Medieval Anatolia," *Islamic Art* 4(1990-91), fig.31.
- 107.For a discussion see Chapter Six.
- 108.Cited by Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 6, note 5.
- 109.See Chapter Eight.
- 110.Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, cat. no.63.
- 111.*Ibid.*, cat. no.64. This oliphant is a copy of the fragment of the oliphant in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (*Elfenbeinskulpturen*, cat. no.68).
- 112.Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, cat. no.71.
- 113.*Ibid.*, cat. nos.72-5.
- 114.P.B. Cott, "Siculo-Arabic Ivories in the Museo Cristiano," *The Art Bulletin* 12(1930), 131-46, see especially pp.139-40 where earlier references are mentioned; idem, *Siculo-Arabic Ivories* (Princeton, 1939).
- 115.J. Ferrandis, *Marfiles Arabes de Occidente* (Madrid, 1940), vol.II.
- 116.R.H. Pinder-Wilson and C.N.L. Brooke, "The Reliquary of St. Petroc and the Ivories of Norman Sicily," *Archaeologia* 104(1973), 261-305.
- 117.*Ibid.*, 272-286.
- 118.R.J.C. Broadhurst (tr.), *The travels of Ibn Jubayr* (London, 1952), 340.
- 119.*Ibid.*, 340-41.
- 120.Pinder-Wilson and Brooke, "The Reliquary of St. Petroc," 293.
- 121.*Ibid.*, 279, 288.

122. *Ibid.*, 282.

123. For an illustration, see *ibid.*, pl. LXXXIVb.

124. Cott, *Siculo-Arabic Ivories*, cat. no. 42; see also Pinder-Wilson and Brooke, "The Reliquary of St. Petroc," 281.

125. See mainly O. von Falke, "Ein Bischofstab islamischer Arbeit und seine Verwandten," *Pantheon* 16(1935), 266-70; Cott, *Siculo-Arabic Ivories*, cat. nos. 148-67; Pinder-Wilson and Brooke, "The Reliquary of St. Petroc," p. 284 (croziers of group V), p. 286 (Croziers of group VII).

126. *Ibid.*, 294.

127. See for example the two carved ivory plaques in the Vatican, Museo Cristiano (Bibl. Barberina no. 1862), which are probably an 11th-century Byzantine product of South Italy: A. Goldschmidt, and K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.-XIII. Jahrhunderts* II (repr. Berlin, 1979) cat. no. 221a, b.

128. Out of the 16 "Hedwig glasses", the 13 ones which are or were kept in church treasuries appear in the catalogue, see cat. nos. 83-95, figs. 84-95; two of the three other beakers are in Amsterdam (Rijkmuseum, HM 712), London (British Museum, no. 1959 4-141), and the third one is the large fragment of a glass beaker which was found in Novogradok in White Russia. Fragments of such glasses have been found in Novogradok, Weibertreu Castle (near Heilbronn) and in Göttingen. For the fragments from Weibertreu and Göttingen see E. Baumgartner and I. Krueger, *Phönix aus Sand und Asche* (Munich, 1988), cat. nos. 44, 45. According to late medieval inventories, a glass beaker was part of the goods belonging to the Valois dukes of Burgundy, namely to Philip the Good (1396-1467) and his son Charles (later Charles VII of France), another beaker was once kept at the church of the Holy House in Loreto, and another one was once kept in the church of St. Adalbert in the Dominican monastery in Breslau. For the different inventories see F.N. Allen, *The Hedwig Glasses, a Survey* (unpublished, 1987), cat. nos. 17, 21, 22.

129. See mainly R. Schmidt, "Die Hedwiggläser und die verwandten fatimidischen Glas- und Kristallschnittarbeiten," *Schlesische Vorzeit in Bild und Schrift, Jahrbuch des schlesischen Museum für Kunstgewerbe und Altertümer* 6(1912), 53-78; Lamm, *Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten*, vol. 1, pp. 171-75, vol. 2, pl. 63; B.A. Shelkownikov, "Russian Glass from the 11th to the 17th century," *Journal of Glass Studies* 8(1966), 95-115; J. Philippe, "Le cristal de roche et la question byzantine," *26 Corso di Cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina, Ravenna 6/18 Maggio, 1979* (Ravenna, 1981), 227-47; B. Gray, "Thoughts on the origin of "Hedwig" Glasses," in:

*idem*, *Studies in Chinese and Islamic Art* (London, 1987), vol.2, 341-47; Baumgartner and Krueger, *Phönix aus Sand und Asche*, 86-88, cat. nos.36-45 (with extensive literature); Allen, *The Hedwig Glasses* (unpublished).

130.Schmidt, "Hedwigsgläser," 65.

131.Lamm, *Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten*, vol.1, pp.171-75.

132.Shelkovnikov, "Russian Glass," 109-112.

133.Gray, "Thoughts on the origin of "Hedwig" glasses," 342.

134.Philippe, "Le cristal de roche," 233.

135.H. Wenzel, "Byzantinische Kleinkunstwerke aus dem Umkreis der Kaiserin Theophano," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 44(1973), 55-6; *idem*, "Das byzantinische Erbe der ottonischen Kaiser - Hypothesen über den Brautschatz der Theophano," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 43(1972), 56-61.

136.See a discussion in Chapter Three.

137.W. Buckley, "Two Glass Vessels from Persia," *The Burlington Magazine* 67(1935), 66-71; R.J. Charleston, "A Group of Near Eastern Glasses," *The Burlington Magazine* 81(1942), 215-16; P. Oliver, "Islamic Relief Cut Glass: A Suggested Chronology," *Journal of Glass Studies* 3(1961), 14.

138.For a comparison see two relief cut glass beakers and a fragment in the Corning Museum of Glass (58.1.5, 55.1.121, 55.1.144); for illustrations see Oliver, "Islamic Relief Cut Glass," figs.16,17,18, 21,22.

139.For literature see cat. nos.93,94.

140.Gray, "Thoughts on the origin of "Hedwig" glasses," 346.

141.R. Koch, "Schliffgläser des Hohen Mittelalters - Vorbericht über zwei Fragmente eines neuen Hedwigsglases von der Burg Weibertreu bei Weinsberg," *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 7(1977), 229-34.

142.Gray, "Thoughts on the Origin of "Hedwig" Glasses," 347.

PART II. THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ISLAMIC OBJECTS IN CHURCH TREASURIES

CHAPTER SIX: FROM SECULAR TO SACRED: TYPES OF "CHRISTIANIZATION" AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

A. Consecration

"Still another vase, looking like a pint bottle of beryl or crystal, which the Queen of Aquitaine had presented to our Lord King Louis as a newly wed bride on their first voyage, and the King to us as a tribute of his great love, we offered most affectionately to the Divine Table for libation. We have recorded the sequence of these gifts on the vase itself, after it had been adorned with gems and gold, in some little verses:

As a bride, Eleanor gave this vase to King Louis,  
Mitadolus to her grandfather, the King to me, and  
Suger to the Saints."<sup>1</sup>

This account of Abbot Suger in his book *De administratione* (1145-1147) illustrates concisely the 'life' of an object which reached the Latin West. Indeed this object, known as the "vase d'Aliénor", is probably a Sasanian vessel.<sup>2</sup> According to Beech the name of the anonymous donor Mitadolus refers to `Imād al-Dawla `Abd al-Malik ibn Hūd, the last Muslim king of Saragossa (1110-1130).<sup>3</sup> Abbot Suger describes how and on what occasions this vessel had passed from one hand to another until it reached the treasury of Saint Denis, and which changes it underwent at the hands of craftsmen in that monastery in order to suit its new role as a holy vessel on the "Divine Table" during the liturgy. But the neutral tone with which Abbot Suger describes how an "enemy" object is accepted for the treasury of Saint Denis is quite astonishing. There may be more than one explanation for this, and these explanations are discussed below. Nevertheless, it



might be argued that Abbot Suger did not realize what the origin of this vase was. But even so, it is known that even Christian secular objects were consecrated before being used for religious ceremonies and services. The widespread formula for consecrations as such, which could be used only by bishops, consisted of a verse: "Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini" whereby the mercy of God was asked, and from a long announcement (*praefatio*) in which it was made clear that any protection gained from relics is given by the will of God and the help of His saints. Afterwards, a benedictory prayer was said, and the relic container was sprinkled with holy water. Though this formula appeared in the 10th century, it was probably practised earlier.<sup>4</sup> A simpler process was carried out by clergymen (apart from bishops) in the late Middle Ages. It consists of the above-mentioned verse and announcement, and, at the end, the relic container was also sprinkled with holy water.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, we do not possess any literary sources which tell us how Islamic objects were consecrated. As a matter of fact, this silence might be explained by two main reasons: on the one hand, many Islamic vessels in church treasuries were brought as mementoes from the East, and thus were already sanctified by relics or other sacred substances carried within them. Indeed, these Islamic containers were regarded as relics of a lesser degree, which were consecrated by sheer proximity to relics or sanctified substances. On the other hand, a large number of Islamic objects was presented

to church treasuries after being used for decades and even centuries in a secular Christian context. Thus, it seems that many of them lost their original identity and were consecrated like any other Christian secular object about which, most of the time, medieval sources also mention no consecration process, probably because it was a regular and obvious routine. However, the fact that medieval accounts fail to mention any consecration ceremony for such trophies and booty as were known to be Islamic artefacts, suggests that most of the time the clergy were not bothered with the idea that the newly-presented precious object was an Islamic one.

#### B. Alteration of function - loss and gain

The major method of Christianization was the alteration of function. Most of Islamic artefacts in church treasuries were originally used in an Islamic secular context and they lost their former function in favour of a sacred one as soon as they reached a treasury. The new Christian functions they were designed for gave them new life, which sometimes went far beyond the scope of their original use. Several of them had 'active' functions such as wine chalices (cat. nos.53,66,78, figs.53,66,78), plates for the sacramental bread (cat. no.42, fig.42), libation vessels (cat. nos.58,60,67, figs.58,60,67), boxes for the Host (cat. nos.125,129,164[?],239?,271,272[?], figs.111,115,134,135),

liturgical combs (cat. nos.240-45), horns for blowing (cat. nos.115,117), censers (cat. no.215) and even a baptistery font (cat. no.259, fig.122). Their new 'active' use gave them a new identity, and their original function and meaning was forgotten.

However, a large number of Islamic vessels in church treasuries lost their 'active' function for the sake of a 'passive' one, namely a relic container. Glass and rock crystal flagons, vases, ewers, beakers, small perfume bottles and even chessmen, ivory hunting horns, and above all small caskets, became receptacles for holy relics. It was forbidden to touch them. They were usually kept in the church's sacristy and were shown to the public only at special religious celebrations, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Eight.

This function of Islamic objects as relic containers has some significant implications. The major one was a kind of "aestetization" by way of exhibition. The fact that they were being displayed to the public called the attention of the beholder to them, and this process revealed their aesthetic merits which did not attract attention before. One may compare it to the experience we undergo today in any arts and crafts museum. Utensils of daily life, once their function is no longer stressed, display their aesthetic values to us more clearly. To a certain extent this is harmful to an art object. Through the neutralisation of its function, the confrontation between its utilitarian purposes

and its aesthetic design, which creates the most fascinating aesthetic tension in any object of art, is reduced to a minimum. But on the other hand, hidden aesthetic values emerge.

The medieval aesthetic was cognizant of these two factors. A distinction between aesthetic merits and utility (*aut decori, aut usui*) was made already at the very beginning of the Middle Ages.<sup>6</sup> It seems that for medieval man they did not match each other. The utilitarian demands of a utensil were not to be confused with its aesthetic values. This distinction became even more sharp in the 11th century with the emergence of various religious orders like the Carthusians or the Cistercians. These orders asked for an ascetic decorative programme of their churches renouncing precious materials "...beautiful and precious clothes, beautiful weaving of varied color...sapphire glass...golden and jeweled chalices...all these are not required for practical needs, but for the concupiscence of the eyes", said the Cistercians regarding the lavish decoration of churches, mainly those of the Cluniac order.<sup>7</sup> This artificially clear-cut separation between function and ornament, which was made in order to prevent the latter from obscuring the former, was no longer valid in a treasury. Since a vessel usually lost its 'active' function in a treasury, aesthetic merits could have been accepted there without causing any disturbance.

Thus, we may assume that the aesthetic merits of most of the Islamic artefacts were accentuated thanks to their new

Christian setting, and that this might have directed the western eye to concentrate on the decorative nature of the Islamic objects.

### C. Mountings: a new Christian appearance

Almost all glass, rock crystal and other objects made of precious stones were mounted by Christian craftsmen in the West. The mounting, first and foremost, had a functional purpose, namely adjusting Islamic objects to suit their new Christian setting. For example, vessels which were intended to enshrine relics received covers, small bottles were mounted with hooked caps in order to be suspended as pendants, glass and rock crystal cups and beakers were elevated on long narrow stems in order to be used as chalices, and handles and spouts were mounted on rock crystal ewers for use as pitchers. On a few occasions rock crystal and ivory plaques were reassembled to form facets for relic caskets (cat. nos.74,135, fig.74) and some other objects were even mounted upside down to fulfil their new Christian functions (cat. nos.71,73, figs.71,73).

But concomitantly, the lavish decoration, which mainly consisted of gold and gilded silver filigree bands studded with precious stones, reduced the Islamic character of these objects. Heavily adorned mountings concealed much of these objects, mainly their bases, necks and mouths. As a result, the distinctively Islamic shapes were blurred (cat. nos.

12,13,26,39 ,65,74,90, figs.13,14,26,39,65,74). Moreover, some rock crystal objects were even recarved to form more stable bases (cat. no.8,16,17, figs.8,8a,17,17a,18), to reduce their lengths (cat. no.6, fig.6) or even to form a cup-like vessel out of the globular body of a bottle (cat. no.53, fig.53). Thus, the act of mounting, to some extent, might be regarded as an act of Christianization. At this level the emphasis was laid on the external appearance of the Islamic objects. The general aim was to give them a new Christian appearance, either by concealing or changing their 'unique' shapes or, as in many cases, by providing them with the typical lavish decoration which other precious objects in the treasury bore.

Royal emblems, well-known Christian scenes and even the Latin inscriptions which appear on numerous mountings also emphasise the new status of Islamic artefacts in the typical church treasury and clearly demonstrate their new Christian identity. A prominent example is that of the enamel plaque, bearing in its centre a medallion with the Lamb and the Alpha and Omega, which is mounted on the top of the cover of the casket from Burgos (cat. no.134) so as to create a new sacred setting for the Islamic ivory casket. Of no less visual power is the scene of the Ascension which was carved on the inner curve of the smooth body of the oliphant from Musée de Cluny, probably around the end of 11th century, when this oliphant was re-used as a relic container (cat.no.118, fig.109). Other examples are the small metal cross which is mounted on the

cut-glass pen box from Capua (cat. no.82, fig.83), or that which is affixed to the top of the rock crystal reliquary from Messina (cat. no.71, fig.71), the hexagonal base of the so-called "Hedwig Glass" beaker at Cracow (cat. no.83, fig.84) on which six Christian scenes are depicted, and the two silver plaques, bearing the arms of France, which are mounted on the inner rim of the basin of Louis IX (cat. no.259).

However, it is misleading to speak about the mountings only from one angle, namely that of 'Christianization'. For elaborate mountings emphasise the beauty of the material and the splendid workmanship of these objects. In fact, some rock crystals, Hedwig Glasses and enamel beakers which are elevated on precious stems to form chalices, look like 'mini-statues' exhibited on pedestals or columns (cat. nos. 47,61,83-85,89,92-94,98,99,101,103,104, figs.47,61,84-86,89,92-94,98,99,104). Some other transparent vessels of rock crystal and enamel glass, which serve as relic containers in monstrance reliquaries, are usually elevated on stems and framed by elaborate Gothic structures. The most evocative examples are the turret-reliquaries from Chicago, Emmerich and Münster (cat. nos.11,69,107, figs.12,69,107). In these reliquaries the Islamic artefacts are displayed as rare costly stones in the hearts of the reliquaries and are even protected by walls so as to emphasis their preciousness.

But generally speaking, mountings stress the beauty of

objects. Bands of gold on rock crystal vessels make the luminous quality of this material more noticeable. Precious stones mounted on any material attract and bounce back waves of light and thus enhance the attractiveness of such objects. The verses engraved on the gilded silver mounting of the so-called Eagle of Suger, an Egyptian porphyry flagon which was converted into the shape of an eagle by the monks of St.-Denis,<sup>8</sup> clearly illustrate this thought:

"This stone deserves to be enclosed in gems and gold. It was marble, but in these [settings] it is more precious than marble." <sup>9</sup>

In sum, while a mounting gave to an Islamic object a new Christian appearance and sometimes even concealed its shape, it emphasised the beauty of its material and its splendid workmanship.

#### D. Biblical associations - Islamic objects integrated into familiar Christian iconography

The objects discussed below illustrate a tendency in church treasures which aspires to associate Islamic objects with Biblical stories and myths. This was done either by integrating them into a Christian work of art so as to create a new visual unity of expression, or by associating them with specific objects which were said to have been used in famous Biblical events. In the first case Islamic vessels are totally combined with Christian artefacts, and the beholder is not able to recognize them at once. Like a word in a



sentence, they serve a partial function and play an important role in evoking well-known Christian representations or shapes.

A good example for such integration is the reliquary cross from Borghorst (cat. no.5, fig.5,5a). A small Fatimid rock crystal bottle is mounted onto the centre of the cross, below the Crucifixion scene which is depicted on its upper front. This recalls numerous representations of the Crucifixion in which a Communion cup is depicted at the feet of Christ hinting at the Holy Cup in which, according to legend, the Blood of Christ was collected during his agony. Moreover, since among the relics enshrined within this Fatimid bottle are fragments of *de ligno Domini* and *di spondia Domini*, Elbern has even suggested that the Fatimid bottle also symbolizes the vinegar jar in which Stephaton soaked the sponge.<sup>10</sup>

Another example is that of the rock crystal piece in the form of the *Agnus Dei* which is mounted on the Coconut Reliquary from Münster (cat. no.31, fig.31). This figure is an Islamic rock crystal lion the head of which was cut and reversely fixed in order to look like a lamb. In addition to that a banner surmounted with a cross was affixed to its back. Thus the crystal lion appears as the famous symbol of Christ.

The relic cross in the cathedral of Münster (cat. no.17, fig.18), which received an Islamic rock crystal base in the 13th or 14th century, probably as soon as the cross was

designed to be displayed on the altar of the cathedral of Münster, recalls a further well-known Christian scene. The dome-like rock crystal piece, which is of the type of the so-called 'molar-tooth' bottles, was partially recarved to render the base stable for a golden studded cross. The combination of the two evokes the memory of the *Crux Gemmata* erected by Theodosius II in 420 on the Rock of Golgotha which became a wide-spread symbol of the Triumphal Cross.<sup>11</sup> Hence, the Fatimid rock crystal cup and plate which are mounted on the pulpit of Henry II in the Palatine Chapel at Aachen (cat. nos.43,44, figs.43,44), are used as precious stones for decorating the huge *crux gemmata* which appears on the pulpit.

The Heavenly Jerusalem, which is described in the Book of Revelation as having walls of diamonds and streets of transparent glasses,<sup>12</sup> might be linked with the so-called "La Grotta della Vergine" (cat. no.73, fig.73). This semi-circular five-sided rock crystal piece represents a fantastic structure decorated with a row of pilasters with Ionic capitals. Thus, the figure of the Virgin gloriously appears in the centre of a fantastic transparent and radiant niche. Indeed a celestial meaning is attributed to the chalice-like reliquary from the church of Arnac-la-Poste (cat. no.4, fig.4). The seven rock crystal bottles mounted on the lid, among which is a Fatimid one, are traditionally said to evoke the representation of the Heavenly Jerusalem with its seven domes.<sup>13</sup>

A few Islamic cups and bowls, which were mounted so as to

form double-handled wine chalices for ecclesiastical use, might represent a desire to associate these vessels with the chalice used at the Last Supper (cat. nos.45,53,67[?],279, figs.45,53,67,143). This holy vessel was usually described as a double-handled chalice. Arculfus, who probably visited the Holy Sepulchre around mid 7th century, saw the chalice there, exhibited between the Basilica of Golgotha and the Martyrium.<sup>14</sup> He added that "the cup is of silver, holding the measure of French quart, and has two little handles placed on it, one on each side...".<sup>15</sup> However, liturgical double-handled chalices mainly appeared after the year 900 and are usually to be found at the feet of Christ in depictions of the Crucifixion,<sup>16</sup> probably to stress the connection between the Blood of Christ and the mystery of the Eucharist in the church.<sup>17</sup> Thus it is not surprising to discover that one of the above-mentioned vessels- the "Santo Cáliz" from Valencia (cat. no.279, fig.143)- is traditionally associated with the chalice used by Christ at the Last Supper.<sup>18</sup>

The so-called 'Alhambra Vase' from the National Museum in Stockholm, the long history of which Otto Kurz has traced,<sup>19</sup> was first recorded in 1512 by a Spanish friar as one of the vessels from Cana (cat. no.287, fig.150); at that time the vase was kept in a church in Famagusta. Numerous antique and probably Byzantine vessels which are mainly made out of marble, granite and other hard stones and are kept in church treasuries in the West, are regarded as the vessels of

Cana.<sup>20</sup> It seems that this was one of the most sought-after relics during the Middle Ages. However, for some reason the 'Alhambra Vase' from Stockholm was believed to be a Cana Vase at least until 1652, when it entered the collection of Queen Christina of Sweden.

A big group of objects on which Islamic artefacts are mounted, and which consists of turret-reliquaries, lidded cups and beakers, precious chalices and small pyxes and caskets, might hint at a significant tendency to associate these objects with the vessels in which the Magi offered the infant Christ gold, frankincense and myrrh. Though in early depictions the gifts are offered in the form of wreaths or in open bowls, around the 12th century some specific types of vessels appeared: pyxes or cups with knobbed lids and rectangular caskets with oblique covers.<sup>21</sup> The lidded pyxes and cups probably enshrined frankincense and myrrh, while gold was probably offered in the caskets. One of the early depictions of the Adoration of the Magi, in which the Kings are shown holding precious studded vessels of these types, is to be found on the chest-reliquary of the Magi- the so-called "Dreikönigenschrein"- at the cathedral of Cologne (datable 1181-1230).<sup>22</sup> Two of the Magi offered presents in lidded chalices and one Magus hold a small rectangular casket with an oblique cover (fig.164). The golden studded and lidded chalices recall the lidded-cup reliquaries from Arnac-la-Poste and Münster (cat. nos.4,24, figs.4,24), and the golden rectangular casket adorned with precious stones recalls some

casket-reliquaries, mainly those from the Hôtel de Cluny in Paris and Oviedo (cat. nos.74,270, figs.74,133). As a matter of fact, from the 13th century onwards the three Magi offer their presents in vessels which share their forms and decoration with medieval Christian reliquaries and liturgical vessels (fig.165).<sup>23</sup> Thus, the appearance of precious reliquaries and liturgical objects in the context of this specific iconographical theme suggests that such objects were associated with the lavish vessels of the Magi, at least from the 13th century onwards. Indeed the Magi are the first pilgrims who declared their faith in Christ. Therefore relics and precious eastern artefacts, given to church treasuries by medieval pious pilgrims, probably evoked the memory of the presents of the Magi and because of that might have been depicted in this Christian scene.

Though no medieval sources have yet been found to attest this speculation, the fact that, in some Romanesque stone reliefs, trumpet-blowing angels use ivory horns, indicates that some oliphants might have been associated with the trumpets of the Last Judgment (fig.163).<sup>24</sup>

The tendency to integrate Islamic objects into Biblical episodes suggests that the unfamiliar forms and decoration of these artefacts evoked the memory of Biblical and early Christian objects. The actual associations of some Islamic objects with the Holy Land- for they had been brought from the East by pilgrims, and that fact was not forgotten or

concealed- helped to bestow Biblical aura upon Islamic objects. This latter attitude indicates a misguided medieval historicism. But it would be difficult to answer whether and in which circumstances this was initially a deliberately thought-out action. Moreover, the Arabic inscriptions which decorate many of these Islamic artefacts were not erased or hidden behind mountings, even though they were hardly intelligible in the West. Indeed, the inscriptions which appear on numerous Islamic objects in church treasuries, mainly on ivory caskets, enamelled glass vessels and metalwork, were first and foremost appreciated from the aesthetic point of view. The manifold variations of the 'pseudo-Kufic' script, which seemingly appeared as a decorative motif in the West as early as ca.900, emphasises how the aesthetic value of these scripts attracted western observers.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that pseudo-Kufic inscriptions often occurred on Biblical figures and Christian saints suggests, according to Ettinghausen,<sup>26</sup> that Arabic letters may have been interpreted as ancient Hebrew script or as letters used in early Christianity.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, though the above-discussed Islamic artefacts are completely integrated with new Christian objects and are accordingly 'totally Christianized', it should be pointed out that they probably bestowed a sense of authenticity upon the relics enshrined within them or at least gave an eastern flavour to the reliquaries and the liturgical objects on which they were mounted.

E. Traditions: the former owner or donor

Though Latin traditions associated with Islamic objects in treasuries cannot be regarded as reliable sources, since they were usually invented in order to bestow an aura of importance and mystery upon an object, they illustrate popular beliefs about the history of these vessels. Moreover, these traditions reveal that apart from four objects, which are associated with Charlemagne and therefore are indirectly regarded as presents of Harun al-Rashid (cat. nos. 18, 99, 109, 124, figs. 19, 99), all other traditional accounts ignore the Islamic origin of these objects. These accounts can be divided into two main groups: traditions which tell about the former Christian owner; and those which focus on the donor. On the one hand, most of these objects had been in Christian secular hands, whether for short or long periods, before they reached church treasuries. Thus, it might be suggested that in the course of time the memory of their Islamic origin was dimmed. But on the other hand, it suggests that in the popular mind much emphasis was being placed on their assumed Christian history. Nevertheless, the result of this was that these Islamic objects were remembered principally for their Christian connections. Royal and noble figures appear as donors (cat. nos. 9, 19, 20, 22, 24, 29, figs. 9, 20, 22, 24, 29) or as former owners (cat. nos. 2, 34, 34a, 35, 45, 91, 105, 110, 119, 120, 228, 229, 259-61, figs. 2, 33-35, 45, 91, 105, 122-124). And some saints, like St. Jerome, St.

Hedwig, St. Orens, St. Hubert, St. Heribert and St. Raymond, were said to have owned these precious objects (cat. nos. 288, 83-95, 115, 116, 119, 242, figs. 151, 84-95).

Generally speaking, such associations conferred a distinguished genealogy upon objects. However, some of the traditions probably referred to the vessels allegedly used by saintly and other famous figures. The Beaker of St. Hedwig is associated with some Islamic cut glass beakers (cat. no. 83-95, figs. 84-95). The Oliphant of Roland is associated with the Islamic oliphant which was kept in the treasury of St. Denis (cat. no. 110). The hunting horn of St. Hubertus, patron saint of hunters, is associated with an Islamic horn at Le Puy-en-Velay (cat. no. 116). As for the so-called "Calice di San Girolamo" ("Chalice of St. Jerome", cat. no. 288, fig. 151), the semi-porcelain vessel which is decorated with birds within medallions, probably gave an 'eastern flavour' to the chalice assumed to have belonged to this saint.

To sum up, although popular traditions might be regarded as another way of Christianizing Islamic objects, the associations with famous names gave these objects prestige and thus made them more conspicuous than the other artefacts in the treasury.



1.E. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger, on the abbey church of St.-Denis and its art treasures* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1979), 79.

2.On the vase of Eleanor see mainly C.J. Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten aus dem Nahen Osten* (Berlin, 1929-30), vol.I, p.187, vol.II, pl.64,1; B. de Montesquiou-Fezensac and D. Gaborit-Chopin, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis* (Paris,1977), 63-4, pls. 47-8; *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis in the Time of Abbot Suger (1122-1151)*, exhibition catalogue, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (New York, 1981), fig.36; *Le trésor de Saint-Denis*, exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre (Paris, 1991), 168-71, cat. no.27; George T. Beech, "The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase, William IX of Aquitaine, and Muslim Spain," *Gesta* 32(1993), 3-10; *idem*, "The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase: its origin and history to the early twelfth century," *Ars Orientalis* 22(1993), 69-79.

3.Beech, "The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase, William IX of Aquitaine, and Muslim Spain," 3-10.

4.J. Braun, *Die Reliquiare des christlichen Kultes und ihre Entwicklung* (Freiburg, 1940), 2.

5.*Ibid.*

6.W. Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics, vol.II: Medieval Aesthetics* (Warsaw, 1970), 148.

7.M. Schapiro, "On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art," in: *idem, Romanesque Art* (New York, 1977), 7; this article was first published in *Art and Thought: Issued in Honor of Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. by K. Bharatha Iyer (London, 1947), 130-50. For the Latin version see Tatarkiewicz, *Medieval Aesthetics*, 174, n.13.

8.For the recent and comprehensive bibliography on this item see: *Le trésor de Saint-Denis*, cat.no.31.

9.Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 79.

10.V.H. Elbern, "Der eucharistische Kelch im frühen Mittelalter, Teil II: Ikonographie und Symbolik," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 18(1964), 147.

11.For a discussion of the cross of Theodosius see D. Barag, "Glass Pilgrim Vessels from Jerusalem. Part I," *Journal of Glass Studies* 12(1970), 39-41; A. Frolov, "Numismatique byzantine et archéologie des lieux saints au sujet d'une monnaie de l'impératrice Eudocie (Ve siècle)," *Mémorial Louis Petit* (Bucharest, 1948), 78-94. For a close parallel to the cross from Münster see the famous mosaic in the apse of the

church of Sta. Pudenziana in Rome, in which, most probably, the above-mentioned cross of Theodosius is depicted.

12. *Revelation*, 21:21.

13. *Les trésors des églises de France*, Musée des arts décoratifs, exhibition catalogue (Paris, 1965), 193.

14. J. R. Macpherson (trns.), *The Pilgrimage of Arculfus in the Holy Land*, Palestine Pilgrims Text Society (London, 1895), 11.

15. *Ibid.*

16. V.H. Elbern, "Der eucharistische Kelch in frühen Mittelalter," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 17(1963), 34.

17. Elbern, "Der eucharistische Kelch im frühen Mittelalter. Teil II," 139-47.

18. This chalice is depicted in two 16th-century paintings of Juan de Juarez (1573-1579): *El Cena* (the Last Supper) and *El Salvador* (the Saviour). Both paintings are exhibited in the Prado Museum, Madrid (nos. 845, 846).

19. O. Kurz, "The strange history of an Alhambra Vase," in: Otto Kurz, *The decorative arts of Europe and the Islamic East, Selected Studies* (London, 1977), 205-12.

20. F. de Mély, "Vases de Cana," *Monuments et Mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot* 10(1903), 145-70.

21. G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, I (London, 1971), 100-114.

22. For a discussion and an extensive bibliography see *Ornamenta Ecclesiae, Kunst und Künstler der Romanik in Köln*, exhibition catalogue, Schnütgen-Museum (Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle) in Cologne (Cologne, 1985), cat. no. E18.

23. Schiller, *Iconography*, 111, see mainly figs. 288-96.

24. See for example the trumpet-blowing angels on the tympanum of the church of Neuilly-en-Donjon (ca. 1130), on the arched vault of the tympanum of the church of St. Trophime in Arles (ca. 1170), on the tympanum of the cathedral of Autun (ca. 1125), on that of the church of Sainte-Foy in Conques (ca. 1140), or on that of the abbey at Beaulieu (ca. 1130-5). Most of these examples are illustrated in M.F. Hearn, *Romanesque Sculpture* (Oxford, 1981), figs. 134, 136, 137.

25.A.H. Christie, "The development of ornament from Arabic script- I," *The Burlington Magazine* 40(1922), 287-92 and part II: 41(1922), 34-41; K. Erdmann, "Arabische Schriftzeichen als Ornamente in der abendländischen Kunst des Mittelalters," *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz* 9(1953), 1-49; S.D.T. Spittle, "Cufic lettering in Christian Art," *The Archaeological Journal* 111(1954), 136-52; G.C. Miles, "Byzantium and the Arabs: Relations in Crete and the Aegean Area," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18(1964), 1-32, figs. 1-94; D. Aanavi, *Islamic Pseudo Inscriptions* (Ph.D., Columbia University, 1969), 35-45; R. Ettinghausen, "Kufesque in Byzantine Greece, the Latin West and the Muslim World," *Colloquium in Memory of George C. Miles* (New York, 1976), 28-47.

26.R. Ettinghausen, "Muslim decorative arts and painting: their Nature and Impact on the Medieval West," *Islam and the Medieval West*, ed. by S. Ferber (Binghamton, 1975), 14; see also S. Ferber, "Islamic art and the Medieval West: the state of the question," *ibid.*, 69.

27.R. Sellheim, "Die Madonna mit der Schahāda," *Festschrift Werner Caskel zum 70 Geburtstag* (Leiden, 1968), 308-15; Spittle, "Cufic lettering," 151-2; S. Auld, "Kuficising inscriptions in the work of Gentile da Fabriano," *Oriental Art*, new series 32, no.3(1986), 246-65.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PARTICULAR FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE  
ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAMIC OBJECTS IN MEDIEVAL CHURCH TREASURIES

A. Introduction

Around 1000 A.D the local Count, Raymond II of Rouergue (961-1010), presented the church of Ste. Foy in Conques with the booty of his victorious war against the infidels. The loot consisted of 21 engraved and gilded silver vases and of a silver saddle which was highly admired for its excellent workmanship. Despite the aesthetic appreciation expressed by the monks of this church, a great silver cross was made out of this booty not long after this gift. The saddle was totally incorporated (*salva integritate*), probably melted, into that cross, leaving only parts of its delicate filigree bands to be reused.<sup>1</sup>

A similar incident occurred in the 11th century, when the spoils of the war with the Saracens of Spain supplied the silver with which the altar of St.-Pierre in Cluny was overlaid.<sup>2</sup>

These accounts are probably symptomatic of the fate of many other Islamic artefacts which were melted, broken into pieces and then reused, or, in less destructive vein, were recarved or reshaped for the new function they were intended to serve. Close observation of studded medieval reliquaries reveals many pierced precious stones, all of which were presumably taken from necklaces, earrings, rings and other

jewels. The elliptical rock crystal stone with the engraved Arabic name, Muhammad ibn Musa, which is inlaid in the monstrance reliquary of the Holy Nail in Essen (cat.no.75, fig.75), the agate piece with the Kufic inscription which adorns the statue reliquary of Ste. Foy in Conques (cat.no.283), the broken rock crystal piece of the Fatimid bowl which was found in the reliquary casket of Ste. Foy (cat.no.55, fig.55), the Islamic sapphire sealstone, which was once mounted on an 11th-century Spanish book cover at the cathedral of Jaca (cat. no.277, fig.141), the red jasper talisman mounted on the book cover of St. Ansfridus at Utrecht (cat. no.280, fig.144), the agate oval stone bearing the Arabic word *baraka* (blessing) and mounted on the cover of a Gospel Book from Bamberg (cat. no.278, fig.142a), the Islamic ivory carved plaques mounted on one of the facets of the Spanish casket known as the "arqueta de las bienaventuranzas" (cat.no.135) and the gem stone with the *naskhi* inscription adorning the crown (probably of Frederick II) in the treasury of the cathedral of Palermo (cat. no.282, fig.146) are the remnants of Islamic objects which shared a similar fate to that of the silver saddle given to the church at Conques.

This important document from Conques stresses the fact that aesthetic admiration did not always help to preserve the 'artefact of the foe' intact. Moreover, it might be suggested that on some occasions, especially in areas of enduring conflict between Arabs and Christians, the act of melting the

artefacts of the foe expressed hostility.<sup>3</sup>

Yet many Islamic artefacts are kept in church treasuries in excellent condition. Judging from the elaborate mounting they received or from the important location in which they were exhibited, it is quite conceivable that other decisions and maybe even aesthetic approaches, free from the medieval scholastic and dogmatic conventions about the 'art of the foe', were often adopted within church treasuries.

In the first place, Islamic precious objects, like any other costly re-used items in church treasuries, were adapted to the West's own purposes. Moreover, according to Ettinghausen, one of the factors why Islamic objects were so popular in the West derives from the fact that "there was no specifically Muslim iconography or overt religious symbolism, which would have been offensive to the Christian mind."<sup>4</sup> But beside the functional demands that they answered, they had some other qualities which were no less important factors contributing to an acceptance in a medieval treasury. These factors are discussed here.

However, before embarking on the core of this discussion some introductory comments should help to define more precisely the aim of this chapter.

The first point relates to the fact that the scrutiny of precious Islamic objects by the medieval Christian clergy was the second time that such Islamic artefacts faced an aesthetic appraisal. It may sound absurd to speak of an aesthetic evaluation of artefacts which already long before

had gained high aesthetic appreciation in their own culture. The Islamic objects in medieval treasuries all belong to what one might term Islamic 'High Art'. This term is not only associated with the rare and expensive materials employed, like gold, silver, ivory, rock crystal and other precious stones, but also reflects the fact that the objects were made by the best craftsmen of their period, and the high social level at which they were commissioned; some of them were made for rulers or for high personages of the royal court. But despite that, it seems that sometimes a work of art and even the concept of beauty itself are deprived of their aesthetic immunity, especially when they are judged by zealous religious criteria.

The second point is linked to the lack of medieval information on this specific subject. There are fewer medieval documents than one might expect from which we are able to learn about the aesthetic attitude of the clergy towards Islamic objects. Though the detailed medieval inventories, which might have been the main source for this research, present precise material, they give information on the quantity and the substance of the objects, but lack any aesthetic criticism or even descriptive information; only when they come to deal with a highly important or very precious object, the name of the donor or the special new function of the object in the church are added.

The last point to be stressed is the fact that this chapter deals with the aesthetic attitude towards Islamic

artefacts in medieval treasuries alone. It should be made clear that outside the church domain, within what we may generally call the secular sphere, imported Islamic objects gained a high aesthetic esteem.

#### B. Precious materials and splendid workmanship

*Materiam superabat opus* ("The workmanship surpassed the material").

Abbot Suger (1081-1151).<sup>5</sup>

This well-known phrase of Abbot Suger, who actually quotes it from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, clearly exemplifies the separation Suger made between these two factors. But, although it seems that he classified the craftsmanship as being in a higher position than the material itself, the phrase attests how extremely aware he was of both. In fact the way he described the treasures of St. Denis suggests that he no less admired the beauty of the substance, being mainly attracted by the scarcity, the sense of the colossal and the effect of luminosity which they produced. Suger even succeeded in establishing an objective aesthetic pleasure as respectable by transforming it into a spiritual experience, or, as Eco explains, from aesthetic pleasure into mystical *joie de vivre*.<sup>6</sup>

As a matter of fact, as Meyer Schapiro has demonstrated, the Romanesque period should be regarded as a major turning point of aesthetic attitude in the medieval mind and of the



growth of sensibility to forms and colours.<sup>7</sup> Until then colours, forms, proportions and even numbers were to be explained within the framework of Christian morality, namely as having sacred meaning, and were listed under the appellation of Christian allegorical symbols.<sup>8</sup> Suger freed the aesthetic medieval mind of its puritanical, theological attitude to art. And even the verbal counter-assaults of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) should be understood, according to Schapiro, as illustrating the fear of St. Bernard himself, and the Cistercian order, of the increasing demand for a sensuous experience to art in the 12th century.<sup>9</sup>

As a result, from the 12th century on, one may say that many Islamic artefacts, though made by the hands of the infidel, did not normally suffer any artistic discrimination. The obvious aesthetic qualities of such Islamic art- its richness of materials and colours and its high quality of workmanship- were quite sufficient for its ready acceptance in a church treasury.

Suger's description of the rear panel of the main altar of St. Denis clearly illustrates the above-mentioned new approach:

"But the rear panel, of marvellous workmanship and lavish sumptuousness (for the barbarian artists were even more lavish than ours), we ennobled with chased relief work equally admirable for its form as for its material,..."<sup>10</sup>

As far as workmanship is concerned, the craft of Islamic metalwork was highly developed in the Middle Ages, when

compared to that of the West. The account of Theophilus the Presbyter, probably the 12th-century monk and metalworker Roger of Helmarshausen, illustrates the high regard in which Islamic metalwork was held:

"If you study it diligently [the *Schedula diversarum artium*] you will find here whatever kinds of the different pigments Byzantium possesses and their mixture; whatever Russia has learned in the working of enamels and variegation with niello; whatever Arab lands adorn with repoussé or casting or openwork; whatever decoration Italy applies to a variety of vessels in gold or by carving of gems and ivories; whatever France loves in the costly variegation of windows; and whatever skilful Germany applauds in the fine working of gold, silver, copper, and iron, and in wood and precious stones."<sup>11</sup>

A further piece of evidence of the skilful craftsmanship of Islamic metalwork is expressed by Geoffrey de Vinsauf who accompanied King Richard I at the end of the 12th century on a crusade to the Holy Land. In a feast given on Christmas Day (1190) by King Richard I in Mategriffin, between Palermo and Messina, de Vinsauf described the elaborate vessels which he saw. His description brings the 12th-century Islamic decorative style of Sicily to mind:

"...for the dishes and platters on which they were served were of no other material or substance than gold or silver, and all the vessels were of wrought gold or silver, with images of men and beasts worked thereon with the chisel or

the file."<sup>12</sup>

And the Franciscan friar Sigoli, who in 1384 travelled to the Holy Land, described in the same manner the Islamic merchandise in Damascus:

"Here also is made a great deal of brass basins and pitchers, and really they appear of gold, and then on the said basins and pitchers are made figures and foliage and other fine work in silver, so that it is a very beautiful thing to see."<sup>13</sup>

Indeed the love of the West for Islamic metalwork became obvious before the end of the 15th century, when a large number of possibly Islamic brass vessels chased and inlaid with silver appeared in Venice.<sup>14</sup> But this is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

Rock crystals, on the other hand, were highly admired from the earlier medieval time in the West. And though the material itself was to be found also in the Alps, the carving of rock crystal was unknown in Latin Europe until the late 12th century.<sup>15</sup> This might explain the great appeal that Islamic rock crystal vessels had in the medieval West. In fact the majority of Islamic rock crystals survived to the present because they were usually employed as relic containers in European church treasuries.

Delicate enamelled glass vessels were also accepted in church treasuries. Their colourful decoration and the enamelling technique, hardly known in medieval Europe, made them exotic and rare items in the West.

The ivory carving industry in medieval western Europe reached a high degree of technical skill. Nonetheless, the numerous Islamic ivories in European church treasuries suggest that the material itself was highly sought after in a religious context. In the Litany and other liturgical prayers ivory is a synonym for the chastity of the Virgin: *Ebur candens castitatis, turris eburnea* ("ivory shining with chastity, tower of ivory").

As a matter of fact, apart from two undecorated bronze vessels (cat. nos.272,273, figs.135,137), Islamic artefacts in church treasuries are usually made of such precious materials as ivory, silver, glass, rock crystal and other precious stones. Some Islamic artefacts of inexpensive materials were also accepted in church treasuries. But unless these objects were evidently of a superior technical skill, they were not accepted for use as ecclesiastic vessels. Therefore these were either brass vessels inlaid with silver or gold, or richly decorated and glazed ceramics. However, to the best of my knowledge, there is not even one Islamic gold vessel in church treasuries in the Latin West, and there are only a few silver ones, mainly in Spanish church treasuries. Therefore, one may suspect that gold and silver objects were normally melted down in the West.<sup>16</sup>

The love for precious materials expressed in medieval church treasuries should not be understood only as the search for the rich and the expensive- the symbols of power and glory- but also, as Heckscher has pointed out, as the search

for permanent eternal form.<sup>17</sup> Of course precious materials had some other qualities praised in the church domain. These were mainly their radiance and even their healing virtues. But these are discussed below.

It is difficult to explain why the sensitivity for superb craftsmanship emerged mainly in the 12th century. However, the western awareness of the high degree of technical skill of Islamic artefacts, far surpassing anything possible in the West, was a further reason, and maybe the most important one as far as their impact is concerned, for their ready acceptance in churches.

### C. Radiant and translucent rock crystal

The widespread medieval conception about rock crystal claimed that this stone was congealed water petrified in the course of a long and continuous natural process.<sup>18</sup> The Latin name *crystallum* - clear ice- derives from Greek where the relevant word means "to congeal with frost". Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) says that rock crystal is hardened by intense cold and therefore "this mineral is found only where the winter snows freeze solid and it is undoubtedly a kind of ice, which is the reason for the Greek term *krystallos*."<sup>19</sup> This belief was adopted by medieval Muslims as well. For instance the 11th-century scholar al-Bīrūnī explained the word crystal (*mahā* or *mihā*) as akin to water (*al-mā*), since both are pure and clear.<sup>20</sup> As for its origin, he accepted the idea of

congealed water and added that the existence of the leaves or ears (of grain) in rock crystal bowls, like the one he had, was a proof of the earlier fluid state of the stone.<sup>21</sup>

The dominant impression conveyed by the stone is one of water. But its supreme clarity was the reason behind medieval spiritual interpretations which tend to associate the mineral with paradise, the source of life and celestial scenes.

In Genesis (2:10-12) it is mentioned in connection with the river Pishon- one of the four rivers of Eden- which encircles the land of Havilah where gold, onyx and bdellium (crystal, כִּרְלִים) are found. In the Book of Revelation (22:1) crystal is used to describe the river of life issuing from the throne of God. And in one of the poems of the 4th-century poet Lactantius, the Fountain of Life in the "far-off land" is described as follows: "...there is a fountain in the midst, the fountain of life they call it, crystal clear, gently flowing, rich in its sweet waters".<sup>22</sup>

Similar views were expressed in medieval Islam. The Arabic name of the stone (*mahā*) which encompasses the words *al-mā* (water) and *al-hawā* (air) hints at the two elements of life embodied in the stone.<sup>23</sup> Two verses of Sura 37 (46-7), which describe the destiny of believers in paradise, were cited by al-Bīrūnī in connection with rock crystal; "...They shall be served with a goblet filled at a gushing fountain, white, and delicious to those who drink it. It will neither dull their senses nor befuddle their senses." Al-Bīrūnī is probably referring to the Arabic term *bayḍā'* (white or radiant), which

appears in these verses, as hinting at crystal. Hence in one of the versions of the Persian passion plays (*ta`ziya*) performed during the 'Āshūrā' festivities, al-Husain will be welcomed in paradise by his father `Alī who will offer him a crystal cup full of cool water from one of the rivers of paradise, the river Kauthar.<sup>24</sup> However, not only paradisiac water is offered in a crystal cup. Ja`far al-Sādiq (699-765) recommends enshrining the dry-powder elixir (*al-iksīr*), the secret life-giving mixture, in a crystal or a gold capsule.<sup>25</sup>

These medieval associations referring to rock crystal suggest that it was used in a Christian setting not only for the reason that it was rare in the West nor because it provided a translucent vessel for enshrining a relic but also for the paradisiac meaning it was credited with. Of course its other characteristics were also explained in a Christian symbolic way. For example, St. Augustine (354-430) said that the hardening of rock crystal from water to petrified ice symbolizes the transformation from bad to good. St. Jerome (342-420) and Gregory the Great (540-604?) said that rock crystal is a symbol for purity and a representative of the vision of Christ.<sup>26</sup> And Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) said that *claritas* (clarity), namely all translucent colours, is the third demand for beauty. However, clarity in the neo-Platonic philosophy of the Middle Ages was first and foremost regarded as the emanation of the divine nature.<sup>27</sup>

But the ability of rock crystal to reflect light

magnificently was the reason why in late medieval Christian theology rock crystal was mainly connected with light symbolism.<sup>28</sup> Its radiance was associated with Apocalyptic descriptions of the Heavenly Jerusalem, which is described as being studded with precious stones and having twelve rock crystal gates.<sup>29</sup> Moreover in medieval treatises on minerals, the twelve precious stones of the breastplate of the Jewish High Priest were identified with the twelve radiant gems of Heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup> But broadly speaking, any precious stone and noble metal was praised since it "brings into light" the existence of the Holy Spirit and develops a metaphysical sensation in the beholder's mind. The words of Abbot Suger well illustrate these ideas:

"Thus, when- out of my delight in the beauty of the house of God- the loveliness of the many-colored gems has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogical manner."<sup>31</sup>

The connection between rock crystal and celestial scene is well expressed in the so-called "La Grotta della Vergine" from the treasury of San Marco (cat. no.73, fig.73) or in the



chalice-like reliquary from the church of Arnac-la-Poste which is traditionally associated with the Heavenly Jerusalem (cat. no.4, fig.4). Indeed any tower-like reliquary, on which a cylindrical rock crystal vessel is mounted and usually protected by a Gothic structure, looks like a radiant domed circular building and might have evoked the memory of the Heavenly Jerusalem (see for instance cat. no.69, fig.69). Moreover, it seems quite possible that the Fatimid rock crystal pieces mounted on the bases of the studded crosses of Münster and Essen (cat. nos.16,17,37, figs.17,17a,18) not only evoked the memory of the apocalyptic Triumphal Cross but also hinted at the legendary Fountain of Life located under the Cross.<sup>32</sup>

Some rock crystal vessels were used as containers for the Holy Blood. The most well known among them are the heart-shaped pendant from Weissenau (cat. no.64, fig.64) and the cylindrical bottle from the treasury of San Marco- the so-called "Reliquario del Sangue miraculoso" (cat. no.47, fig.47). Other rock crystals are the presently lost pendant from the Chenou collection (cat. no.65, fig.65) which enshrined the Holy Blood, and some other important relics, such as a small cylindrical bottle from Bad Gandersheim (cat. no.2, fig.2) which is traditionally considered to hold holy blood, and a rock crystal chessman (king or queen) which serves as a container for the blood of St. Paul (cat. no.24, fig.24).

The Holy Blood was the most precious and expensive substance among relics. It was traditionally said to have been collected by Joseph of Arimathaea who caught the blood from Christ's wound in the cup of the Last Supper. According to Arculfus who probably visited the Holy Sepulchre around mid 7th century, this cup was exhibited there.<sup>33</sup> And extracts from the book of Peter the Deacon (1137) tell that during the Crusade period the Holy Blood was preserved in a golden lamp hung in the middle of the Dome of the Rock.<sup>34</sup> But drops of the Holy Blood were also collected later. In 320 the True Cross preserved in Constantinople was miraculously bleeding, after some Jews had violated it with a knife.<sup>35</sup> In the late Middle Ages a similar legend was told about a cross from Beirut which was desecrated by a Jew or a Saracen.<sup>36</sup> According to the 14th-century Franciscan pilgrim Sigoli, the blood collected in Beirut was bought by a nobleman from Bruges, who carried it with him to Venice. Half of this precious liquid was presented to the church of San Marco, and the rest was brought by him to the church of St. Barbara or that of St. Anastasia in Bruges.<sup>37</sup> Since Sigoli tells us that this Holy Blood was shown in Venice twice a year, on the Ascension and on Good Friday,<sup>38</sup> it might be suggested that the above-mentioned "Reliquario del Sangue miraculoso" from San Marco was associated with this legend.

The fact that the Holy Blood was usually kept in rock crystal vessels can be partially explained by some writings of St. Thomas Aquinas (datable to 1267). He says that only

rock crystal, translucent cloisonné enamels on gold, and gold itself are worthy to serve as vessels for the Holy Blood.<sup>39</sup> But it seems that the combination between the Holy Blood and rock crystal had further meaning. This mainly derived from the unique ability of this mineral to absorb light without damaging the rays.

Though a connection between rock crystal and blood is mentioned by Theophilus- the 12th-century metalworker Roger of Helmarshausen- in his description of the carving process applied to the stone,<sup>40</sup> the medieval idea of the mystery of the Incarnation was probably associated with this mineral. The Incarnation was explained as a passage of light through glass or precious stone. Thus the womb of the Virgin was compared to a precious stone or to pure and undamaged glass.<sup>41</sup> For example, St. Bernard said:

"Just as the brilliance of the sun fills and penetrates a glass window without damaging it, and pierced its solid form with imperceptible subtlety, neither hurting it when entering nor destroying it when emerging: thus the word of God, the splendor of the Father, entered the virgin chamber and then came forth from the closed womb."<sup>42</sup>

And in the Incarnation, envisaged by St. Bridget, Christ had said:

"I have assumed the flesh without sin and lust, entering the womb of the virgin just as the sun passes through a precious stone. For as the sun, penetrating a glass window, does not damage it, the virginity of the Virgin is not

spoiled by my assumption of human form."<sup>43</sup>

This piece of evidence suggests that the Holy Blood- the precious relic of Christ in the flesh- enshrined in a womb-like rock crystal vessel, was an allegory for the mysterious process of the Incarnation. These precious reliquaries might also have been believed to have a magic power of giving long life and redemption to the believer. The *Lohengrinlied*, a 14th-century song on the Holy Blood reliquary of Weissenau, demonstrates this idea. It says:

"At Ravensburg there is a convent.

It is called Aue (meadow).

There the Blood (of Christ)

can be seen through a crystal.

He who cannot see it (so the saying goes)

Will be overcome by death within a year."<sup>44</sup>

In sum, it seems that the preference for Fatimid rock crystals above other precious stones in medieval reliquaries was rooted not only in the transparency of the stone, which fulfilled at the same time the need for protection and the representation of the sacred object, but also in its other merits. The latter were allegorically interpreted. The assumption that the stone's nature is of congealed water might have been the reason for its use as a paradisiac symbol, mainly that of the Water of Life. Its purity was identified with the virtue of the Virgin. Its ability to absorb and reflect light magnificently found a spiritual

explanation referring to the Incarnation. The radiance of the stone evoked the memory of apocalyptic scenes. Therefore this mineral probably provided the medieval artist with a concrete form for verbal descriptions of celestial scenes.

D. The exotic aspects; magic; and the power to work good

On his way to Cathay around the end of the 13th century, Marco Polo (1254-1324) tells us of the mysterious fabric called salamander (the fabric was none other than asbestos), which attracted his curiosity. He says that the fabric "is thrown into the fire and left there for a while, and it comes out as white as snow". And he ends this account with the following interesting information: "Let me tell you finally that one of these cloths is now in Rome; it was sent to the Pope by the Great Khan as a valuable gift, and for this reason the sacred napkin of our lord Jesus Christ was wrapped in it."<sup>45</sup>

This document illustrates how a 'marvel of nature' was also accepted in a church collection and how it even functioned in a sacred context. The medieval approach to a 'marvel of nature' should be above all rooted in the inability of the medieval mind to differentiate between nature and art. But it seems that the inclination to bestow upon a curious object aesthetic merits and to assimilate the concept of beauty with the strange and the unfamiliar were already expressed by St. Bernard as early as the 12th

century. His famous phrase *mira quaedam deformis formositas ac formosa deformitas* ("that marvellous deformed beauty, that beautiful deformity")<sup>46</sup> hints at the assimilation he made between the beautiful and the strange. In fact, this confusion exists even at present in regard to the term 'exotic', since it is actually used as a synonym for anything marvellous and strange and can be considered as beautiful without being judged by any aesthetic criteria.

Many odd and eccentric objects were collected and displayed in medieval church treasuries. These included horns of the mythical unicorn (in fact narwhal tusks), ostrich eggs, coconuts, tortoiseshells, and even exotic plants, fruits and perfumes.

Some Islamic artefacts were probably also accepted as 'marvels of nature'. In the first place appear the so-called "Saracenic oliphants" (cat. nos.109-118). These carved elephant tusks attracted the western eye not only because of their elegant curved form and the beauty of their substance but also because they were the most powerful parts of an exotic animal.<sup>47</sup> Their decoration, which consists of fabulous and wild animals, intensified their exotic appearance.

Metal figures of demonic animals like the huge griffin of Pisa (cat. no.263, fig.126) or the metal falcon from the church of San Frediano in Lucca (cat. no.265, fig.128) were probably also regarded as marvellous and even magical

statues. The griffin was a famous legendary animal in the medieval West. In Hellenistic antiquity, these animals were the sacred creatures which drew the chariot of Apollo. But in the late Middle Ages, they were also known as the fabulous animals guarding the gold of India or as the mighty birds which can carry an elephant through the air.<sup>48</sup> In fact, the numerous antelope horns collected in medieval church treasuries were shown to the public as griffin claws.<sup>49</sup> The falcon from Lucca which was at the beginning of this century placed on the summit of the façade of the church, was said to produce a high-pitched sound as soon as wind was blowing. The terrifying appearance of the falcon and its high-pitched sound probably caused the public to regard it as a magical statue.

Hence, many other Islamic artefacts decorated with legendary animals, or even with interlaced motifs and Arabic inscriptions, which normally could not have been deciphered by a western eye, might also have been regarded as exotic. Islamic textiles first and foremost belong to this category. But other objects regarded as exotic were probably the 'Hedwig Glasses' and enamelled glass beakers and painted ivories decorated with mighty animals.

The exotic appearance of Islamic artefacts in the West probably contributed to their being associated with some elements of magic. This might be the reason why the so-called 'Hedwig Glasses' were associated with the legendary cup of Saint Hedwig (born 1174) in which water miraculously changed

into wine (cat. nos.83-95, figs.84-95). But it might also explain the association of the Alhambra Vase in Stockholm (cat. no.287, fig.150) with the miraculous story of the Marriage at Cana. Other examples are the agate chalice from Valencia (cat. no.279, fig.143) associated with the Holy Grail, and the chalice at Louvain (cat. no.37a, fig.37) associated with the miracle of the host, which changed into flesh.

As mentioned in Chapter Five, it seems possible that some oliphants were associated with the magic sound of the two trumpets of Last Judgment.

The fragility of glass vessels was probably the reason why some of them were regarded as amulets ensuring health and long life as long as they remained intact. Perhaps the most celebrated among them is the Luck of Edenhall (cat. no.100, fig.100) which was associated with the fate of the house of the Musgraves of Edenhall. A similar legend was told about two cut glass beakers, known also as 'Hedwig Glasses' (cat. nos.87,88, fig.88), which were regarded as amulets of the Asseburg Family. The cut glass beaker at Coburg (cat. no.91, fig.91) was also regarded as an amulet, since a tradition tells that it ensured delivery to the house of Wettin.

The association of some Islamic objects with healing virtues is quite understandable. Having been used as containers for relics, they were regarded as relics of second degree, namely as having been consecrated by their sheer proximity to the sacred substance. However, some Islamic



carved precious stones, which were mounted on Christian book covers, might have been chosen for this purpose for the healing and even for the magical power they were believed to possess.<sup>50</sup> Like many other antique and medieval gems mounted on book covers, these Islamic precious stones were also associated with medieval ideas referring to light symbolism. But the fact that some of them were seals and talismans suggests that the indecipherability of their minute Arabic inscriptions by medieval western man brought about a situation in which they were also regarded as possessing magical powers.

The small oval-shaped agate bearing the Kufic inscription *baraka* ("blessing") provides a typical illustration of this point (cat. no.278, figs.142,142a). The fact that it is mounted onto the centre of a cross, which adorns the book cover of the Gospel Book from Bamberg, suggests that the stone was regarded as a talisman. But the sapphire sealstone which was once mounted on a Spanish book cover from the cathedral of Jaca (cat. no.277, fig.141), the red jasper mounted on the book cover of St. Ansfridus in the cathedral of Utrecht (cat. no.280, fig.144), and the chalcedony plate on the book cover of the "Bamberg Apocalypse" (cat. no.281, fig.145) might have been regarded also in the West as magical and talismanic stones, and were perhaps mounted on religious book covers for this reason in particular.

It should be noted that not only translucent and radiant stones were mounted on book covers but also opaque stones

like onyx and agate. In fact, excluding rock crystals, agates frequently appear among the Islamic precious stones used in a Christian setting; jasper and chalcedony were probably also regarded as different types of agate.<sup>51</sup> This seems quite interesting because the magical lore associated with agate tells that it has the power of making a man to be loved by man and God alike.<sup>52</sup>

In sum, the medieval concepts which dictated or permitted the acceptance of Islamic artefacts into the medieval church treasuries of the Latin West mainly referred to the rare, precious materials or to the splendid workmanship of the objects. The radiance or the transparency of some objects, especially those made of precious stones, were immediately associated with Christian ideas about light. However some less orthodox aspects referring to the exotic or the magical, and even some folklore traditions about the healing virtues of precious stones, were also taken into account. Hence, if some of the Biblical associations assigned to Islamic objects were known in the West even before the objects reached medieval treasuries, this should be regarded then as a further factor favouring their acceptance.

1. Cited by M. Schapiro, "On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art", *Romanesque Art* (New York, 1977), 17. The same account is cited by R.A. Jairazhboy, *Oriental Influences in Western Art* (Bombay, 1965), 38.
2. M.-M. Gauthier, *Highways of the Faith. Relics and Reliquaries from Jerusalem to Compostela* (London, 1986), 32.
3. Melting a golden cross and then trampling on it was a familiar procedure for Christians who, according to Ibn Jubayr (1185), renounced the Christian religion and gave allegiance to the faith of Islam. See Abu 'l-Husayn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, ed. by William Wright (Leyden, 1907), 338; for the English translation see R.J.C. Broadhurst, *The travels of Ibn Jubayr* (London, 1952), 355.
4. R. Ettinghausen, "Muslim decorative arts and painting: their Nature and Impact on the Medieval West," in Stanley Ferber (ed.), *Islam and the Medieval West*, exhibition catalogue at the Art Gallery of the State University of New York at Binghamton (Binghamton, 1975), 14.
5. E. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger, on the abbey church of St.-Denis and its art treasures* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1979), 62-3.
6. U. Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* (New Haven and London, 1986), 14-5. Eco refers to the frequently-cited paragraph of Suger, see Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 63-5 (the English translation of Panofsky is cited below, in the discussion on the radiance of rock crystal).
7. M. Schapiro, "On the Aesthetic Attitude," 1-27.
8. On medieval aesthetics see mainly B. Bosanquet, *A History of Aesthetics* (repr. London, 1949), 120-50; K. Everett Gilbert and H. Kuhn, *A History of Esthetics* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1953), 119-61; Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*; C. Barret, "Medieval art criticism," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 5(1965), 25-36; W. Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics, vol.II: Medieval Aesthetics* (Warsaw, 1970).
9. Schapiro, "On the Aesthetic Attitude," 6-10.
10. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 61.
11. Theophilus, *On Divers Arts*, trans. from the Latin by J.G. Hawthorne and C. Stanley Smith (New York, 1979), 13.
12. G. de Vinsauf, *Itinerary of Richards I and others to the Holy Land (Chronicles of the Crusades [London, 1848])*, 175.

13.T. Bellorini and E. Hoade, *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384 by Frescobaldi, Gucci and Sigoli* (Jerusalem, 1948), 182.

14.H. Huth, *Lacquer of the West* (Chicago, 1970); *idem*, "Sarazenen in Venedig?" *Festschrift für Heinz Landendorf* (Cologne, 1970), 58-68; R. Ward, "Metallarbeiten der mamluken-Zeit, hergestellt für den Export nach Europa," in: *Europa und der Orient* (Berlin, 1989), 202-9.

15. See Chapter Three, note 20.

16. For a discussion, see A.M. Watson, "Back to Gold--and Silver," *The Economic History Review*, second series 20(1967), 1-34.

17.W.S. Heckscher, "Relics of pagan antiquity in medieval settings," *Journal of Warburg Institute* 1(1938), 210.

18. See "crystal", *The Oxford English Dictionary* IV(Oxford, 1989), 97; *EI2*, s.v. "Billawr".

19. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History: A Selection*, trans. by J.F. Healy (London, 1991), 367.

20.P. Kahle, "Bergkristall, Glas und Glasflüsse nach dem Steinbuch von el-Beruni," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 90(1936), 325.

21. *Ibid.*, 335, 341-2.

22. Cited by P.A. Underwood, "The Fountain of Life in Manuscripts of the Gospels," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5(1950), 48.

23. Kahle, "Bergkristall," 326.

24. Cited by D.S. Rice, "Two unusual Mamluk metal works," *Bulletin of the School of African and Oriental Studies* 20(1957), 493.

25. J. Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten II, Ġa`far al-Sādiq, der sechste Imam* (Heidelberg, 1924), 118.

26. U. Henze, "Edelsteinallegorese im Lichte mittelalterlicher Bild- und Reliquienverehrung," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 54(1991), 433.

27. Heckscher, "Relics of pagan antiquity," 212.

28. The stone was also called by Pliny the Elder the Rainbow Stone, since its faceted surface breaks light into the different colours of the rainbow. See his *Natural History*,

373. See also J. Baermann, "Abhandlung über das Licht von Ibn al-Haitam," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 36(1882), 195-237.

29. Henze, "Edelsteinallegorese," especially pp.444-5.

30. For medieval sources on this topic see J. Evans and Mary S. Serjeanston, *English Mediaeval Lapidaries* (London, 1933).

31. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 63-5; see also the discussion of P. Kidson, "Panofsky, Suger and St Denis," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50(1987), 1-17.

32. See mainly P.A. Underwood, "The Fountain of Life," 96.

33. J.R. Macpherson (trans.), *The Pilgrimage of Arculfus in the Holy Land*, Palestine Pilgrims Text Society (London, 1895), 11.

34. J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099-1185* (London, 1988), 213.

35. Gauthier, *Highways of the Faith*, 115.

36. T. Bellorini and E. Hoade (trans.), *Fra Niccolo of Poggibonsi, Libro d'Oltamare or a Voyage beyond the Seas* (Jerusalem, 1945), 82; *idem, Visit to the Holy Places*, 148.

37. Bellorini and Hoade, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 194.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Cited by M.-M. Gauthier, *Highways of the Faith*, 115.

40. "If you want to carve a piece of rock crystal, take a two- or three- year-old goat and bind its feet together and cut a hole between its breast and stomach, in the place where the heart is, and put the crystal in there, so that it lies in its blood until it is hot. At once take it out and engrave whatever you want on it, while this heat lasts. When it begins to cool and become hard, put it back in the goat's blood, take it out again when it is hot, and engrave it. Keep on doing so until you finish the carving. Finally, heat it again, take it out and rub it with a woolen cloth so that you may render it brilliant with the same blood." See Theophilus, *On Divers Arts*, 189-90.

41. M. Meiss, "Light as Form and Symbol in some Fifteenth-century paintings," *The Art Bulletin* 27(1945), especially 175-78.

42. *Ibid.*, 176.

43. *Ibid.*, 177.

44. The translation by K. Erdmann, "The 'Sacred Blood' of Weissenau," *The Burlington Magazine* 95(1953), 300.

45. Marco Polo, *The Travels*, trans. by R. Latham (London, 1958), 89-91.

46. Schapiro, "On the Aesthetic Attitude," 8.

47. For a summary discussion about the medieval western view of the elephant, see H. Swarzenski, "Two Oliphants in the Museum," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston* 60(1962), 28-30; see also A. de Gubernatis, *Zoological Mythology* (London, 1872), vol. II, pp. 91-5.

48. *Ibid.*, 204-5; for the association of the griffin with the mighty bird which carries an elephant through the air see Marco Polo, *The Travels*, 300-1; see also R. Wittkower, "'Roc': an Eastern Prodigy in a Dutch Engraving," in *idem*, *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (London, 1977), 94-6.

49. The famous 'claw of a griffin' is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (inv. no. 28). See *Le trésor de Saint-Denis*, exhibition catalogue of the Musée du Louvre (Paris, 1991), cat. no. 41; see also H. Kohlhaussen, *Nürnberger Goldschmiedekunst des Mittelalters und der Dürerzeit 1240 bis 1540* (Berlin, 1968), 138-41.

50. For this topic see Evans and Serjeantson, *English Mediaeval Lapidaries*; J. Evans, *Magical Jewels of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance particularly in England* (Oxford, 1922), especially pp. 30-50; G.F. Kunz, *The Magic of Jewels and Charms* (London, 1915), especially pp. 118-60; U.T. Holmes, "Mediaeval Gem Stones," *Speculum* 9(1934), 195-204.

51. Holmes, "Mediaeval Gem Stones," 201.

52. Evans and Serjeantson, *English Mediaeval Lapidaries*, 129.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: EXHIBITION OF ISLAMIC ARTEFACTS IN CHURCH TREASURIES

### A. The church treasury - a medieval museum?

While the two previous chapters discuss the different methods of Christianization and the factors which paved the way for the acceptance of Islamic objects into medieval church treasuries, their being displayed among highly-valued Christian artefacts had a major effect. The church, like the museum nowadays, bestowed final aesthetic approval upon them.

This chapter will examine the 'museum-related' aspects of medieval church life, focusing on the Islamic objects.

Though the origins of museums are deeply rooted in the 16th-century cabinets of curiosities,<sup>1</sup> they go far beyond the latter and should indeed be traced far back into the past—whether to the Greek temple, where trophies of war and marble statues demonstrated to visitors historical events and ideas of beauty respectively, or to the giant collection of the Alexandrian library.

Already in 1908, Julius von Schlosser had drawn an imaginative line linking the *geistliche* and *weltliche Schatzkammern* (church and secular treasuries) with the 15th- and 16th-century *Kunst-* and *Wunderkammern* (the cabinets of art and curiosities) and with modern museums.<sup>2</sup> For him the medieval church was a kind of museum in which objects

enshrining national collective memories of past and present were collected.<sup>3</sup>

Though they were kept behind the locked doors of the sacristy, on certain occasions special items of the church treasury were taken out and presented to the gaze of the faithful. We may consider these events as a kind of 'temporary exhibition'.

For example, we happen to know that precious objects of the treasury of San Marco were exhibited to the public on different occasions in the Square of San Marco.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the religious processions in which crosses and reliquaries were ostentatiously carried demonstrate the most obvious example of these 'temporary exhibitions'. These 'exhibitions' occurred on specific occasions like the commemorative day of the local saint, the consecration day of the church and various specific religious ceremonies. The natural superb luminosity of Islamic rock crystal bottles, mounted on the processional crosses of Münster (cat. no.17, fig.18), Essen (cat.no.16, figs.17,17a), St. Severin (cat. no.14, figs.15,15a) and Borghorst (cat. no.5, fig.5), probably caught the eyes of the faithful.

Of no less impact are the Islamic glass and rock crystal vessels in which relics were enshrined. The ostensory reliquary of the Miraculous Blood in the Treasury of San Marco (cat. no.47, fig.47) was hung with the help of a long silver chain around the neck of the archdeacon of San Marco,



who blessed the crowd during the ceremony on Good Friday.<sup>5</sup> The Fatimid rock crystal bottle, enshrining the most valuable relic and decorated with carving of arabesque-like motifs and Kufic script, probably played an important role during the blessing itself. The impression which this reliquary left on viewers might have found an echo on the sculpture in the National Museum (Bargello) in Florence, made by an artist from the circle of Nicola Pisano (the second half of the 13th century); among the sculptured figures is a priest holding a densely-decorated Islamic globular bottle, probably a metal one, with a high neck and a spout (fig.166).<sup>6</sup>

The reliquary of the 'Sacred Blood' of Weissenau (cat. no.64, fig.64) already in the late 13th century attracted many pilgrims who came to see this precious relic "through a crystal", as it was described in the 14th-century *Lohengrinlied*.<sup>7</sup> In fact it is a splendid rock crystal bottle in the form of two stylized birds of prey which was probably one of the superb rock crystal objects in the Fatimid court.

A 14th-century glass beaker with gold enamel decoration (cat. no.106, fig.106) was, according to tradition, the beaker of St. Hedwig and was used every year during the ceremonial feast of that saint in a convent in Breslau.<sup>8</sup>

The Syrian(?) enamel beaker from Douai (cat. no.98, fig.98) was donated to the cathedral of this city at the beginning of the 14th century under the condition that once a year the priests should drink out of it in memory of its donor, Marguerite Mallot.

Though the first record about the so-called "Baptistère de St. Louis" (cat. no.259, fig.122) is dated to 1742, we may assume that it had already long served for the baptismal ceremonies of the newly-born kings of France.<sup>9</sup>

The oliphants, whether Byzantine or 'Saracen', which were kept in the treasuries, beside being used as relic containers, served several functions on specific occasions. On the mourning days of the Passion, mainly on the last three days before Good Friday, the monks refrained from using bells and instead blew oliphants;<sup>10</sup> such was the function of the 'Saracen' oliphant, the so-called horn of St. Orens from Auch (cat. no.115),<sup>11</sup> and of the horns from the Guelph Treasure, the so-called 'St. Blasius' Horns' which were kept in Brunswick.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, on Maundy Thursday sacred oil was carried in horns and then used for confirmation and unction.<sup>13</sup>

Other precious vessels were taken out of the sacristy during sacraments. According to Abbot Suger, the pear-shaped rock crystal vessel, probably a Sasanian or early Islamic object, was "...offered most affectionately to the Divine Table for libation".<sup>14</sup> He added that another vessel, probably the Fatimid pear-shaped ewer from the Louvre (cat. no.60, fig.60), served the same function, and that "Also we [the monks of St.-Denis] deposited in the same place the little crystal vases which we had assigned to the daily service in our [private] chapel."<sup>15</sup>

We may assume that the Islamic rock crystal and glass vessels in the treasury of San Marco were used during the sacraments as libation vessels or as receptacles to hold water or wine (cat. nos. 57, 58, 42, 67, 77, 78, 80, figs. 57, 58, 67, 77, 78, 80). Among them the green glass bowl (cat. no. 78, fig. 78) was used during the Eucharist, as the Greek inscription on the mounting of its rim suggests.

Ivory caskets were chiefly chosen as relic containers, but some of them served as boxes for the Host. Thus they were shown to the public during the Eucharist. The *naskhi* inscription on the edge of the lid of the Nasrid casket from Palencia (cat. no. 164) states, according to one interpretation, that the casket was made to contain the consecrated Host (*ramīz al-bīd*).<sup>16</sup> The cylindrical box with a conical lid which was made in the 8th century in Aden and which is kept in the church of St. Gereon in Cologne (cat. no. 125), the cylindrical box with a flat lid from St. Servatius in Maastricht (cat. no. 239, fig. 115) and the little casket in the form of a centralized building, now in the Germanisches Museum in Nuremberg (cat. no. 129, fig. 111), probably served the same purpose.

The so-called "hostiario de Roda" (cat. no. 271, fig. 134) is an Islamic silver pyxis which is decorated with interlaced medallions inhabited with different animals; a type of decoration which chiefly appears on Fatimid carved wood panels and ivories. Its name suggests that it was probably used as a container for the Host in the church of San Pedro

in Roda.

In the 13th century, when the act of raising the Host was established as one of the elements of the mass,<sup>17</sup> the demand for translucent vessels grew.<sup>18</sup> It is probable that Islamic rock crystal and glass vessels were mounted on the monstrances which were used during the ritual exhibitions of the Host.

Some Islamic artefacts were permanently exhibited in the church. Out of doors, one of the most celebrated objects of this group was the so-called Pisa Griffin (cat. no.263, fig.126) which was displayed until 1828 as a trophy of war on top of the east gable of the Duomo in Pisa. Though less conspicuous than the latter, *bacini* (Islamic painted ceramic bowls) were frequently inserted into the facades of Romanesque churches in Italy.<sup>19</sup>

Costly Islamic textiles were first and foremost hung inside churches. The so-called 14th-century "Banner of Las Navas de Tolosa" which is erroneously reputed to have been taken by Alfonso VIII of Castile from the Almohads after the decisive battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) was ostentatiously hung in the monastery church of Las Huelgas in Burgos.<sup>20</sup> A 14th-century Mamluk silk cloth (Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 39.40) is said to have served as a mantle for a statue of the Virgin in a church near Valencia.<sup>21</sup> A Nasrid silk cloth with geometrical interlace (London, Victoria and Albert Museum, no. 1312-1864) formed

part of a hanging behind a wooden statue of the Virgin.<sup>22</sup> Hence a 12th-century inventory from Bamberg informs us of a Saracen cover which was spread over the altar (*Et pallium altaris Sarracenum*).<sup>23</sup> Such evidence might partially explain the many representations of various Islamic textiles and carpets in western painting of the 15th and 16th centuries.<sup>24</sup>

Islamic objects made out of other materials were also displayed in churches. Though it is not clear whether it was a Byzantine or a Saracen oliphant, an ivory horn was suspended over the main altar of the cathedral of Canterbury (*In majori cornu eburneo pendente sub trabe ultra magnum altare*).<sup>25</sup>

Islamic ivory caskets which were looted by Fernán Gonzáles from al-Mansūr (around 1002) were brought to the church of San Pedro de Arlanza, and in 1260, according to the poem of an anonymous monk, were still exhibited on the altar.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately we do not possess any document which might tell us where and how the so-called *Grotta della Vergine* from the Treasury of San Marco (cat. no.73, fig.73) was displayed. But the loops which are affixed to the back of each metal peacock and the rings which are attached to the lower part of the Byzantine votive crown hint that this fantastic object was designed for suspension; the loops would afford appropriate fixings for chains, and the rings would serve to carry pendants.

Some 16th-century documents, the earliest among them that

of the Spanish friar Diego de Mérida (1512), inform us of a huge ceramic vase which was displayed in a church in Famagusta. The vase, which was said to be one of the vessels of the Marriage of Cana, is none other than the "Alhambra Vase" now in the National Museum in Stockholm (cat. no.287, fig.150).<sup>27</sup> Another "Alhambra Vase", nowadays in the State Hermitage Museum (cat. no.286, fig.149), was still at the end of the last century serving as the base for the holy water font in the del Salar church in the province of Granada.

Since the pulpit of Henry II, commissioned before 1014, was originally placed in the main hall, between the two pillars of the inner octagonal arcade which face the main choir of the Palatine Chapel in Aachen, the Fatimid cup and plate mounted on it (cat. nos.43,44, figs.43,44) were probably more noticeable than they are today.<sup>28</sup>

The pulpit of Henry II, a miscellaneous collection of artefacts of diverse origins and periods, might be regarded as the earliest 'mini-exhibition' in a medieval church. Apart from the Fatimid rock crystal cup and plate, a Byzantine(?) agate bowl, agate and chalcedony chessmen (probably of oriental origin) and, probably, a Roman cameo of huge size adorned the outer semi-circular wall, forming a huge *crux gemmata*. These objects were flanked by six Alexandrian carved ivories which are mounted on the two wings of the pulpit.<sup>29</sup> The multilingual character of this pulpit is probably intended to emphasize, so to speak, the wealth and the extent of King Henry II's sovereignty, but concomitantly it might be

considered as a 'micro'-museum of the history of nations.

Although they were usually secured by a metal latticework, around 1300 relics and reliquaries were displayed to the public in relic cupboards (*Reliquienarmaria*) in the churches of Cologne.<sup>30</sup> The wooden cupboards are divided into compartments, thus creating a separate niche for each object, and were placed mainly in the chancel (fig.167). This practice permitted an equal presentation for variegated artefacts- among them, probably, even Islamic ones.

Unfortunately most of the illustrations of these relic cupboards are of the 16th century and later. The earliest depiction of a treasury's belongings, to my knowledge, is the 14th-century marble relief at the entrance to the Treasury of San Marco on which, it seems, some important reliquaries of the Treasury are depicted (fig.168).<sup>31</sup> On the upper part, above the kneeling angel, on the right side of the relief, perhaps a little clumsily drawn, is an oliphant which is hung on its upper and lower parts by a chain. On its body is a pattern which consists of intersecting lines, forming a series of lozenges. This pattern might be a stylized simplification of the "inhabited scroll" design which is so characteristic of a large group of "Saracenic" oliphants.

The copper engraving from the *Thesaurus SS. Reliquiarum* of Petrus Schonemann, dated 1671 (Cologne, Schnütgen-Museum, M678), presents various reliquaries of the Cathedral Treasury of Cologne (fig.169).<sup>32</sup> The reliquaries are organized in separate compartments recalling the niches of a typical relic

cupboard. In the second row from the top are two caskets (nos. 26,29), which reveal a great similarity to the "Saracenic" ivory caskets from South Italy.

The most conspicuous examples of such illustrations, though dated as late as 1706, are the engravings of Ph. Simonneau and N. Guérard for the *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis en France*, written by Dom Michel Félibien.<sup>33</sup> In plate no.4 (fig.170) the Fatimid rock crystal ewer (cat. no.60, fig.60) is displayed behind the so-called *Coupe des Ptolémées* and at the foot of the famed *Ecran de Charlemagne*.

In addition to the significant and equal position that some Islamic artefacts achieved, it must be kept in mind that the elaborate effulgent mountings which almost all of the Islamic vessels received can be considered as the 'spotlights' of the medieval museum. The rays of light which were bounced back from the shiny surfaces of the gold sheets and from the various precious stones invited the attention of the beholders to centre on them. The relic enshrined within them, and the legend or the tradition which associated the Islamic object with an important event or a specific figure, enhanced this beauty with extra significance.

Forming an integral part of the medieval treasury, and exhibited side by side with other Christian works of surpassing quality, Islamic objects of *virtù* attained an equal aesthetic rank. The latter were probably contributory factors to the impact they had on the western art.



- 1.O. Impey and A. Macgregor (eds.), *The origins of museums, the cabinet of curiosities in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe* (Oxford, 1985).
- 2.J. von Schlosser, *Die Kunst und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance* (Leipzig, 1908).
- 3.*Ibid.*, 10; see also the introduction of P. Williamson in *idem* (ed.), *The Medieval Treasury, The Art of the Middle Ages in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1986), 5-14.
- 4.G. Perocco, "Zur Geschichte des Schatzes von San Marco," *Der Schatz von San Marco in Venedig*, exhibition catalogue, Römisch-Germanisches Museum in Cologne (Milan, 1984), 74.
- 5.M.-M. Gauthier, *Highways of the Faith Relics and Reliquaries from Jerusalem to Compostela* (London, 1986), 115.
- 6.For a detailed illustration, see F. Gabrieli and U. Scerrato, *Gli arabi in Italia* (Milan, 1979), fig.529.
- 7.K. Erdmann, "The 'Sacred Blood' of Weissenau," *The Burlington Magazine* 95(1953), 300.
- 8.This source was cited by Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten*, vol.I, p. 393.
- 9.This document was cited by D.S. Rice, *Le Baptistère de Saint Louis* (Paris, 1951), 9.
- 10.Fr. Bock, "Über den Gebrauch der Hörner im Alterthum und das Vorkommen geschnittener Elfenbeinhörner im Mittelalter," *Mittelalterliche Kunstdenkmale des Österreichischen Kaiserstaates*, ed. by G. Heider and R. v.Eitelberger, vol.II (Stuttgart, 1860), 142.
- 11.E. Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen, VIII.-XIII. Jahrhundert* (Berlin,1971), 61.
- 12.W.M. Milliken, "The acquisition of six objects from the Guelph Treasure for the Cleveland Museum of Art," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 17(1930), 169.
- 13.*Ibid.*, 142-3.
- 14.E. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 79. For this vase see Chapter Six, note 2.
- 15.*Ibid.*

16.The inscription was read by Ferrandis:

"He sido construida de muchas piezas pour arte sutil de encantamiento, con procedimientos maravillosos, para encerrar lo [el] reservado de las puras hostias. Y he sido adornada con cuadritos de plantas y flores." J. Ferrandis, *Marfiles Arabes de Occidente* (Madrid, 1935-1940), vol.2, 216 (cat. no.97); for further discussion on this inscription see cat. no.164.

17.H. Belting, *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter: Form und Funktion früher Bildtafeln der Passion* (Berlin, 1981), 126-8; P. Verdier, "A Thirteenth-Century Monstrance in the Walters Art Gallery," *Gatherings in Honor of Dorothy E. Miner*, ed. by U.E. Mc Cracker, L.M. Randall and R.H. Randall, Jr. (Baltimore, 1974), 280.

18.For the typical form of earlier monstrances for the Eucharist, see Verdier, *A Thirteenth-Century Monstrance*, 257-82.

19.D. Abulafia, "The Pisan *Bacini* and the Medieval Mediterranean Economy: A Historian's Viewpoint," in D. Abulafia, *Italy, Sicily and Mediterranean, 1100-1400* (London, 1987), 287-302.

20.A.F. Kendrick, "Textiles," *The Burlington Magazine, Monograph-II, Spanish Art* (1927), 68, pl.11.

21.E. Atil, *Renaissance of Islam, Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, D.C., 1981), cat.no.116.

22.*The Arts of Islam*, Hayward Gallery exhibition (England, 1976), cat.no.18.

23.B. Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse. Erster Teil: Von der Zeit Karls des Großen bis zur Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1967), 20.

24.For this subject see mainly: K. Erdmann, *Europa und der Orientteppich* (Berlin and Mainz, 1962).

25.Cited by Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 85, no.5.

26.J. Ferrandis, *Marfiles Arabes de Occidente* (Madrid, 1935), vol.I, p.21:

"Cuando fué Almocore gran tierra alexado,  
Finco de sus averes, el campo bien poblado;  
coyeron sus averes, que Dios le avya dado;  
tan grant aver fallaron que non podria ser contado.

Fallaron ay de marfil arquetas muy preciadas  
con tantas de noblezas que non podrian ser contadas,

fueron para San Pedro las arquetas donadas;  
están en este día en el altar asentadas."

27.O. Kurz, "The strange history of an Alhambra Vase," *The decorative arts of Europe and the Islamic East*, selected studies of Otto Kurz (London, 1977), 205-12.

28.E. Doberer, "Studien zu dem Ambo Kaiser Heinrichs II. im Dom zu Aachen," *Karolingische und ottonische Kunst, Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und christlichen Archäologie* (Wiesbaden, 1957), 337-48.

29.H. Stern, "The Ivories on the ambo of the Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle," *The Connoisseur* 153(1963), 166-71; see also the discussion of J.W. Allan, "The Influence of the Metalwork of the Arab Mediterranean on that of Medieval Europe," *The Arab Influence in Medieval Europe*, ed. by D.A. Agius and R. Hitchcock (Reading, 1994), 44-62, figs.1-17, especially pp.46-48.

30.A. Legner, "Vom Glanz und von der Präsenz des Heiltums - Bilder und Texte," in A. Legner (ed.), *Reliquien, Verehrung und Verklärung*, exhibition catalogue from the Collection of Louis Peters in the Schnütgen-Museum in Cologne (Cologne, 1989), 102 and fig. 58 (the wooden Gothic relic cupboard from the Cathedral of Cologne).

31.*Der Schatz von San Marco in Venedig*, exhibition catalogue, the Römisch-Germanisches Museum in Cologne (Milan, 1984), 33b.

32.*Ornamenta Ecclesiae*, cat.no. E4.

33.B. de Montesquiou-Fezensac and D. Gaborit-Chopin, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis* (Paris, 1977), pls.1-5.

## CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

This survey of portable Islamic objects in the medieval church treasuries of the Latin West reveals, though in as yet largely unexplored detail and sometimes rather dimly, the high esteem in which precious Islamic objects were held in the West. Despite the assumption that many delicate and fragile objects perished or disappeared in the course of time and in spite of some evidence telling of the dismantling and melting down of studded silver and gold objects, it appears that the great majority of Islamic artefacts in medieval European church treasuries consists of ivories and rock crystals; subsequently there appear glass and metal objects.

Taking into consideration the mounting of these Islamic artefacts as an indication for their first appearance in the Latin West, the pulpit of Henry II in Aachen, dated before 1014, can serve as a *terminus ante quem*. But according to historical accounts referring to royal presents, commerce and pilgrims' mementoes, it is likely that Islamic artefacts reached the Latin West even earlier than the 11th century. The existence of small, probably 9th-century, containers of rock crystal in European church treasuries, the historical evidence on the one hand of commercial relationships between the `Abbasid court in Baghdad and the lands of the Baltic Sea, and on the other hand of early commercial connections between North African seaports and South Italian cities like Amalfi and Salerno (not to mention Venice), suggest that

precious Islamic objects started to migrate to the Latin West already in the 9th century, probably with the consolidation of the `Abbasid hegemony by Harun al-Rashid (r. 786-809). Hence, though the accounts referring to the migration of Islamic artefacts from Muslim Spain to Europe before the 11th century are scarce, it seems that a few objects might have had reached Europe via this geographical region.

Islamic artefacts reached the Latin West as relic containers, royal presents, booty or as exported luxuries. Small Islamic glass and rock-crystal vessels were probably used by pilgrims as containers for fluid sanctified substances, and even the small Islamic perfume bottles which were and are kept in church treasuries should probably be regarded as containers for sanctified fragrant oily substances. Unfortunately it is impossible to identify specific royal presents among the precious objects in church treasuries. Nevertheless, medieval sources, scarce as they are, verify that Islamic royal presents were received in the West. 'Saracenic' booty was mainly brought to the West during the period of the Crusades. It should be stressed that the long-lasting wars for Christian Spain created a unique situation in the Iberian Peninsula in which almost every looted object was regarded in medieval Spanish church treasuries as a trophy of war and as a symbol for the liberation of al-Andalus. Eastern luxury goods seem to arrive in the markets of the Latin West during the Middle Ages almost without interruption. This East-West trade seems to

increase with the establishment of the crusading kingdoms in the Near East and with the relatively massive export of Islamic goods from the Norman monarchy in Sicily.

However, two important events which contributed to the existence of splendid Islamic artefacts in the medieval church treasuries of the Latin West, mainly those of San Marco in Venice, Saint Denis in Paris and the cathedral of Halberstadt, were the dispersion of the Fatimid treasury between the years 1061 and 1069 and the sack of Constantinople in 1204.

In fact, the role of Constantinople as a bridge through which Islamic objects migrated to the West was stressed three times: first, as a major medieval trade centre where Islamic as well as other precious artefacts could have been obtained, second, as a possible 'source' for some Islamic artefacts which were brought to the West as royal presents or even as a royal dowry, and third, in connection to the above-mentioned sack of Constantinople.

Roughly speaking, the migration of Islamic artefacts to the Latin West can be divided into two major periods. The first period is one in which Islamic artefacts slowly but almost constantly reached the West; it probably started in the 9th century and continued until the First Crusade (ca.1095). The second period, which is marked by an intensive encounter between East and West, is the period of the Crusades, either in the East (1095-ca.1300) or in Spain (ca.1085 [the fall of Toledo to Alfonso VI] -1492). It is

likely that many Islamic artefacts were brought to the West during the second period.

Though it is not possible to trace the exact history of these objects, it is fair to assume that a relatively large number of them had been used in a secular context in the West before they reached a specific church treasury; they were probably given to churches as endowments. However, some of them reached church treasuries directly or at least were given to church treasuries soon after they had been brought to the West. These were first and foremost Islamic precious objects which were used to hold holy relics. Other Islamic artefacts which probably also reached church treasuries directly were trophies - these were usually displayed in churches to celebrate victories over Muslim infidels - and ivory croziers and painted ivory caskets with Christian motifs. The latter were most probably initially manufactured for ecclesiastical uses.

It is generally accepted that the positive attitude towards most of the Islamic artefacts in medieval church treasuries, and the ready inclusion of such objects in these treasuries, are rooted in the fact that they were mainly judged 'aesthetically', namely by qualities like precious substance, delicate and splendid workmanship, radiance, richness of colours and the like. But it must be emphasised that on many occasions the objects were not identified by clergy as Islamic. On the one hand, since numerous Islamic objects were first in Christian secular hands, whether for

short or long periods, the memory of their Islamic origin was probably dimmed. On the other hand, Islamic objects which reached the Latin West as relic containers were in fact already Christianized by the relics or other sanctified substances carried within them. Of course the attitude towards Islamic booty and trophies was different. On some occasions they were melted down, but usually they were immediately accepted in church treasuries as Islamic, and the memory of their Islamic origin was kept green mainly by traditions.

It is true that the decision to adapt an Islamic artefact as well as other precious re-used objects was primarily made to answer church treasuries' own purposes. Thus rock-crystal and glass vessels were used as relic containers, ivory caskets were chosen to protect other sacred objects, and precious stones were inlaid for decoration. But it has been demonstrated that clear transparent rock crystals were chosen for other merits which were allegorically interpreted, like associating this material with purity, paradise and the Water of Life. The radiance of Islamic precious artefacts was associated with Christian ideas about light, mainly those referring to apocalyptic and celestial scenes. However, some less orthodox aspects were also taken into account. These refer to the exotic, the magical, and sometimes even to the healing virtues of precious stones.

The Biblical stories and myths with which many Islamic objects were associated suggest that the unfamiliar forms and



decoration of these artefacts evoked the memory of legendary Biblical and early Christian objects. The Arabic inscriptions which usually appear on these artefacts were probably interpreted, at least in the high Middle Ages, as an ancient eastern or even Hebrew script. Therefore, Islamic objects decorated with Arabic inscriptions might have bestowed a sense of authenticity or might have given an eastern flavour to the reliquaries on which they were mounted.

Though the Islamic origin of these objects was usually blurred and almost all Islamic objects were 'Christianized' in church treasuries either by receiving typical Christian mountings or by being associated with Biblical or Christian stories and figures, it should be borne in mind that the reaction of the Latin West took various forms. For instance in specific regions in the West like Spain, Sicily, South Italy and also in northern Mediterranean centres, which had a continuous regular contact with the East, the Islamic origin of these objects was not immediately forgotten. This might have been resulted in presenting them as booty and trophies of wars, attributing magical powers to them, or, in more destructive vein, depriving them of their precious stones and even melting them down. Conversely, in other regions, mainly those beyond the Alps, Islamic objects might have enjoyed the aura of exotic vessels from the Holy Land and were even sometimes associated with the presents of the Magi.

Though the impact of Islamic objects on the art of the

West has not been discussed in this present study, some implications referring to the manner in which Islamic objects were kept and exhibited, might help to define some aspects of this important field of research. Among these implications one should mention the 'aesthetization' of these objects in their new Christian setting, the prestige that they achieved by the popular traditions and the famous names that became associated with them, and the aesthetic rank that they attained in forming an integral part of a medieval church treasury.

Some questions, however, are left without answers. The major one is that which concerns the Islamic identity of these objects in the West. On the basis of the evidence available it is often difficult to say when exactly an Islamic object was accepted in a church treasury not only as a precious or beautiful item but also as an *artefact* which was known to be made in the East by a Muslim craftsman - of course this question should exclude from discussion booty and royal presents. On the one hand, evidence referring to a regular trade in Islamic luxury goods, especially those made for the western markets, might partially answer this question. But unfortunately most of such evidence seems to appear from the late 14th century on. On the other hand, the curtain of silence which is drawn over this matter in medieval church inventories leaves us almost in the dark; the identification of some objects in medieval church inventories as *opus sarracenum* or *arabie* does not confirm that the

objects were accepted in treasuries for that specific reason. In fact this question is not only bound up with the development of the aesthetic appraisal of Islamic artefacts in the West but also the exact timing of that turning point when western man was able to differentiate between religion and culture. The answer involves religious, social and cultural aspects which caused a change in the mind of the western beholder and enabled him to consider an Islamic artefact as a product of a different cultural atmosphere and not as a product of an antagonistic rival religion. The closer examination of this phenomenon leads on to the birth of such modern terms as 'exotica' and 'orientalism'.

The present study is a small contribution to this large and still unexplored field of research.

## PART III: DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE

I. ROCK CRYSTALCarved cylindrical bottles decorated with lanceolate leaves1. Bottle on gilded bronze base, Cologne.

Fig.1, text, pp.33-34.

Rock crystal, bronze mounting.

Fatimid. Base: Italian, 16th century.

Height: 7 cm. (with the base- 12 cm.).

Cologne, Schnütgen-Museum (G 19).

A relative short and slightly faceted bottle, the decoration of which is cut in high relief and consists of heart-shaped leaves alternately placed upside-down. The lower part of the neck has accentuated rims. The bronze base concealing the narrow base of the bottle has a shell-like decoration.

This kind of rock crystal bottles was supposedly used as perfume, oil or scent vessels; hence the suggestion of Wenzel ascribing this bottle to a part of the "Parfum-Garnitur" of Theophano.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68, 12; Wenzel (1972), 45-55, fig.53; *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/4.

2. The Holy Blood reliquary, Bad-Gandersheim.

Fig.2, text, pp.33-34, 213-216.

Fatimid.

Height: 11.2 cm.

Germany, Bad-Gandersheim, *Stiftskirchengemeinde*.

The bottle has the same form as the above-mentioned bottle. Its decoration consists of heart-shaped leaves and of half leaves pointed at the head of the blade and curled at its lower ends.

The name of this bottle- "Parfumflakon der Theophano"- links it to the same tradition (cat. no.1) which would see in this bottle one of the toilet vessels of Theophano. According to one version Sophie, the daughter of Theophano and Otto II, who was admitted as a nun to the convent of Gandersheim, brought it with her when taking her vows.

The bottle might be the one mentioned [Bischoff (1967)] as the *ampula cristallina* in an inventory of Gandersheim dated to the beginning of the 12th century.

Bibl.: Wenzel (1971), fig.7,8; *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/6; Bischoff (1967), 36.

3. Little bottle, Poitiers.

Fig.3, text, pp.33-34, see also p.24.

Fatimid crystal; gilded silver mounting.

France, 13th century.

Height: ca.3 cm.

Poitiers, Sainte-Croix.

A tiny bottle with a narrow base. The body is decorated with a plant motif. The neck is hidden by the mounting. The bottle might have been used as an amulet pendant.

It is said to enshrine milk of the Virgin like the "Chenou bottle" (cat. no.65).

Mentioned for the first time in an inventory dated to 1476.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,7; Braun (1940), pl.5,18.

4. Little bottle, Arnac-la-Poste.

Fig.4, text, pp.33-34, 190.

Rock crystal, gilded silver.

France, 13th century (one of the rock crystal bottles is Fatimid).

Height of the reliquary: 29.2 cm.

Diameter (of the base): 15 cm.

Haute-Vienne, the church of Arnac-la-Poste.

Seven rock crystal bottles are mounted on the lid of a chalice-like reliquary, six of them (among them a Fatimid one) encircle a relatively bigger one.

The body of the Fatimid bottle is decorated with a row of pointed leaves. The head and the base are hidden behind a

metal mounting.

The reliquary might have served as an *ciborium*, a vessel which holds the sacramental host. It was kept until 1790 in the Abbey of Grandmont and is mentioned for the first time in the inventory of 1496 of this abbey.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,8; Braun (1940), pl.60,201; *Les trésors* (1965), cat. no.355.

#### 5. Procession Cross, Borghorst.

Figs.5,5a, text, pp.33-34, 189.

Wooden cross, gilded silver mounting, precious stones, antique gems and two Fatimid rock crystal bottles (a cylindrical bottle and a fish-formed one).

Mounting: 11th century (1014?).

Height of the cross: 41 cm.; cylindrical bottle: 12.5 cm.

Borghorst (Westphalia), St. Nikomedes.

In this elaborated *crux gemmata*, which is a relic cross, the two rock crystal bottles serve on the one hand as decorative inserted precious stones and on the other hand as containers for the different relics mentioned in the Latin inscription engraved on the back. The cylindrical bottle is inserted in the centre of the cross, below the Crucifixion scene and above the depiction the apotheosis of Henry (II?).

The inscription on the back reads: HEC SUNT NOMINA ISTORUM SANCTORUM DE LIGNO DNI DI SPONDIA DNI DE LECTO MARIE MATRIS

DNI DE CORPORESCI PETRI APL SCI ANDREE APL SCI BARTHOLOMEI  
 APL SCI STEPHANI M NICOMEDIS S MAURITII S PANCRATII S  
 LAURENTII S CRISTOFORI S CLEMENTIS S NICOLAI DE SCAPULA S  
 SIMEONIS S MARIE MAGDALENE S AGATHE V ISTI ET OMNES SANCTI  
 INTERCEDANT PRO ME PECCATRICE ET PRO OMNIBUS ILLIS QUI  
 ALIQUID BONI HOC SIGNACULO FECERUNT. BERHTA ABBA HEINRIC(US)  
 I(M)P(ORATO)R ("These are the names of those holy [relics]:  
 from the [holy] tree of the Lord, from the Sponge of the  
 Lord, the bed of Mary the Mother, of the body of St. Peter,  
 apostle...[and all the other named apostles (A), martyrs (M),  
 saints (S) and virgins (V)]. They and all saints may  
 intercede for me, a sinner [female], and for all those who  
 have done any good to this sign [the cross]; Bertha abbess,  
 Henry emperor").

Though Althoff (1978) has lately shown how the convent of  
 Borghorst benefited from Henry III, and thus shown that the  
 cross  
 is likely to date between the years 1046-1056, the question  
 of how and when the two Fatimid bottles reached Borghorst is  
 still obscure.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,9; Swarzenski (1954), pl.35;  
 Elbern (1964), 145-7, fig.97; Eickel (1968), 45-55; Wentzel  
 (1972), 51; Arenhövel (1977), 69-70; Althoff (1978), 283-98;  
*Ornamenta Ecclesiae* (1985), cat. no.H28; *Salier* (1992), 278-  
 81.



6. Horizontal reliquary, Saint-Riquier.

Fig.6, text, pp.33-34.

Fatimid rock crystal. Gilded copper mounting.

Mounting dated to the early 13th century.

Height: 19 cm.

Saint-Riquier (Somme), Church Treasury, Saint-Wulfran.

Cylindrical bottle, the upper and lower parts of which were recarved. Horizontally mounted and elevated on a chalice-like foot to form a simple monstrance reliquary.

Bibl.: *Les trésors* (1965), cat. no.74.

7. Bottle, British Museum.

Fig.7, text, pp.33-34.

Rock crystal (Tulunid?). Gilded metal lid.

Gilded metal lid is probably a 13th century addition.

Height of the bottle: 11.4 cm.

London, British Museum (The Islamic Gallery, 1894 5-17 1).

Acquired by the museum in 1894, said to have come from a Byzantine church in Calabria.

A long cylindrical bottle. The body is decorated with a carved ornament organized in three bands; two narrow bands with diagonal and vertical slits, and a wide central band carved with lanceolate leaves and half-palmettes. The ornament, deeply carved in a "rigid" manner, leaves the

impression that this bottle is pre-fatimid product. The neck is long, and the base is terminated with a small circular foot.

Bibl.: Pinder-Wilson (1954), 85, pl.XXXIIIa.; Erdmann (1959), pl.1,2.

8.Tower-ostensory, Emmerich.

Figs.8,8a, text, pp.33-34.

Fatimid rock crystal, silver and niello mounting.

Reliquary dated to the later 14th century.

Height: 39.5 cm.; bottle (base was partially recarved): ca.4 cm.

Emmerich, Church Treasury, St. Martini.

An oblong and narrow tower-like reliquary stands on a thin foot with a circular flat base. A cross surmounts the conical roof, and six niello ovals on which a cross is depicted ("Wieder Kreuz") create an architectural decorative structure on the stem. The Fatimid bottle is kept within the silver tower behind the four thin silver columns which hold the roof. The bottle's body is decorated with a pattern of leaves cut in low relief. The bottle is sealed with a piece of cloth and a thin (leather?) thong wrapped around its neck which might be an original one.

Bibl.: Lemmens (1983), cat. no.H7.

Cylindrical little bottles with carved Arabic inscriptions9. Reliquary, Marienberg in the Tyrol.

Fig.9, text, pp.100-101.

Fatimid rock crystal, gilded silver mounting.

13th century.

Height of the reliquary: ca.12 cm.; bottle: ca.6 cm.

The Benedictine convent of Marienberg in Tyrol.

A relative short bottle with accentuated rims and a smooth body. It was mounted on a gilded silver foot in the 13th century in order to display the enshrined relic. The carved Arabic inscription on the bottle's body invokes best wishes for the owner ("Glück und Lebensgenuss und (?) dem Besitzer", after Lamm).

Donated by Graf Ulrich II von Tarasp (died 1177), the founder of the convent in 1146, whose two shields carried during his wars "contra Saracenos" are kept in this church. This rock crystal bottle was most probably brought by him as a trophy of war after one of his campaigns against Muslims.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,11.

10. Pendant, British Museum.

Fig.10.

rock crystal, silver mounting and niello.

Fatimid. Mounting dated to the 15th century.

Height: 8.4 cm.; bottle: ca.6.5 cm.

Diameter: 2 cm.

London, British Museum, (FB Is.13).

A relatively narrow bottle. The base and neck are mounted in a 15th century silver mounting made up of a half-domed silver base and a cylindrical upper lid with a hook. The carved Kufic inscription on its body reads: "blessing to its owner" (*baraka li-ṣahibihi*).

The niello inscription on the mounting states that the bottle enshrined a hair of the Virgin. According to tradition John the Apostle collected the hairs of the Virgin, who tore her hair in grief while agonizing Christ on the cross. Later, Ilger Bigod, a French crusader, brought back with him a collection of these relics and presented them to churches in France and England.

The bottle was probably hung with a chain and might have been used as an amulet.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,14; Longhurst (1926), 150, pl.II,c; Pinder-Wilson (1954), 86, pl.XXXIIIb,c.

10a.Pendant reliquary, Harelbeke.

Fig.11.

Fatimid rock crystal. Metal mounting.

Height: 8 cm.

Diameter: 2 cm.

Harelbeke, the church of Saint-Sauveur.

A cylindrical narrow bottle with accentuated rims. The neck and the base were probably recarved. A dome-like metal lid is affixed with a metal chain to the lower part of the bottle's neck.

The Kufic inscription on the body of the bottle reads: "blessing to its owner".

Bibl.: Philippe (1975), 19-21, figs.15,16.

Cylindrical little bottles with an irregular ornamentation

11. The "Welfenschatz" reliquary.

Fig.12.

Fatimid. Gilded silver mounting.

Mounting: Germany (Lower Saxony), 14th century (with a 15th century addition).

Height of the reliquary: 45.4 cm.; bottle: ca.9.5 cm.

Diameter of the base of the reliquary: 14.6 cm.

Chicago, Art Institute (1962.91, gift of Mrs. Chauncey McCormick). Formerly in the Treasury of the Dukes of Braunschweig-Lüneberg, namely the Welfenschatz. Acquired in 1930 by the Goldschmidt-Konzern, New York & Berlin.

This turriiform ostensory reliquary is elevated on a long and high foot. The rock crystal bottle which enshrines a

tooth of John the Baptist is displayed within the elaborate architectural structure; it is flanked by two wide buttresses ornamented with little towers, and its upper part is in the form of a small chapel surmounted by a crucifix. The decoration of the little bottle consists of a square and leaf design.

The six-segment metal foot has a small pearl border and the Latin inscription which reads: *dens Johannis baptiste* ("tooth of John the Baptist").

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,15; von Falke, Schmidt and Swarzenski (1930), no.60, p.194, pl.95; Braun (1940), pl.107,390; De Winter (1985), no.59.

#### Molar-tooth rock crystal bottles

All the bottles of this group share the same form: A four-faceted body with a short neck. On each facet is a scutiform rock crystal, slightly concaved and carved in high relief, forming a base with four pointed feet.

#### 12.Monstrance reliquary of St. Stephen, Sens.

Fig.13, text, pp.28-31.

Pre-Fatimid? bottle. Silver and gilded copper mounting.

13th century (Burgundy?).

Height: 29.7 cm.

Sens (Yonne, France), Cathedral Treasury, St.-Etienne (D1 4).

Three small reliquaries- two cubical structures with a pyramidal roof and one circular with a conical one - are raised on a prismatic central stem and on two curved consoles, springing out of a narrow and oblong architectural structure which has four ogival openings. The latter in turn stands on a flat base decorated with three rock crystal cabochons.

The circular higher reliquary reveals a Fatimid rock crystal bottle mounted upside down. The scutiform feet which were probably recarved, i.e. shortened, in their upper parts, jut out over the mounting in four openings. Through these openings the relics of St. Stephen were to be seen and venerated.

According to tradition the relics of St. Stephen, found in 415 and brought to Constantinople and to Rome, were later scattered in all directions.

Though the Treasury of Sens is rich in many oriental objects, mainly textiles, it is not yet clear when and how this bottle reached the treasury.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pp.219-20; *Les trésors* (1965), cat. no.822; M.M. Gauthier (1986), no.74.

13.Reliquary of the Holy Thorn, Arras.

Fig.14, text, pp.28-31.

Pre-Fatimid? bottle. Gilded silver mounting.

Early 13th century.

Height of the reliquary: 24 cm.; bottle: 7 cm.

Arras (Pas-de-Calais), Dames Augustines.

The rock crystal bottle is elevated on a chalice-like metal foot with a circular base and is surmounted by an oblong lid to which a metal cross is affixed. One of its scutiform feet is broken. A close observation of the mounting reveals two different styles. The first is that of the mounting on the bottle's body -gilded sheets adorned with stones- which is probably the earlier one and is datable to the 11th or the early 12th century. The second is that of the gilded silver foot and cover, which are decorated with plant motifs and with the sphere of six niello medallions; this mounting, probably local work, is datable to the 13th century.

On the lower part of the circular base, which stands on the three animal-like feet, is a Latin inscription: DE. SPINEA. CORONA. DOMI.DE.LANCEA.DOMINI.-DE. CLAVO.DOMINI ("[relics of the] Crown of Thorns of the Lord, the Spear of the Lord and the Nail of the Lord").

According to tradition the Holy Thorn was brought by St. Louis (1226-70) from Constantinople. The bottle itself might have been brought to Arras by Alvis (Alvis le Vénérable), the bishop of Arras, who left with King Louis VII on a crusade to the Holy Land in 1147.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,29; *Les trésors* (1965), cat.



no.40; Lightbown (1968), fig.9.

14. Procession Cross, St. Severin.

Figs.15,15a, text, pp.28-31.

Wooden cross mounted with gilded copper and adorned with precious stones. Two pre-Fatimid? rock crystal bottles in the shape of a fish and a molar tooth.

Later 11th century.

Height of the cross: 45 cm.; molar tooth bottle: ca.7 cm.

Width of the cross: 43 cm.

Cologne, St. Severin.

This reliquary processional cross containing a particle of the Holy cross was originally adorned with engravings of the *Agnus Dei* and the symbols of the four evangelists; the plate with the *Agnus Dei* was replaced, probably by the end of the 19th century, by a big rock crystal cabochon, but the symbol of the four evangelists are still to be seen. Though the actual pelican base of the cross with its different relics is Baroque work, dated 1717-18, probably already in 1237 this processional cross became an altar cross.

The molar tooth bottle, which is suspended from the left arm and which contains an indefinable red content, belongs to the original cross of the 11th century. Two of its scutiform feet are broken.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,27; Wentzel (1972), figs.58,

59a,b; von Ew (1984); *Ornamenta Ecclesiae* (1985), cat. no.E42; *Salier* (1992), pp.368-9.

15.Reliquary of St. Johannes, Burtscheid.

Fig.16, text, 28-31.

Pre-Fatimid? bottle. Gilded silver reliquary.

The reliquary is partially from the 13th century.

Height: ca.17 cm.

Burtscheid (near Aachen), St. Johannes.

The rock crystal bottle is mounted on a chalice-like foot with a circular base and a fluted sphere. The neck of the bottle is hidden behind the mounting, and only the four scutiform feet can be seen. A Latin inscription on the lower part of the mounting which is around the bottle's neck reads: S. JOHANNIS BAPT. S. ZACHARIE. PATR(ris). EI(us) ("[relics] of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Zacharias his father").

Bibl.: Maier (1916), 61, fig.56; Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,32.

16."Theophano Cross", Essen.

Figs.17,17a, text, pp.28-31.

Wooden cross mounted with gilded silver and adorned with precious stones and enamel plaques. Fatimid? bottle.

The cross dated: ca.1050.

Height of the cross: 44.5 cm.; bottle without neck: 5.3 cm.

Width: 30 cm.

Essen, Cathedral Treasury.

This elaborate Latin Cross is a reliquary cross. An oval rock crystal piece at the junction of the four arms enshrines two particles of the Holy Cross sewn onto a red textile. The front of the cross is densely decorated with filigree, precious stones and with reused Byzantine enamelled plaques. On the reverse side, in the middle, is an engraving of Christ and on the four arms the four symbols of the evangelists. A rock crystal bottle, the neck of which was recarved and which stands on its head, is attached to the base of the cross by filigree wires. A fragmentary Latin inscription along the sides of the cross reads: EDITA REGALE GENERE NOBILIS ABBATISSA THEOPHANU HOC SIGNUM (crucis) DEDIT ("the noble abbess Theophano, of royal birth, endowed this mark [cross]").

This *assemblage* cross was probably made on commission for Theophano, the granddaughter of Otto II, who became abbess of the *Münster-Stift* in 1039. If we consider this kind of bottle as a product of the earlier Fatimid period (or even pre-Fatimid), we may speculate whether this rock crystal bottle reached the Ottonian court together with the many other Byzantine treasures which belonged to the Byzantine princess Theophano, who married Otto II in 972.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,31; Küpper and Mikat (1966), 57-60; Swarzenski (1954), fig.230; Grimme (1972a), fig.15.

17. Relic cross with a rock crystal base, Münster.

Fig.18, text, pp.28-31, 189-190.

Fatimid? bottle. Wooden cross mounted with gold and adorned with precious stones.

North-West Germany, 12th century.

Height: 22.6 cm.; cross: 17.2 cm.

Width: 13 cm.

Münster, Cathedral Treasury, St. Paulus.

This classical Latin cross has its front part adorned with filigree, precious stones and antique gems. On the copper mounting of the back is engraved Christ on the cross between the sun and the moon, God's hand above and the Chalice below. According to the Latin inscription on the cross' sides different relics were held in it: HERMANNO DE VESTE SANCTAE MARIE PANCRATII MARTIRIS DE LIGNO DOMINI STEPHANI MARTIRIS DE SVDARIO SILVESTRI PAPAE DE SEPULCHRO DOMINI VITI ("[relics] of Herman, of the garment of St. Mary, of the Martyr Pancratius, of the [holy] tree of the Lord, of the Martyr Stephan, of the sudarium of Pope Silvester, of the Sepulchre of the Lord, of Vitus").

The base is made of a rock crystal bottle; the four scutiform feet were recarved to render it stable. The gilded copper mounting of the base is datable to the 13th or 14th century, which suggests that the Fatimid rock crystal bottle became a part of this reliquary in the Gothic period.

Bibl.: Pieper (1981), cat. no.2; Jászai (1991), no.5; *Salier* (1992), 365.

### Chessmen

18. The so-called 'Charlemagne crystal chessmen'.

Fig.19, text, pp.50-55.

Rock crystal.

Fatimid.

Height: from 3 to 5 cm.

Osnabrück, Diocesan Museum.

14 different chess figures decorated with palmette leaves or with geometrical ornament consisting of vertical slits; one king (*shāh*), one queen (*firzān*), four towers (*rukḥ*), five bishops (*fīl*), two knights (*faras*) and one pawn (*baydhaq*).

In a 17th century document it is stated that 25 chessmen, the so-called 'Chessmen of Charlemagne' were kept in the church of Osnabrück: "il y a encore 25, ou 26, eschets qu'on dit estre de luy (Charlemagne), qui sont de cristal, et ont diverses figures, les uns estants rondes, les autres quarres, et les autres pointus, sans ressembler aux nostres d'apresent."

Wenzel suggests that these chessmen might have been part of the dowry of Theophano and that they were given to the church by Otto III, her son.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,7-18; Wichmann (1960), 283-4;  
Wenzel (1972), p.9, fig.4; *Salier* (1992), 72-4.

19.Chessman, Halberstadt.

Fig.20, text, pp.50-55.

Rock crystal.

Fatimid.

Height: ca.5 cm.

Halberstadt, Cathedral Treasury.

A "king" chesspiece (*shāh*) decorated with carved geometrical spear-like ornament.

According to Wenzel this piece might have been donated to this church by Otto III in 1001.

Bibl.: Wenzel (1972), 9, fig.5.

20.Chessmen, Ager.

Text, pp.50-55.

Rock crystal.

Height: between 5 to 8 cm.

Kuwait, National Museum. Formerly in the collection of the Comtess de Béhague.

These are 15 different chessmen. Ten are decorated with palmette motifs and with vertical slits, and the rest have a smooth surface (probably in order to differentiate between

the two opposite groups); one king (*shāh*), one queen? (*firzān*), three knights (*faras*), five bishops (*fīl*), three pawns (*baydhaq*) and two towers (*rukḥ*).

According to tradition the chessmen were donated to a church at Ager in Catalonia by a Count of Catalonia.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,3 and 5, pl.77,1-15; Camón Aznar (1936-9), figs.1-16; *The Arts of Islam* (1976), cat.nos.108a-d.

21.Chessman, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Fig.21, text, pp.50-55.

Rock crystal.

Fatimid.

London, Victoria and Albert Museum, no.669-1883. Probably belonged to the church of Ager in Catalonia.

The figure of a queen (*firzān*) or a king (*shāh*) with carved decoration of palmette leaves and birds.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,2; Longhurst (1926), 150, pl.II,j.

22.Chessmen, Orense.

Fig.22, text, pp.50-55.

Rock crystal.

Fatimid.

Orense (north Spain), the Episcopal Palace.

The 13 chessmen are slightly carved with palmette leaves and might have been donated in 938 by Ilduara, the mother of St. Rosendo- Bishop of San Martín de Mondoñedo who also founded the monastery of Celanova in Orense in 936.

Bibl.: Camón Aznar (1936-9), 396-405.

23. Reliquary of St. Millán.

Fig.23, text, pp.50-55.

Three rock crystal chessmen.

Fatimid.

Height: knight: 5 cm., pawns: ca.2.8 cm.

Province of Rioja, the church of San Millán de la Cogolla.

The three rock crystal chessmen- one knight (*faras*) and two pawns (*baydhaq*)- are mounted to the upper part of the reliquary casket of St. Millán, creating the impression of three huge precious stones.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,4 and 6.

24. Lidded-Cup Reliquary, Münster.

Fig.24, text, pp.50-55.

Fatimid rock crystal. Gilded silver mounting.

Mounting of the chessman is dated to the mid of the 13th



century. The lidded cup: Germany, ca.1400.

Height of the reliquary: 31.5 cm.; chessman: 4.7 cm.

Münster, Cathedral Treasury, St. Paulus.

This silver lidded cup reliquary stands on a chalice-like foot. The four empty metal mountings on the lid probably served to hold precious stones. The latter encircled the rock crystal chessman [king (*shāh*) or queen (*firzān*)] which is still mounted with its head pointing downwards to the lid's top. The gilded silver mounting of the chessman looks like a structure with a pointed roof and a pommel on its top; a cross probably surmounted the pommel.

An inscription runing on the base of the roof states that the blood of St. Paul is enshrined within the rock crystal chessman and that this reliquary was given to the bishop Suitger

by Otto III: INCLUSUM SANCTI LATET HIC DE SANGUINE PAULI CESAR SUITCHERO QUOD PONTIFICI DE DIT ODDO ("enclosed is [a part] of the blood of St. Paul which was given by Emperor Otto to Suitger the high priest").

Since Suitger was in Münster between 993-1011, and Otto III was crowned in Rome in 996 and died in 1002, we may consider the years 996-1002 as the *terminus ante quem* for the rock crystal chessman.

Bibl.: Piper (1981), cat.no.44; *Europa and der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/8; Wenzel (1972), fig.7.

25. Chessman, Capua.

Fig.25, text, pp.50-55.

Carved rock crystal (Fatimid?).

Capua, Diocesan Museum.

Chess piece [probably a "king" (*shāh*)] with a circular base. It is unique for the figurative decoration it bears; on the front side two birds reclining towards a stylized plant with lanceolate leaves and on the back, two griffins.

Bibl.: Lipinsky (1970), figs.6,7; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), 501,517.

Fish-shaped bottles26. Procession cross, Borghorst.

Fig.26, text, pp.31-33.

Length: ca.7 cm.

For further details see: cat. no.5.

The rock crystal bottle is carved in the form of a fish with a cylindrical boring running from its head almost up to its tail. A long and narrow bulge on the back of the fish's body forms a fin. Three other elliptical bulges on its belly serve as short feet to maintain it in a horizontal position.

The bottle, which enshrines relics, is mounted on the lower part of the cross, where the scene of the apotheosis of

Henry II is depicted.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,25; Lafontaine-Dosogne (1991), fig.14; for further literature see cat. no.5.

27. Procession cross, St. Severin.

Fig.27, text, pp.31-33.

Length: ca.6 cm.

For further details see: cat. no.14.

The form of this bottle is similar to the fish-shaped pendant in the Victoria and Albert Museum (M.110-1966). The tail is missing. The fin is decorated with carved slits.

A metal ring which is mounted on the mouth of the bottle renders it possible to hang it to the arm of the cross. The bottle enshrines an unidentified relic wrapped in a red cloth.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,26; for further literature see cat. no.14. For the pendant in the Victoria and Albert Museum see Lightbown (1968).

28. Fish reliquary, Hochelten.

Fig.28, text, pp.31-33.

Fatimid rock crystal. Gilded silver mounting.

The reliquary is dated to 1400.

Height: 9.9 cm.

Length: 8.5 cm.

Emmerich, the Treasury of St. Martini. Earlier was kept in the treasury of St. Vitus, Hochelten.

The form recalls the form of the fish-formed bottle from Borghorst (cat. no.26). The fin and the tail are broken. The mounting consists of a lid in the form of a fish-head, three long and thin legs and three gilded silver strings holding the bottle.

The Latin inscription, kept within the cylindrical boring, confirms that a relic is enshrined in the bottle: DE PANN(O) S.MARIA MAGDALEN ("[relic] from the cloth of St. Mary Magdalene").

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,20; Wenzel (1973), fig.11; Lemmens (1983), cat. no.H9; *Salier* (1992), 346.

29.The hair reliquary, Quedlinburg.

Fig.29, text, pp.31-33.

Fatimid rock crystal. Gilded silver mounting.

Mounting: Germany, 1230-50.

Height of the reliquary: 11 cm; bottle: ca.9.2 cm.

Width of the bottle: 4.7 cm.

Diameter (the metal base): 4.4 cm.

Quedlinburg, Church Treasury, St. Servatius.

Fish-shaped bottle. The same form as the above-mentioned

bottle (cat. no.28). The bottle stands on its head; its mouth is mounted on a chalice-like foot with a circular base, and a long narrow metal buckle holds the bottle up to its tail.

The Latin inscription on the metal mounting reads: CAPILL(US) S(ANCTE) MARIE OTTO T(ERCIUS) IMP(ERATOR) ("Hair of St. Mary - Otto III Emperor"), and suggests that Otto III (983-1002) donated this hair reliquary to the church of Quedlinburg; Otto III visited Quedlinburg in the year 1000, spending Easter there with his sister Adelheid, the abbess of the Quedlinburg convent since 999.

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), fig.19; Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,23; Braun (1940), pl.59,195; Wentzel (1972), figs.49a,b; Kötzsche (1992), cat. no.11.

### 30. Fish-shaped reliquary, Quedlinburg.

Fig.30, text, pp.31-33.

Fatimid rock crystal, gilded metal with precious stones.

Germany, 13th-14th century.

Height: 12.1 cm.; bottle: ca.5.5 cm.

Width of the bottle: 3.5 cm.

Diameter of the metal base: 5.6 cm.

Quedlinburg, Church Treasury, St. Servatius.

This shares almost the same form as the other fish-shaped bottles; the belly of the fish is more round and less oblong. The tail is missing. The reliquary contains a relic which

might be the hair of Mary Magdalene; in a 19th-century inventory of the treasury this peculiar relic is mentioned as being enshrined in a rock crystal bottle, mounted with gilded silver mounting.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,24; Kötzsche (1992), cat. no.12.

Rock crystals in the form of a crouching lion

31.Coconut reliquary, Münster.

Fig.31, text, p.36.

Carved coconut, Fatimid rock crystal, silver (partially gilded) mountings.

Münster, 1230-50.

Height: 27.5 cm.

Diameter of the base: ca.11 cm.

Münster, Cathedral Treasury, St. Paulus.

This reliquary consists of a coconut held by a gilded silver mounting, and elevated on a silver foot with an elliptical sphere. A rock crystal piece in the form of a crouching lion, the head of which looks backwards (the lion's head was cut and set in an opposite direction), is mounted on the coconut's silver lid. This and the lion's gilded silver mounting with the Cross Banner on its back evoke the Christian symbol of the Agnus Dei.

The lion's body is decorated with carved half-palmettes.

A circular boring runs from the lion's chest to deep in its hindquarters. A red cloth within probably covers an unidentified relic.

Bibl.: Pieper (1981), cat. no.45; Jászai, (1991), no.6.

32. Rock crystal lion, Cologne.

Fig.32, text, p.36.

Fatimid rock crystal and gilded silver mounting.

Mounting: Cologne, 13th century.

Height: 4 cm.

Length: 6.5 cm.

Cologne, the church of St. Ursula.

The rock crystal lion, decorated with carved palmette leaves and drop-like motifs, probably served as a base for the tower-like reliquary mounted to its back with the help of a metal girdle. A boring which runs from its chest to its hindquarters might have served to hold a further relic; remains of rivets on the metal girdle suggest the loss of another metal mounting which served to close the circular opening on the lion's chest.

It was once suggested that this lion with the Gothic tower on its back might have served as a chessman; the legendary rock crystal chessmen which Charlemagne received as a present from Harun al-Rashid (cat. no.18), and the tower-like structure on the lion's back which recalls the "tower"

chessman, probably encouraged this speculation which was mistakenly accepted. It is more probable that this lion, like the Münster (cat. no.31) and the Sulmona lions (cat. no.33), served as a precious transparent relic container.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.75,16; Wichmann (1960), 284-5, fig.8; Wentzel (1972), fig.56; *Ornamenta Ecclesiae* (1985), cat. no.E108; *Salier* (1992), 346.

### 33. Reliquary casket, Sulmona.

Text, p.36.

Fatimid rock crystal.

Casket: 15th century.

Length (the lion): 6-6.5 cm.

Abruzzi, the cathedral of Sulmona.

The crouching lion is mounted on the upper lid of a 15th-century Italian reliquary casket with a metal girdle which holds its body to the casket and closes the opening of the boring in its chest. Carved palmette leaves decorate the lion's hindquarters and forearms. A deep boring runs from the lion's chest to its hindquarters, where, seemingly, a relic is enshrined.

Bibl.: Erdmann (1940), 135-6, fig.11.



34. Reliquary, Bamberg.

Fig.33, text, p.36.

Rock crystal base and stem, gilded copper mounting.

Fatimid(?) three rock crystal lions.

Mounting: Gothic, probably 13th century.

Height of the reliquary: 28.5 cm.

Bamberg, Diocesan Museum.

This oblong crystal "stand" is made of different pieces of rock crystal attached to each other by a Gothic gilded copper mounting in order to form an elaborate rock crystal base for different relics which were displayed on its top. The base consists of three undecorated and roughly carved rock crystal pieces having the form of crouching lions. A long and faceted rock crystal foot with an octagonal bulge and with a three-leg pedestal rests on the lions' back. A smoothly carved elliptical rock crystal piece surmounts the hybrid structure. A gilded copper ring clutched to the upper part of the foot, below the elliptical rock crystal, serves to hold three little reliquaries which were lost, leaving us with the three empty settings.

This reliquary was called 'the Lamp of Saint Kunigunde', probably after 1799, for its resemblance to an oil lamp; Kunigunde, the wife of Henry II, was declared saint in 1200.

Bibl.: Sarre (1910), pl.164, cat. no.2095; Lamm (1929-30), pl.75,15; Bassermann-Jordan (1914), 13, no.20; Wentzel

(1972), 77a.

34a. Rock crystal base, Bamberg.

Fig.34, text, p.36.

Triangular rock crystal piece and three rock crystal lions.  
Fatimid(?).

Height of the base: 6 cm.

Height of each lion: 3.5 cm.

Length of each lion (according to the unbroken one): 4.5 cm.

Height of the triangular piece: ca.3 cm.

Width of the triangular piece: 8.5-9 cm.

Bamberg, Diocesan Museum (no. 5/14).

The rock crystal base consists of three lions (two of them are broken, namely lacking their heads and their forelegs) and a triangular carved piece which rests on the lions. A boring in the centre of the triangular piece (1 cm., diameter) probably served to hold an additional upper object. The carved decoration consists of deep symmetrical slits which leave the impression of faceted rock crystal. The lions and the triangular piece are affixed to each other with three nails.

The shape of this base recalls the base of the other rock crystal reliquary in Bamberg (cat. no.34); Therefore it was sometimes mentioned as the 'second lamp of Kunigunde'.

When and how this rock crystal base reached the Treasury of Bamberg is unknown; according to Dr. Renate Baumgärtel

from the Diocesan Museum in Bamberg this rock crystal base was never mentioned in the inventories of the Treasury.

Bibl.: Wenzel (1972), fig.77b.

### Carved pommels

#### 35. Hungarian coronation sceptre.

Fig.35.

Fatimid rock crystal ball mounted with gold sheets.

Sceptre: dated to the 12th century.

Height of the sceptre: 29.5 cm.

Diameter of the pommel: 7 cm.

Present location, after being removed to the West in 1945, is unknown.

On the three carved medallions of the pommel three crouching lions are depicted. Golden sheets decorated with delicate filigree hold the pommel; golden bands run along the three relatively deep carved spaces between the medallions. On the pommel's top is a flower-like filigree mounting the centre of which bears the Seal of Solomon. Short chains with tiny balls at their ends are hung on the flower-like upper mounting. The stem is decorated with a filigree pattern of medallions. A circular boring runs along the centre of the pommel.

According to tradition this sceptre belonged to Saint

Stephen, king of Hungary (997-1038).

A similar pommel to this one is the pommel from the collection of Prince Karl von Preussen (once kept in the Zeughaus Museum in Berlin, present location unknown); the latter is mounted on the top of a carved ivory sceptre, and its decoration consists of three birds with magnificent tails which are carved on each medallion.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.75,9; László (1974), figs.190, 192-3. For the lost pommel from Berlin see Schmidt (1912), 65, fig.14.

36.Pommel, Bamberg.

Fig.36

Fatmid rock crystal

Height: 4.5 cm.

Diameter: 7 cm.

Bamberg, Diocesan Museum (no.5/15).

Three griffins are roughly carved on the pommel. Little punctures fill the griffin's bodies. A circular boring (2 cm. in diameter) runs along the pommel's centre. A projecting rim-base is found on the lower part.

The style of carving recalls the carved griffin on the rock crystal chessman from Capua (cat. no.25).

In an early 12th century inventory of the Bamberg treasury six *nodi cristallini* were already mentioned.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.75,7; Sarre (1910), pl.164, cat. no.209; Schmidt (1912), 64-5; Bassermann-Jordan (1914), 28, no.49, fig.30. Wentzel (1972), fig.77c. For the above-mentioned inventory see Bischoff (1967), 18.

37.Otto-Mathilde Cross, Essen.

Wooden (oak) cross decorated with gold and copper plates, precious stones, filigree and enamel.

Fatimid rock crystal pommel mounted to its base.

Cologne, 971-982.

Height of the cross: 44.5 cm.

Width of the cross: 29.5 cm.

Diameter of the pommel: 7 cm.

Once in Essen, Cathedral Treasury. Present location unknown.

The cross has the form of a Latin cross. A golden three-dimensional figure of Christ is affixed to the front which is covered with gold plates, filigree and precious stones. An enamel plate affixed to the lower part, below the crucifixion, shows the two donors of this cross - Mathilde and Otto. The back is covered with engraved copper plates: the *Agnus Dei* and the symbols of the four evangelists in the centre and on the four arms respectively, and a plant motif filling the remaining spaces.

The pommel, which has the form of a melon, bears a circular boring in its centre and a projection in one of its segments. Its decoration consists of half-palmettes which run

horizontally along each of its segments. It was probably mounted to the base of the cross by the end of the 10th century, when the cross was presented to this church.

Since Mathilde was the abbess of the Münster-Stift in Essen between the years 971-1011, and her brother Otto, count of Bayern and Schwaben, died in 982, we may assume that the cross was given as a present between the years 971-982. This date is one of the earliest *termini ante quem* for an Islamic rock crystal object finding its way to the West.

Today the cross is exhibited in the treasury of the cathedral without the rock crystal pommel; the pommel has probably been lost.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30) pl.75,10; Küpper and Mikat (1966), 30-4; Pothmann, (1988), 12.

37a. Pommel, Louvain.

Fig.37.

Rock crystal sphere, metal, filigree and precious stones.

Chalice restored in 1874.

Height of the chalice: 20 cm.

Louvain, the church of Saint-Jacques.

A chalice with a relatively long stem and a circular base. The rock crystal pommel is mounted on the stem. Filigree ornaments and precious stones on the stem, above and below the pommel, and on the circular base. The decoration of the

pommel consists of four medallions, within which a quadruped is depicted; in one of the medallions a griffin is depicted. The carving is rough.

The rock crystal sphere is said to have reached Louvain from an unknown treasury in Cologne.

According to tradition it is said to be the same chalice which was brought to Louvain in 1380 enshrining the legendary "Sacrement de Miracle", a Host which was miraculously changed into flesh.

Bibl.: Philippe (1975), 6-7, figs.6-10.

38.Octagonal pommel, San Marco.

Fig.38.

Rock crystal.

Probably Fatimid.

Height: 4.8 cm.

Diameter: 4 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.139).

Octagonal chess-like piece with a central cylindrical boring. Decorative bands with carved rhombuses appear on the pommel's facets and base.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.73,1; Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.129; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.586.

Flattened bottles39. Reliquary of the Holy Thorn.

Fig.39, text, pp.33-34.

Fatimid rock crystal, gold mounting, enamel, pearls and rubies.

Ca.1460-70.

Height of the reliquary: 25.5 cm.; bottle: ca.9.5 cm.

Width: 9.4 cm.

Reims, Cathedral Treasury in the Palais du Tau.

An elaborate chalice-like reliquary. The flat rock crystal bottle is elevated on a relatively high chalice-like foot with a circular base, the rim of which is decorated with a row of pearls and rubies. Vertical gold bands studded with pearls and rubies hold the bottle. A lid with a figure of an angel who holds the Crown of Thorns in his hands surmounts the reliquary.

An inscription on the base reads: HANC SEQUIMUR SUMMIS HOEC PROEMIA DIBNA TRIUMPHIS (from here [this reliquary] we follow these dignified [if one reads DIGNA] prizes with highest triumphs).

The carving on the rock crystal bottle consists of four vertical rows with floral scrolls ending with palmettes. This decoration recalls the floral scrolls on the neck of the rock crystal reliquary of St. Madeleine (cat. no.61).

The gold mounting is signed by Guillaume Lemaistre, a



known 15th century goldsmith from Paris.

The Holy Thorn which was enshrined in the bottle was carried by the figure of an angel; this figure is today exhibited at the reliquary's side.

According to tradition this relic was given by Henry II (more probably by Henry III) to Renée de Lorraine, the first abbess of Saint-Pierre-des Dames in Reims (mentioned in the inventory of 1690).

The reliquary already appeared in an inventory from 1561: "XXII- Ung reliquaire de cristal ayant ung ange au-dessus garny d'or émaillé de blanc avec ung chapeau d'espines, led reliquaire enrichy de XL rubis et XXXIII perles estimé 2 C(escus)". It was kept in this church until the French Revolution and afterwards, in 1822, it reached the treasury of the cathedral of Reims.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.75,1; *Les trésors* (1965), cat. no.137; Gauthier (1972), 415, no.241; Bialostocki (1990), 318, no.288.

40.Ostensory reliquary, Essen.

Fig.40, text, pp.33-34.

Fatimid rock crystal, gilded silver mounting.

13th century.

Height of the reliquary: 22 cm.; bottle: 9 cm.

Width of the bottle: 6 cm.

Essen, Cathedral Treasury.

A flat and heart-shaped bottle with a short neck, the body of which is decorated with delicate carving of a fantastic plant motif with stylized palmettes. The relatively simple gilded silver mounting consists of a tripod base with a short column, flat bands which hold the bottle in its base and its neck, two bands with a thorn-like ornament which run vertically along the bottle's body and a conical lid. The bottle holds an unidentified relic wrapped in a red cloth.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.75,5; Küpper and Mikat (1966), 55-6; Wentzel (1972), fig.54; Pothmann (1988), 26; Lafontaine-Dosogne (1991), fig.12; *Salier* (1992), 346.

41.Reliquary, Assisi.

Fig.41, text, pp.33-34.

Fatimid rock crystal, metal mounting.

Venice, 13th century.

Height of the reliquary: 21 cm.; bottle: 9-10 cm.

Assisi, the church of Santa Chiara.

The heart-formed rock crystal is mounted with its head downwards on an oblong metal foot with a six-lobed base. Delicate palmette scrolls decorate the bottle. A narrow circular boring (circa 6-7 cm. long) runs from the head of the bottle toward its pointed base. The reliquary is said to enshrine within the nail of St. Chiara ("De Ungulis S. Chiara").

Bibl.: Erdmann (1940), 128-30, fig.3.; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), fig.520.

### Plates

#### 42. Plate, San Marco.

Fig.42.

Rock crystal.

Iran or Iraq(?), 9th-10th century.

Height: 5.3 cm.

Diameter: 21 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.102).

The circular bowl is decorated with half-palmette scrolls on its outer surface. The inner concave side and the bottom were left undecorated. A ring (1 cm. wide) is attached to the lower part of the bowl and serves as a base.

A similar plate to this one, probably a western copy, is also kept in San Marco (Tesoro, no.106).

The plate was probably the one mentioned in the inventory of the treasury dated to 1325, where it was described as: "Platinam unam de cristallo intaiatam" (an inlaid [incised?] crystal plate).

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.73,3; Erdmann (1940), 138, fig.20; Christie (1942), 166, fig.1; Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.126; *Der Schatz von San Marco* (1984), cat. no.29. Gabrieli and

Scerrato (1979), no.588; Curatola (1993), cat. no.53. For the above-mentioned inventory see Gallo (1967), 280.

43. Plate from the pulpit of Henry II, Aachen.

Fig.43, text, p.234.

Rock crystal.

Fatimid, 10th century.

Diameter: 17.5 cm.

Aachen, Palatine Chapel (mounted on the pulpit of Henry II).

The trefoil-shaped pulpit (height: 146 cm., width: 115 cm.) commissioned by Henry II probably before 1014, the year he was crowned in Rome, is a unique 'miscellaneous' work of art. The decorative scheme is well planned to form on the semi-circular section a huge *crux gemmata* surrounded on its four sides by the four evangelists (St. Matthew is the only one which is original). Six Alexandrian carved ivories (dated to the 6th or even the 7th century) depicting Dionysiac scenes are mounted on the two lateral wings (three ivory plaques on each side). The pulpit is richly elaborated with Byzantine(?) agate bowls (only the upper one is original), a Fatimid rock crystal cup and a plate, agate and chalcedony (onyx) chessmen, copper bowls with a leafy ornament (made following the method called *émail brun*) and precious and semi-precious stones.

A Latin inscription on the lower and the upper part of the pulpit attests that Henry II was the donor: HOC OPUS AMBONIS

AURO GEMMISQUE MICANTIS REX PIUS HEINRICUS CELESTIS HONORIS  
 ANHELUS DAPSILIS EX PROPRIO TIBI DAT SANCTISSIMA VIRGO QUO  
 PRECE SUMMA TUA SIBI MERCES FIAT USIA ("The pious King Henry,  
 who is longing for celestial honour, gives this wealthy (as  
 he is) work of a pulpit which radiates by gold and gems, to  
 You, most holy Virgin, by which, through Your highest  
 intercession, may the usual reward be given to him").

The plate is made of relatively thick rock crystal. It is  
 a circular bowl with a protruding ring-foot. The decoration  
 consists of half-palmettes and bisected palmette leaves.

It is tempting to see in this choice of rare and precious  
 objects parts of the Ottonian imperial treasure acquired by  
 Henry II in Augsburg, right after the death of Otto III, and  
 maybe even parts of the dowry which Theophano, the mother of

Otto III, brought with her from Constantinople when she  
 came to marry Otto II. But it may also have reached the  
 Ottonian treasure as trophies of the wars fought in Southern  
 Italy by Otto III and Henry II. The lack of clear-cut  
 documents leaves us only with speculations as to the rock  
 crystals' origin.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,2; Grimme (1972), cat. no.27,  
 pp.38-45; Doberer (1957); Schnitzler (1959), fig.110; Lasko  
 (1972), 125-6; Wentzel (1972), figs.72a,b,c,d.

Cups44. Cup from the pulpit of Henry II, Aachen.

Fig.44, text p.191.

All details correspond to those of the plate (cat. no.43).

Height: 7.5 cm.

It is a large cup with a wide ring-base and a thick ring-formed handle with a large extended thumb-piece. The decoration consists of half palmettes and pointed leaves.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,3; for further bibliography see the plate from Aachen (cat. no.43).

45. Chalice of Henry II, Munich.

Fig.45, text, p.191.

Fatimid rock crystal, gilded silver mounting with precious stones and a rock crystal pommel.

Mounting: probably Germany, the 12th century.

Height (with mounting): 12.8 cm.

Diameter (with handle): 12.5 cm.

Munich, *Schatzkammer der Residenz*. Formerly in the treasury of the Cathedral of Bamberg.

From the top downwards the double-handled chalice is composed of a Fatimid rock crystal cup, a rock crystal sphere and a gilded silver foot with a circular base decorated with

precious stones and enamel plaques. The three parts are connected together by a gilded silver mounting. A metal handle imitates the cup's handle with its extended thumb-piece and is mounted exactly parallel to it.

The decoration of the rock crystal cup recalls the carving on the cup from Aachen (cat. no.44).

The name of this chalice (*Heinrichkelch*) refers to the tradition which claims that this chalice belonged to Henry II.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,1; Wentzel (1972), fig.73.

46.Rock crystal foot, San Marco.

Fig.46.

Rock crystal, gilded silver mounting with enamel decoration (*verroterie cloisonnée*).

Islamic rock crystal foot, 9th-10th century.

Byzantine mounting, 10th or 11th century.

Height: 19.5 cm.

Diameter: 10 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.73).

The upper part of the chalice is made of six rock crystal plaques inlaid to a gilded silver beaker-formed mounting, the latter decorated with red and blue glass paste. The lower part of the chalice has a carved rock crystal foot. The circular base is decorated with a high relief of half-

palmette scrolls, and the cylindrical stem with ornament of vertical slots.

Though it is unlikely that the form of the foot is Islamic, the half-palmette decoration on its base is typically Islamic and found in pre-Fatimid wood and ivory carving. This might suggest the 9th or the early 10th century as the date of manufacture.

The precise function of this chalice cannot be established. The vessel appeared in an inventory from 1571: "Un gotto [a glass] de pezzi de cristallo col piede de cristallo" (crystal-glass pieces with a crystal foot).

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.84,7; *Der Schatz von San Marco* (1984), cat. no.21; Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.55; Curatola (1993), cat. no.54.

Bottles with a cylindrical or an ovoid body and a high cylindrical neck

47.The so-called 'Reliquario del Sangue miraculoso'.

Fig.47, text, pp.213-216, 228-229.

Rock crystal and gold mounting.

Bottle: probably Fatimid Egypt, ca.1000.

Mounting: Venice, before 1283.

Height with the mounting: 10 cm.

Width of the bottle: 4 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.128).



A carved bottle with a cylindrical body and a cylindrical high neck. Concave bands on the base, the shoulders and the lower and upper parts of the neck. Scrolls with half-palmette leaves facing each other are depicted on the body. A Kufic inscription on the neck reads: "blessing and glory".

The gold mounting consists of four stripes curved along the bottle forming a console-like structure underneath the bottle's base. This in turn is elevated on a chalice-like foot with a sphere and a base of two hexafoil steps, offset against each other. Birds and foliated ornaments are engraved on the foils.

The Latin inscription on the mounting reads: "HIC EST SANGUIS XPI" (this is the blood of Christ), which suggests that the Holy Blood of Christ was enshrined within. A pearl which no longer exists sealed the mouth of this bottle.

This precious reliquary was hung by a silver chain (measuring more than three meters in length) around the neck of the archdeacon of San Marco on Good Friday.

It is difficult to answer how and from where the Holy Blood reached the Treasury of San Marco. Despite the probability, considering the fluid character of this relic, that the Islamic bottle served from the beginning as a container for it, there is no evidence for the existence of this important reliquary in the East. In the account of Robert de Clari (born in 1170, died in ca.1216), who took part in the Fourth Crusade and thus in the sack of Constantinople in 1204, we are told about a phial with the

blood of Christ which might be this same reliquary of the Miraculous Blood from San Marco.

The reliquary might have been the one mentioned in the inventory of 1283: "In primis ampulla una de christallo in qua est sanguis Salvatoris Nostri Jesu Christi, ornata auro et una perla desuper, et est in quadam ecclesia argenti" (first, there is a crystal bottle in which the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ is [kept] and which is decorated with gold and surmounted by a pearl, and it is [the bottle] in a silver church?).

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.69; Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.128; Hahnloser (1959), fig.25; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.587; Gauthier (1986), 65. For the account of Robert de Clari, see *Der Schatz von San Marco* (1984), 68. For the above-mentioned inventory see Gallo (1967), 273.

#### 48. Reliquary, San Lorenzo.

Fig.48.

Fatimid rock crystal, metal 'Renaissance' mounting.

Height: 29 cm., the bottle- 24,5 cm.

Florence, the church of San Lorenzo (inv. 1945, no.2).

A relatively oblong body widens slightly towards its shoulders. Accentuated rims on the base and the lower and upper parts of the neck. On the body pairs of birds looking backwards to each other and bordered by upper and lower rows

which consist of pairs of half-palmettes. On the neck a row of half-palmette leaves. A Kufic inscription on the shoulders reads: "And happiness and grace and comfort and continuance and everlasting glory."

The probably 16th-century mounting bears the Medici arms and the emblem of Cosimo I. The inscription on the lower part of the lid reads "COSMUS MED. FLOREN. ET SENARUM DVXII.D.D."

Bibl.: Erdmann (1940), 125-7, fig.1; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.538; Grote (1980), cat. no.21; Curatola (1993), cat. no.57 (fig.56).

#### 49. Reliquary, San Lorenzo.

Fig.49.

Fatimid rock crystal, silver mounting.

Mounting: Italy, 16th century.

Height with mounting: 29 cm.; bottle: 15 cm.

Florence, the church of San Lorenzo (inv. 1945, no.3).

The cylindrical rock crystal bottle is mounted in order to serve as a handled pitcher. A snake-formed handle and a dragon-like spout are attached to its sides, and a hexafoil chalice-like foot serves as a relatively high base. The mouthpiece is sealed with a pointed lid on which a pearl is mounted.

A decorative band of birds in oval frames with grooved decoration is carved on the body of the bottle. Two carved

lions facing each other adorn the neck.

The Latin inscription, which is affixed to the relic and reads: "COSTA S. ERINAE VIRG", suggests that a holy relic (a rib) of a saint (Saint Catherine?) is enshrined within.

The reliquary was probably given to the church of San Lorenzo by Pope Clement VII in 1533.

Bibl.: Erdmann (1940), 127-8, fig.2; Braun (1940), pl.2,7; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.540; *Europa und der Orient* (1989), fig.219; Grote (1980), cat. no.22; Curatola (1993), cat. no.56 (fig.57).

#### 50. Reliquary of San Paolino, Capua.

Fig.50.

Fatimid rock crystal, metal mounting.

Capua, Diocesan Museum.

The globular body of the bottle is mounted on a tripod metal base, each leg of which is cast in the form of an acanthus leaf. The decoration on the bottle consists of pointed leaves.

Relics of St. Paolino, bishop of Capua (835-843), are enshrined within this vessel.

Bibl.: Lipinsky (1970), figs.3,4; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.449.

51. Reliquary of Santa Brigida, Capua.

Fig.51.

Rock crystal, original silver Seljuq mounting with a niello decoration.

Egypt(?), 11th century.

Capua, Diocesan Museum.

The bottle has an ovoid body and a faceted long neck. A tear-drop motif, half palmettes and lanceolate leaves are carved on its surface. The silver Seljuq mounting consists of a flower-like base, a right-angled handle and a heart-shaped lid, all decorated in the niello technique. Half-palmette leaves and the typical Seljuq motif of the three-lobed leaf with the central elongated foil adorn the elaborate mounting.

This reliquary, which retains its original Seljuq mounting, is important for two reasons: first, if we consider that the vessel was carved and mounted in the same region, it might suggest that other rock crystal carving centres, besides those mentioned by al-Bīrūnī, namely Egypt and Basra, existed; second, it suggests that the accentuated rims and concave borders on the majority of rock crystal vessels served to hold elaborate metal mountings.

Bibl.: Lipinsky (1970), figs.1,2; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), 503-4 (with a drawing of this vessel).

52.Bottle reliquary, Halberstadt.

Fig.52.

Fatimid rock crystal, gilded silver filigree mounting and precious stones.

Mounting: Germany, 13th century.

Height: 17 cm.

Halberstadt, Cathedral Treasury (no.49).

The bottle has a globular body and an oblong cylindrical neck. The decoration on both consists of scrolls of half-palmettes and lanceolate leaves. Accentuated rims are on the lower and uppers of the body and the neck.

Rich ornamented gilded silver bands are mounted on the base, the lower part of the neck and the mouthpiece.

According to tradition the bottle enshrines some holy relics of the Virgin. It was probably brought by Konrad of Krosigk, the bishop of Halberstadt (1202-8), who returned from the Holy Land and Constantinople in 1205 with a large number of remarkable relics.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.67,12; Braun (1940), pl.1,3; Wenzel (1971), fig.9.

53.Chalice of St.-Denis.

Fig.53, text, p.191.

Fatimid rock crystal, gilded silver mounting, filigree and precious stones.

Mounting: France, 11th century.

The chalice belonged to the Treasury of St.-Denis. It was exhibited in the Louvre in 1793 and in 1798, after the French Revolution, it was sold to an anonymous person; since then it has disappeared.

The chalice, about which we are able to learn only through a water-colour from the Album of Peiresc (Paris, Bibl.nat. Est.Aa 53, fol.95), is of elaborate double-handled form. The globular body of a Fatimid rock crystal bottle with a high neck was recarved to form a cup-like vessel. This was mounted on its lower and upper parts with a gilded silver mounting to which two curved handles were affixed, all studded with precious stones. The foot consists of a rock crystal sphere and a gilded silver circular base with precious stones.

Scrolls of half-palmettes and lanceolate leaves, similar to those on the Halberstadt bottle (cat. no.52), are carved on the rock crystal vessel.

The form of this chalice recalls the double-handled chalice of Henry II from Munich (cat. no.45).

Bibl.: Montesquiou-Fezensac (1977), III, 51-2, pl.34; *Le trésor de Saint-Denis* (1991), cat. no.25.

54. 'Jarra de Nuestra Señora', Astorga.

Fig.54.

Fatimid rock crystal, gilded silver mounting.

Mounting: Spain, 17th century.

Height with the mounting: 26 cm.; bottle: 10 cm.

Astorga (León), Cathedral Treasury.

The globular body of the bottle, the neck of which is broken, was mounted on a 17th century reliquary. Scrolls of half-palmettes and lanceolate leaves are carved on its body. Two decorative bands, a variation on the classical bead and reel motif, appear on the lower part and on the shoulders.

The reliquary is also called: "cáliz de santo Torobio", a 5th-century saint.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.67,11; Gómez Moreno (1951), 341, fig.403b.

55. Broken piece, Conques.

Fig.55.

Rock crystal, probably part of a cylindrical bottle.

Fatimid.

Height: 10 cm.

Conques (Aveyron), the piece was found in the 12th-century reliquary casket of Ste. Foy.

A relatively big piece of the cylindrical body of a vessel. Scrolls of half-palmettes and a tear-drop ornament are delicately carved in high relief. Carved rims mark the upper and lower parts of the piece.



The decorative scheme recalls the ornament on the cylindrical rock crystal bottle of the Miraculous Blood in San Marco (cat. no.47).

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,6.

56.Foot of a chalice, the collection of Louis XIV.

Fig.56.

Fatimid(?) rock crystal, crystal cup and gilded silver mounting.

Mounting and the crystal cup: France, 13th century.

Height: 22 cm.; the Fatimid piece: 10 cm.

Paris, Louvre, (MR.296), formerly in the Treasury of St.-Denis.

This hybrid chalice is composed of a French globular cup mounted on a rock crystal foot. The foot is probably the neck and the uppermost cylindrical body, i.e. the shoulders, of a typical rose-water bottle. The base of the foot is decorated in the Fatimid manner presenting crouching ibexes in high relief.

Bibl.: Migeon (1927), 108, fig.275; Lamm (1929-30), pl.67,8;  
*Der Schatz von San Marco* (1984), fig.30f.

Pear-shaped vessels

57. Ewer of al-`Azīz-billāh.

Fig.57, text, pp.80-81.

Rock crystal, gold and enamel.

Fatimid, 975-996.

Metal mounting: 16 century or later.

Height: 23 cm.; vase: 18 cm.

Width: 12.5 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.80).

Among the pear-shaped vessels this ewer is the best-preserved one; its form is undamaged, still retaining its delicate handle with its thumb-piece.

The decoration on its body consists of elaborate foliage flanked by two seated lions (lynxes?) the neck of which are held by a collar. The handle, though made out of a solid piece, leaves the impression of a vertebra-like handle, pierced with five circular holes. The thumb-piece has the shape of an ibex.

The Kufic inscription on the top of the bottle's body reads: "blessing from Allāh for the Imām al-`Azīz-billāh". This enables us to date this ewer between 975-996.

The later golden mounting is attached to the inner part of the ewer's handle and to its base. The latter is a tripod base with winged hoof-shaped feet.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.67,1; Erdmann (1953), 189-205, fig.49; D.S. Rice (1956), fig.2; Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.124; *Der Schatz von San Marco* (1984), cat. no.30; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.592; Grabar (1992), 142-3; Curatola (1993), cat. no.61.

58.Ewer without a handle, San Marco.

Fig.58.

Rock crystal, nielloed and gilded silver mounting.

Fatimid, Egypt.

Mounting: Venice(?), 13th century.

Height: 28 cm.; ewer: 17.5 cm.

Width: 10.5 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.86).

A pear-shaped rock crystal ewer. With its gilded silver mounting it was completely transformed into an oblong pitcher bearing an elaborate handle in the form of a winged dragon and an elegant spout terminated with the head of a snake. The Fatimid crystal ewer (the handle was probably recarved in order to fit the new setting) is densely decorated with a fantastic plant flanked by two crouching rams looking backwards. The delicate carving recalls the decoration of the ewer of al-`Aziz (cat. no.57) and of that of the ewer from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (no.7904-1862). Little pierced dots which appear on the animals and the foliage of the three vessels might have served for the

insertion of precious stones.

The rich metal mounting representing dense inhabited scrolls and foliage is probably piece of 'oriental' metalwork which perhaps originated from artistic centres like Limoges, North Germany (Rhine) or even Venice.

The ewer might have been mentioned for the first time among other crystal vessels in an inventory of 1325: "Ampulletas tres de cristallo, varnitas arg(ent)o" (Three small crystal bottles mounted with silver).

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.67,2; D.S. Rice (1956), fig.10; Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.125; *Der Schatz von San Marco* (1984), cat. no.31; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.591; Curatola (1993), cat. no.60. For the inventory see Gallo(1967), 278.

59. Ewer, Fermo.

Fig.59.

Fatimid Egypt.

Metal mounting: 18th century.

Height: 16.7 cm.

Fermo, Cathedral Treasury.

A pear-shaped ewer the handle, neck and spout of which were lost, bears a metal lid and circular metal base. Two birds flanking elaborate foliage are carved on the ewer's body.

A Kufic inscription, read by Ignazio Guidi in 1898 as: "baraka wa surūr bis-sayyid al-malik al-mansūr", which led Lamm to associate it with the Fatimid caliph al-Hākim (996-1021) or al-Āmir (1101-1131), was reread by D.S.Rice, who proposed the following anonymous dedication: "baraka wa surūr as-sayyid al-mu('a)yyad al-mansūr".

The ewer contains the relic of St. Ceseno.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.67,7; Erdmann (1953), 189-205, fig.60; D.S. Rice (1956), 91, fig.9; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.521; Curatola (1993), cat. no.58.

60. Ewer, St.-Denis.

Fig.60, text, pp.81-83.

Rock crystal, gold filigree lid.

Fatimid Egypt; lid: Italy, 11th century.

Height: 24 cm. ewer: 21 cm.

Maximal width: 13.5 cm.

Paris, Louvre (MR.333). Until 1793 it was kept in the Treasury of St.-Denis.

The ewer resembles in its shape and its carving technique the three above-mentioned ewers (cat. nos.57,58,59). It is in relatively good condition (only the thumb-piece is missing). The composition is less dense than the other ewers and consists of two birds and an elaborate plant motif.

The Kufic inscription which runs along the upper part of

the ewer's body reads: "Blessing and joy and [sic] to its owner".

The gold filigree tear-drop lid recalls the gold filigree decoration of Fatimid jewellery.

Scholars would like to identify this vessel with the *lagena* (flagon) mentioned by Abbot Suger in his *De Administratione* [Panofsky 1971], 78-9]. According to Abbot Suger this vessel was presented to him by Count Thibault de Champagne around 1140. The latter in turn had received it from King Roger II of Sicily.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.67,3; D.S. Rice (1956), fig.8; Montesquiou-Fezensac (1977), 44-5, pl.26-7; *Le trésor de St.-Denis* (1991), cat. no.26. On Fatimid jewellery see Jenkins (1988), 39-57.

61. 'Reliquary Burette of St. Madeleine'.

Fig.61.

Rock crystal, gilded silver and nielloed silver mounting and stamped copper sub-foot.

Fatimid Egypt. The silver mounting: Byzantium or Moorish Spain, 12th century.

Height: 28 cm.; ewer: 18 cm.

Milhaguet (France, Haute-Vienne), church treasury (until 1790 in the treasury of the Abbey of Grandmont, Haute-Vienne). The reliquary was stolen from the Museum of Limoges in 1980 and since then has not been recovered.

An ovoid-shaped ewer with a short neck and a tear-drop mouth; the handle is broken. Two eagles seen in profile adorn the ewer's body while scrolls adorn its neck; they are similar to the scrolls on the reliquary of the Holy Thorn from Reims (cat. no.39). The decoration of the nielloed silver mounting on the base, the shoulders and the convex lid consists of lozenge patterns, bands of half-palmettes and rows of pointed leaves.

Four medallions depicting Christian motifs (the Crucifixion, the Virgin, St. Martial and St. Valeria) are depicted on the base of the chalice-like sub-foot with its rock crystal knob.

The reliquary is already mentioned in the inventory of 1495 (no.33), and later in many others; among them that of 1616 is the most detailed. These inventories mention the various relics enshrined within: a small bone of *Sancti Sylvestri*, a tooth of St. John, and a lock of St. Catherine's or of Mary Magdalen's hair.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.67,6; *Les trésors* (1965), cat. no.368, pl.73; Lightbown (1968), fig.8; *Arts de l'Islam* (1971), cat. no.271; *The Arts of Islam* (1976), cat. no.112; Gauthier (1986), no.14.

62.Ewer, the Hermitage.

Fig.62.

Fatimid rock crystal, possibly 11th century.

modern mounting.

St. Petersburg, Hermitage Museum (no.5399). Ex-Stroganoff Collection. The ewer is reported to have been found under the altar of a ruined church near Cologne. The ewer was acquired in 1868 by A. Reichensperger and afterwards reached the collection of Stroganoff in Rome. It was given as a present to the Hermitage Museum by Princess Štšerbatova.

A pear-shaped ewer with a right-angled handle, a large tubular opening without a spout and a relatively high base. Two confronted lions are carved on the body, and a row of half-palmette scrolls adorns the neck.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.67,5; Wentzel (1972), fig.74.

Bottles or pendants in the form of two birds of prey

63. Pendant, Quedlinburg.

Fig.63.

Rock crystal, silver.

Early Fatimid or Ikhshidid.

Mounting: Germany, 13th and 14th century.

Height (with mounting): 18 cm.; bottle: ca.17 cm., (The lower part is damaged).

Width: 10.5 cm.

Quedlinburg, Church Treasury, St. Servatius. The reliquary was stolen from Quedlinburg during the first weeks after the



end of World War II, and returned to the treasury in 1992.

The pendant presents in its form an amalgam between a cylindrical bottle with straight shoulders and a heart-shaped bottle. The cylindrical bottle with its long cylindrical neck is flanked by two stylized birds of prey turning outwards. A tubular boring runs from the birds' heads up to the lower part of their bodies; thus the pendant has three separate containers. Though the lower part of the pendant is broken, it is quite certain that it had a pointed base. Carved half-palmettes adorn the surface of this vessel.

The pendant enshrines different relics of Christ, and, according to Lamm (1929-30), the milk of the Virgin Mary. It might have been part of the donation of Otto III (983-1002) to Quedlinburg abbey.

It is difficult to discover what the original function of this pendant was. Erdmann (1953) compared this piece to two other similar rock crystal pendants, the Weissenau and the Chenou pendants (cat. nos.64,65), and pointed to the similarity between them and a 15th-century necklace from Granada (The Metropolitan Museum, 17.190.160). According to him this necklace may embody some memory of an earlier practice of hanging rock crystal pendants of this kind around the neck.

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), fig.15; Lamm (1929-30), pl.75,3; Erdmann (1953a), 299-303, fig.17; Wentzel (1972), fig.50c;

Kötzsche (1992), cat. no.10.

64. The 'Sacred Blood' reliquary, Weissenau.

Fig.64, text, pp.213-216.

Rock crystal, silver mounting.

Egypt, 11th century.

Silver mounting: 1709 (the cross on the top is datable to the 16th century).

Height: 28 cm.; rock crystal pendant: 15 cm.

Weissenau (near Ravensburg); in the possession of the former convent chapel of Weissenau.

It shares the same form as the Quedlinburg pendant (the pointed lower part is not damaged, and the neck is relatively wide). The rock crystal is hidden behind a rich silver mounting which makes it possible to hang it with a chain over the neck.

According to tradition this rock crystal was brought by Mary Magdalene to the South of France, and later by King Dagobert to Strasbourg where it remained for 600 years. In 1283 Rudolf of Habsbourg, who received it from the citizens of Strasbourg as a token of gratitude, presented it to the convent chapel of Weissenau.

According to the Latin inscription on the metal ring which was once mounted to this rock crystal, the vessel served to house the sacred blood of Christ, a particle of the Holy Cross and a hair of Mary ("De sanguine Domini. De S. Cruce.

De capillis B. Mariae").

Bibl.: Erdmann (1953a), figs.15,16,18.

65. Pendant reliquary, the Chenou Collection.

Fig.65, text, pp.213-216.

Rock crystal, gilded silver mounting.

Fatimid Egypt.

Mounting: probably South Italy, 14th century.

Height: ca.30 cm.; rock crystal pendant: ca.20 cm.

According to Lamm the rock crystal was on the art market in 1929 and since then it has disappeared. In 1884 it was part of the collection of Madame Chenou in Paris. A drawing which appeared in 1884 in *Revue de l'Art chrétien* is the only visual information we possess about this reliquary.

It shares the same form as the Quedlinburg and Weissenau pendants. The Latin inscription on the gilded silver mounting reads: "DE SANGUINE DNI DE S.CCE DE CAPILLIS S.MARIE." ; thus it contained the same relics as the above-mentioned ones in the crystal pendant from Weissenau (cat. no.64).

The rock crystal supposedly belonged to a German church.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.75,4; Erdmann (1953a), fig.19.

Carved rock crystals of unusual forms66. Lamp, the Hermitage Museum.

Fig.66.

Fatimid rock crystal.

Formerly mounted with an Italian 15th-century gilded silver and enamel.

Length: 22 cm.

St. Petersburg, Hermitage Museum (EG 938).

A boat-shaped lamp with a projecting handle (partially broken). Delicate decoration of half-palmette scrolls emerge out of horn-like motif. The ring-foot suggests this lamp was an oil lamp with a stand similar to the usual oil lamps (mainly of bronze) called *sirāj*.

Like many other rock crystal vessels this lamp reached the West, where it was mounted in the 15th century, probably in Italy, and served as a goblet.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,5; *The Arts of Islam* (1976), cat. no.109; Grabar and Ettinghausen (1987), fig.180; *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/10.

67. Chalice, San Marco.

Fig.67.

Rock crystal, filigree mounting with precious stones.

Iraq(?), late 10th century.

Mounting: Venice, the second half of the 13th century.

Height: 49 cm., rock crystal: 35 cm.

Diameter: 17 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.99).

This is one of the biggest Islamic rock crystal pieces. It is an oblong cylindrical vessel with accentuated upper rims and two deep carved decorative bands on the upper and lower parts of its body. A bulge at the bottom of the vessel was recarved in the second half of the 13th century, as the vessel was intended to serve as a libation vase (today it is concealed by the filigree mounting). The lower decorative band, measuring 7.5 cm., recalls the marble friezes from the Throne Room of the Jausaq al-Khaqani in Samarra (ca.836); this motif was also used in the decorative friezes above the arcades of the mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo (completed 879).

The upper band, 7.8 cm wide, consists of a carved Kufic inscription which reads: "Permanent power and complete excellence and safety to our lord".

The elaborate mounting consisting of a base, a dome-like lid and two curved handles, attached to the upper and the lower part of the rock crystal vessel with filigree bands, suggests a double-handled vase.

The vessel is mentioned in an inventory of 1325: "Feriale unum (a lamp) de cristallo varnitum, cum pede et capite argenti" (one crystal lamp with a foot and a cover made of silver).

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,17; Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.123; *Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.590; Der Schatz von San Marco (1984), cat. no.36; Curatola (1993), cat. no.55.* For the inventory see Gallo (1967), 278.

68.Bell-shaped vessel, Hanover.

Fig.68.

Fatimid rock crystal.

Height: 10.1 cm.

Diameter (upper rim): 8.4 cm.

Hanover, Kestner Museum (WM,XXI,a,28a).

This bell-shaped vessel has a projecting cylindrical base. The rims are strongly accentuated, and the decoration with scrolls of palmette leaves is carved in high relief. The upper rim is heavily damaged. The vessel resembles a bell-shaped Islamic candlestick. Thus it is possible that its projecting cylindrical part served to hold a candle.

The rock crystal was used as a relic container in the treasury of the Cloister of St. Michaelis in Lüneburg (Lower Saxony).

According to an inventory dated to 1699, the Hanover vessel was mounted in gold and was presented to the cloister by Hermann Billung, who received his Saxon ducal title in 961 from King Henry II.

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), fig.27 (regarded as glass); Lamm

(1929-30), pl.61,16 (regarded as glass); Stuttman (1937), 38-9; Allen (1987), cat. no.19.

69.Ostensory reliquary, Emmerich.

Figs.69,69a.

Rock crystal, gilded silver mounting.

Fatimid(?).

Mounting: probably Cologne, 14th century.

Height: 37.8 cm.; rock crystal: ca.10 cm.

Emmerich, Church Treasury, St. Martini. Formerly belonged to the treasury of St. Vitus in Hochelten.

This tower-like monstrance reliquary stands on a chalice foot with a hexalobed base. The flattened conical rock crystal beaker, containing the relic of St. Hippolytus, is carved in high relief. Rhombuses filled with curved lines of soft and bevelled cut adorn the four facets of the beaker. The narrow base (foot?), enclosed by the mounting, is broken (recarved?).

The decoration of this beaker is unique. The bevelled method of cutting recalls the abstract motif on the little Fatimid bottle in the Victoria & Albert Museum (M 78-1910).

How this beaker reached the church of Hochelten is difficult to say. Wenzel (1973) would like to see in this vessel a gift from the Ottonian royal treasury, formerly the property of Otto II and his wife Theophano or of their son, Otto III.

Bibl.: Erdmann (1940), fig.22 (with the projecting base); Wenzel (1973), 49-50, fig.10; Lemmens (1983), cat. no.H11 (with extensive bibl.); Allen (1987), cat. no.18.

70.Two candlesticks, San Marco.

Figs.70,70a.

Rock crystal, silver.

Egypt, 9th century.

Mounting: Italy, 16th century.

Height (with mounting): 46 cm.

Diameter of base; 23 cm.

Height of rock crystals: first: 21 cm.; second: 19 cm.

Diameter of rock crystals: first: 8.5 cm.; second: 9 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, nos.24, 25).

A sphere and a baluster-shaped rock crystals were used for the shafts of two silver candlesticks. The decoration consists of rows of heart-shaped tendrils, each of which carries a pointed leaf.

Erdmann (1951) pointed to the stylistic differences between the two, and proposed a different dating for each of them.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.75,11; Erdmann (1940), 142, figs.23-4; Erdmann (1951), 144-5, figs.3-6; Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.121-2; Curatola (1993), cat. nos.51,52.



71.Rock crystal reliquary, Messina.

Fig.71.

Rock crystal and brass.

Fatimid, Egypt(?).

Mounting: Byzantium, 11th century.

Messina, Church Treasury.

This rock crystal vessel has a globular fluted body with a narrow pointed base and accentuated rims. With its opening downwards it was mounted on a circular metal base supported by three short legs. A pointed metal piece crowned with a metal cross is attached to its top.

The fluted rock crystal vessel has a unique form. Its original function is not clear (lamp?).

It served as a reliquary in the church of Messina.

Bibl.: Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.289.

72.Crescent of al-Zāhir, Nuremberg.

Fig.72, text, pp.83-84.

Rock crystal, gilded silver mounting.

Egypt, 1021-36.

Mounting: Venice, 1350.

Height: 41 cm.

Diameter of the crescent: ca.19 cm.; thickness: 4.3 cm.

Nuremberg, *Germanisches Nationalmuseum* (KG 695). Formerly in the *Burgkapelle* in Vienna.

This ring-shaped rock crystal is one of the few rock crystals which enables us clearly to assign it to the Fatimid period. A Kufic inscription, deciphered by von Karabacek, bears the name of the Fatimid caliph "Al-Zāhir li-i`zāz dīn Allāh" (1021-36). The ring was mounted in the 14th century to a monstrance or ostensory reliquary in Venice. The crystal serves as a precious oval frame for the rectangular transparent plaque in which a relic is enshrined; both are elevated on an oblong foot with a Gothic-like structure and an elaborate lobed base.

The original function of this piece is unknown. Different speculations, like its forming the upper part of a spear carried on official occasions or its adorning the harness of the caliph's horse, have been put forward by various scholars.

Bibl.: Von Karabacek (1913); Lamm (1929-30), pl.75,21; Hahnloser (1959), 133-140, fig.24; Lightbown (1968), figs.6,7; Grabar and Ettinghausen (1987), fig.178.

73. 'La Grotta della Vergine', San Marco.

Fig.73, text, p.190.

Rock crystal, gilded silver, enamel and precious stones.

Egypt, 11th century (Fatimid or Coptic) rock crystal; crown of Leon VI (886-911) and a 13th-century statue of the Virgin.

Height: 20 cm.; rock crystal: 15.8 X 13.7 cm.

Diameter: 13 cm.

Height of the statue: 9 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.116).

This object is made of three different parts: a rock crystal carved to form a five-sided niche, a crown with 14 enamelled medallions (six of them are lost), each of them surrounded with pearls and separated by two triangular precious stones, and a gilded silver statue of the Virgin standing on a low platform with open arms.

The decoration of the rock crystal consists of a 'fantastic' structure with its pilasters and Ionic capitals. A shield(?), a spear, a sword and a foliated unidentified object intermittently appear between the pilasters.

The rock crystal was probably mounted upside down; a boring in the centre of the original base might have fulfilled a specific function in the former state of this carved rock crystal.

Though the carving is cut in a very low relief, the foliage motifs and their bevelled cut suggest Fatimid Egypt as place of origin.

The Byzantine crown, probably a votive crown which was meant to be hung, is surmounted with two little bronze peacock (the third one is missing). The peacock might also be the product of Fatimid craftsmanship. The loops attached to their hind parts suggest that the object was designed for suspension. The rings affixed to the lower part of the crown served to hold pendants.

The object was probably mentioned for the first time in the inventory of 1325: "Ecclesiolam unam de cristallo furnitam arg(ent)o deaur(at)o" (One small crystal church with gilded silver mounting).

According to the account of Robert de Clari (1170-1216), cited by Lamm (1929-30), a reliquary similar to this one was brought back after the Fourth Crusade. Robert de Clari describes a lens-shaped rock crystal reliquary containing a wooden statue of the Virgin, made out of a piece of the Holy Cross.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.76,1, p.214; Christie (1942), 167-8, fig.2; *Der Schatz von San Marco* (1984), cat. no.8. For the above-mentioned inventory see Gallo (1967), 278.

74.Reliquary casket, Hôtel de Cluny.

Fig.74.

Rock crystal plaques, gilded silver, filigree and precious stones.

Egypt(?), 11th century; casket: Germany, the 13th century.

Length: 11 cm.

Width: 15 cm.

Height: 10 cm.

Paris, Musée National des Thermes et de l'Hôtel de Cluny (Cl.11 661). Formerly kept in the church of Moûtiers-en-Tarentaise in Savoie.

This is a rectangular casket decorated with filigree work and studded with precious stones (among which are two little ivories in which angels are carved). Four little columns with Corinthian capitals are affixed to its corners, and four different rock crystal plaques form its four transparent facets. An oval rock crystal cabochon is mounted on its upper part.

A stylized tree is carved on each of the two long plaques; on one of them it is flanked by ibexes and on the other by hares. Running dogs are carved on the two shorter plaques. The decoration is carved in soft and low-cut relief.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.67,10; *Arts de l'Islam* (1971), cat. no.270; *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/9.

75.Reliquary of the Nail of the Cross, Essen.

Fig.75.

Wood faced with gold sheets, filigree work, enamel and studded with precious stones (among them an oval rock crystal stone with a Kufic inscription), rock crystal disc and metal staff.

Monstrance reliquary: 10th century.

Metal staff and crown-like ornament: 14th century.

Height: 13 cm.

Width: 11.7 cm.

Essen, Cathedral Treasury.

A wooden frame covered with gold sheets of filigree work and studded with precious stones, decorate a smooth rectangular rock crystal piece (6.3 x 5 cm.), behind which the Nail of the Cross is enshrined. A trefoil arch-like structure is mounted on the top of it (probably a later addition), and a 14th century staff is affixed to its lower part.

An oval rock crystal piece on which the Arabic name Muhammad ibn Musa is inscribed (7 mm. long) is mounted on the back of the reliquary, in the lower row of the precious stones.(the second from left).

A Latin inscription inside the reliquary reads: "QUI XPM PASSU CREDITIS HIC CERNITE CLAVUM" (You, who believe in Christ and His passion, see the nail here).

The studded frame recalls the decoration of the Theophano Cross (kept in the same church, cat. no.16). Thus the reliquary can be dated to the 11th century.

The rock crystal stone with the Arabic name was probably removed from a ring and reused to adorn this important reliquary.

Bibl.: Küpper and Mikat (1966), 67-9; Pothmann (1988), 16; Salier (1992), 353.

76.Pendant, Quedlinburg.

Fig.76, text, 213-216.

Rock crystal and gilded silver mounting.

Egypt, Fatimid.

Mounting: Germany, the band with the inscription- 1230-1250, the rest-15th century.

Height: 9.2 cm., (without the ring).

Width: 7.3 cm.

Thickness: 3 cm.

The reliquary was stolen from the cathedral treasury of Quedlinburg during the first weeks after the end of World War II. Present location unknown.

This is a triangular flattened rock crystal piece decorated with carved half-palmettes. It was mounted with metal clasps to be hung as a pendant. Different holy relics were kept inside the boring. The Latin inscription on the clasps reads: DE SA(N)G(u)I(n)E. D(omi)NI. S(ANCTISSIMO). S(=C)I(n)GULO. S(ANCTE) MAR(ie) ET VEST(ibus). DE. CORP(or)IB(us). S(anctorum). NICOLAI. SEV(e)RI. BA(=E)NEDICTI ("[relics] from the blood of the Lord, of the most holy girdle [belt] and the garments of Saint Mary, from the bodies of the Saints: Nicholas, Severus, Benedict.").

The rock crystal, though relatively big, recalls the oriental shape of a pawn (*baydhaq*), but it is most probably a body of a flattened heart-shaped bottle like the one from Essen (cat. no.40).

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), fig.17; Lamm (1929-30), pl.68,13 (with extensive bibl.); Wentzel (1972), figs.50a,b; Kötzsche (1992), cat. no.57.

II. GLASSRelief cut glass vessels

77. Turquoise glass bowl, San Marco.

Fig.77, text, pp.84-89.

Opaque turquoise glass, gold, gilded silver, enamel and filigree plaques.

Probably Iran, 10th century.

Mounting: inner- 10th century; outer- Byzantium, 12th and 13th century.

Height: 6 cm.

Diameter: upper- 18.6 cm.; lower- 7.4 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.140).

The bowl is fashioned into five lobes, each of them decorated with the figure of a running hare cut in low relief and bounded by a raised ridge. The word "Khurāsān", written in Kufic letters, is carved in relief under its foot.

The mounting consists of several plaques of different materials and artistic techniques. The 10th-century inner mounting is made of gold and it bears an engraving of palmette leaves within interlaced medallions. The gilded silver outer mounting consists of Byzantine enamel and filigree plaques; the latter are decorated with semi-precious stones and were probably made in the West (datable to the 12th or the 13th century).



According to tradition the bowl was sent as a present to the Signoria of Venice in 1472 by the Turkoman ruler Uzun Hasan (died 1478).

Though made out of opaque turquoise glass and not out of turquoise, the bowl might be the one mentioned in the inventory of 1325: "scutelam unam de turchese varnitam argento deaurato" (one bowl [made out] of turquoise mounted with gilded silver).

Bibl.: Conway (1914), 140-5; Lamm (1929-30), pl.58,23; Charleston (1942), 217, fig.4; Erdmann (1953), 194, fig.54; Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.117; Gallo (1967), 206-12; *Der Schatz von San Marco* (1984), cat. no.28; Curatola (1993), cat. no.26; for the above-mentioned inventory see Gallo (1967), 278.

78.Green glass bowl, San Marco.

Fig.78.

Green glass, gilded silver and precious stones.

Attributed to Iraq, 8th-9th century.

Mounting: Byzantium, 11th century.

Height (with mounting): 18.5 cm.; bowl: 7 cm.

Diameter of mounted base: 10.5 cm.; bowl (upper rim): 13.1 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.76).

A hemispherical bowl decorated with four figures of

running hares. Accentuated rims. Though the carving is relatively rough, the decoration recalls that of the opaque turquoise bowl (cat. no.77). The bowl stands on a chalice-like foot with a circular base studded with precious stones. It is held by gilded silver bands on which precious stones are mounted. These bands run from the bowl's base to its upper rim. The latter is mounted with a relatively large band which bears the Greek inscription: (tout)O EC(=s)TI TO A(ima mou)- (this is my blood); the Byzantine liturgical formula for the consecration of wine during a mass. This suggests that the bowl was used as a chalice during the Eucharist.

The chalice might be the one mentioned in the inventory of 1325: "Calicem unum viridem ornatum argento" (one green chalice decorated with silver).

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.58,5; Oliver (1961), 26,28; Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.118 (with extensive bibl.); Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.585; Curatola (1993), cat. no.27. For a colour chronology of Islamic glass see Kolbas (1983), 95-100. For the above-mentioned inventory see Gallo (1967), 278.

79.Translucent red-ruby glass bowl, San Marco.

Fig.79.

Glass, gilded silver, filigree with pearls and precious stones.

The red-ruby glass: Egypt or Iran, 9th-10th century.

Mounting: Venice, 13th century.

Length (with mounting: 20 cm.; bowl: 18 cm.

Width (with mounting): 12 cm.; bowl: 10.5 cm.

Height (with mounting): 18 cm.; bowl: 5.2 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.46).

It is an elongated oval bowl of ruby colour which stands on an oval ring foot. A scutiform piece (similar to the scutiform pieces which appear on the so-called 'molar-tooth' bottles, see cat nos.12-17) appears on the outer wall of the long side of the bowl. The simple decoration consists of carvings of astragal motifs and spirals.

The bowl is mounted on a chalice-like mounting which consists of a foot with a circular base and a sphere, a fluted band which runs along the upper rim of the bowl and of four bands which are affixed to the upper part of the foot and to the lower part of the fluted band. Precious stones and pearls are inlaid between the filigree ornament of these mountings.

Bibl.: Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.119; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), p.485; Curatola (1993), cat. no.28.

80. Beaker, San Marco.

Fig.80.

Attributed to Egypt, 10th century.

Height: 13 cm.

Diameter (upper rim): 15 cm.

Venice, Treasury of San Marco (Tesoro, no.117).

A bell-shaped beaker made of a translucent light green glass. A narrow circular ring foot. The decoration consists of three striding lions with tails curling over their backs. The carving is deep.

The stylized lions recall the deep carved lions which appear on some of the so-called 'Hedwig glasses' (for an example see the beaker from Nuremberg, cat. no.92).

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl. 61,17; Oliver (1961), 20,28 (with some other comparisons of cut glass vessels); Hahnloser (1971), cat. no.120; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.584; Curatola (1993), cat. no.59.

81. Goblet, The Vatican.

Fig.81.

Glass and metal cover (lead?).

Glass: Egypt or South Italy.

Rome, The Vatican, Museo Sacro. Belonged to the church of S. Nicola ai Cesarini in Rome.

An undecorated colourless glass in the shape of a stemmed cup. It has a high flaring foot attached to a receptacle with a rounded base and a globular body. It was most likely used as a drinking vessel.

The leaded cover bears a list of the enshrined relics.

Bibl.: Volbach (1937), 348, fig.11.

81a. Beaker, The Vatican.

Fig.82.

Glass.

Egypt(?).

Rome, The Vatican, Museo Sacro.

An undecorated cylindrical beaker made of colourless glass. It has a rounded base and a slightly thickened rim.

Bibl.: Volbach (1937), 348, fig.13.

82. Pen box(?), Capua.

Fig.83.

Glass and metal mounting.

Glass: Egypt or Iraq, 10th century.

Capua, Cathedral Treasury.

It is a rectangular narrow box with soft edges which is made out of two smoky cut-glass pieces. Deep-carved leaves decorate the surface of the lid. The box is surmounted by a metal cross which was probably affixed as soon as the box was used as a container for the relics of St. Biagio.

Bibl.: Lipinsky (1970), figs.8,9; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.450.

The so-called Hedwig Glasses

Apart from their varying dimensions, all of these vessels have the same form, namely that of a conical beaker with thick walls and a slightly projecting footring. They are mainly considered to be Islamic products of the 12th century. Their place of origin is still unknown.

83.Beaker, Cracow.

Fig.84, text, pp.163-168.

Glass, silver and gilded metal.

Mounting: 15th century.

Height (with the mounting): 20 cm.

Dimensions of the beaker: height: 11.2 cm.; diameter: top- 10.9 cm.; base- 7 cm.

Cracow, Treasury of the Hawel Cathedral.

This beaker is made of bubbly smoky topaz glass. The deeply cut decoration on the walls consists of an eagle with displayed wings, flanked by two lions, each of them with a raised paw.

It stands on a chalice-like foot with an hexagonal base. Six scenes are engraved on the foot: 1.St. John The Baptist, 2.St. Hedwig with a prayerbook, 3.St. Veronica with the Sacred Cloth, 4. A pelican, 5.Samson and the lion, 6.An

unidentified abbot with his crook.

According to tradition it belonged to King Casimir III (1310-1370), the founder of the Convent of St. Hedwig in Cracow.

Until 1641 it was kept in the possession of Sigismund Poremba-Porembskie. Later it was kept in the St. Hedwig church, and when the latter was demolished, it reached the treasury of the Havel cathedral.

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), 57, figs.3,4; Lamm (1929-30), pl.63,2; Wentzel (1972), fig.64b; Wenzel (1973), 55-6, fig.12; Baumgartner (1988), cat. no.37 (with extensive literature); Allen (1987), cat. no.2.

#### 84. Beaker, Breslau.

Fig.85, text, pp.163-168.

Height: circa 10 cm.

Diameter: top-12 cm.; base-10 cm.

The beaker is lost. It was kept until 1944 in the *Schlesisches Museum für Kunstgewerbe und Altertümer* at Breslau.

The beaker is made of a greenish-brown glass. The deeply carved decoration consists of a chalice surmounted with a crescent and a star, two lions with raised paw and a stylized tree (sometimes called the "double crown" motif).

The metal base (ca.2-3 cm. height), probably of a later

period (15th century), is a circular elaborated ring carried by three angels bowing on their right foot.

The beaker was probably presented to the council members of the city of Breslau in the 16th century and since then was preserved in the Breslau town hall (*Rathaus*). According to tradition the beaker belonged to St. Hedwig.

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), 56, pl.II; Lamm (1929-30), pl.63,6; Allen (1987), cat. no.6.

85.Beaker, Minden.

Fig.86, text, pp.163-168.

Glass, gilded copper.

Mounting: datable to the 14th century.

Height with the mounting: 29.7 cm.

Dimensions of the beaker: height: ca.10 cm.; diameter: top- 8.5 cm.; base- 7.1 cm.

Minden (Westphalia), Cathedral Treasury.

The decoration of the bubbly topaz smoky glass beaker is deeply carved. A lion with a raised paw, an eagle with its open wings and a stylized palmette tree are depicted on the beaker's walls.

The beaker is said to have been kept in the treasury of Minden centuries ago, but it is unknown when it received its 14th-century mounting and served as an *ostensorium* for the holy relics enshrined within.



Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), 58-9, figs.7a,b; Braun (1940), fig.19a; Kessemeir and Luckhardt (1982), 72-3; Meyer (1984), 280; Baumgartner (1988), cat. no.39 (with extensive literature); Allen (1987), cat. no.1.

86.Beaker, the Corning Museum.

Fig.87, text, pp.163-168.

Height: 8.7 cm.

Diameter: top- 7.2 cm; base- 6.2 cm.

Corning (New York), the Corning Museum of Glass (Acc.No.67.1.11). Formerly in the collection of Madame Alexandrine de Rothschild (auctioned by Sotheby in May 1967).

Two lions with raised paws are depicted on the bubbly yellowish glass beaker. The carving is deep. Four key-cuts on the footing suggest that once it was mounted.

The beaker was found around 1820, during repairs in the sacristy of the cathedral of Halberstadt. It was published by Schmidt in 1912. At that time it belonged to Mrs. von Röse (Berlin).

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), 55, fig.2; Lamm (1929-30), pl.63,5; Wentzel (1972), fig.64a; Baumgartner (1988), cat. no.40 (with extensive literature); Allen (1987), cat. no.5.

87.Beaker, Asseburg.

Fig.88, text, pp.163-168

Height: ca.10 cm.

Diameter: top- 8 cm.; base- 7.2 cm.

It was kept in the household of the Counts of Asseburg at the castle of Hinnenburg, near Brakel in Westphalia. Present location unknown.

The beaker is made of a yellowish brown glass and carved in high relief. The decoration consists of six interlocking heart-shaped forms, each containing a pointed palmette leaf (similar to the pointed leaf which frequently appears on Fatimid rock crystal bottles, cat. nos.1-8).

According to tradition the beaker reached the Asseburg family centuries ago, from a small town called Meisdorf located on the southeast of Halberstadt; hence it was called the 'Meisdorf Beaker'. The tradition also claims that two other glasses were kept among the treasures of the Asseburg family, and that all of them were regarded as amulets. A legend says that should one of them break, a member of the family would find his death. This legend recalls that of the enamel glass beaker of Edenhall (cat. no.100).

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), 60, fig.10; Lamm (1929-30), pl.63,8; Allen (1987), cat. no.8.

#### 88.Beaker, Hinnenburg.

Text, pp.163-168.

Height: 9 cm.

Diameter: top- 6 cm.; base- 5 cm.

Brakel (Westphalia), the castle of Hinnenburg, Graf Karl-Christoph Rotkirch.

This conical beaker, though undecorated and made of a colourless glass, was regarded by Schmidt as a Hedwig glass.

Being part of the glass beakers of the Asseburg family, it is, like the above-mentioned beaker (cat. no.87), associated with the same legend. It still has its 14th or 15th-century leather case.

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), 61 (in the possession of Graf Bochholtz-Asseburg); Allen (1987), cat. no.20.

89. Beaker, Halberstadt.

Fig.89, text, pp.163-168.

Mounting: 14th century.

Height (with the mounting): 27.5 cm.

Dimensions of the beaker: height: 9 cm.; diameter: top- 7.5 cm.; base- 6.5 cm.

Halberstadt, Cathedral Treasury (no.69).

The beaker is made of a bubbly greenish-yellowish glass. Its decoration consists of eye-like symbols enclosing a diamond or a napkin (these appear on the upper part of the beaker's walls), and of crescents, each enclosing a star or a ray motif (the latter fill the lower part of the beaker's

walls). The carving is deep.

The beaker rests on a chalice-like foot with an hexagonal base and a sphere. The metal lid (ca.9 cm. height) looks like a Gothic tower's spire.

The beaker served as a container for the relics of St. James and St. Thomas. It is unknown how it reached Halberstadt. The church inventories mention another glass beaker of the same type which has probably disappeared.

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), 59, fig.8; Lamm (1929-30), pl.63,7; von Falke (1936), 269, fig.9; Braun (1940), fig.19b; Allen (1987), cat. no.7.

90.Beaker, Nysa.

Fig.90, text, pp.163-168.

Present silver mounting: 1750; silver foot: 1578.

Height (with the mounting): 24 cm.

Dimensions of the beaker: height: 10.6 cm.; diameter: top- 9 cm.; base- 6.5 cm.

Nysa, Nysa Museum. It was kept until 1810 in the collection of the Jesuit College in Nysa.

This beaker was reassembled after being broken into pieces probably around 1750, the time it received its additional "Baroque" silver mounting. Its decoration recalls that of the beaker at Halberstadt (cat. no.87); eye-like motifs are carved on the upper part of the beaker and two horns (the

Mamluk blazon of two powder horns?) facing each other are depicted on its lower part. The decoration is carved in high relief.

The earlier mounting, namely the foot, bears in its inner side a medallion in which St. Hedwig and the year 1528 are engraved. The Baroque mounting, which holds the broken beaker, has four cartouche-formed openings from which the horn-like emblems can be seen.

According to tradition this beaker belonged to St. Hedwig.

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), 60, figs. 9a,b; Lamm (1929-30), pl.63,9; Wentzel (1972), fig.64d; Wentzel (1973), 55-6, fig.13; Allen (1987), cat. no.9.

91. Beaker, Coburg.

Fig.91, text, pp.163-168.

Height: 10.3 cm.

Diameter: top- 10 cm.; base- 8.2 cm.

Coburg. Coburg Castle, Glass Collection (a.S. 625).

The thick-walled beaker is made of a bubbly smoky topaz glass. The decoration recalls that of the beakers at Halberstadt and Nysa (cat. nos.89,90). It consists of protruding hobs and rectangles around the beaker's rim and of a stylized motif (two confronted horns?) organized in two rows around the beaker's body. The footring is incised with eight key-cuts.

The well-documented history of this beaker associates it with St. Hedwig and other saints. The beaker is known as the "Elizabeth Beaker" (after St. Elizabeth of Hungary 1207-1231), and as the "Luther Beaker" (after Martin Luther 1483-1546)

It is first mentioned in 1331 as part of the treasury of the Franciscan order of Eisenach, near the castle of Wartburg, the home of Saint Elizabeth (Elizabeth joined the Franciscan order in Eisenach in 1227). The relics associated with that saint, among them her belt, her spoon and this beaker, were regarded in the 15th century mainly by the members of the house of Wettin as having the power to ensure delivery during childbirth (the future mothers were asked to drink wine from this beaker).

According to tradition this beaker passed in the early 16th century into the hands of Martin Luther, who received it from Frederick the Wise.

The beaker reappeared in 1910 in the collection of the castle of Coburg.

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), 60, fig.11; Lamm (1929-30), pl.63,10; Fuchs (1950), 4; Wentzel (1972), fig.64e; Maedebach (1978), 70; Koch (1981), 272-84; Moeller (1983); Allen (1987), cat. no.10.

92.Beaker, Nuremberg.

Fig.92, text, pp.163-168.

Glass and gilded copper mounting.

Height (with the mounting): 28.5 cm.

Dimensions of the beaker: height: 9.5 cm.; diameter: top- 9.6 cm.; base- 7.6 cm.

Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum (KG 564).

The faceted beaker is made of a light brown glass (similar to the beaker in the British Museum, no. 1959.4-14.1). The decoration consists of two lions and one griffin, carved in high relief. It is mounted on a chalice foot with a fluted sphere and a hexafoliated base.

The 15th-century mounting (probably made in Venice) suggests that the beaker served either as a chalice during Mass or as a reliquary.

Bibl.: Schmidt (1912), 57-8, fig.6; Lamm (1929-30), pl.63,4; Baumgartner (1988), cat. no.38 (with extensive literature); Allen (1987), cat. no.4.

93. Beaker, Namur (1).

Fig.93, text, pp.163-168.

Glass and metal mounting.

Height (with the mounting): 25 cm.

Dimensions of the beaker: height: 8 cm.; diameter: top- 6.8 cm.; base- 4.5 cm.

Namur. Le Trésor d'Oignies aux Soeurs de Notre Dame.

A lion and a griffin are deeply carved on the walls of this colourless beaker. The carving style chiefly recalls that of the beakers from the Corning Museum and from Nuremberg (cat. nos.86,92).

The beaker rests on a chalice foot with a circular base. A metal lid (measuring ca.8 cm.) surmounts the beaker.

The treasury of Oignies is associated with Jacques de Vitry, a clerk who left the monastery of Oignies in 1213, took part in the 5th Crusade and became Bishop of Acre in 1216. The presents and relics that he sent to Oignies from the Holy Land were the first objects to be included in the treasury of Oignies. This information suggests that the two Hedwig glasses in the treasury were acquired by him in the Near East, probably in Syria or Egypt.

The treasury of Oignies was transferred to Namur in 1648, where it has been kept to the present day.

Bibl.: Courtoy (1923), 145-57; Lamm (1929-30), pl.62,27; Philippe (1975), 5, figs.3,4; Baumgartner (1988), cat. no.41 (with literature); *Salier* (1992), 346 ; Allen (1987), cat. no.11.

94.Beaker, Namur (2).

Fig.94, text, pp.163-168.

Glass and metal mounting.

Height with the mounting: 27.5 cm.

Dimensions of the beaker: height: 9 cm., diameter: top- 8



cm., base- 5 cm.

Namur. Le Trésor d'Oignies aux Soeurs de Notre Dame.

The beaker is made of a very light smoky glass. The carved decoration is similar to that of the beaker at Halberstadt (cat.no.89).

The beaker is mounted on a metal stem with a circular base and a fluted sphere. A pointed lid terminated with a pierced rock crystal knob covers the beaker.

According to tradition it was brought by Jacques de Vitry from the Near East to Namur.

Bibl.: Courtoy (1923), 145-57; Lamm (1929-30), vol.I, 170 (no.28); Philippe (1975), 5, fig.5; Baumgartner (1988), cat. no.42 (with literature); Allen (1987), cat. no.12.

95.Fragment of a beaker, Pistoia.

Fig.95, text, pp.163-168.

Height (maximum): 7.8 cm.

Diameter: base- 5.3 cm.

Florence, Soprintendenza Archeologia della Toscana (3563). It was found during excavations in the ruins of the 13th-century bishop's palace in Pistoia.

A fragment of a yellowish glass beaker with key-cuts on its footring. The decoration is similar to that of the second beaker in Namur (cat. no.94).

Bibl.: Baumgartner (1988), cat. no.43; Allen (1987), cat.  
no.16.

Enamel glass

96. Bottle, Vienna (1).

Fig. 96.

Probably Syria, 13th century.

Height: 34.5 cm.

Vienna, Cathedral Treasury, St. Stephen.

The bottle has a flat globular body and a relatively short and bulbous neck. A pair of handles arise from its shoulders and are affixed to the lower part of its neck. The decoration on its body consists of four medallions in which different scenes are depicted. Four sitting musicians playing different instruments (lute, flute, kettle-drum and tambourine) are depicted on each of the two medallions on the front and back of the bottle, and two horsemen on each of the medallions below the handles. *Naskhi* inscriptions invoking good wishes to the sultan encircle each of the medallions. A row of standing figures appear on a band on the upper part of the bottle's neck; these figures are similar to the ones which appear on a Syrian (?) enamel glass horn in the Hermitage Museum (V3 827) and on two other beakers in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore (47.17 and 47.18).

The bottle served as a reliquary for earth which was stained with the blood of the innocent children of Bethlehem. This bottle with the above-mentioned relic might have had reached Vienna in 1363, the year Rudolf IV returned from

Constantinople with a large amount of reliquaries.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.158,3; Braun (1940), fig.21; Schlosser (1956), figs.46-7; Charleston (1976), 332; Duda (1985), 44-5, fig.15; for an illustration see also Sarre (1910), pl.170.

97.Bottle, Vienna (2).

Fig.97.

Probably Syria, 13th century.

Height: 35 cm.

Vienna, Cathedral Treasury, St. Stephen.

The bottle has a relatively oblong body, which widens towards its shoulders, a high neck, a wide footring and a pair of handles which emerge from its shoulders and curve towards the upper part of its neck. The decoration consists of horizontal bands around the body and the neck. Bands with arabesques on the neck and the upper part of the body, a wide band with foliage on the shoulders, a wide band with stars on the lower part of the body and four narrow bands with *naskhi* inscriptions (repeating the word *al-`ālim*) on the neck and the body. Birds of prey appear on the two medallions on the shoulders, and gold arabesques fill the four medallions on the upper part of the body.

Like the above-mentioned bottle (cat no.96), this one served also as a reliquary for earth, which was stained with

the blood of the innocent children of Bethlehem, and might have reached the treasury the same way as the other bottle.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.179,5; Charleston (1976), 333; Duda (1985), 44-5, fig.14; for an illustration see also Sarre (1910), pl.169.

98. Beaker, Douai.

Fig.98.

Gilded silver mounting

Probably Syria, Raqqa?, 13th century.

Mounting: France, 14th century.

Once in Douai, Musée de Douai. Present location unknown; it disappeared, apparently during the First World War.

The conical beaker is mounted on a gilded silver chalice-like foot with a sphere. Its decoration consists of a band of strapwork forming lozenges and circles on a blue and white dotted ground and of bands with now illegible Arabic inscriptions.

The beaker is known as "Le gobelet des huit prêtres" (The Goblet of the Eight Priests). At the beginning of the 14th century it was in the possession of Marguerite Mullet (or Mallet), surnamed Baudran, who donated it in 1329, before she died, to the cathedral of Douai as an endowment for eight priests. The priests were once a year to drink out of this beaker in memory of the donor.

Bibl. Lamm (1929-30), pl.96,1; Honey (1927), 289; Charleston (1976), 334.

99. Beaker, Chartres.

Fig.99.

Gilded copper mounting.

Probably Syria, Raqqa?, 13th century.

Mounting: France, 14th century.

Height: 14 cm.; with mounting: 23.8 cm.

Chartres, Musée de Chartres (inv. 5144).

A conical beaker. The mounting is similar to that of the beaker from Douai (cat. no.98). The decoration consists of a main band of strapwork on blue and white dotted ground and of two further bands with Arabic blessing inscriptions, written in gold.

It is known as "Coupe de Charles le Grand". Traditions associate this beaker with one of the presents given to Charlemagne by Harun al-Rashid and claims that it was later donated by Charlemagne to the abbey La Madelaine in Châteaudun (Eure-et-Loire), where it was kept. It was presented to the Library of Chartres in 1793 and was transferred to the museum of this city in 1843.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.96,3; Honey (1927), 290; *Arts de l'Islam* (1971), cat. no.282; Charleston (1976), 335.

100. The Luck of Edenhall.

Fig.100.

Probably Syria, 13th century.

Height: 16.1 cm.

Diameter: top- 10.8 cm.; foot- 4.8 cm.

Cut leather case: probably France, 14th century.

London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

A conical beaker. Its decoration consists of interlacing foliage in dark red, light green and milky blue colours.

Late tradition, probably in the 19th century, associates the fate of this beaker with that of the house of Musgraves of Edenhall. The Uhland's poem *Das Glück von Edenhall*, which was written in 1834 and which was translated into English in 1841 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, attests the magic and mysterious qualities associated with this beaker. According to Honey [(1927), 289, n.2] this tradition appears first in *A History of Cumberland*, written by Hutchinson in 1794.

In 1927 the beaker was deposited on loan at the museum by Sir Courtenay Musgrave.

Bibl.: Honey (1927); Lamm (1929-30), pl. 127,2; Charleston (1959); Charleston (1976), 333; Grabar and Ettinghausen (1987), fig.395.

101. Beaker, British Museum.

Fig.101.

Mounting: gilded silver foot set with pearls and precious stones and with a rock crystal sphere.

Probably Syria, 13th century.

Mounting: France, 14th century.

Height: 14.3 cm.; with mounting 27.2 cm.

London, British Museum (W.B.53).

The conical beaker is mounted on a gilded silver chalice-like foot with a rock crystal sphere. Its decoration consists of a wide band, on which a seated figure (ruler) on a throne, attended by two figures, is depicted. This scene is bordered by two narrow bands with Arabic inscriptions.

The beaker is said to be in the possession of the Palmer-Morewood family of Lodbrooke in Warwickshire for years, who received it as a present from the King of France. Though this information can not be attested, the mounting hints at its function in a religious Christian setting.

It was bought at an auction in London in the spring of 1881, and was donated later by the Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild to the British Museum.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.96,6.

102. Beaker, Louvre.

Fig.102.

Probably Syria, 13th century.

Height: 15.5 cm.



Diameter (rim): 10.5 cm.

Paris, Louvre (A.O.6131, Acq.1908).

A conical beaker. Its decoration consists of three polo-players riding white, black and red horses. The background is of gilded foliage. An upper band and a lower narrow band with Arabic inscriptions.

The beaker was found at the end of the 19th century under an altar in the ruins of the church of Santa Margherita in Orvieto.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.127,1; *Arts de l'Islam* (1971), cat. no.285; Charleston (1976), 335; Wenzel M.(1984), 11-12, fig.9; Wenzel M.(1985), 107-8, fig.6a.

103.Beaker, Dresden (1).

Fig.103.

Silver mounting, partially gilded.

Probably Syria, 13th century.

Mounting: 15th century.

Height: 18.5 cm.; with mounting: 34.5 cm.

Dresden, Grünes Gewölbe (IV 192).

The conical beaker is mounted on a relatively lower chalice-like foot. A pyramidal cover on top. The decoration consists of a seated figure by a source of running water, surrounded by plants and flying birds.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.129,2; Charleston (1976), 331.

104.Beaker, Dresden (2).

Fig.104.

Gilded silver mounting.

Probably Syria, 13th century.

Mounting: circa 1400.

Height: 17.5 cm.; with mounting: 26.4 cm.

Dresden, Grünes Gewölbe (IV 193).

The conical beaker is mounted on a flat circular base. The decoration consists of three polo-players on white, black and red horses. The background is gilded foliage. Two bands with Arabic *naskhi* inscriptions decorate the upper and lower parts of the beaker, probably invoking best wishes to the owner.

Formerly in the collection of the Elector of Saxony.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl. 129,3; Charleston (1976), 331;  
Wenzel M.(1984), 11-12, fig.10; Wenzel M.(1985), 108, fig.6a.

105.The so-called "Luther-Becher".

Fig.105.

Silver mounting.

Probably Syria, 13th century.

Height: ca.29 cm.

Diameter: lower base- 13 cm.; upper rim- ca.17.5 cm.

Quedlinburg, Cathedral Treasury.

A conical beaker with a wide ring base. The decoration consists of a wide band with a *naskhi* inscription (*al-`ālim*), written in blue on a white, green, yellow, red and gold arabesque ground. On the lower and upper parts medallions with floral motifs.

The beaker known as "Luther-Becher" was kept before it reached the cathedral in the City-Museum of Quedlinburg.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl.159,2; Charleston (1976), 332.

106.Beaker, Breslau.

Fig.106.

Gilded silver mounting.

Probably Syria, 14th century.

Mounting: 16th century.

Height: ca.19.5 cm.; with mounting: 23.4 cm.

Once in Breslau, the *Schlesisches Museum für Kunstgewerbe und Altertümer* (4800). Present location unknown.

The decoration consists of floral friezes which run on the upper and the lower zones of the beaker. The mounting bears the stamp (*E.R.*) of the Breslauer goldsmith Eucharius Riher, who in 1567 or in 1568 made this mounting as a commission from Bartholomew Mandel (1567-82)- the headmaster of the Matthias Foundation of the Breslauer convent.

The beaker was kept until 1810 in that convent, and later, between 1810-62, in the *Altertümersammlung* of the university.

In 1862 it was moved to the above-mentioned museum in Breslau.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), pl. 174,6; Charleston (1976), 333.

107. Tower-reliquary, Münster.

Fig.107.

Silver mounting.

Probably Syria, 13th century.

Mounting: 13th century.

Münster, St. Paulus Cathedral.

A relatively narrow and small conical beaker the decoration of which consists of two red lines on the upper and the lower zones and of little medallions with floral ornaments. The beaker is mounted on a chalice-like foot and held on its three sides by a turriform mounting. A lid in the form of a conical and pointed roof is mounted on its top. The latter is surmounted with a figure of the Virgin with the Child.

The Latin inscription on the base reads: IESUS CRISTUS MARIA IASPAR MELCHIOR BAL(TASAR) (Jesus Christ, Mary, Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar).

Bibl.: Pieper (1981), cat. no.50.

108. Tower-ostensory, Bonn.

Figs. 108, 108a.

Gilded copper mounting.

Probably Syria, 14th century.

Mounting: North Italy, 14th century.

Height: 7.9 cm.; with mounting: 42.2 cm.

Diameter: 5.7 cm.

Bonn, Rheinisches Landesmuseum (203). Acquired in 1877 from a private owner (Ehrenbreitstein).

The beaker the upper part of which was cut is mounted on a chalice-like foot with a sphere and with an hexagonal base. A conical pointed lid, surmounted with a little cross with the figure of Christ, is mounted on the top. The decoration of the beaker consists of a red delicate floral design which runs along its lower zone.

Bibl.: Baumgartner (1988), cat. no.71.

III.IVORYObjects with carved decoration

This part of the catalogue is based mainly on Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen* (1971), therefore only additional literature, later than 1971, is cited below.

Oliphants

109.The 'Oliphant of Charlemagne' (Kühnel, cat. no.55).

Text, pp.48-50, 140-159.

Metal mounting with precious stones.

South Italy(?), early 11th century.

Length: 63 cm.

Diameter: top-10.5-13 cm.

Aachen, Treasury of the Palatine Chapel.

Further bibl.: Grimme (1972), cat. no.11. A twin to this oliphant is in the British Museum, London.

110.The 'Oliphant of Roland' (Kühnel, cat. no.56).

Text, pp.140-159.

Spain(?), 11th century.

Length: 51 cm.

Diameter: top-9.7-10.5 cm.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles. Until 1797 belonged to the Treasury of St.-Denis.

Further bibl.: *Le trésor de Saint-Denis* (1991), cat. no.20.

111.Oliphant, Arles (Kühnel, cat. no.57.).

Text, pp.140-159.

Sicily(?), 11th century.

Length: 52 cm.

Diameter: top-9.2 cm.

Arles, St. Trophime (sacristy).

112.Oliphant, Baltimore (Kühnel, cat. no.59).

Text, pp.140-159.

South Italy(?), 11th century.

Length: 58 cm.

Diameter: top-10.2-11 cm.

Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery (71.234). Purchased from Henry Daguerre, Paris, 1926.

According to a dealer from Berlin, the horn was purchased from the widow of a general who said that the horn was given to her husband by the Duke of Brunswick. The horn was probably part of the Guelph Treasure. Drills on the upper rim hint at its former use as a relic container.

Further bibl.: Randall (1985), cat. no.247.

113.Oliphant, SMPK, Berlin (Kühnel, cat. no.60).

Text, pp.140-159.

South Italy(?), 11th century.

Length: 50 cm.

Diameter: top-10-11.5 cm.

Berlin, SMPK (K 3106). Probably belonged to the treasury of the cathedral of Speyer.

Lately, Ebitz ([1986], 309-29) has suggested that this oliphant belonged to a large group of Islamic carved ivory objects manufactured in Venice; for the different stylistic groups of the oliphants see mainly von Falke (1929 and 1930), Kühnel (1959) and Swarzenski (1962).

The oliphant might have been recorded as *cornu eburnea* in an inventory of Speyer of 1051; in an inventory of 1056, six ivory horns are mentioned (see Bischoff [1967], 90).

114.Oliphant, Metropolitan Museum of Art (Kühnel, cat. no.67). Text, pp.140-159.

South Italy(?), 11th century.

Length: 58 cm.

Diameter: top-10-12.8 cm.

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (04.3.177). Probably belonged to a Benedictine Cloister in Dijon.

115.The so-called "Oliphant de St. Orens" (Kühnel, cat. no.76). Text, pp.140-159.

South Italy(?), 11th century.

Length: 55 cm.



Diameter: top-10.3-11.5 cm.

Auch, Musée d'Archéologie de la Ville d'Auch (temporarily kept in the town hall of Auch). Once belonged to the church of St. Orens.

116. The so-called "Cornet de St. Hubert" (Kühnel, cat. no.77). Text, pp.140-159.

South Italy(?), 11th century.

Length: 51 cm.

Diameter: top-9.3-10 cm.

Le Puy-en-Velay, Musée Crozatier. Once belonged to the treasury of the cathedral and was kept in the chapel of St. Paul.

117. Oliphant, Brunswick (Kühnel, cat. no.79).

Text, pp.140-159.

South Italy(?), 11th century.

Length: 58 cm.

Diameter: top-11.7-12.7 cm.

Brunswick, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum (MA 107). Probably belonged to the cathedral in Brunswick.

Further bibl.: Hedergott (1981), 5-6.

118. Oliphant, Musée de Cluny.

Fig.109, text, pp.140-159.

Amalfi(?), end of 11th century.

Paris, Musée de Cluny (Cl.13065).

The decoration consists of an Ascension on the inner curved part of the oliphant's body. On the outer curve are three vertical panels. On the middle panel are busts of the four Evangelist symbols and a depiction of the hand of God, and of an animal (a dog?). On each of the two other vertical panels are six square frames in which six apostles are depicted. A frieze of running animals bordered by bands of half-palmette scrolls and pierced beads decorates the upper zone. A frieze of animals (griffon, dragon and a lion attacking a ram) and bands of woven chain and of scrolls of half-palmettes decorate the lower zone.

The combination of Christian iconography on the body and of a Fatimid ornament of running animals and scrolls suggests that the horn is an Islamic one (belonging to the group of oliphants with a smooth body), and that the 11th-century Byzantine decoration on its body was carved later, probably as soon as the oliphant was accepted by a church to serve as a relic container.

Bibl.: Kühnel (1971), fig.34; Kryzhanovskaya (1965), 407, fig.8; Werner (1972), figs. 24,25; Ebitz (1986a).

Liturgical combs119. The so-called "Bartkamm Kaiser Friedrich Barbarossa"

(Kühnel, cat no.8).

Egypt or Syria(?), 8th century.

Height: 14-15.1 cm.

Width: lower-11.5 cm., upper-11.7 cm.

Cologne, Schnütgen-Museum (B 99). It is said to have been transferred in 1930 from the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Cologne to the Schnütgen-Museum.

According to tradition the comb was associated with St. Heribert. A further legend says that Friedrich Barbarossa used to comb his beard with it.

Bibl.: Swoboda (1963), cat. no.11.

120. The so-called "Kamm Heinrichs I" (Kühnel, fig.38).

Gold mounting with precious stones.

Egypt or Syria(?), 7th-8th century. Mounting: (9th-10th century).

Height: 17 cm.

Width: 10 cm.

Quedlinburg, Church Treasury, St. Servatius. It was stolen from the Treasury at the end of World War II, and returned to the Treasury in 1992.

A lyre-shaped comb. Both pointed ends are missing. The decoration on its body consists of carved vine leaves.

In the inventory of 1544 it was mentioned as the comb of Heinrich I (876-936): "Keisser Heinrichs Kamme met stein und golt beschlagen" (a comb of Emperor Henry, mounted with [precious] stones and gold).

Bibl.: Swoboda (1963), cat. no.10; Kühnel (1971), 28, fig.38; Wentzel (1972), fig.79; Kötzsche (1992), cat. no.3 (with a colour-illustration); Kötzsche (1994).

121.Comb, Roda de Isábena (Huesca) (Kühnel, cat. no.129).

Egypt(?), 10th-11th century.

Length: 11.8 cm.

Width: 9.1 cm.

Roda de Isábena (Huesca), Museo Parroquial de la antigua Cathedral.

122.Comb, Liège (Kühnel, cat. no.130).

Egypt(?), 10-11th century.

Length: 7.5 cm.

Liège, Cathedral, Diocesan Museum.

The comb was kept in an abbey in Malonne (near Namur) and is associated with St. Berthuin, the founder and first abbot of Malonne.

Bibl.: Swoboda (1963), cat. no.46.

123.Comb, Bamberg.

Figs.110,110a.

South Italy(?), 11th century.

Length: 13.5 cm.

Width: 10 cm.

Bamberg, Diocesan Museum (no.5/17).

The decoration on each side of the comb consists of three interlaced medallions; a cross is carved in the central medallion, and an animal (a hare?) is depicted in each of the two others. The carving is relatively low. Another ivory comb in the Diocesan Museum (Inv. no.5/16) with carving of birds and animals recalls the 11th-century Byzantine ivory carving of South Italy.

Bibl.: Swoboda (1963), cat. no.48.

### Chessmen

124.Chessman, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Kühnel, cat. no.17).

India, 9th century.

Height: 15.5 cm.

Diameter: base-9 cm.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles. Once

belonged to the Treasury of St.-Denis.

According to tradition the piece was presented to Charlemagne by Harun al-Rashid.

Further bibl.: Montesquiou-Fezensac (1977), cat. no.197; *Le trésor de St.-Denis* (1991), cat. no.18.

### Pyxids

125.Pyxis, St. Gereon, Cologne (Kühnel, cat. no.18).

Yemen, 8th century.

Height: 17.5 cm.

Diameter: 11.8 cm.

Cologne, St. Gereon.

Further bibl.: *Ornamenta Ecclesiae* (1985), cat. no.E33.

126.Pyxis, Braga (Kühnel, cat. no.36).

Cordova, circa 1005.

Height: 20 cm.

Diameter: 10.4 cm.

Braga (Portugal), cathedral.

Further bibl.: *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.5.

127. Pyxis, Narbonne (Kühnel, cat. no.42).

Cuenca, circa 1030-40.

Height: 10 cm.

Diameter: 7.3 cm.

Narbonne, Cathédrale Saint-Just.

128. Flat pyxis, Aude (Kühnel, cat. no.141).

Spain or Sicily(?), 11-12th century.

Height: 8 cm.

Diameter: 12 cm.

Caunes-Minervois (Aude), Church Treasury.

129. Pyxis, Nuremberg.

Fig.111.

Gilded metal braces.

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 7.5 cm.

Width: 7.7 cm.

Height: 7 cm.

Nuremberg, Germanisches National Museum (KG 718).

A small pyxis in the form of a square building with a pyramidal roof and small projecting apsidal chapels. Simple decoration which consists of row of discs, decorates the upper and the lower zones of each facet and apsidal chapel.

The pyxis probably served as a container for the Host or for relics.

Bibl.: *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/17.

### Caskets

130.Rectangular case, Burgos, (Kühnel, cat. no.19).

Madīnat al-Zahrā', circa 950.

Length: 46.5 cm.

Width: open-19.8 cm.

Height: ca.10 cm.

Burgos, Museo Arqueológico Provincial. Once belonged to the Cloister of Santo Domingo de Silos.

The original function of this case is still unknown; lately (*Al-Andalus* [1992]) it has been suggested that it served as a game box. The case was probably presented around 950 by Fernán González to the church of Santo Domingo in Silos as a trophy of war. It was first mentioned as a reliquary in an inventory dated to 1440.

Further bibl.: *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.1.

131.Rectangular casket with flat cover, Fitero (Kühnel, cat. no.23).

Madīnat al-Zahrā', 966.

Length: 12.8 cm.

Width: 8.3 cm.

Height: 8.9 cm.



Fitero (Navarra), Iglesia Parroquial.

132.Rectangular casket with flat cover, Florence (Kühnel, cat. no.34).

Silver gilded mounting with semi-precious stones.

Cordova, end of the 10th century.

Length: 12.9 cm.

Width: 9.4 cm.

Height: 6.9 cm.

Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello (81C). Probably belonged to a church located near Logroño in Spain.

Further bibl.: *The Arts of Islam* (1976), cat. no.148.

133.Rectangular casket with truncated pyramidal cover, Pamplona (Kühnel, cat no.35).

Text, pp.112-113.

Cordova, 1005.

Length: 35 cm.

Width: 22 cm.

Height: 22 cm.

Pamplona, Museo de Navarra. Served as a reliquary for the relics of the two martyred sisters, Nunilona and Alodia, in the Benedictine abbey of Leyre.

Further bibl.: Gauthier (1986), 28-32, fig.2; *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.4.

134. The reliquary casket of St. Domingo (Kühnel, cat. no.40).

Text, pp. 113-122.

Cuenca, 1026. Enamel mounting: Silos, 1150.

Length: 34 cm.

Width: 21 cm.

Height: 19 cm.

Burgos, Museo Arqueológico Provincial.

The casket served as a container for the relics of St. Domingo and the 11,000 Virgins. It was kept until 1860 in the Benedictine abbey of Santo Domingo in Silos.

Further bibl.: Gauthier (1986), 32, fig.12. On the additional enamel work see also Lasko (1972), fig.263.

135. The so-called "arqueta de las bienaventuranzas" (Kühnel, cat. no.41, fig.49).

Three ivory plaques are mounted on one of the facets of the casket.

The ivories: Cuenca, circa 1025-30.

Length: a) 11 cm., b) 7.4 cm., c) 5.6 cm.

Width: a) 3.9 cm., b) 3.9 cm., c) 1.7 cm.

Madrid, National Archaeological Museum.

The three ivory plaques which once belonged to an Islamic casket were mounted on the *arqueta de las bienaventuranzas*, a casket commissioned by Ferdinand I in 1063 to the church of

San Isidoro de León. It was broken during the French Revolution, and later restored.

136. Casket, Palencia (Kühnel, cat. no.43).

Text, pp.113-122.

Wood casket, ivory plaques, gilded leather and cloisonné enamelled corner pieces.

Cuenca, 1049-50. Mounting: probably 11th century.

Length: 34 cm.

Width: 23.5 cm.

Height: 23 cm.

Madrid, National Archaeological Museum (7.371). Once belonged to the cathedral of Palencia.

Further bibl.: *The Arts of Islam* (1976), cat. no.150; *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.7.

137. Small casket with flat cover, León (Kühnel, cat. no.51).

11th century.

Length: 4.6 cm.

Width: 3.2 cm.

Height: 3.1 cm.

León, Colegiata de San Isidoro. According to the Latin inscription, which is carved on the bottom, the small casket holds relics of St. Cosmas and Damian.

138.Rectangular casket with truncated pyramidal cover, Maastricht (Kühnel, cat. no.85).

South Italy(?), 11th century.

Length: 28.5 cm.

Width: 19 cm.

Height: 17.5 cm.

Maastricht, St. Servatius, Treasury. This casket might be the one which enshrined the head of St. Gereon and other relics, and which was presented by the church of St. Gereon in Cologne to the treasury of St. Servatius in Maastricht in 1374.

Further bibl.: *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/21.

139.Rectangular casket, Madrid (Kühnel, cat. no.131).

Wood, ivory plaques, gilded silver mounting.

Spain or Sicily?, 12th century. Painted ivory panels: 16th century.

Length: 31.5 cm.

Width: 23.5 cm.

Height: 20 cm.

Madrid, National Archaeological Museum (1.944). Once belonged to the cathedral of Zamora.

140.Rectangular writing box, Klosterneuburg (Kühnel, cat. no.134).

Sicily?, 12th century.

Length: 26.1 cm.

Width: 12.8 cm.

Height: 8.6 cm.

Klosterneuburg, Museum des Chorherrenstiftes (KG 152).

The box is associated with St. Leopold (1095-1136); in an inventory of 1485 it was mentioned as the writing box of this saint. Later, in 1533, it was mentioned as a relic container.

The original function of the box is unknown (container for playing chips(?) Kühnel [1971], 81). It could have served as a pen box; the circular inner space might have been used to hold a poly-lobed inkwell.

Further bibl.: *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/11 (with literature).

141.Casket, Bagnoregio.

Fig.112

Sicily(?), 12th century.

Bagnoregio (Viterbo), the parish church.

Bibl.: Toesca (1927), fig.791; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), figs 516-7.

142.Panel of a casket (Kühnel, cat. no.133).

Probably a facet of a rectangular casket.

Sicily?, ca.1200.

Length: max.-22 cm.

Width: 13.5 cm.

Ravenna, Museo Nazionale. Probably belonged to the church of S. Appollinare in Classe.

Further bibl.: Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), fig.552; Curatola (1993), cat. no.87.

Cylindrical boxes with carved and pierced decoration

143.Box, Sens.

Fig.113.

Egypt or Spain, 14th century.

Height: ca.10 cm.

Sens, Cathedral Treasury (C1,15).

Cylindrical box. The body is pierced with an overall pattern composed of quatrefoils radiating from roundels. Lobed scallops enclose the upper and lower edges. *Naskhi* inscriptions which are cut in low relief adorn the lower and the upper zones.

The inscription reads: "La gloire dans ce monde s'acquiert par les richesses, et la récompense des bonnes oeuvres est la gloire et le bonheur. Lorsque la fortune ne te favorise pas en quelque affaire, embrasse fortement la patience; autrement tu perdras ta récompense, et tu n'auras ni la félicité de ce monde ni celle de l'autre..." (translation: the Museum of the

Cathedral, Sens).

Bibl.: For parallels see Atil (1981), cat. no.106 and Curatola (1993), cat. no. 32.

144.Box, Saragossa.

Fig.114.

Mounting: silver, paint and gold leaf.

Egypt or Spain, 14th century.

Height: 9.4 cm.

Diameter: 11.5 cm.

Saragossa, Cabildo Metropolitano.

The box still retains its lid and its metal bands and locker. The decoration is similar to the box from Sens (cat. no.143). *Naskhi* inscriptions appear on the upper zone of the box and on the metal bands.

The inscription on the box reads:

"Truth is in me like something stored in a pyxis and they say faithfulness is my share in life.

Never did I betray this confidence [in me].

Thus my name soared so I serve only the great".

Bibl: Migeon (1927), vol.I, fig.163; Ferrandis (1935), vol.II, cat. no.7; Braun (1940), fig.49; *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.52. For parallels see Atil (1981), cat. no.106 and Curatola (1993), cat. no.32.

Painted ivories

This part of the catalogue is based on Cott, *Siculo-Arabic Ivories* (1939), Ferrandis, *Marfiles Arabes de Occidente* (1940), vol.2, and on a revision which was made by Pinder-Wilson and C.N.L. Brooke in 1970 and which was published by them in *Archaeologia* 104(1973), appendix C (see also the general discussion in text, pp.159-163).

Rectangular caskets with truncated pyramidal cover and with painted and gilded or with painted incised decoration

145.Casket, Halberstadt (Cott, cat. no.2)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 11 cm.

Width: 6.7 cm.

Height: 8.5 cm.

Halberstadt, Cathedral Treasury (53).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.50.

146.Casket, Regensburg (Ferrandis, cat. no.55)

Sicily or Spain, 12th century.

Length: 12 cm.

Width: 7.8 cm.

Height: 8.4 cm.

Regensburg, the church of St. Emmeram.



147. Casket, Vienna (Cott, cat. no.54)

Sicily, 12th century. Silver band on the lid: 18th century.

Length: 20.5 cm.

Width: 10 cm.

Height: 11 cm.

Vienna, Geistliche Schatzkammer.

The casket contains different relics all which are mentioned on the silver band.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.132bis.

148. Casket, Salzburg (Ferrandis, cat. no.59)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 12.4 cm.

Width: 6.8 cm.

Height: 9 cm.

Salzburg, the Benedictine Convent Nonnberg.

149. Casket, Salzburg (Cott, cat. no.55).

Sicily, 12th century.

Salzburg, Cathedral Treasury.

Painted incised decoration.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.127ter.

150. Lost casket, Aschaffenburg (Cott, cat. no.123).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height (of the drawing): 13 cm.

Aschaffenburg, Schlossbibliothek MS.14, fol.10v.

The casket is illustrated in the inventory of objects belonging to the Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg at Halle (1525-1530).

151. Lost casket, Aschaffenburg (Cott, cat. no.124).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height (of the drawing): 10.7 cm.

Aschaffenburg, Schlossbibliothek MS.14, fol.11v.

The same as the above-mentioned casket (cat. no.150).

152. Lost casket, Aschaffenburg (Cott, cat. no.125).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height (of the drawing): 12.2 cm.

Aschaffenburg, Schlossbibliothek MS.14, fol.248v.

The same as the two above-mentioned caskets (cat. nos.150-1). The painted decoration which consists of different Christian representations is a German addition of the late 15th-century.

Further bibl.: Braun (1940), fig.34.

153.Casket, Berlin (Cott, cat. no.135).

Sicily, 13th century.

Length: 25 cm.

Width: 17.4 cm.

Height: 14.8 cm.

Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum (W6). Belonged to the *Welfenschatz*, Brunswick.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.102; Kötzsche (1973), cat. no.5.

154.Casket, Toulouse (Cott, cat. no.6).

Sicily, 12th century.

Toulouse, St.-Sernin, Treasury. Formerly in the Collège de Mirepoix at Toulouse.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.49.

155.Casket, Toulouse (Ferrandis, cat. no.120)

Toulouse, St. Remi.

156.Casket, Marseille (Cott, cat. no.17)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 33.5 cm.

Width: 18.9 cm.

Height: 16 cm.

Marseille, Old Cathedral Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.13.

157.Casket, Sion (Cott, p.59).

Sicily(?), 12th century.

Length: 12 cm.

Height: 8 cm.

Sion (Valais), Monastery Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.56.

158.Casket, Laval (Cott, cat. no.41)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 32.5 cm.

Width: 16 cm.

Height: 14.5 cm.

Laval (France), Archaeological Museum.

Formerly preserved in the Collégiale de St. Tudual. During the Revolution it was transferred to the treasury of La Trinité de Laval (the present cathedral). It is known as the 'Reliquary of St. Tudual'.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.23.

159.Casket, Gerona (Cott, cat. no.9)

Sicily or Spain, 12th century.

Gerona, Cathedral Treasury.

The decoration is partially incised.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940) cat. no.42.

160.Casket, Gerona (Ferrandis, cat. no.43)

Sicily or Spain, 12th century.

Length: 33 cm.

Width: 19.5 cm.

Height: 19.5 cm.

Gerona, Cathedral Treasury.

The casket is partially covered with repoussé metal plates bearing floral ornament of leaves in a Gothic manner.

161.Casket, Corcega (Ferrandis, cat. no.38)

Sicily or Spain, 12th century.

Length: 12.6 cm.

Width: 8 cm.

Height: 7.6 cm.

Corcega (Canton de Brando), the church of San Martin de Sisco.

162.Casket, Burgos (Cott, cat. no.134).

Sicily(?), 13th century.

Burgos, Cathedral Treasury.

Painted incised decoration.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.90.

163.Casket, Burgos (Ferrandis, cat. no.98)

Spain, 14th century.

Borgos, Cathedral Treasury.

164.Casket, Madrid (Cott, cat. no.138)

Spain, 14th century.

Length: 38 cm.

Width:27 cm.

Height: 24 cm.

Madrid, Instituto Valencia de Don Juan. Once belonged to the parish church of Villamuriel de Cerrato, Palencia.

The *naskhi* inscription on edge of the lid states (according to Ferrandis [1935]) that the casket was made to contain the consecrated Host (*ramīz al-bīḍ*); the inscription was lately read by Juan Zozaya (Al-Andalus [1992], 264) who has suggested the following translation: "With beauty I did wonders that are radiant all the while I was surrounded by gardens and embellished with plants and flowers" (Zozaya probably translated the ambivalent word *bīḍ* as hinting at light). The lower zones of the short sides of the caskets bear further *naskhi* inscriptions: "happiness and prosperity".

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.97 (with the full

inscription); *The Arts of Islam* (1976), cat. no.153; *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.50.

165.Casket, Zamora (Ferrandis, cat. no.39).

Sicily or Spain, 12th century.

Length: 11.5 cm.

Width: 7.5 cm.

Height: 8 cm.

Zamora, Cathedral Treasury.

The casket serves as a reliquary for the relics of Martin Cid.

166.Casket, Zamora (Ferrandis, cat. no.89)

Spain(?) 13th or 14th century.

Length: 13 cm.

Width: 8.5 cm.

Height: 10 cm.

Zamora, Cathedral Treasury.

167.Casket, Zamora (Ferrandis, cat. no.99)

Spain, 14th century.

Length: 11.5 cm.

Width: 7.5 cm.

Height: 9 cm.

Zamora, Cathedral Treasury.

168.Casket, Soria (Cott. cat. no.137)

Spain, 14th century.

Soria, Collegiate Church.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.95.

169.Casket, Vich (Ferrandis cat. no.96)

Spain, 14th century.

Vich (near Barcelona), Diocesan Museum.

Painted and partially pierced decoration.

Further bibl.: Degen (1975), 276-7 (with illustrations).

170.Casket, Palma de Mallorca (Cott, cat. no.34)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 33 cm.

Width: 17 cm.

Height: 18 cm.

Palma de Mallorca, Cathedral Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat no.31.

171.Casket, Zara (Cott, p.59).

Length: 14 cm.

Height: 8 cm.

Zara (Italy), monastery of Sta. Maria.



Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.140.

172.Casket, Veroli (Cott, cat. no.11)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 18 cm.

Width: 10 cm.

Height: 10 cm.

Veroli, Cathedral Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.40.

173.Casket, Veroli (Cott, cat. no.12)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 20 cm.

Width: 12 cm.

Height: 10 cm.

Veroli, Cathedral Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.60.

174.Casket, the Vatican (Cott, cat. no.16)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 13.3 cm.

Width: 9.1 cm.

Height: 9 cm.

Rome, Vatican, Museo Sacro (588).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.54a.

175.Casket, the Vatican (Cott, cat. no.25).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 27.5 cm.

Width: 14 cm.

Height: 12.5 cm.

Rome, Vatican, Museo Sacro (724).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.36.

176.Casket, Monte Cassino (Cott, cat. no.26).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 11.5 cm.

Width: 7.5 cm.

Height: 7.5 cm.

Monte Cassino, Abbey Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.69a.

177.Casket, Milan (Cott, cat. no.28).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 17 cm.

Width: 9 cm.

Height: 9 cm.

Milan, S. Ambrogio, Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.69e.

178.Casket, Bari (Cott, cat. no.39).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 36 cm.

Width: 19 cm.

Height: 18 cm.

London, Victoria and Albert Museum (603-1902). Once belonged to the cathedral of Bari.

This casket is peculiar; it bears on the front side two standing figures holding tall cross-staves (probably saints) and an Arabic inscription which reads: "The happiness of a bird and the height of esteem and conditions which point to the proper guidance, and everlasting glory and may the ending be perfect and may glory endure!".

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.12.

179.Casket, Tagliacozzo (Cott, cat. no.49).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 19.5 cm.

Width: 10.5 cm.

Height: 10.5 cm.

Tagliacozzo, Church of SS. Cosmo e Damiano. The casket contains relics.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.69bis.

180.Casket, Troia (Cott, cat. no.57).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 19 cm.

Width: 12 cm.

Height: 12 cm.

Troia, Cathedral Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.118bis.

181.Casket, Trent (Cott, cat. no.107).

Sicily, first half of the 13th century.

Length: 32 cm.

Width: 15.5 cm.

Height: 15.5 cm.

Trent, Cathedral Museum.

182.Fragments, Lucera.

Fragments of painted ivory panels found in the Castello at Lucera.

Bibl: Whitehouse (1966), 172.

183.Casket, Anagni (Cott, cat. no.31).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 25.5 cm.

Width: 13.5 cm.

Height: 13 cm.

Anagni, Cathedral Treasury (10).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.41bis.

184.Casket, Anagni (Cott, cat. no.32).

Length: 33 cm.

Width: 17.5 cm.

Height: 13 cm.

Anagni, Cathedral Treasury (42).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.41.

185.Casket, Palermo (Cott, cat. no.30).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 26.3 cm.

Width: 15 cm.

Height: 15.5 cm.

Palermo, Cappella Palatina, Treasury (163).

The word *septima* (seventh) on the front side suggests that the casket is one of the eight mentioned in the inventory of 1309 of the Cappella Palatina.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.69d.

186.Casket, Palermo (Cott, cat. no.51).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 25 cm.

Width: 12 cm.

Height: 11 cm.

Palermo, Cappella Palatina, Treasury (166).

The word *octava* (eighth), written on the front side, suggests that the casket is one of the eight mentioned in the inventory of 1309 of the Cappella Palatina.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.118.

187.Casket, Palermo (Cott, cat. no.60).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 20.5 cm.

Width: 14 cm.

Height: 12.3 cm.

Palermo, Cappella Palatina, Treasury (164).

Painted incised decoration. Below the lock-plate is the word *secunda* which suggests that the casket is one of the eight mentioned in the inventory of 1309 of the Cappella Palatina. On the cover are Latin inscriptions referring to the relics enshrined within the casket.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.129.

188.Casket, Palermo (Cott, cat. no.61).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 21 cm.

Width: 12.7 cm.

Height: 13 cm.

Palermo, Cappella Palatina, Treasury (165).

Painted incised decoration. The word *sexta* to the left of the lock-plate suggests that the casket is one of the eight mentioned in the inventory of 1309 of the Cappella Palatina.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.126a.

189.Casket, Palermo (Cott, cat. no.64).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 19.8 cm.

Width: 11.5 cm.

Height: 11 cm.

Palermo, Cappella Palatina, Treasury (167).

Painted incised decoration. The word *quarta* (fourth) on the front suggests that this casket is one of the eight mentioned in the inventory of 1309 of the Cappella Palatina.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.130.

190.Casket, Palermo (Cott, cat. no.105).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 12 cm.

Width: 7.7 cm.

Height: 8 cm.

Palermo, Cappella Palatina, Treasury (168).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.106.

191.Reliquary of St. Petroc (Cott, cat. no.24).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 47 cm.

Width: 29.2 cm.

Height: 23.5 cm.

London, British Museum. Until 1970 it was kept in the parish church of St. Petroc in Bodmin.

Pinder-Wilson and Brooke [(1973), p.299] have suggested that the casket was brought in 1147-8 from Sicily by William FitzHerbert, King Stephen's nephew, known as St. William of York.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.69ter; Pinder-Wilson and Brook (1973).



Rectangular caskets with flat lid

192.Casket, Trent (Cott, cat. no.43).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 33.5 cm.

Width: 18.5 cm.

Height: 12 cm.

Trent, Cathedral Museum.

According to tradition the casket was brought from the Holy Land by Bishop Federico Vanga (1207-18).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.15; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), nos.608-10.

193.Casket, Veroli (Cott, cat. no.44).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 27 cm.

Width: 13 cm.

Height: 10 cm.

Veroli, Cathedral Treasury (71).

Pair of circular medallions enclosing busts of saints are painted on the cover.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.19; Curatola (1993), cat. no.88.

194.Casket, Veroli (Cott, cat. no.45).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 31 cm.

Width: 17 cm.

Height: 11.5 cm.

Veroli, Cathedral Treasury (72).

Further bibl.; Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.17.

195.Casket, Veroli (Cott, cat. no.46).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 32.5 cm.

Width: 18.2 cm.

Height: 11 cm.

Veroli, Cathedral Treasury (73).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.18.

196.Casket, Troia (Cott, cat. no.69).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 25 cm.

Width: 12 cm.

Height: 12 cm.

Troia, Cathedral Treasury (There are no remains of painted decoration).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.124bis.

197.Casket, Palermo (Cott, cat. no.106).

Sicily, first half of the 13th century.

Length: 11.5 cm.

Width: 7 cm.

Height: 5.3 cm.

Palermo, Cappella Palatina, Treasury (169).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.106bis.

198.Casket, Palermo (Cott, cat. no.38).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 48.5 cm.

Width: 29.5 cm.

Height: 17.5 cm.

Palermo, Cappella Palatina, Treasury (158).

Among the usual hunting scenes, which frequently appear on this kind of painted caskets, this casket bears a unique medallion in which the *Traditio Legis* (Christ in the centre giving the Law to St. Peter and St. Paul) is depicted.

The privileges given by Frederick II to the Cappella Palatina were presented on St. Stephen's Day in 1225 in this box.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.10.

199.Casket, Halberstadt (Cott, cat. no.20).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 16.5 cm.

Width: 10 cm.

Height: 7.3 cm.

Halberstadt, Cathedral Treasury (54).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.64.

200.Casket, Würzburg (Cott, cat. no.47).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 38 cm.

Width: 20 cm.

Height: 18 cm.

Würzburg, Cathedral Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat no.11.

201.Casket, Merseburg (Cott, cat. no.118).

Sicily, 12th century (repainted).

Length: 32 cm.

Width: 17 cm.

Height: 11.5 cm.

Merseburg, Cathedral Treasury.

202.Casket, Apt (Cott, cat. no.23).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 13 cm.

Width: 8 cm.

Height: 5 cm.

Apt, Ste. Anne, Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.47.

203.Casket, Navarre (Ferrandis, cat. no.21)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 33 cm.

Width: 18 cm.

Height: 12 cm.

Navarre, parish church of Fitero.

Further bibl.: Pinder-Wilson (1970), pl.72a.

204.Two fragments of a casket, Navarre (Ferrandis, cat. no.

22)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 18 cm.

Width:6 cm.

Navarre, parish church of Fitero.

205.Three fragments of a casket, Gerona (Ferrandis, cat.

no.34)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 18.5, 10, 13 cm.

Width: 4, 1, 1.5 cm.

Gerona, church of San Felix.

206. Casket, Corcega (Ferrandis, cat. no.66)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 12 cm.

Width: 7.5 cm.

Height: 5.6 cm.

Corcega (canton Brando), the church of San Martin de Sisco.

207. Casket, Corcega (Ferrandis, cat. no.67)

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 11.6 cm.

Width; 7.4 cm.

Height: 5.4 cm.

Corcega (canton Brando), the church of San Martin de Sisco.

208. Casket, Huerta (Ferrandis, cat. no.94)

Spain(?) 13th or 14th century.

Huerta, church of Santa Maria.

The casket serves as a reliquary.

Oval or polygonal caskets

209. Oval casket, Trent (Cott, cat. no.101).

Sicily, first half of the 13th century.

Length: 14 cm.

Width: 10.5 cm.

Height: 13.5 cm.

Trent, Cathedral Museum (42).

Three large equilateral crosses are depicted on the cover. On the bottom of the casket are 'Sepharadi' Hebrew letters, written in a script found chiefly in North Africa and Spain (probably a later addition). The inscription reads:

בְּרֵךְ. כֹּא פְצֵלוּ. לְאוּרִין וְלְתַמִּין. This inscription is an enigmatic one and might be translated as: "Blessed (if one reads בְּרֵךְ), twenty one under his shade, to Urim and Thummim (oracle)". This suggests that the casket was reused in a Jewish context.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.37; Pinder-Wilson and Brook (1973), pl.79b; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), fig.606; Curatola (1993), cat. no.89.

210. Oval casket, Estella (Ferrandis, cat. no.115).

Length: 12.5 cm.

Width: 6.8 cm.

Estella, San Pedro de Rua.

211. Oval casket, York (Ferrandis, cat. no.139).

Sicily(?), 12th century.

Length: 14.5 cm.

Width: 11.1 cm.

Height: 15.9 cm.

York, York Minster.

Further Bibl.: Pinder-Wilson and Brook (1973), pl.80a,b, 81a.

212.Decagonal casket with cover in the shape of a tower,  
Passau (Cott, cat. no.99).

Sicily, 12th century.

Passau, Cathedral, Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.137bis.

213.Octagonal casket with cover in the shape of a tower,  
Cambridge (Cott, cat. no.100).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 31.5 cm.

Width: 21.5 cm.

Cambridge, Fogg Art Museum (1931.52). Formerly in the  
*Welfenschatz*, Brunswick.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.137.

Cylindrical boxes with flat lid

214.Cylindrical box, the Vatican (Cott, cat. no.70).

Sicily, 12th century.



Height: 6.3 cm.

Diameter: 10.3 cm.

Rome, Vatican, Museo Sacro (733). Formerly in the treasury of the Sancta Sanctorum, Rome.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.86.

215.Cylindrical box, Barletta (Cott, cat. no.71).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 10 cm.

Diameter: 12 cm.

Barletta, Cathedral Treasury.

The lid is missing. The box, to which long metal chains are affixed, probably served as a censer.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940) cat no.48bis; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.345.

216.Cylindrical box, Monte Cassino (Cott, cat. no.74).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 14.2 cm.

Diameter: 13.5 cm.

Monte Cassino, Abbey Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.85a.

217.Cylindrical box, Monte Cassino (Cott cat. no.76).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 11.2 cm.

Diameter: 11 cm.

Monte Cassino, Abbey Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.80a.

218.Cylindrical box, Troia (Cott, cat. no.80).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 14 cm.

Diameter: 13.5 cm.

Troia, Cathedral Treasury.

The decoration consists of two nimbed figures (probably saints).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.75.

219.Cylindrical box, Venice (Cott, cat. no.83).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 14 cm.

Diameter: 14 cm.

Venice, San Marco, Treasury (120).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.27.

220. Cylindrical box, León (Ferrandis, cat. no.77).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 13 cm.

Diameter: 14 cm.

León, collegiate church of San Isidoro.

221. Cylindrical box, León (Ferrandis, cat. no. 77bis.).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 17 cm.

Diameter: 20 cm.

León, collegiate church of San Isidoro.

222. Cylindrical box, Zamora (Ferrandis, cat. no. 84).

Sicily? 12th century.

Height: 13 cm.

Diameter: 13 cm.

Zamora, Cathedral.

223. Cylindrical box, Zamora (Ferrandis, cat. no. 117).

Height: 7 cm.

Diameter: 8.5 cm.

Zamora, Cathedral.

Incised decoration.

224. Cylindrical box, Estella (Ferrandis, cat. no.113).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 11 cm.

Diameter: 13 cm.

The box, which belonged to the church of San Pedro of Rua, is now part of the Arenaza Collection, Bilbao.

225. Cylindrical box, Estella (Ferrandis, cat. no.114).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 11.6 cm.

Diameter: 12.5 cm.

The same as the above-mentioned box (cat. no.224).

226. Cylindrical box, Estella (Ferrandis, cat. no.114bis.).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 11.6 cm.

Diameter: 5.3 cm.

The same as the above-mentioned boxes (cat. nos.224,225).

227. Cylindrical box, British Museum (Cott cat. no.108).

Sicily, first half of the 13th century.

Height: 8.5 cm.

Diameter: 11.4 cm.

London, British Museum (572). Acquired in 1904. According to its former owner, Alfred Higgins, it was purchased from the custodian of the church of S. Giovanni degli Eremiti at Palermo, and said to have come from Girgenti.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.87.

228.Cylindrical box, Dijon (Cott, cat. no.128).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 12.1 cm.

Diameter: 12.1 cm.

Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts (1461).

Probably belonged to the Abbey of Cîteaux or to that of the Chartreuse de Champmol. In 19th-century inventories of the museum it was mentioned as one of the "boîtes des toilettes de Bourgogne" or as a container for the Host.

Further bibl.: Guillaume (1978-79), 221-2; Maurice (1983), cat. no.5.

229.Cylindrical box, Dijon (Cott, cat. no.130).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 12.1 cm.

Diameter: 12.1 cm.

Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts (1460).

Probably belonged to the Abbey of Cîteaux or to that of the Chartreuse de Champmol. It was also mentioned as one of the "boîtes des toilettes de Bourgogne", as the above-mentioned one (cat. no.228).

Further bibl.: Guilaume (1978-79), 221-2; Maurice (1983), cat. no.4.

230.Cylindrical box, Salzburg (Cott, cat. no.73).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 15 cm.

Diameter: 14.5 cm.

Formerly Salzburg, St. Peter, Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.85; Pinder-Wilson and Brook (1973), pl.63, and pl.75b.

231.Cylindrical box, Halberstadt (Cott, cat. no.79).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 11 cm.

Diameter: 11 cm.

Halberstadt, Cathedral Treasury (55).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.28; Pinder-Wilson and Brook (1973), pl.71b.

232.Cylindrical box, Hanover (Cott, cat. no.89).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 7 cm.

Diameter: 7 cm.

Hanover, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum (formerly Provinzialmuseum (XXXIa 20). It was once kept in the treasury

of the Michaelskirche at Lüneburg.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.110bis.

233.Cylindrical box, Hanover (Cott, cat. no.93).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 13 cm.

Diameter: 12 cm.

Hanover, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum (formerly Provinzialmuseum (XXXIa 19). It was once kept in the treasury of the Michaelskirche at Lüneburg.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940) cat. no. 111bis.

234.Cylindrical box, Cologne (Cott, cat. no.90).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height: 12 cm.

Diameter: 13 cm.

Cologne, St. Ursula, Treasury.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.111a.

235.Cylindrical box, Halberstadt (Cott, Cat. no.97).

Sicily, 12th century.

Height (without the later mounting): 5 cm.

Diameter: 7.5 cm.

Halberstadt, Cathedral Treasury (52).

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.78.

236.Lost cylindrical box, Aschaffenburg (Cott, cat. no.126).  
Sicily, 12th century.

Height: (of the drawing) 10.9 cm.

Aschaffenburg, Schlossbibliothek MS. 14, fol.72v. Illustrated in the inventory of objects belonging to Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg at Halle (1525-1530).

237.Lost cylindrical box, Aschaffenburg (Cott, cat. no.127).  
Sicily, 12th century. Additional 15th-century German(?)  
painting.

Height: (of the drawing) 12 cm.

Aschaffenburg, Schlossbibliothek MS. 14, fol.71v. Illustrated in the inventory of objects belonging to Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg at Halle (1525-1530).

238.Cylindrical box, Salzburg (Ferrandis, cat. no.116).  
Sicily, 12th century.

Salzburg, the Benedictine Convent Nonnberg.

Bibl.: G. Swarzenski (1940), 105.

239.Cylindrical box, Maastricht.

Fig,115.

Probably Sicily, 12th century. Gilded copper mounting: (the



upper addition) Maasland?, 12th century, (the foot) 19th century.

Height (with mounting): 18.2 cm.

Diameter: 8.4 cm.

Maastricht, St. Servatius, Treasury.

The box retains part of its original metal clamps and some remnants of red pigment. It is mounted on a chalice-like foot and surmounted by a gilded copper circular structure; the latter consists of eleven arcades and bears a conical roof. The incised letter H on the lid is probably the mark of an old inventory.

The box might have served as a container for the Host.

Bibl.: *Ornamenta Ecclessiae* (1985), cat. no.H19.

### Combs

240.Comb, Florence (Cott, cat. no.143).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 13.4 cm.

Height: 13.5 cm.

Florence, Sta. Trinità, Sacristy.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.70c; Swoboda (1963), cat. no.55.

241.Comb, Florence (Cott, cat. no.144).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 15 cm.

Height: 12 cm.

Florence, Sta. Trinità, Sacristy.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.70a; Swoboda (1963),  
cat. no.53.

242.Comb, Roda (Cott, cat. no.145).

Sicily, 12th century.

Roda (Huesca), San Pedro. Ex-Cathedral Treasury.

The so-called "comb of Saint Raymond".

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.70; Swoboda (1963),  
cat. no.54.

243.Comb, San Miguel de Celanova (Ferrandis, cat. no.72).

Sicily? 12th century.

Celanova, the church of San Miguel.

Further bibl.: Swoboda (1963), cat. no.52.

244.Comb, Martres-Tolosane (Cott, cat. no.142).

Sicily, 12th century.

Length: 14 cm.

Height: 13.4 cm.

Martres-Tolosane (Haute-Garonne), Church Treasury.

The comb is associated with St. Vidianus. It was kept as a relic of this saint in a Baroque ostensory.

Further bibl: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.71; Swoboda (1963), cat. no.57; Les trésors (1965), cat. no.485; *De Toulouse a Tripoli* (1989), cat. no.28.

245.Comb, Ardennes.

Sicily, 12th century.

Ardennes, St. Hubert, Church Treasury.

The comb was kept in the reliquary chest of St. Hubert.

Bibl.: Swoboda (1963), cat. no.59 (with extensive literature).

246.Comb, Augsburg (Cott, cat. no.147).

Sicily, 12th century.

Augsburg, Cathedral Treasury (St. Ulrich and Afra).

The comb is associated with St. Konrad.

Further bibl.: Ferrandis (1940), cat. no.70e; Swoboda (1963), cat. no.58.

Undecorated Caskets247. Casket, Stuttgart.

Fig.116.

Sicily, 12th-13th century.

Length: 13.7 cm.

Width: 13.5 cm.

Height: 9.3 cm.

Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum (11831).

A rectangular casket with flat lid. Though part of its original metal clamps and bracing bands with their usual lanceolate ending are still in use, the casket was later mounted with further metal fittings decorated with incised geometrical motifs.

The casket was acquired in 1904. It is said have belonged to the cloister of Weissenau at Ravensburg.

Bibl.: *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/19.

248. Rectangular casket, Chur.

Fig.117.

Sicily, 12th-13th century.

Latter gilded copper mounting: 13th century (?).

Length: 18.5 cm.

Width: 10 cm.

Height: ca.11.5 cm.

Chur (Switzerland), Cathedral Treasury.

A rectangular casket with a pyramidal truncated cover. The original mounting was replaced by a "Gothic" gilded copper mounting; probably the work of a 13th- or 14th-century local craftsman.

The casket was probably used as a reliquary.

249. Rectangular casket, Maastricht.

Fig.118.

Probably Sicily, 12th-13th century.

Length: 69 cm.

Width: 36.5 cm.

Height: 26 cm.

Maastricht, St. Servatius, Treasury.

A rectangular casket with a pyramidal truncated cover. The thin ivory plaques, which cover the wooden box, are mounted with lanceolate and pierced metal fittings. Though differing from the usual 'Sicilian' fittings, the metal clamps and bracing bands, which were once gilded, are probably an Islamic product from Sicily or Spain. The fittings recall those of the octagonal casket from the Fogg Art Museum (1931.52, Cott, cat. no.100), and the pierced metal chains of a lamp in the David Collection in Copenhagen (17/1970).

The casket might be the one mentioned in a 17th-century inventory as being presented in 1374 to the treasury of St.

Servatius at Maastricht by the church of St. Gereon in Cologne.

Bibl.: *Ornamenta Ecclesiae* (1985), cat. no.H20.

250.Oval casket, Maastricht.

Fig.119.

Sicily or Spain, circa 1200.

Length: 37.5 cm.

Width: 20.1 cm.

Height: 19.1 cm.

Maastricht, St. Servatius Treasury.

An oval casket with a slightly curved cover. It has six sphere-like feet and is mounted by cast and gilded metal fittings with decoration of peacocks in foliage; these recall the 12th-century carved wooden panel from Sicily (Museo Nazionale, Palermo). A lock plate with four combination lockers is mounted on the front. This suggests that the casket was originally used as a container for valuables. A similar combination lock with four sets of dials, signed by Muhammad ibn Hamid al-asturlābi al-Isfahānī (circa 1200-1), is in the David Collection, Copenhagen (1/1984). The cast-metal fish on the cover is probably a later addition which was probably mounted as a replacement for the missing original handle.

The casket was restored in 1873. It served as a container for the relics of St. Amor.

Bibl.: *Ornamenta Ecclesiae* (1985), cat. no.H17; *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/13. On this kind of combination lock see Maddison (1985).

251.Casket, Chur.

Fig.120.

Ivory, gilded silver clamps and bracing bands decorated with niello, engraved copper.

Spain, ca.1200.

Additional mounting: local work, 13th or 14th century.

Length: 32.8 cm.

Width: 20.5 cm.

Height: 11 cm.

Chur (Switzerland), Cathedral Treasury.

A rectangular casket with a flat cover which stands on four splayed feet. The cast-metal fittings consist of corner pieces, a lock plate, wide clamps and bracing bands. These are decorated with fantastic birds (simurgh?) within scrolls.

The inner space is divided into three equal rectangular sections each of which is covered with an ivory lid (measuring 16x9 cm.). A light blue embroidery cloth serves as a lining for this casket.

The lower part of the casket is held by engraved copper bands; probably a 13th-century local work.

The casket was used as a reliquary and might originally have served as a portable Qur'an box.

Bibl.: Migeon (1927), vol.II, 16; Braun (1940), fig.48; Dosch (1988), 6.

252.Casket, Bayeux.

Fig.121.

Spain, ca.1200.

Length: 42 cm.

Width: 27 cm.

Height: 16 cm.

Bayeux (Calvados, France), Cathedral Treasury.

The same form as that of the casket from Chur (cat. no.251). The mounting is engraved, nielloed and gilded. The decoration consists of peacocks in foliage. Bosses on the sides probably once held handles.

The Kufic inscription around the lock reads: "In the name of the clement and merciful God, whose justice is perfect and whose grace immense".

The casket is said to enshrine the relics of St. Regnobert (died 668). According to tradition it was regarded as part of the booty taken by Charles Martel during wars against the Saracens or as a present of Henry I, King of England, to the treasury of Bayeux. Since the cathedral of Bayeux was looted in 1106, Migeon [(1927), p.16] suggested that the casket was probably brought after this event.

The casket might have been originally used as a portable Qur'an box.



Bibl.: Migeon (1927), vol.II, 14-6; Ferrandis (1940), vol.II, cat. no.3; *Les trésors* (1965), cat. no.224; Gauthier (1986) no.16.

Inlaid and incrustated-ivory caskets

253. Rectangular casket with truncated pyramidal cover, Madrid

(Ferrandis, cat. no.161).

Spain(?), 13th century.

Length: 17.6 cm.

Width: 13 cm.

Height: 12 cm.

Madrid, National Archaeological Museum (1.015).

The box is signed by its maker, Muhammad ibn al-Sarrāj. It once belonged to the Collegiate Church of San Isidoro at León, where, in 1572, it was probably mentioned among the *marfil y taraceas* (ivory and inlay) seen by the visitors to that church.

254. Rectangular casket with truncated pyramidal cover,

Tortosa (Ferrandis, cat. no.162).

Spain(?), 13th century.

Length: 38 cm.

Width: 26 cm.

Height: 26 cm.

Tortosa, Cathedral Treasury.

255. Rectangular casket with truncated pyramidal cover,

Tortosa (Ferrandis, cat. no.163).

Spain(?), 13th century.

Length: 36 cm.

Width: 25 cm.

Height: 25 cm.

Tortosa, Cathedral Treasury.

Further bibl.: *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.51.

256.Rectangular casket with truncated pyramidal cover, León  
(Ferrandis, cat. no.164).

Spain(?), 13th century.

Length: 10.5 cm.

Width: 7.5 cm.

Height: 7 cm.

León, Collegiate church of San Isidoro.

257.Rectangular casket with truncated pyramidal cover, León  
(Ferrandis, cat. no.165).

Spain, 13th century.

Length: 12.5 cm.

Width: 8.2 cm.

Height: 6.2 cm.

León, Cathedral Treasury.

258.Oval casket, Palermo (Ferrandis, cat. no.166).

Spain(?), 13th century.

Length: 40 cm.

Width: 23.5 cm.

Height: 39 cm.

Palermo, Cappella Palatina, Treasury.

IV. METALWORKBasins

259. The basin of Louis IX.

Fig. 122.

Brass, inlaid with silver and gold.

Egypt, circa 1290-1310. Made by Muhammad ibn al-Zayn.

Height: 22.2 cm.

Diameter (of rim): 50.2 cm.

Paris, Musée du Louvre (LP 16). Bequest of Marquet de Vasselot, 1959.

This is a flat-bottomed basin with walls slanting inwards before curving out and ending in broad flat rims. It is richly elaborated with typical Mamluk decoration on its interior and exterior sides. The decoration is organized well. On the inner and outer walls, in the main zone, are probably specific scenes from court life and hunting activities, interspersed with medallions with riders and enthroned personages; two medallions in the inner part of the basin bear 19th-century additions representing the blazons of France. These zones are bordered on their lower and higher parts with a frieze of running animals in which roundels with coats of arms are interwoven. The *décor* on the interior base of the basin consists of lanceolate leaves encircling a fantastic design composed of concentric rings of fish and

other marine creatures.

The work is signed by its maker five times at different places; except the relatively big one below the rims which reads: "`amal al-Mu`allim Muhammad ibn al-Zayn ghufira lahu" (the work of the master Muhammad ibn al-Zayn, forgiveness will be bestowed upon him).

It was probably made for one of the more important Mamluk figures. The original emblems- a rampant lion and a *tamgha*- which were revealed by D.S. Rice (1951), suggest that the basin was made for Amīr Sālār, one of the wealthiest patrons of the time. Since Amīr Sālār was elevated to high position in 1290 and died in 1310, the basin was probably made between those years. Lately, Doris Behrens-Abouseif (1989) has suggested the Mamluk sultan Baybars (reigned 1260-77) as the sponsor of the basin.

The basin, known by the name *Baptistère de Saint Louis*, is said to have been brought by Louis IX from the East during one of his crusades.

The first record of the basin appeared in *Description de Paris* written by Piganiol de la Force in 1742. In his chapter on "Vincennes" the following description is given: "Dans le Trésor, on voit les Fonts qui pendant longtems ont servi au Batême des Enfans de France, & qui furent portés à Fontainebleau pour le Batême du Dauphin qui regna ensuite sous le nom de Louis XIII. C'est une espèce de cuvete qui fut faite, à ce qu'on dit, en 897, &, qui est de cuivre rouge couvert de plaques d'argent à personnages entaillés si

artistement que le cuivre ne s'en voit que comme par filets."

The basin was kept in the Treasury of Sainte-Chapelle until 1852, the year it reached the Louvre. Four years later it was brought to Notre-Dame for the baptism ceremony of Prince Napoléon-Eugène.

Bibl.: D.S. Rice (1951); D.S. Rice (1949-50), 367-80; Atil (1981), cat. no.21 (with extensive literature); Bloom (1987), 15-26; Behrens-Abouseif (1989), 3-15; *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/84.

260. The basin of Hugh IV de Lusignan.

Fig.123.

Brass, inlaid with silver and gold.

Egypt or Syria, 14th century.

Height: 27.5 cm.

Diameter: (upper) 57 cm., (lower) 43 cm.

Paris, Musée du Louvre (MAO 101).

The basin shares the same form as that of the Basin of Louis IX (cat. no.259). It retains some traces of silver and gold. The outer decoration is combined of an epigraphic band in Arabic *thuluth* script, which is divided into six cartouches by large polylobed medallions, and of two narrow friezes of running animals, a lower and upper one. Three medallions display radiating inscriptions framed by circles of flying ducks. The arms of Jerusalem are depicted on two

further medallions, and a Maltese cross on a third one. The shields are surrounded with elaborate floral decoration. The decoration on the inner walls is the repetitive schema of the outer walls apart from the upper animal frieze which was replaced by a French dedicative inscription. The inner bottom of the basin is decorated with astrological symbols, all organized in two concentric rows of medallions encircling a radiating sun. The first row consists of six medallions in which the six planets are depicted. The second row consists of twelve medallions displaying the zodiac.

The French inscription reads: "TRES HAUT ET PUISSANT ROI HUGHE DE JHERUSALEM ET DE CHIPRE QUE DIEU MANTEIGNE". The Arabic inscription has been read by D.S. Rice (1956) as follows: "Of what was made for the most high Excellency, the splendid, noble Eminence Hugh, who has received the favours (of God), who rises in the van of the *élite*-troops of the Frankish kings, Hugh de Lusignan, may his power endure".

In 1268, with the death of the last Hohenstaufen King Conradin the German hold of Jerusalem reached its end, and Jerusalem was again under French sovereignty. The Lusignans from Cyprus were anointed Kings of Cyprus and Jerusalem. Among them was Hugh IV (1324-59), whose capital Famagusta became an important port for the naval commerce between the Near East and the West in the 14th century. It is quite probable that Hugh IV was the sponsor of this basin, and that he even employed another Christian metalworker for the engraving of the inscription and the coats of arms.



Though the function of the basin in the royal court of Famagusta is unknown, the fact that Hugh IV was known as a very religious king and the reference to the favours of God in both inscriptions, might suggest that the basin was used during religious ceremonies.

By the late 19th century, the basin appeared in Paris in an auction-sale of a Russian boyar and was acquired by the collector M.R.-H. D'Allemaigne from whom it was purchased in the fifties by the Louvre.

Bibl.: D.S. Rice (1956a), 390-402; *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/85.

261. The basin of Elizabeth von Habsburg-Kärnten.

Fig.124.

Brass, inlaid with silver and gold.

Syria, 1337-42.

Height: 19.6 cm.

Diameter: (body) 35 cm., (rims) 46.6 cm.

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (NM 7474).

The basin has straight walls which open at the top forming a flat rim. The exterior surface was left undecorated except for a narrow frieze with a Latin inscription which is intersected by the shield of Elizabeth von Habsburg-Kärnten, the queen consort of Peter II of Sicily (1337-42). An Arabic inscription evoking good wishes decorates the upper part of

the inner walls. The inscription is divided into six cartouches by six medallions, each of them displaying either a sitting figure with a goblet or a shield. Roundels of fish arranged around a centre decorate the inner bottom.

The Latin inscription reads:

"MENTEM:SCA:SP:/ONTANIE:ONOREM:D? /EI:PATREM:LIB/ERACIONIS"  
 (which can be freely translated as: He had a pious soul, willingly gave the honour to God and is the Father of Relief), which suggests that the basin was used in a religious context.

The basin belonged to a group of 14th-century metalwork vessels which were made for wealthy western patrons. The fact that the Mamluk decoration appears only on the inner walls of the basin, and that the exterior was left undecorated in order to leave a space for the Latin inscription, suggests the adjustment of the Mamluk metalworker of this basin at the request of his Christian patron.

Bibl.: *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/90; On the export of Mamluk vessels to the West see Ward (1989), 202-9.

262.Bronze plate, Pisa.

Fig.125.

Bronze, engraved.

Iran, 12th century.

Diameter: 97 cm.

Pisa, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo (1/31).

A relatively big plate with low walls, the rim of which bears 16 pointed terminations. The inner decoration consists of a big medallion, in which a six-pointed star is depicted, and of two further roundels which encircle this medallion. The first roundel bears little medallions, and the second one bears an Arabic inscription evoking good wishes to the owner.

Bibl.: *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat. no.4/87.

### Animal figures

263.The Griffin of Pisa.

Fig.126, text, pp.97-98.

Bronze, cast and engraved.

Provenance uncertain, ca.1000.

Length: 82 cm.

Width: 32 cm

Height: 102 cm.

Pisa, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo (1/32).

This statue is one of the biggest Islamic metal sculptures (apart from the two wings, which are attached to the front legs, the body is made of one cast piece). A pattern of scales covers the chest, and feather motifs decorate the neck and the wings. Rows of medallions are incised on its back, and a drop-like shape with leafy borders bears a figure of an animal in foliage. The latter appears on the upper part of

each leg.

Bands of Kufic inscriptions decorate the Griffin's body on its front, right and left sides.

Front: "Perfect joy, perpetual peace".

Right: "Perfect health, happiness [support] for the owner".

Left: "Perfect blessing, complete well-being".

Though most of the scholars date the sculpture to the 11th century, the question of its provenance remains unsolved. On the one hand, its form recalls the relatively smaller Fatimid incense burners. But on the other hand, the calligraphy and the incised decoration suggest that the griffin is of Iranian origin (according to Melikian-Chirvani [1968]). Hence, this kind of decoration appears also on Islamic metalwork attributed to Spain (see the decoration on the stage which was found in Madīnat al-Zahrā', cat. no.264).

The griffin could have been originally used as a part of an architectural decorative plan, either filling a pure decorative function (standing in a niche) or as forming a part of a font (serving as water spout).

According to Jenkins (1978), the griffin probably reached Pisa after the sack of Mahdiyya in 1087. Referring to some different historical sources, some suggestions have been put forward: arrived after the sack of Palermo in 1063, after the sack of Almeria in 1089 or taken from the Balearic Islands between 1113-1114 (all mentioned by Marilyn Jenkins [1978]).

The huge statue was probably installed during the late 11th century on the top of the gable of the eastern facade as

a trophy of war. It remained there until 1828, and later it was displayed in the Camposanto at the Piazza of Pisa. Today it is in the above-mentioned museum of Pisa.

Bibl.: Melikian-Chirvani (1968), 68-86; Jenkins (1978), 79-81; *Europa und der Orient* (1989), cat no.4/83; *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.15; Curatola (1993), cat. no.43.

264. Stag Cordova.

Fig.127.

Cast bronze, incised.

Spain (probably Cordova), 10th century.

Height: 40 cm.

Cordova, Archaeological Museum (500).

The stag, the horns of which are missing, is decorated with an all-over pattern of scrolls and leaves. A hole in the lower part of its body and an opening in its mouth suggest that it served as a fountain-head, probably in one of the Umayyad palaces of Spain; the hole and the opening allowed the passage of water. Two similar pieces to this stag are in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence and in the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid (51.856).

The statue is said to have been found in the ruins of Madīnat al-Zahrā'. It was kept in the monastery of San Jeromino, where it was described by visitors in the late 16th and the 17th century.

Bibl.: *The Arts of Islam* (1976), cat. no.172; *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.10 (with literature).

265.Falcon, Lucca.

Fig.128.

Bronze, cast and incised.

Iran, probably 8th century.

Lucca, the church of San Frediano.

The falcon is casted out of one solid bronze piece. A Kufic inscription is incised on the lower part of its neck. This might be read: "In the name of God blessing from God".

The falcon, which at the beginning of this century was placed on the summit of the facade of the church, was said to produce an acute sound as soon as south-western wind was blowing; a blow-whistle was probably mounted to its beaker.

Other metal falcons are in St. Petersburg, the Hermitage Museum (NP-1567, dated 796-7), Berlin (Dahlem), Islamic Museum (I.5623) and in the church of St. Catherine in Sinai.

Bibl.: Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.530; Curatola (1993), cat. no.24.

Caskets

266.Silver casket, Gerona.

Fig.129.

Wood, repoussé silver, gilded and nielloed.

Cordova, 976.

Length: 38.5 cm.

Width: 23.5 cm.

Height: 27 cm.

Gerona, Cathedral Treasury.

Rectangular wooden casket with gabled lid which is all covered with plaques of repoussé silver, partially gilded and nielloed. The decoration consists of scrolls terminating with intersected leaves and flowers. A band of Kufic inscription runs along the lower part of the lid and reads: "In the name of God, prosperity, fortitude, and perpetual joy and happiness for the servant of God al-Hakam Commander of the Faithful al-Mustansir bi-llāh. Among those things ordered for Abū'l-Walīd Hishām the successor to the Caliphate. Completed under the direction of the official Gaudar."; Gaudar was an eunuch of al-Hakam.

On the back of the hinge which closes the casket is a further Kufic inscription with the names of the two craftsmen, Badr and Tarīf ("Work of Badr and Tarīf, your servants"). Since Hishām was declared heir on February, 976, and al-Hakam died on October of that same year, the casket was probably made in 976.

The casket was probably part of the spoils which were looted by El Vacar during the battle in Cordova on July, 1010.

Bibl.: Christie (1943), fig.17; Kühnel (1971), fig.40; Gómez-Moreno (1951), fig.339a; *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.9 (with extensive literature).

267.Silver casket, Madrid (1).

Fig.130.

Silver, incised and inlaid with niello.

Spain, 10th-11th century.

Length: 17.7 cm.

Width: 11 cm.

Height: 8 cm.

Madrid, National Archaeological Museum. Formerly in the treasury of San Isidoro, León.

A rectangular casket with a lower oblique-angled lid. It stands on four splayed feet, and has a carved metal hinge and claps fittings (later addition?). The decoration consists of large bands of Kufic inscriptions bordered by scrolls of leaves.

The inscription on the lid reads: "perpetual well-being, complete health, perfect favour, entire blessing". The inscription on the body reads: "entire blessing from God, perpetual well-being, complete health, perfect favour, enduring happiness...health to its owner".

This casket is probably part of a group of silver precious objects with incised and nielloed decoration which were made during the *Taifa*. Their place of provenance is uncertain.



There are three other similar objects: two caskets which once belonged to the treasury of San Isidoro in León (cat. nos.268,269), and a perfume bottle in the Museum of Teruel (629).

Bibl.: *The Arts of Islam* (1976), cat. no.164. For the bottle from Teruel see *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.16.

268.Silver casket, Madrid (2).

Fig.131.

Silver, incised and inlaid with niello.

Spain, 10th-11th century.

Length: 11 cm.

Height: 5.5 cm.

Madrid, National Archaeological Museum (50.889). Formerly belonged to the treasury of San Isidoro in León.

A small oval casket. The decoration consists of scrolls of palmettes. The Kufic inscription which runs along the lower part of its lid expresses good wishes to its owner.

Bibl.: *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.13.

269.Silver casket, León.

Fig.132.

Silver, incised and inlaid with niello.

Spain, 10th-11th century.

León, the treasury of San Isidoro.

A rectangular casket with a lower oblique-angled lid. It has an incised bracing band and a handle which is affixed to its lid. The decoration consists of scrolls of palmettes. The Kufic inscription which runs along the lower part of the lid bears the name: Abū Shaqir.

Bibl.: Migeon (1927), vol.II, 18; Gómez-Moreno (1951), fig.399b.

270.Silver casket, Oviedo.

Fig.133.

Silver, incised and inlaid with precious stones.

Spain.

Oviedo, Cathedral Treasury.

A small rectangular box with a lower oblique-angled lid. The decoration consists of incised leafy scrolls and of Kufic and Latin inscriptions. It is said to enshrine the relics of Saint Eulalie.

Bibl.: Migeon (1927), vol.II, 18; Gómez-Moreno (1951), fig.480.

271.Silver pyxis, Roda.

Fig.134.

Silver, chased.

Spain.

Roda, the church of San Pedro.

A relatively small silver pyxis with a flat cover and a ring-handle. The decoration on the body consists of interlaced quatrefoil medallions filled with four interlaced flowers, while that of the lid consists of interlaced medallions inhabited with different animals. Kufic inscriptions on the upper zone of the walls of the pyxis and on the lower zone of the lid read: "to its owner".

The pyxis, known by the name *hostiario de Roda*, was probably used as a container for the Host.

Bibl.: Gómez-Moreno (1951), 336-7, figs.398a,c.

272.Bronze pyxis, Lucera.

Fig.135.

Bronze.

Pyxis: Islamic; provenance: unknown.

Mounting: local work(?), 13th century.

Lucera (Foggia), Cathedral Treasury.

The cylindrical relatively flat pyxis is mounted on a long metal stem with a flat circular base.

The object probably served as a container for the Host.

Bibl.: Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.362.

272a. Reliquary of San Marco, Rome.

Fig.136.

Bronze or brass, incised and bounced decoration.

Spain or sicily, 14th century(?).

Height: 22 cm.

Rome, the church of San Marco.

It is a bell-shaped pyxis the lid of which has in its centre a small fluted dome. The decoration consists of bands bearing Arabic inscriptions, a large band in which fantastic plants and different animals are depicted within columns and stepped arches, and another band with medallions and rectangles; figures entertaining during a banquet are depicted in the medallions while three of the rectangles bear Arabic blessing inscriptions: "perfect blessing and prosperity" (*baraka kāmila wa'na`ma*).

Other inscriptions on the cover, the upper part of the body and around the base invoke good wishes to the owner.

According to tradition the casket enshrines a relic of St. Mark.

Bibl.: Curatola (1993), cat. no.38.

Ewers and buckets273.Bronze ewer, The Vatican.

Fig.137.

Bronze.

Iran(?), 9th or 10th century.

Rome, The Vatican, Museo Sacro. Formerly in the Basilica of San Lorenzo fuori le Mura.

The ewer has a globular body, shallow foot-rim, faceted neck, rolled lip, a long curved handle in the form of a snake and a long S-shaped spout with serpent-like terminal.

Bibl.: Volbach (1937), fig.6; Hahnloser (1971), pl.138; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.496.

274.Bucket, Toledo.

Copper.

Spain?, date unknown.

Toledo, Cathedral Treasury.

The bucket has a cylindrical tapering body and a swing handle.

Bibl.: Gómez-Moreno (1951), 337.

Candlesticks and lamps275. Candlestick, Rome.

Fig.138.

Brass or bronze, incised and inlaid with silver.

Anatolia, end of 13th century or beginning of 14th century.

Height: 9.2 cm.

Diameter: 10.2 cm.

Rome, Museo di Palazzo Venezia. Formerly kept in the sanctuary of the church of Santa Maria della Vulturella, near Tivoli.

The candlestick has a bell-shaped body with a slightly everted foot-rim and flat shoulders. The neck is relatively short and has a flanged upper part.

The decoration on its body consists of polylobed medallions in each of which dancers, representing the different labours of the months, are depicted. Arabic inscriptions on the neck of the socket and on the upper and lower parts of the body invoke good wishes to the owner: "Lasting glory, lasting success..."

Bibl.: D.S. Rice (1954), pl.9b (and other parallels); Curatola (1993), cat. no. 130a (with the full Arabic inscriptions).

275a. Candlestick, Rome.

Fig.139.

Brass or bronze, incised and inlaid with silver.

Anatolia, end of 13th century or beginning of 14th century.

Rome, Museo di Palazzo Venezia. Formerly kept in the sanctuary of the church of Santa Maria della Vulturella, near Tivoli.

The candlestick has the same form as the above-mentioned one (cat. no.275). The decoration on its body consists of dancing figures intersected by medallions in which riding falconers are depicted. Arabic inscriptions on the neck of the socket and on the upper and lower parts of the body repeat the blessing: "Lasting glory" (*al-`Uzz al-dā`im*).

Bibl.: Curatola (1993), cat. no.130b).

276. Nasrid lamp, Madrid.

Fig.140.

Bronze, pierced and incised.

Spain (probably Granada), Nasrid, 1305.

Height: 230 cm.

Madrid, National Arcaeological Museum (50.519). Formerly in the Alcalá de Henares.

A bell-formed hanging lamp to which a metal holder for six glass oil containers was affixed (see illustration in Migeon

[1927], vol.I, 192). The decoration consists of pierced Arabic inscriptions which are partially intelligible. The inscriptions on the lamp's body and on the spherical units read: "and there is no victor but God, be he the exalted". The incised inscriptions on the rim of the body read: "In the name of God the Merciful, the compassionate, may God bless our master Muhammad and his family and grant him full salvation. Our lord the sultan, the exalted, the fortified by God, the conqueror, the just, the master, arranger[?] of lands and tracer[?] of the course of justice among God's servants amir Abū `Abd-Allāh son of our lord, amir of the Muslims, Abū `Abd-Allāh of our lord al-Ghālib billāh [victor in God], victorious through the bounty of God, amir of the Muslims, Abū `Abd-Allāh, may God, be He exalted, exalt...and that was in the blessed month of Rabī' al-Awwal, in the year seven hundred and five [A.D.1305]".

The inscription attests that this lamp was made for the third Nasrid ruler Muhammad III (1302-9), probably in Granada.

According to 16th-century inventories from Alcalá de Henares, the lamp, which was part of the treasury of Cardinal Cisneros, was brought with other objects as part of the booty taken from Granada after the fall of the Nasrid kingdom in 1492.

Bibl.: Migeon (1927), vol.I, 386, fig.192; *The Arts of Islam* (1976), cat. no.175; *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.57.



V.VARIAPrecious stones277.Sapphire, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fig.141.

Provenance: unknown.

Length: ca.1.15 cm.

Width: 0.95 cm.

New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (acc.  
no.17.190.134).

It is an elongated rectangular pyramidal sealstone. Four of the ninety-nine 'Beautiful Names' of God are inscribed in Kufic (in reverse) on the four facets of the stone; one name on each facet.

The sealstone was mounted on an 11th-century Spanish book cover from the Cathedral of Jaca.

Bibl.: Keene (1981), 38, fig.23.

278.Agate, Munich.

Figs.142,142a.

Provenance: unknown.

The book cover: ca.1000.

Width: 23.6 cm.

Height: 30.5 cm.

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Clm. 4454).

It is a brown-white agate of oval shape. The Arabic word *baraka* inscribed in Kufic on its flat top surface suggests that the stone was originally used as an amulet.

The stone is mounted on the centre of an elaborated cover of a Gospel Book from Bamberg.

Bibl.: Bassermann-Jordan (1914), 20, no.27, pl.13; Messerer (1952), 51, figs.32,33 (with literature); Lasko (1972), fig.124.

279. Agate Bowl, Valencia.

Fig.143, text, p.191.

Agate, gold mounting studded with precious stones and pearls.

Provenance: the upper agate bowl- Orient?, probably 4th century, the lower agate bowl- Fatimid?.

Mounting: 13th and 14th century.

Height (of the chalice): 17 cm.

Diameter- upper bowl: 9.5 cm., lower bowl: 14.5 cm.

Valencia, Cathedral Treasury.

It is a double-handle chalice which is made out of two agate bowls mounted to each other by a stem (4.5 cm long) with a sphere in its centre. The circular agate bowl (height- ca.5.5 cm.) serves as a cup, and the oval one (height- circa 4 cm.) serves as a base. An Arabic inscription written in

Kufic on the outer wall of the oval bowl, namely the base, reads: *lilzāhira* or *al-zāhira* (to the illuminated [f.] or, more probably, the illuminated [f.]).

Traditions associate this chalice with the one used by Christ during the Last Supper. Therefore, it is known as the *Santo Cáliz* from Valencia.

Bibl.: Beltran (1984). See also V. Rincón Gracia, *Monasterios de España*, vol.II (Madrid, 1991), 186.

280.Red Jasper, Utrecht.

Fig.144.

Provenance (of the stone): unknown.

Length: 1.4 cm.

Width: 1.17 cm.

Book cover: datable to the 11th century (restored and renovated at various periods).

Length- 33.5 cm.

Width- 26 cm.

Utrecht, Archiepiscopal Museum, Evangelistarium of St. Ansfridus.

The rectangular red jasper stone is mounted on the front of the book cover of St. Ansfridus (on the right side of its lower part); the book cover is decorated with 32 different stones. The Kufic inscription reads: "Put your trust in Allah, and with the Lord of the faithful seek communication".

This suggests that this stone is a talisman.

The Latin inscription on the back says that the codex was originally presented by Bishop Ansfridus to the patron saint of the Cathedral of Utrecht ("Ornatu lapidum rutilans auroque politum praesulis ansfridi martino munus obivi"); Ansfridus was bishop of Utrecht between 995-1009.

Bibl.: Snijder (1932), 21.

281. Chalcedony plate, Munich.

Fig.145.

Egypt(?), 10th century.

Length: 23 cm.

Width: 16 cm.

Munich, Schatzkammer der Residenz.

It is a brownish spotted chalcedony plate of oval shape. The decoration consists of two shell-like motifs facing each other and bordered by tendrils. The carving is simple and slightly rough.

The decoration and the style of its carving recall the little rock crystal plate (Sasanian?) which was found in Susa and is now kept in the Louvre.

The plate is said to belong to the treasury of St. Stephen in Bamberg, where it was mounted as a huge precious stone on the book cover of the "Bamberg Apocalypse"; a Latin inscription on the book cover reads: *Heinric et Kunigunt haec*

*tibi munera promunt* ("Henry and Kunigunde forward [give] these to you as a gift").

Bibl.: Bassermann-Jordan (1914), 49, no.198, fig.64; Messerer (1952), 44, fig.1; Wenzel (1972), 15, fig.12. For the rock crystal plate from the Louvre see *Le trésor de St.-Denis* (1991), cat. no.10, fig.2.

282.Garnet, Palermo.

Fig.146.

Palermo, Cathedral Treasury.

This oval garnet is mounted on the crown which was found in the tomb of Constance of Aragon; the crown probably belonged to Frederick II. The carved *naskhi* inscription reads: "in Allah Isā ibn Jābir(?) trusts".

Bibl.: Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), figs.145,146.

283.Agate, Ste. Foy, Conques.

Conques, the church of Sainte Foy.

The agate is mounted on the well-known reliquary of Sainte Foy. A Kufic inscription is carved on it.

Bibl.: Lamm (1929-30), vol.I, 200 (no.6).

Leather

284.Octagonal casket, Berlin.

Fig.147.

Wood, leather, lead nails and metal clamps and feet.

Probably Spain.

Height: 15.5 cm.

Diameter: 20.5 cm.

Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum (W7). Formerly part of the *Welfenschatz*.

The octagonal casket with its flat lid stands on eight feet. The decoration consists of nails affixed to the leather. The flat lid bears the name of the Prophet Muhammad; the name appears four times written in a stylized Kufic script. Apart of the frontal facet (with the lock) which is decorated with arcades, all the other seven facets are decorated with a large leaf motif.

Bibl.: Kötzsche (1973), cat. no.6.

Ceramic

285.Alhambra Vase, Jerez.

Fig.148.

Lustre-painted pottery.

Nasrid Spain, 14th century.

Height: 126 cm.

Madrid, National Archaeological Museum. It was found in 1927 during excavations at the Carthusian monastery of S. Maria de la Defensa (founded 1475) at Jerez de la Frontera.

It has an ovoid body, a narrow base and a high neck with flaring mouth. Two large and impractical "wing" handles are affixed to the upper part of the vase's shoulders.

The decoration consists of an arabesque motif, a vegetal pattern, a wide central register with a large Kufic inscription (*al-mulk*) on the body and the *khams* motif (the so-called 'Fatima Hands') on the handles.

This vase probably belonged to the earliest group of the so-called 'Alhambra Vases'; the other earliest ones are: the vase from the Hermitage (cat. no.286), the vase from Galleria Regionale della Sicilia in Palermo (5229) and the so-called "Osma Vase" in the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan in Madrid.

Bibl.: Lane (1946); Van de Put (1947), pl.XIVc; Frothingham (1951), fig.10; Ettinghausen (1954), figs.23,26; Kenesson (1992), 104, fig.6; see also Al-Andalus (1992), cat. nos.110,111,112.

286.Alhambra Vase, State Hermitage Museum.

Fig.149.

Lustre-painted pottery.

Nasrid Spain, 14th century.

Height: 117 cm.

St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum (F317).

The vase has the same shape as the above-mentioned vase (cat. no.285). The decoration on its body consists of horizontal bands: an arabesque band, a large Kufic band bearing the word *`āfīya* (health), a register with roundels bearing the word *ghibtah* (pleasure). The khams motif appears on both handles.

The vase served as the base for the holy water font in the del Salar church in the province of Granada. It was bought in 1871 by the painter Fortuny, and was sold in 1875 in Paris to A. P. Basilevsky. It reached the State Hermitage Museum in 1855.

Bibl.: Van de Put (1947), pl.XIVb; Frothingham (1952), fig.8; Ettinghausen (1954), fig.21; Kenesson (1992), fig.7; *Al-Andalus* (1992), cat. no.111; see also the above-mentioned literature (cat. no.285).

287.Alhambra Vase, Stockholm.

Fig.150, text, p.191.

Lustre-painted pottery. 18th-century bronze mounting.

Nasrid Spain, 14th century.

Height: 125 cm.

Stockholm, National Museum.



It has an elongated elegant body and a faceted neck. The decoration consists of horizontal rows of delicate Kufic inscriptions in foliage repeating the word *ghibtah* (pleasure).

In the 18th century the Swedish architect Carl Harleman (1700-1753) replaced the missing handle with a bronze mounting consisting of the figure of a dragon and a wreath of vine leaves; the latter covers the upper shoulders of the vase.

The vase has a long and adventurous history which was traced by Otto Kurz (1977). It was first recorded in 1512 by a Spanish friar as one of the vessels from Cana; at that time it was kept in a church in Famagusta.

Bibl.: Frothingham (1952), fig.19; Kurz (1977); *Europa und der Orient* (1989), fig.451 (colour illustration); see also the above-mentioned literature (cat. no.285).

288.The so-called "Calice di San Girolamo".

Fig.151.

Semi-porcelain and metal mounting.

Attributed to Egypt, 9th or 10th century.

Mounting: Italy(?).

Rome, The Vatican, Museo Sacro. Belonged to the church of St. Anastasia in Rome.

A fragment of a semi-porcelainous cup(?) is mounted on a

chalice-like foot with a circular base and a sphere. The fragment is decorated with medallions inhabited with birds. The carving is soft.

The object is known as 'the Chalice of St. Jerome'.

Bibl.: Volbach (1937), fig.10; Gabrieli and Scerrato (1979), no.498.

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167. Relic cupboard, wood, Cologne, ca. 1300. Cologne, Cathedral.

168. Relief, marble, Venice, 14th century. Venice, San Marco.

169. "Thesaurus SS. Reliquiarum", copper engraving, Cologne, 1671. Cologne, Schnütgen-Museum, M678.

170. One of the five armoires in the treasury of St.-Denis (detail), engraving, Paris, 1706. Dom Michel Félibien, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis en France*, pl. IV (engraved by N. Guérard).

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