

**EARLY ISLAMIC BRONZE AND BRASS EWERS
FROM THE 7TH TO THE MID-13TH CENTURY**

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Chapter 11

ICAW 1: Hammered Bronze Ewers with Cylindrical Body and Neck

1. General Description

The ewers assembled in this category are characterized by a mainly tall cylindrical body, sometimes with slightly waisted sides. In some cases, however, the body may also appear rather squat (cat. nos. 4-6, 10; figs. 4-6, 10). They have more or less sloping shoulders and bases, the latter often with a round, concave centre.¹ In some instances this area was replaced by a simple rosette design with petals worked in relief.² From the shoulder rises the cylindrical neck, with round, slightly flaring mouth. The handle, which is mainly cast in contrast to the hammered body, is either soldered or rivetted onto the neck and upper body.³

A metal strip or plaque, the latter often wide, lobed and occasionally decorated with the simplest designs, runs around the neck of the object.⁴ Towards the back two metal wires issue from it on either side, intertwine underneath the handle and are then wound together firmly around the handle's body. In several cases rings are attached to various parts of the ewers, either to the twisted wires underneath the handle (cat. no. 1; fig. 1), the very centre of the metal plaque (cat. no. 6; fig. 6) or to the lower handle attachment plate (cat. nos. 8, 9, 13; figs. 8, 9, 13). These rings may originally have received chains, which could either have

¹ This concave base might have been added to stabilize the vessels; cf. Wilkinson 1973, p. 292.

² Dahnke 1988, p. 9; Arne 1932, p. 103; Stenberger 1947, p. 23; Stenberger 1958, p. 238. This noteworthy detail can also be observed on a number of other, chronologically later bronze and brass ewers with which the ewer type discussed here is generically linked; cf. ewer type ICAW 6.

³ Allan 1982, p. 41.

⁴ *Ibid.*; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 224.

secured a lid or attached drinking cups, or could have served for suspension purposes.⁵

Ewer 18 (fig. 17), though typologically related to the other pieces in this group, stands somewhat apart as far as its shape is concerned. It is characterized by a much squatter body with a sloping shoulder and a broad waisted neck with a round mouth without lip. The handle is very flat and thin. Attached to the upper neck, it first bends upwards in a narrow loop and then down to join the body. A narrow dented metal band runs across the lower neck and is joined to the handle by two very flimsy metal wires.

Ewers V.1/1 and V.1/2 (figs. 18, 19), finally, are characterized by a similar appearance to that of ewer 18 (fig. 17). Ewer V.1/1 (fig. 18) also has a squat body with sloping shoulder, a cylindrical neck and a round mouth. The latter in this case is surmounted by a nearly square lid secured by a chain. The upper termination of the handle is attached to the neck by a narrow metal band running all round. A similar band additionally runs around the lower neck, connecting it to the central handle by means of a very thin metal stem. This attachment system directly recalls that on ewer 18 (fig. 17).

Ewer V.1/2 (fig. 19) resembles ewer V.1/1 (fig. 18) closely. Again, it has a very squat body, which in this case, however, is more rounded and set on a low ring base. The sloping shoulder introduces a cylindrical and slightly waisted neck. The mouth is lidded by a domical cover. This was originally also attached by a chain, as the little loop at the top indicates. The handle attachment is identical to that on ewer V.1/1 (fig. 18), utilizing two superposed narrow metal strips (one securing the upper handle termination, the other one the central handle by means of intertwined wires issuing from both its sides instead of a metal stem).

⁵ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 224; Allan 1982, p. 41.

1.1. Manufacturing Technique

The technique in which the objects were executed is more complicated than might at first be conceived from their simple appearance. In fact up to six different sheets of metal were involved in the creation of these vessels.

The body was made up from one sheet, joined at the back either by soldering or hammering. In the latter case one side of the metal sheet would have castellated edges, and the small tongues created would grip over and under the plain side. Afterwards this joint was hammered together so strongly that a seam would hardly be visible.⁶ Similar castellations were also cut out on the upper and lower edges of the body to receive the shoulder and base plates respectively.⁷ In many cases additional solder might have been applied to provide extra coherence.⁸ In at least one case (cat. no. 14; fig. 14) the body and base were obviously raised in one piece.⁹

The neck was slotted into a low collar, which was hammered from the centre of the shoulder plate, and soldered on. The handle was then rivetted onto neck and body, and additionally secured by the metal wires issuing from the metal plaque on the front of the neck, which was likewise attached by soldering or rivetting.

2. Decoration

If the ewers are decorated at all, the decoration is only of a very modest character with simple punched and incised ornaments, most characteristically confined to the shoulder. Three main decorative treatments of the shoulder can be observed.

⁶ Cf. Arne 1932, p. 105; Stenberger 1958, p. 238; Allan 1982, p. 41; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 224.

⁷ Arne 1932, p. 104; Allan 1982, p. 41.

⁸ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 224.

⁹ Arne 1932, p. 102.

2.1. Shoulder Treatment 1

The first layout uses a more or less dense system of concentric bands. Thus, on ewer 1 (fig. 1) from Nīshāpūr an inner band of hatching and a broader outer band with alternating circles and dotted vertical stems form the only decoration. On ewer 3 (fig. 3) from the same findspot a broad section around the outer shoulder, framed by dotted lines, contains five narrow concentric bands, three of them decorated with punch-dotted circles and two in between with diagonal lines and abstract scrollwork. Ewer 6 (fig. 6) carries an abstract system of circles and lines, again displayed within the framework of concentric bands.¹⁰

Among the other vessels of the same type, which were excavated in Sweden and Finland, ewer 16 (pl. 1) has its shoulder decorated with concentric bands filled with diverse punches including rhomboid motifs.¹¹ On ewers 14 and 17 (figs. 14, 16) the decoration appears to be much denser and more profuse, with much more variety in the choice of decorative elements.

On ewer 17 (fig. 16) six concentric ornamental bands make up the shoulder decoration. The innermost band is demarcated by dotted borders, the lower of which consists of punch-dotted circles, and remains plain inside. Above, on the plain area surrounding the base of the neck several dotted triangles appear. Below, a broader band, again bordered by a dotted line, contains zig-zag motifs above and angular plaiting below. Then follows a band of interconnected rhomboid motifs and a very narrow border of punched dots, enclosed by two incised lines, the lower of which consists of adjoining linear sections with punched dots at both ends. Below, a wider band framed by punch-dotted circles contains a succession of diagonal lines, and lastly a zig-zag line runs around the outer edge of the shoulder. In one place this decorative scheme is interrupted and the first three bands seen from the inside

¹⁰ Allan 1982, pp. 78 - 81, nos. 93-99.

¹¹ Stenberger 1958, p. 296 ann. 1.

were replaced by a rectangular panel containing enigmatic signs and motifs, perhaps of an epigraphic nature, displayed in two superposed levels.¹²

A very similar panel with two levels of enigmatic symbols also appears on ewer 14 (fig. 14), inserted into a system of four concentric bands separated by punched dots or, as for the outermost band, by punch-dotted circles. The innermost punch-dotted border is surmounted by large punched triangles, flanking the "inscription" panel. Other smaller motifs appear at intervals all round, but unfortunately they could not be identified from the available photograph. The first broad band contains a succession of small concentric circles surmounting a simple guilloche. Below, another band with punch-dotted motifs perhaps indicating small spirals is followed by two superposed wavy lines with central punched dots. The outermost band contains simple hatching.¹³

12 T. J. Arne interpreted these as degenerated Arabic letters, and Prof. K. V. Zettersteen in Uppsala attempted the following transcription and translation on the basis of comparisons with early Islamic coin epigraphy: "Al-fasl al-akmal wa [al-a]ḥsan qabīṣa lillāh". This translates as "The most complete and glorious superfluity is (but) a pinch for God". It was suggested that this "inscription" was applied after the completion of the original decoration, which would have had to be partly erased for that purpose. The "epigraphic" signs would then have been incised by someone who was illiterate or indifferent to legibility, perhaps in the eastern lands of the vessels' origin before their journey to Scandinavia; cf. Arne 1932, pp. 75, 107-8.

¹³ Kivikovski 1973, p. 129 no. 1017, pl. 113 no. 1017. It is interesting to note in this context that the two preceding pieces present a much more comprehensive and diverse application of incised and punched ornaments than that found on the pieces from Iran, and it seems worth speculating whether this ornamentation might not present a later development of the original, more modest, decoration, perhaps not applied in the homeland of the ewers but actually in Scandinavia, where the ornamentation of metal by means of various punches had reached great popularity during the Viking age. Moreover, the concept of decorating an object with dense concentric bands was well elaborated and was especially applied to small disc-shaped gold amulets (bracteats), which were worn around the neck (cf. Graves 1975, p. 274). Originally, the technique of punching as a means of metalwork decoration was probably imported from the east, where it was used earlier by the peoples of Russia and eastern Iran in more modest fashion. Under the Vikings this technique was then refined and used to greatest effect, especially on silver and gold work, but also on base metal (cf. Stenberger 1958, pp. 288, 296). The enigmatic "inscription" panels on both these Scandinavian pieces might be of further help in determining the origin of the decoration. As mentioned above, the symbols applied on both panels seem to evoke epigraphy and in the case of the ewer from Oestergoetland (cat. no. 17), an attempt was made to relate these symbols to degenerated Arabic letters, inserted into an already existing decorative system. However, if, as Arne suggested, the decoration had already been applied as a whole in Islamic territory, any Arabic letters would probably have been more legible and comprehensible, even if a fairly unskilled and illiterate craftsman was responsible. In fact, at first sight, the decoration of the panels does not immediately evoke Arabic letters at all. It seems to allude much more to certain signs used in the medieval Runic alphabet, and perhaps these panels were indeed of some magical importance for a

2.2. Shoulder Treatment 2

In the second variety of shoulder decoration the system of concentric bands is replaced by individual motifs, floral or pseudo-epigraphic, displayed at intervals around the shoulder plate (cat nos. 2, 8, 9, 12; figs. 2, 8-9, 12) and set against a plain background. Thus ewer 2 (fig. 2) from Nīshāpūr has its shoulder decorated with groups of three trefoils on very tall stems alternating with a stylized lancet leaf.¹⁴ On the Maimāna pieces (cat. nos. 8, 9; figs. 8-9) strange pointed and lobed designs are separated by punch-dotted circles and vertical hatched lines in the first case or dotted lines in the second case. Both pieces have a fairly broad band of hatching demarcating the decorative panel towards the base of the neck, and either an incised (cat. no. 8; fig. 8) or a dotted (cat. no. 9; fig. 9) double border running around the outer edge of the shoulder.

In addition to the shoulder decoration, these two ewers from Maimāna carry superposed horizontal lines executed in dots around their bodies, and ewer 8 (fig. 8) additionally has a decorated handle base with two superposed crosses separated by a broad hatched line, displayed on the handle's back as well as on the sides.

The ewer in the Baghdād Museum (cat. no. 12; fig. 12) seems to correspond very closely to those from Maimāna as far as the shoulder decoration is concerned. The inner and outer borders as well as the individual motifs set within seem to be virtually identical.

Viking owner or for a local Nordic craftsman, who might have inserted them into the overall decorative scheme on purpose (for examples of Danish and Swedi-Norwegian runes cf. Graham-Campbell 1980, p. 157).

¹⁴ Allan 1982, p. 78 no. 94.

2.3. Shoulder Treatment 3

Only one ewer, the fragmented piece from Foelhagen on Gotland (cat. no. 15; fig. 15) carries a third type of decoration, which includes irregular stamped and incised motifs seemingly arranged in a system of roundels or arcades. These elements are enclosed in a broad band, which stops short of the base of the neck. The latter is enhanced by a design of upright and inverted triangles. This ornament is of an entirely different quality from that discussed above, and can perhaps be regarded as more innovatory.¹⁵

One vessel, the ewer excavated in the Kazan district (cat. no. 13; fig. 13), has no shoulder decoration, but few enigmatic motifs on the upper neck. The now remaining ornament recalls a simple scroll with interspersed dots and lines organised in triangles.¹⁶

3. Origin of Ewer Type

In an attempt to trace the typological origin of the ewers assembled in this chapter, the appearance of ewers V.1/1 and V.1/2 (figs. 18, 19) is of greatest importance. Undoubtedly, they are related typologically to the ewers that have been found in Nīshāpūr, Maimāna and adjacent regions and dated to the 9th and 10th centuries.¹⁷ At the same time, however, their squatter bodies, their domical lids, the crozier-shaped handles and, in particular, their handle attachment system utilizing two superposed metal wires, relate them directly to certain Byzantine prototypes. Thus, a Byzantine ewer datable to ca. 600 A.D. in the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig.

¹⁵ Again, one might suggest that here an eastern vessel was enhanced at a somewhat later date in Scandinavia, in this case perhaps Gotland itself, according to local taste and fashion.

¹⁶ Arne 1932, p. 100 fig. 70, p. 101.

¹⁷ Allan 1982, pp. 41-2.

20) seems to anticipate directly the piece from Susa (cat. no. V.1/1; fig. 18).¹⁸ It has a similarly squat, cylindrical body executed in a sheeted copper-alloy with horizontal fluting all round. The body tapers towards a low ring base. The sloping shoulder is fluted, too, with a fairly broad, cylindrical neck rising above. The latter tapers towards a ridge, above which the round mouth area originally received a lid. The crozier-shaped, cast brass handle of this vessel is attached in exactly the same way as those on the piece from Sūsa and its closely related counterpart (cat. no. V.1/2; fig. 19): the upper termination is fixed by a narrow metal strip around the upper neck. Additional security is provided by a second metal band with round-section wires issuing from both sides, intertwining under the handle and coiling around its central part.

In this case the metal band is broader, lobed and subdivided into three medallions with stamped images of an equestrian saintly figure inside, a decorative feature which would obviously be omitted on later Islamic ewers of this type. However, strangely enough, even on the 9th/10th-century ewers from Khurāsān and Transoxiana, which have experienced several modifications with regard to size and shape, lobed or at least indented metal plaques still appear around the neck, and the ancient handle attachment as a whole is implemented virtually unchanged. At least one other example of this Byzantine ewer type exists today and is preserved in the British Museum (fig. 21). This vessel, of virtually identical shape to that in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is also worked in sheeted copper-alloy. Originally, it was found containing the hoard of a 7th-century Byzantine jeweller and was dated accordingly.¹⁹

In view of the evidence assembled above it appears that the Islamic ewers of the type discussed here are derived directly from certain Byzantine vessels executed in sheet base metal.

¹⁸ V & A M 434-1910; raised copper, height at handle 17 cm, circumference 12 cm.

¹⁹ BM 1982, 12-1,1; height 14.8 cm. Another vessel of this type was published in Venator KG 1969, p. 13, S. 51. The peculiar handle attachment system encountered on the Byzantine ewers was also utilized on other more or less contemporary ewer and jug types; cf. Sotheby's 10./11.7.89, p. 198 lot 440; Borell s.a., pp. 118-9 no. 128.

4. Provenance and Attribution

Seven pieces of the ewer type under discussion (only one of them still intact) were excavated between 1935-40 in the surroundings of Nīshāpūr in north-eastern Iran, a city of great importance in early Islamic times as a trading centre on the Silk Road and, more importantly in this context, as one of the major metal-working cities in the area.²⁰

Six pieces came from Tepe Madrasedh, one of the mounds within the ruin fields of the ancient city, which was probably inhabited mainly between the 8th and the 10th centuries. Here, the ewers were either found in well Wo at deep level or in one case (cat. no. 3; fig. 3) in the corridor of a latrine. Only one ewer (cat. no. 6; fig. 6) came to light in Qānat Tepe, another mound probably occupied between the 8th and the 12th centuries.²¹

Three ewers, which are very similar to those from Nīshāpūr, yet slightly taller, were among a large find of metal objects discovered near Maimāna in north-western Afghanistan in 1953.²² In early Islamic times Maimāna was a city of great importance in the region. It was the seat of the provincial Muslim governor and a major economic centre, located on an important commercial and military thoroughfare connecting all the major cities of Khorāsān and Transoxiana. The actual find spot of the hoard lies to the south of the city, within the cemetery of a small local sanctuary, the Ziyārat-e Imām. According to early Islamic topographic reports, this area might have been the site of a military fortress and the actual residence of the Sāmānid governor during the 10th century.²³

Unfortunately, however, the circumstances under which the Maimāna hoard was discovered do not allow any historical connection with such installations to be

²⁰ Allan 1982, pp. 13, 17.

²¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 78-81 nos. 93-9, p. 13; Wilkinson 1973, p. 302; in this location also a pottery ewer was found, closely resembling the metal ewers from Tepe Madrasedh. A similar piece was published in Pope 1938, Vol. VI, p. 678 fig 233.

²² Scerrato 1964, pp. 699-700 nos. 11-13, p. 900, pls. 33-39; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 636 nos. C/2/8, C/2/9, C/2/10.

²³ Scerrato 1964, pp. 676-7.

made, as its discovery was purely coincidental and not the result of systematic excavations. This fact also prevents any concrete dating for the find, and as all the objects are executed in a very simple manner, either without or with few and diverse datable features, Scerrato, who first published and discussed the pieces, had to content himself with a general dating before the Mongol invasion, when the area was devastated completely.²⁴

Nevertheless, even if such a general dating has to be accepted for the time being for the interment of the hoard as a whole and as a *terminus ante quem* for the production of the individual pieces, some of the objects can be dated more precisely on the basis of their close resemblance to pieces from other datable contexts. Thus the three Maimāna ewers can be dated tentatively to somewhere between the 8th and 10th centuries on the basis of their close resemblance to the majority of vessels from Tepe Madrased near Nīshāpūr, at least as a preliminary basis for further research. As for their geographical origin, such simple domestic vessels were perhaps produced in Maimāna itself or might have been imported from a more obvious metalworking centre like Nīshāpūr, an assumption supported by the close resemblance between the objects from both sites.²⁵

At least one other, probably more or less contemporary, metal ewer of this type has come to light in Ravat Hodja/Uzbekistan (cat no. 11; fig. 11), and a pottery vessel copying the metal shape so closely as to include the peculiar shoulder ornaments has apparently come to light in the ruins of Afrasiyab, i.e. ancient Samarqand.²⁶

All these finds show that the ewers under discussion were very popular, not only in Khurāsān but also further east in Transoxiana and, considering their simple manufacture, they might have been produced in several places, perhaps including

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 709-711.

²⁵ Allan 1982, pp. 41-2.

²⁶ Arne 1932, p. 105.

large cities like Bukhāra and Samarqand, both known for their metalworking industries.²⁷

A similar provenance may be assumed for those typologically closely related ewers which, filled with Islamic coins, have come to light in Russia and various locations all over Scandinavia. As for their date, the coins they contain often give useful clues. Thus ewer 13 (fig. 13), which was discovered near ancient Bulghar on the Volga, contained Arabic coins dating from 875 - 884 A.D. Accordingly, the vessel must have been executed in the latter half of the 9th century at the latest.

Ewer 14 (fig. 14), which came to light on the island of Åland off the coast of Finland, was filled with 818 Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd silver coins from various mints and dating between 739 and 890 A.D.²⁸ As it contained no Sāmānīd coins yet, this hoard probably left the Islamic lands before the accession to the throne of the first Sāmānīd Isma'īl b. Aḥmad in 892 and the establishment of a Sāmānīd mint probably a year later.²⁹ Accordingly, ewer 14 (fig. 14) was probably produced some time during the 9th century and is most likely to have reached Åland before the year 900, where it was deposited shortly afterwards.³⁰

Another large hoard with 835 mainly Sāmānīd coins, various occidental currencies dating before 1002 and silver jewellery was discovered hidden in a cylindrical vessel which came to light on the island of Gotland near Foelhagen (cat. no. 15; fig. 15), where it was probably interred in the early 11th century.³¹ This ewer may have been executed in the late 9th or early 10th century to judge by the numismatic evidence alone.

The fragmented state of ewer 16 (pl. 1) does not allow any comments as to features that might link it to one or the other datable pieces in this group, and therefore both the exact provenance and the date remain unknown at present. Ewer 17 (fig. 16), from Oestergoetland in Sweden, was interred as part of the rich

²⁷ Allan 1982, p. 18.

²⁸ Arne 1932, pp. 101-2; Kivikovski 1973, p. 129 no. 1017; Stenberger 1947, p. 240.

²⁹ Arne 1932, p. 103.

³⁰ Stenberger 1958, p. 240.

³¹ Arne 1932, p. 104; Stenberger 1947, pp. 21-24; Stenberger 1958, p. 240.

funerary equipment of a Viking lady around the year 975.³² Again, one might assume a date of production some time before that year, perhaps the early 10th century. Ewer 18 (fig. 17), finally, was found in a 10th-century grave in Klinta on the island of Oeland off the coast of Sweden.³³ This vessel was probably produced around the late 9th century.

In assessing the preliminary considerations made above, it appears that most of the eastern ewers in this group were probably executed in Iran around the 9th and 10th centuries.³⁴

Despite the fact that the majority of ewers in this category most probably originated from eastern Iran, this ewer type was not only known in the east. The ewer which survives in the Baghdād Museum (cat. no. 12; fig. 12) points to the fact that these vessels may also have been used in the western Caliphate. Its characteristic shoulder decoration is closely related to the pieces from Maimāna, and therefore it might be suggested that pieces such as this were transmitted westwards from the centres of manufacture in the east. However, perhaps a local western production centre might also have adapted this practical vessel shape. Thus, a hammered silver ewer with rich repoussé decoration, which is generally attributed to north-western Iran and dated to the 9th/10th century, seems to hint indirectly at such a possibility (fig. 22). Although this piece is executed in a precious metal and was certainly intended for a much richer clientele, it is executed in a very similar technique to, and faithfully retains the general shape of, the much simpler base metal examples discussed in this chapter. Accordingly, its existence might suggest that this ewer type was also produced in areas like north-western Iran or Mesopotamia in early Islamic times.³⁵

³² Arne 1932, pp. 75, 107-8; Stockholm 1985, pp. 188-9 no. 21; Graham-Campbell 1980, pp. 100-1; Oxenstierna 1966, p. 125, pl. 61; Stenberger 1985, p. 240.

³³ Stenberger 1958, p. 240; Petersson 1958, pp. 134-150.

³⁴ It is hoped that future researchers, with more concrete evidence at their disposal, will establish more precisely the provenance and date of the individual ewers discussed here.

³⁵ David-Weill 1962, pp. 139-42. This piece is said to have originally had a beak spout. This was obviously a modification of the ewer type under discussion, the occurrence of which will be discussed later on in this thesis; cf. ewer type ICAW 6, chapter 16.

Ewer 18 (fig. 17) also reveals clues to support this assumption. Its profile, as has been noted above, differs from that of the remaining pieces in this group. On the other hand, its appearance comes close to that of ewer V.1/1 (fig. 18), which was found at Sūsa, and ewer V.1/2 (fig. 19) which, to judge by its close similarity to ewer V.1/1 (fig. 18), may be of similar provenance.

5. Function

The purpose of the simple vessels assembled in this category is not immediately evident, but there are certain clues that can be derived from their findspots.

Thus, the pieces from Nišhāpūr might have been used to hold water for domestic purposes, brought either from a nearby well or the river, which flows not far from the old city walls. If such a usage can be assumed, the concave base of all the pieces from Tepe Madrseh, apart from its purpose to provide steadiness, may also have been intended to ease their transport, when the local women carried them on their heads, a method which can still be observed in many regions of the Middle East today. Probably, the ewers were not intended to supply water for culinary purposes, as tinning of their inside would have been required to avoid poisoning. They might rather have been utilized to provide water for ritual ablution and general cleansing purposes, a suggestion supported by the fact that one vessel (cat. no. 3; fig. 3) was actually discovered in one of the local latrines. In fact, even in modern times a special water jug is kept near the toilet in many Muslim households in order to clean oneself properly according to the requirements of the Qur'ān.

Only ewer 6 from Qānat Tepe (fig. 6) may have been intended actually to serve water for drinking purposes. It is considerably smaller than the other vessels, lacks the characteristic concave base and most importantly reveals the tinning necessary to prevent poisonous chemical reactions caused by the combination of base metal and water.

Turning to the pieces discovered within the modern cemetery of the Ziyārat-e Imam south of Maimāna, their suggested 8th - 10th-century dating tempts one to consider possible connections between these vessels and the military installations which are said to have occupied this site in the 10th century.³⁶ Perhaps the ewers and at least some of the other objects discovered with them were indeed domestic utensils used with the household equipment of the 10th-century fortress. They might also have constituted part of the army's official marching gear for military campaigns.

That ewers were indeed part of such equipment in the eastern Iranian lands in early Islamic times is suggested by the 11th-century *Tarīkh-i Sīstān*, which reports that "in 830/1 the Sīstāni army equipped themselves with many water containers, ropes, ewers, water skins and various other provisions for a journey to fight the Khārijites".³⁷ Although the material of which the vessels were made is not specifically mentioned in this context, metal was probably used, as it alone could successfully withstand the permanent concussions of a military convoy on the move. Tempting as such considerations undoubtedly are, they must remain purely speculative for the time being, until future excavations in the area reveal a real historical connection between the Maimāna pieces and any architectural remains, perhaps including those of a military fortress. Be that as it may, the objects constituting the hoard from Maimāna were certainly utilitarian and components of ordinary domestic equipment, as it was used in many households in the region at the time.³⁸

In addition to the ordinary household chores for which the vessels in this category were used, it appears that they also had a rather more important purpose, i. e. as containers for money and jewellery. As such they travelled as far as Russia and Scandinavia (where at least three ewers still containing their precious contents have so far been discovered) during centuries of extensive trade. This flourished

³⁶ Scerrato 1964, pp. 676-7.

³⁷ Gold 1976, p. 144.

³⁸ Scerrato 1964, p. 677; Allan 1982, p. 15.

between the Islamic lands and the countries to the north from the 9th century onwards.³⁹

Already at the beginning of the 9th century, Viking traders, and particularly Swedes, had pushed eastwards into Russia, where by 850 they established their first trade route down the Dnieper to the Black Sea, Byzantium and further east overland to Baghdād.⁴⁰ Subsequently, they initiated economic relations with the Bulgars in the upper Volga area, and with the Khazars, who were centred around the Volga delta on the shores of the Caspian Sea, with their capital at Itil.⁴¹ With their permission and after paying profitable tolls, they continued on their way across the Caspian and then by camel over the Persian highlands to Baghdād or down the caravan routes to the East.⁴²

In the bazaars of the Caliphate the Vikings would offer their wares - furs, amber, slaves - with the help of Slavonic interpreters.⁴³ The Arabs would pay with silk and, much more importantly, silver coins, a commodity which was more than abundant in the Caliphate of the 9th century, considering that the Caliph in Baghdād in 800 A.D. had a yearly income of 1,200 tons of silver.⁴⁴

These riches, at times stored in metal ewers, were taken back by the Scandinavian traders, partly to Russia where many had established settlements. Here their wealth can still be traced by the enormous amounts of Arabic coins excavated in jugs on the Volga, the Dnieper, in northern Russia and on the Baltic coast. Others took their hoards directly to their Scandinavian homelands.⁴⁵

Arab traders, too, soon followed the newly established trade routes to the north, where they attended markets in Itil and Bulghar on the Upper Volga, the latter a world famous centre for fur at the time. As payment for the merchandise on offer, they probably took their silver with them, possibly stored safely in ewers like

³⁹ Simpson 1967, p. 108.

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 107-8; Oxenstierna 1966, p. 94, p. 119.

⁴¹ Oxenstierna 1966, p. 100, p. 264; Simpson 1967, p. 108, p. 110.

⁴² Simpson 1967, p. 108; Oxenstierna 1966, p. 264.

⁴³ Oxenstierna 1966, pp. 119-200, 264-5.

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

⁴⁵ Arne 1914, *passim*.

the ones under discussion. Some of them might even have deposited such ewers with excess cash in secret locations near their base of commercial activities as a financial safeguard for their return journey.⁴⁶

The somewhat peculiar practice of storing money in ewers seems to have been well known in the 10th century, as an anecdote reported in the 11th-century *Siyāsatnāmeḥ* by the Seljuq *wazīr* Nizām al-Mulk implies.

A messenger reported to 'Adūd al-Dawla about a merchant's son, who after a life of excess decided to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca as penitence. As he did not wish to take all his cash with him, he bought two copper ewers and placed 10,000 *dīnars* into each of them. He then left them with the local *qādi* for safety, who on his return refused to hand his possessions over. The king, hearing about this injustice, decided to intervene, but he knew that his directly confronting the *qādi* would not lead to the desired result. He therefore decided to trick the *qādi*.

He asked him personally to safeguard a large treasure for him as insurance for his family in the case of his unexpected death. This fortune should be stored in a special secret subterrestrial room. The king had 1.5 million *dīnars* in money and jewellery prepared and instructed his treasurer to fill 140 ewers in the treasury with gold, together with three jars of pearls and other precious items. He then asked the *qādi* to inspect the treasure. Thereupon the king sent the merchant's son to the *qādi*, who threatened to complain about him to the ruler if his ewers were not returned to him. The *qādi*, worried that his own ill repute could spoil his chance of retaining a much larger treasure and keeping it after the king's death, finally agreed to hand the ewers over. The man immediately had the two ewers transported to the king, who called for the *qādi*, confronted him with the young man and stripped him of his position because of his greed and dishonesty.⁴⁷

Judging by this story, it was a known practice to store large amounts of money and jewellery in copper ewers in early Islamic times, and thus it does not

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁴⁷ Schabinger 1960, pp. 174-183.

seem unlikely that such ewers were also used to transport coin hoards as payment in trade transactions outside the country, either by Scandinavian traders who had adapted this practical local method for safely carrying their riches, or by Arab and Persian merchants in anticipation of large-scale purchases in the markets of the north.

Towards the late 9th and early 10th century, trading relations between the heartland of the Caliphate and the countries to the north declined, partly because of political upheavals in the latter, partly because of the increasing activities of pirates in the Caspian Sea and the Volga area.⁴⁸ Subsequently, the newly established empire of the Sāmānids in eastern Iran continued trading with the north from Khwārazm, situated to the south-east of the Caspian Sea, until the early 11th century. Muslim traders would still venture across the Caspian and continue up the Volga, or travel by land across the steppes to the east of the Caspian and over the Urals to the trading centres in Russia, most importantly Bulghar, where again they exchanged silver hoards stored in ewers for fur and other desirable goods. In fact, one such ewer (cat. no. 13; fig. 13), still filled with twelve kilos of dirhams dating from 875-984 and safely sealed with wax, was actually found in the close vicinity of ancient Bulghar near the village of Tatarski Tolkish in the Chistopol district.⁴⁹

From Bulghar the Scandinavian traders carried their earnings home not only to various regions in Russia but also directly to their homelands, the eastern provinces of Sweden and the Baltic islands of Åland, Oeland and Gotland.⁵⁰ To date more than 85,000 Arabic coins dating mostly from the 9th and 10th centuries have been found in Scandinavia, many yet again contained in cylindrical ewers with narrow cylindrical necks. The location of their find-spots often corresponds to that of major Scandinavian trading centres.

Thus, Gotland was one of the most important centres of Baltic commerce during the Viking age and even later, and its inhabitants were among the most

⁴⁸ Arne 1932, pp. 106-7.

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 100; Stenberger 1958, p. 356.

⁵⁰ Arne 1914, p. 88.

active merchants involved in oriental trade missions.⁵¹ Subsequently, the island became one of the wealthiest areas of all Scandinavia at the time, and not surprisingly Arabic coin hoards are more numerous here than anywhere else in the region.⁵² Over 280 finds totalling more than 40,000 coins give ample evidence of the great prosperity of the local population. At the same time, however, they suggest that their owners often needed to hide their treasures from possible plunderers, perhaps raiders from poorer areas of Scandinavia.⁵³

However, such deposits, although at first sight a practical necessity, also had deeply religious implications. According to local belief these riches would enable the owner, should he die in any of these raids or military campaigns, to enjoy a comfortable life in Valhalla, the Olympus of the Germanic people.⁵⁴

Another prosperous commercial centre involved in large-scale trading with the east was Birka, situated on the island of Bjoerkoe in Lake Melar in eastern Sweden.⁵⁵ Birka was at the height of its prosperity towards the close of the 9th century, and remained vital to Sweden's commercial life for centuries thereafter. Graves in the region where the town is situated, dating largely from the 9th and the first half of the 10th century, reflect its oriental trade links through numerous Near Eastern and Persian coins, glass and all sorts of vessels, including yet another cylindrical ewer of eastern type (cat. no. 16; pl. 1).⁵⁶

From the market in Birka foreign imports, coins and exotic objects were dispersed through the rest of Sweden, and perhaps the well-preserved ewer in Stockholm with intricate shoulder patterns thus reached the area of Oestergoetland further south (cat. no. 17; fig. 16).⁵⁷ Yet another ewer of the type discussed here

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁵² Simpson 1967, p. 20; Arne 1914, p. 89.

⁵³ Simpson 1967, p. 23; Oxenstierna 1966, p. 131.

⁵⁴ Oxenstierna 1966, p. 132.

⁵⁵ Arne 1914, p. 14; Simpson 1967, p. 104.

⁵⁶ Simpson 1967, pp. 104, 107; Oxenstierna 1966, p. 124; Arne 1914, p. 90; Stenberger 1958, p. 240.

This ewer was found in a 10th-century grave in Tuna, Hjaelsta in the Swedish County of Uppland.

⁵⁷ Simpson 1967, p. 107.

ended up in a 10th-century grave in Klinta on the island of Oeland off the coast of Sweden (cat. no. 18; fig. 17).⁵⁸

It has been mentioned above that the Islamic ewers discussed here probably derive from Byzantine prototypes. Interestingly enough, it appears that at least one of the type's functions, too, seems to have been adopted by the Muslims from their Byzantine predecessors. Thus, the aforementioned copper-alloy ewer in the British Museum is said to have contained the hoard of a 7th century-Byzantine jeweller, a clear parallel to later Muslim practices.⁵⁹

6. Summary

Hammered bronze or copper-alloy ewers with cylindrical bodies and necks, and a peculiar handle attachment by means of metal plaques with metal wires issuing from it and winding around the handle, were in use in many different regions of the Caliphate, including Mesopotamia, western Iran, Khurasan and Transoxiana, mainly between the 8th and the 10th century.⁶⁰ The shape of this ewer type is probably derived from Byzantine types, and it is likely that the first Islamic pieces were produced in the western lands of the Caliphate such as Mesopotamia and western Iran, from where they were then introduced to more eastern regions. If such an evolution can be assumed, this ewer type would be yet another example indicating the great importance of Mesopotamia and western Iran for the establishment of Islamic vessel shapes in the east.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Stenberger 1958, p. 240; Petersson 1958, pp. 134-150.

⁵⁹ BM 1982, 12-1,1; height 14,8 cm.

⁶⁰ It seems that this ewer type survived even longer, as a piece in the David Collection in Copenhagen suggests. Though slightly modified in shape, without the characteristic handle attachment, and with rich inlay decoration, it still retains the basic shape. This piece (reg. no. 54/1979) has been dated to the 13th/14th centuries. I am grateful to the C. L. David Collection for supplying me with information regarding this object.

⁶¹ In fact this assumption has received further support by the very recent excavations at Umm al-Walīd in Jordan. Here, two probably 8th-century ewers of this type have come to light; cf. Geneva 1992/3, p. 17 figs. 11.5 & 11.6. Unfortunately, this piece of information, which I owe to Dr. J. Allan, reached me too late to receive more extensive consideration

The vessels in this group were probably used mainly as water containers as well as ablution and cleansing equipment. At the same time they were also used as money containers, although it seems unlikely that they were specifically made for this purpose. The latter function was responsible for their distribution in Russia and Scandinavia during trade relations between the Muslim lands and the areas to the north, such as Russia and Scandinavia, from the 9th century onwards.

here. It is to be hoped that this flaw can be rectified in the future. If it can be established beyond doubt that, as indeed seems to be the case, the first Islamic examples of the type discussed here were executed in the Near East and/or Mesopotamia rather than Iran, as is still largely accepted today, the ICAW classification should be replaced with an EMW or a MW classification.

Catalogue

Cat. nos. 1 - 7 Tepe Madrased/ Qānat Tepe, Nīshāpūr, Iran

1. Tehran, Archaeological Museum; Nīshāpūr, Tepe Madrased, well WO deep level; fragmentary; beaten bronze, punched and incised; h. 30.2 cm, diam. 15.8 cm.

Tall, cylindrical body; slightly sloping shoulder; sloping base with concave centre; tall cylindrical neck, slightly flaring mouth; simple handle attached to body by soldering; from metal plaque fixed to front of neck issue two metal strips, which intertwine underneath the handle and then are wound together around the handle's body; ring suspended from lower strip beneath handle.

Around shoulder, an inner line of hatching and an outer, broader line with circles separated by three superposed dots (fig. 1).

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 635 no. C/2/1; Allan 1982, p. 78 no. 93, p. 79 fig. 93.

2. Tehran, Archaeological Museum; Nīshāpūr, Tepe Madrased, well WO deep level; fragmentary; beaten bronze; punched and incised; h. 30 cm, diam. 16.4 cm.

Form like 1, but the plaque around the front of the neck is situated further down just above the lower end of the neck; on shoulder, framed by a narrow double line towards the outer edge, three groups of punched trefoils on long stems alternate with three five-petalled lancet-like blossoms (fig. 2).

Lit.: Wilkinson 1973, p. 302 (bottom left); Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 635 no. C/2/2; Allan 1982, p. 78 no 94, p. 79 fig 94.

3. Tehran, Archaeological Museum; Nīshāpūr, Tepe Madrased, latrine corridor R; beaten bronze, punched and incised; h. 26.6 cm, diam. 13.8 cm.

Form like 1, handle rivetted to neck. On shoulder, broad band outlined by dots, containing narrow bands of circles alternating with hatching and simple abstract scrollwork; trilobed, flattened part of metal strip around neck decorated with punched circles enhancing its outlines and creating little roundels in the centre; central area of metal plaque obviously rivetted on (fig. 3).

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 635 no. C/2/3; Allan 1982, p. 80 no 95 and fig. 95.

4. Tehran, Archaeological Museum; Nīshāpūr, Tepe Madrased, well WO deep level; fragmentary; beaten bronze; h. 29 cm, diam. 16.4 cm.

Form like 1. Undecorated (fig. 4).

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 635 no. C/2/4; Allan 1982, p. 80 no. 96, p. 81 fig. 96.

5. Tehran, Archaeological Museum; Nīshāpūr, Tepe Madrased, well WO deep level; fragmentary; beaten bronze; h. 28 cm, diam. 19.2 cm.

Form like 1, but body squat; trilobed strip around neck. Undecorated (fig. 5).

Lit.: Allan 1976, p. 635 no. C/2/5; Allan 1982, p. 80 no. 97, p. 81 fig. 97.

6. Tehran, Archaeological Museum; Nīshāpūr, Qānat Tepe; fragmentary; beaten bronze; punched and incised; tinned inside; h. 18.4 cm, diam. 11.6 cm.

Form basically like 1, but body much smaller and very squat; handle and strip rivetted to neck; strip around neck trilobed, with metal eye and ring. On shoulder, circles and lines organised in narrow bands (fig. 6).

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 636 no. C/2/6; Allan 1982, p. 80 no. 98, p. 81 fig. 98.

7. Tehran, Archaeological Museum; Nīshāpūr, Tepe Madrased, well WO deep level; fragmentary; beaten bronze; h. 26.6 cm, diam. 13.4 cm.

Form basically like 1, but body smaller in relation to neck; neck broader; handle crozier-shaped and rivetted to neck and body; no metal strip. Undecorated.

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 636 no. C/2/7; Allan 1982, p. 80 no. 99, p. 81 fig. 99.

Cat. no. 8 - 10 Maimāna, Afghanistan

8. Kabul Museum; Maimāna; beaten bronze; punched and incised; h. 33 cm.
Form like 1, but very tall and slender body and neck; dented seam around outer edge and base of sides; handle of round section above and square section below, rivetted onto neck and body; heart-shaped attachment plates above and below, the latter holding a crescent-shaped ring of rhomboid section; from ovoid metal plaque (made of copper) across upper part of neck issue two strips intertwining underneath handle and then winding around handle's centre, thus separating the round and square sections. Modest incised decoration on shoulder: two bands of herring bone and one of double zig-zag lines run around base of neck; around outer edge of shoulder, signs of epigraphic(?) derivation grouped in three designs, divided by vertical bands alternating with rosettes, all framed by two subtle bands towards the outer edge; punched rosettes on neck plaque and neck; on body, superposed dotted horizontal lines; at base of handle, simple decoration with dots and lines; attachment plate with cross-like design (fig. 8).

Lit.: Scerrato 1964, pp. 699-700, no. 11, figs 33-36 (Pls. XVIII/XVIV); Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 636 no. C/2/8.

9. Kabul Museum; Maimāna; beaten bronze; punched and incised; h. 34.4 cm.
Form very similar to 8, but slightly waisted sides; very slightly tapering neck; angular handle rivetted to neck and body; small loop projecting from the lower attachment plate; metal plaque around upper neck: dented and narrow. On body, superposed horizontal dotted lines; on shoulder, between an inner border of hatching and an outer double dotted line, isolated abstract floral motifs, situated on front and sides of shoulder (fig. 9).

Lit.: Scerrato 1964, p. 700 no. 12, pl. XX fig. 37, pl. XXI fig. 38; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 636 no. C/2/9.

10. Kabul Museum; Maimāna; beaten bronze; h. 39 cm.
Form similar to 1, but slightly squatter; neck slightly broader; handle rivetted on; dented oblong metal plaque rivetted onto neck; the original metal strips issuing from it have disappeared; however, remains still wound around handle. Undecorated (fig. 10).

Lit.: Scerrato 1964, p. 700 no. 13, pl. XXI fig. 39; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 636 no. C/2/10.

11. Samarqand Museum; Ravat-Hodja, Uzbekistan; beaten bronze; decoration unknown; measurements unknown.

Form like 1, handle missing; parts of upper and lower handle attachments remain (fig. 11).

Lit.: Arne 1932, p. 103 fig. 74; p. 105.

12. Baghdād Museum; n. p.; fragmentary; beaten bronze or copper(?); punched and incised; h. ca. 21 cm.

Form like 1, neck fragmented with upper part missing; handle missing. On shoulder, inner band of hatching and narrow outer band from which issue abstract pointed and lobed motifs, pointing inwards (fig. 12).

Lit.: Stenberger 1958, p. 241, fig. 103.

13. Hermitage; Tatarski Tolkish, Chistopol district, Kazan province; beaten bronze; punched and incised; measurements unknown.

Form like 1, but slightly squatter. On upper neck, remains of ornamentation; abstract scroll and triangles made up from dots and lines (fig. 13).

Lit.: Arne 1932, pp. 100-1, fig. 69.

14. Helsingfors, National Museum; Saltvig-Bertby, Åland; fragmentary; beaten bronze; punched and incised; measurements unknown.

Form originally like 1, now only shoulder plate and parts of the body remain. On shoulder - in concentric bands framed by dots - hatching, wavy lines enclosing dots, circle and dot motifs, cable pattern; above innermost band punched triangles; decorative system interrupted in one place to include rectangular panel with enigmatic signs, motifs and cable pattern on two superposed levels (fig. 14).

Lit.: Arne 1932, pp. 101-3, p. 108; Kivikovski 1973, p. 129 no. 1017, pl. 113 no. 1017.

15. Stockholm, Statens historiska Museum no. 3547; Foelhagen, Gotland; fragmentary; beaten copper plate or low tin bronze; stamped and incised; h. ca. 31 cm, diam. ca. 17.5 cm, diam. of neck at mouth ca. 6.5 cm.

Form originally similar to 1; now only base, parts of the body and the shoulder plate remain. On base, five-petalled rosette worked from the inside; on shoulder, irregular, stamped(?) geometric ornamentation recalling abstract scrollwork or arcading; on neck base, zig-zag pattern (fig. 15).

Lit.: Arne 1932, pp. 103-5; Stenberger 1947, pp. 21-24; *idem* 1958, pp. 238-40; Stockholm 1985, p. 189 no. 22.

16. Uppsala Universitets Museum foer Nordiska Fornsaer 1142; Tuna, Hjaelsta, County Uppland; hammered bronze; punched and incised (reworked as bowl or bucket, original shoulder area now serving as base); h. 14.5 cm.

Decorated on original shoulder with concentric bands containing diverse punches, among them rhomboid motifs with central dots (pl. 1).

Lit.: Stenberger 1958, p. 296 ann. 1; Stockholm 1985, p. 189 no. 23.

17. Stockholm, Statens Historiska Museum no. 16429:1; Aska Fraelsegard, Oestergoetland; fragmentary; beaten bronze; punched and incised; h. without neck 20 cm, h. of neck 9.4 cm, h. 31.4 cm, diam. 15.15 cm, diam. neck 6.8 -6.15 cm.

Form originally like 1. On shoulder, in concentric bands outlined by punched dots zig-zag motifs, hatching, rhomboid designs, simple angular cable pattern; decorative system in one place interrupted to include rectangular panel containing enigmatic signs, motifs and cable patterns (fig. 16).

Lit.: Arne 1924, pp. 105-8; Arne 1932, p. 73 fig. 20, p. 74 fig. 21a, p. 75, fig. 21b, pp. 100-8; Oxenstierna 1959 p. 89 pl. 38 top; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 636 no. C/2/11; Graham-Campbell 1980, pp. 100-1 no. 351; Stockholm 1985, pp. 188-9 no. 21; Berlin 1989, p. 525 no. 2/5.

18. Stockholm, Statens Historiska Museum no. 25840; Klinta, Oeland; beaten bronze; h. 26 cm, max. diam. 18 cm, diam. base 16 cm, diam. mouth 8.7-10.5 cm, handle h. 20.5 cm.

Form similar to 6 and V.1/1; very thin handle rivetted onto upper neck and soldered to body; short and broad flaring neck; prominent shoulder collar; handle attachment much less sophisticated than on other examples with one narrow band around the lower neck and two thin intertwining metal wires issuing from it. Undecorated (fig. 17).

Lit.: Petersson 1958, pp. 134-150; Stockholm 1985, p. 189 no. 24.

V.1/1. Tehran, Archaeological Museum (?); Sūsa; hammered(?) bronze; h. ca. 26 cm (?).

Form similar to 18, but taller neck with domical lid attached to crozier-shaped handle by chain; handle attached by two superposed narrow bands around neck, one joining upper end of handle, the other one the handle's body by means of a thin metal stem, also securing the lid's chain. Undecorated (fig. 18).

Lit.: De Mecquenem 1947, fig. 7, p. 11; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 637 no. C/2/V.1, Vol. 1, p. 515.

V.1/2. Christie's 19.2.80, lot 178; n. p.; bronze; h. 20 cm.

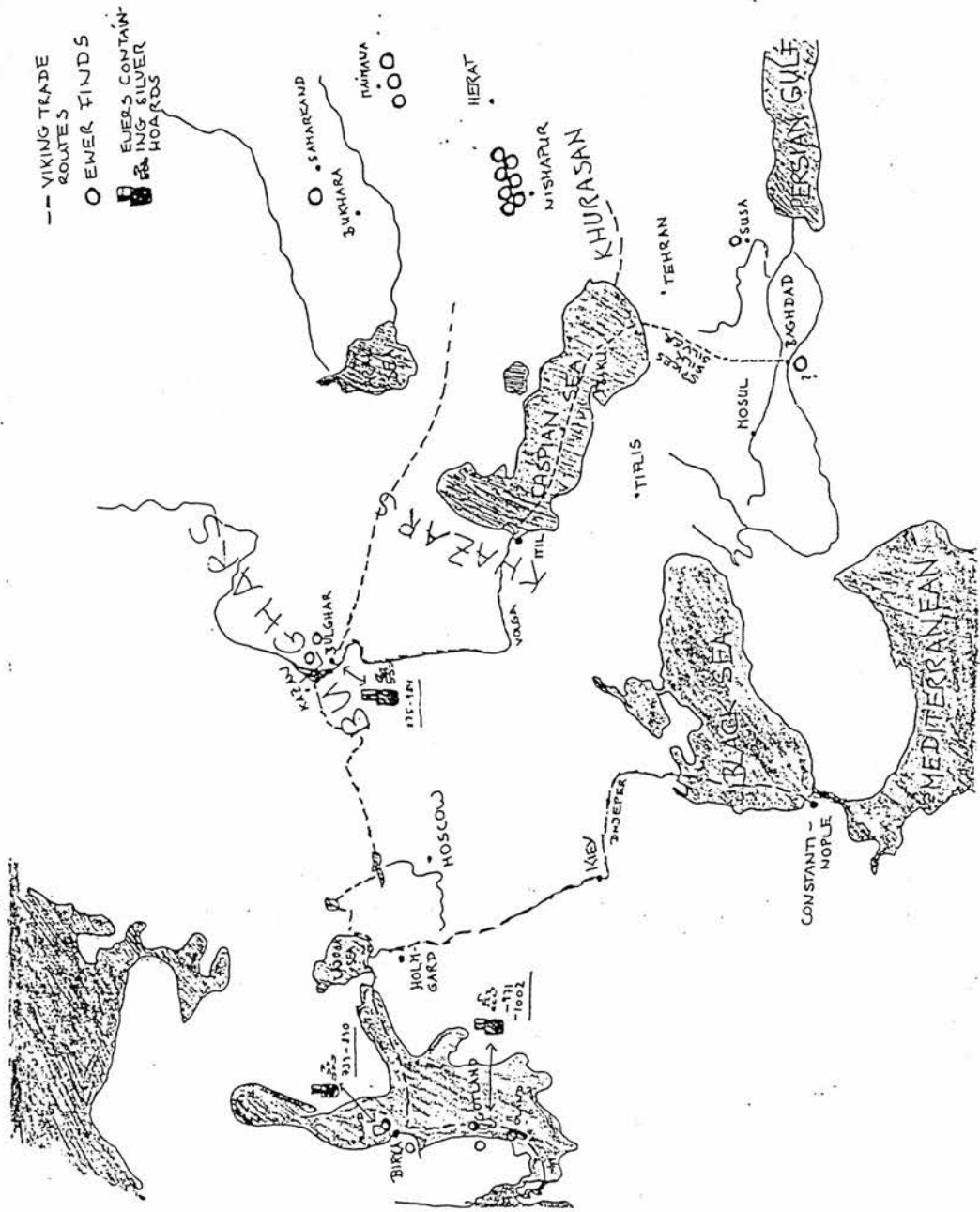
Form similar to 18 & V.1/1, but more globular body on low foot-ring; lid without chain (hinge remains) and more pointed; very wide loop handle attached to neck by two narrow metal bands around the neck, the upper one joining the upper end of the handle, the other one narrowing down into two metal wires intertwining and coiling around the handle's body. Undecorated (fig. 19).

Lit.: Christie's 19.2.1980, lot. 178.



Plate 1

ICAW 1/16. Hammered Bronze Ewer (Fragmented)
found in Tuna, Hjaelsta, County Uppland, Sweden.
H. 14.5 cm (Uppsala, Universitets Museum foer Nordiska
Fornsaker 1142).



Map 1
 Distribution and Findspots of Ewer Type ICAW 1.

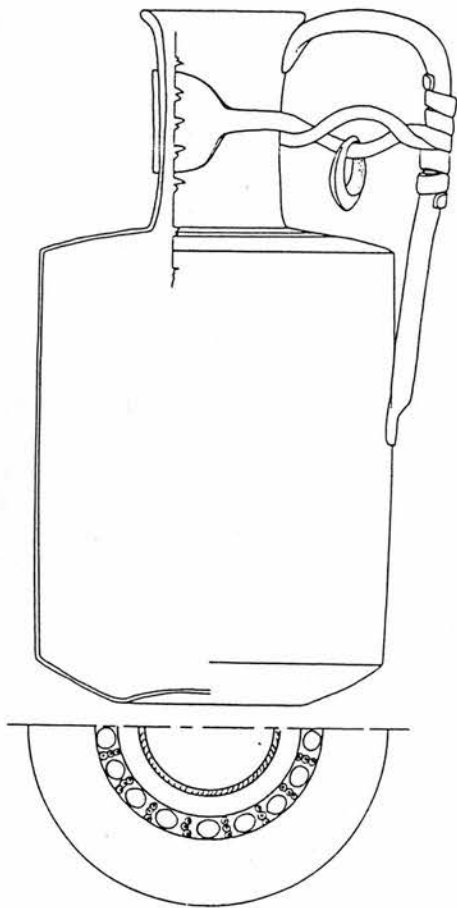


FIG. 1
 ICAW 1/1. Beaten Bronze Ewer (Fragmented)
 found in Tepe Madrasah, Nīshāpūr, Iran.
 H. 30.2 cm (Tehran, Archaeological Museum;
 after Allan 1982, fig. 93).

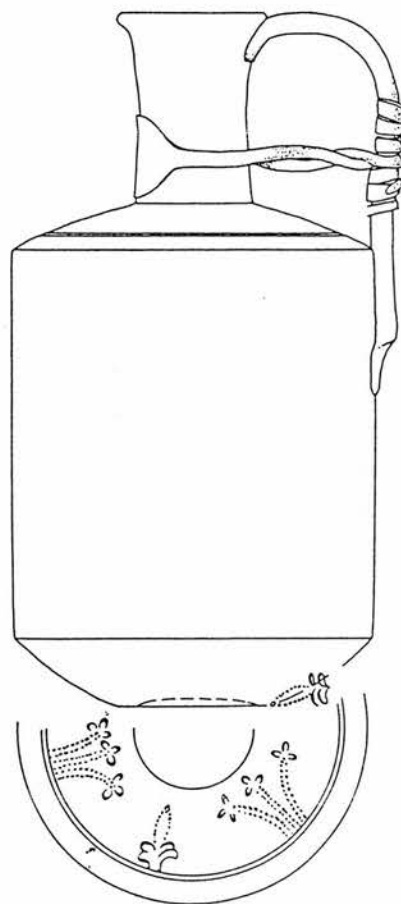


FIG. 2
 ICAW 1/2. Beaten Bronze Ewer (Fragmented)
 found at Tepe Madrasah, Nīshāpūr, Iran.
 H. 30 cm (Tehran, Archaeological Museum;
 after Allan 1982, fig. 94).

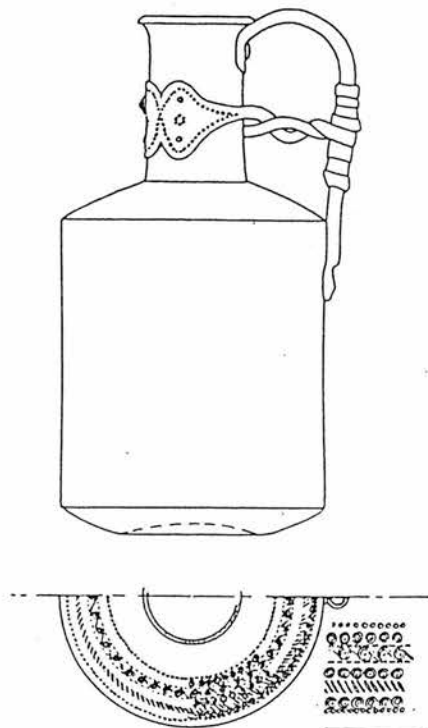


FIG. 3
 ICAW 1/3. Beaten Bronze Ewer found in
 Tepe Madrasah, Nīshāpūr, Iran. H. 26.6 cm
 (Tehran, Archaeological Museum; after
 Allan 1982, fig. 95).

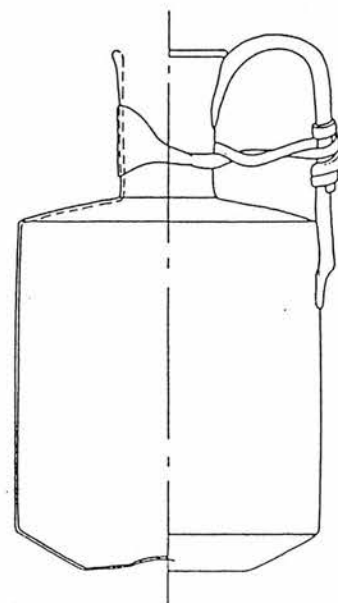


FIG. 4
 ICAW 1/4. Beaten Bronze Ewer (Fragmented)
 found in Tepe Madrasah, Nīshāpūr, Iran.
 H. 29 cm (Tehran, Archaeological Museum;
 after Allan 1982, p. 81 fig. 96).

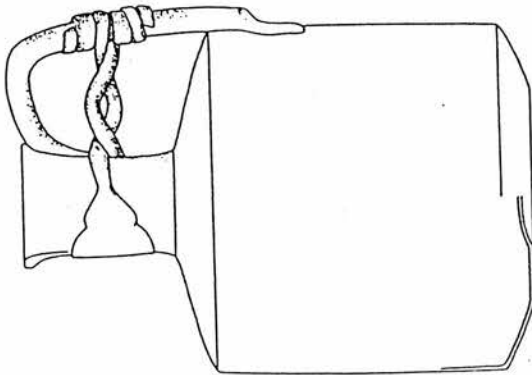


FIG. 5
ICAW 1/5. Beaten Bronze Ewer (Fragmented)
found in Tepe Madrasah, Nīshāpūr, Iran.
H. 28 cm (Tehran, Archaeological Museum;
after Allan 1982, p. 81 fig. 97).

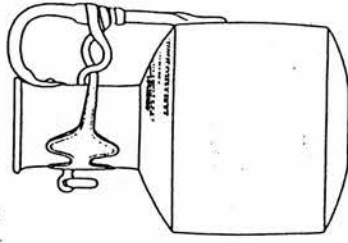


FIG. 6
ICAW 1/6. Beaten Bronze Ewer (Fragmented)
found in Qānat Tepe, Nīshāpūr, Iran. H. 18.4 cm
(Tehran, Archaeological Museum; after Allan 1982, fig. 98).

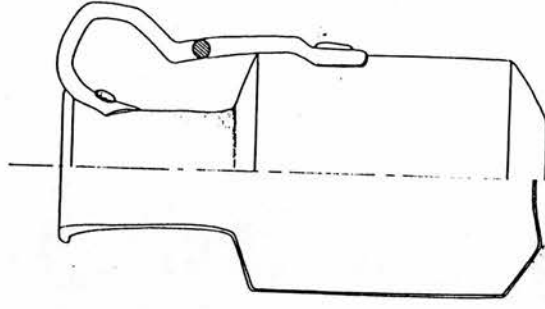
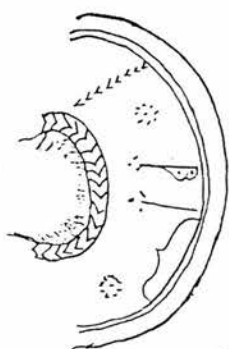
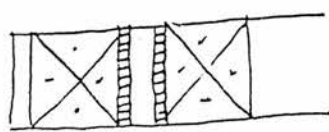


FIG. 7
ICAW 1/7. Beaten Bronze Ewer (Fragmented)
found in Tepe Madrasah, Nīshāpūr, Iran.
H. 26.6 cm (Tehran, Archaeological Museum;
after Allan 1982, fig. 99).



SHOULDER
OF
CAT. NO. 8



DECORATION
OF
HANDLE BACK

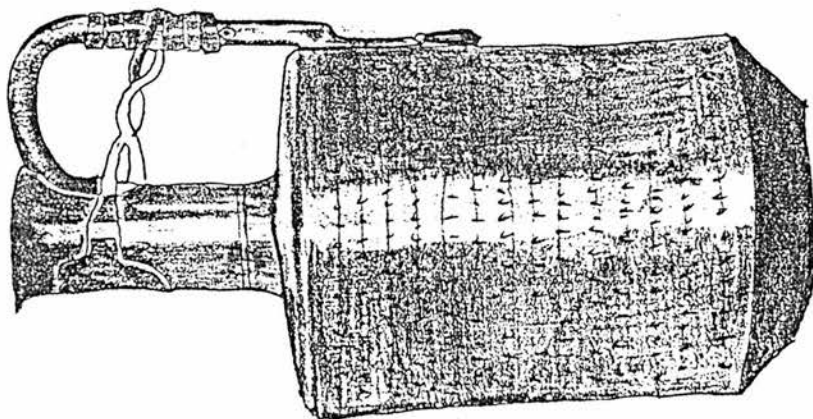


FIG. 8
ICAW 1/8. Beaten Bronze Ewer found at
Maimana, Afghanistan. H. 33 cm (Kabul Museum).

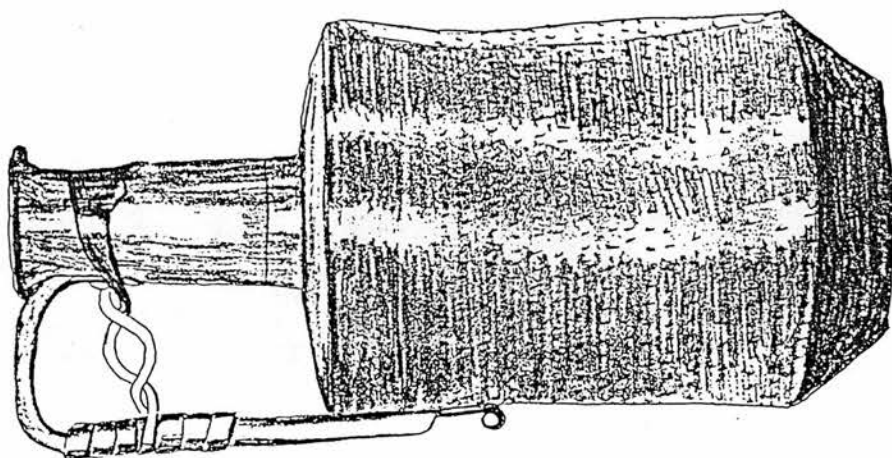


FIG. 9
ICAW 1/9. Beaten Bronze Ewer found at
Maimana, Afghanistan. H. 34.4 cm (Kabul Museum).

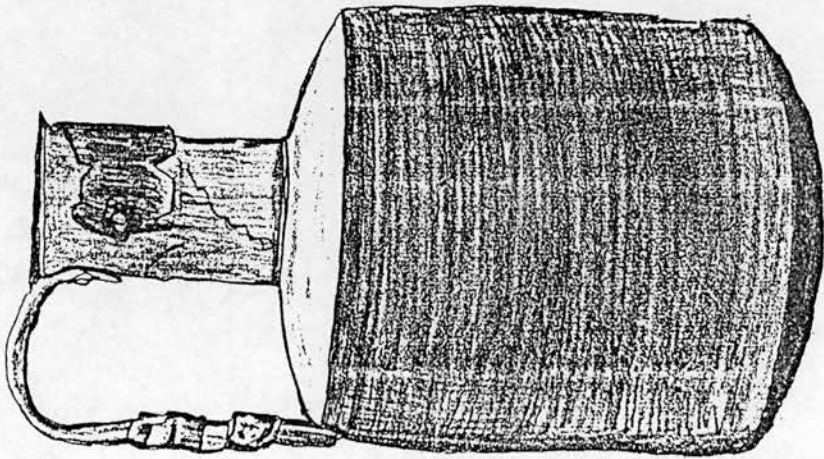


FIG. 10
ICAW 1/10. Beaten Bronze Ewer found at
Maimāna, Afghanistan. H. 39 cm (Kabul Museum).

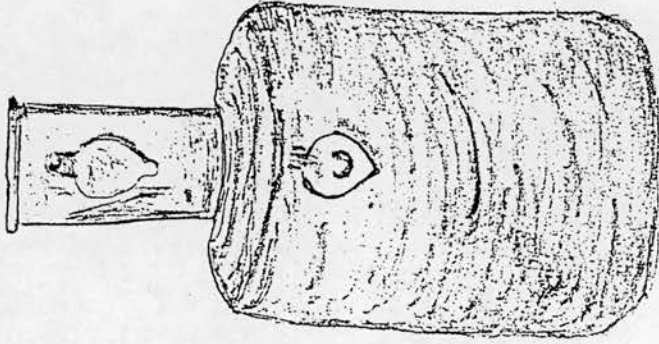


FIG. 11
ICAW 1/11. Beaten Bronze Ewer found at Ravat-Hodja,
Uzbekistan. Dimensions unknown (Samarqand Museum).

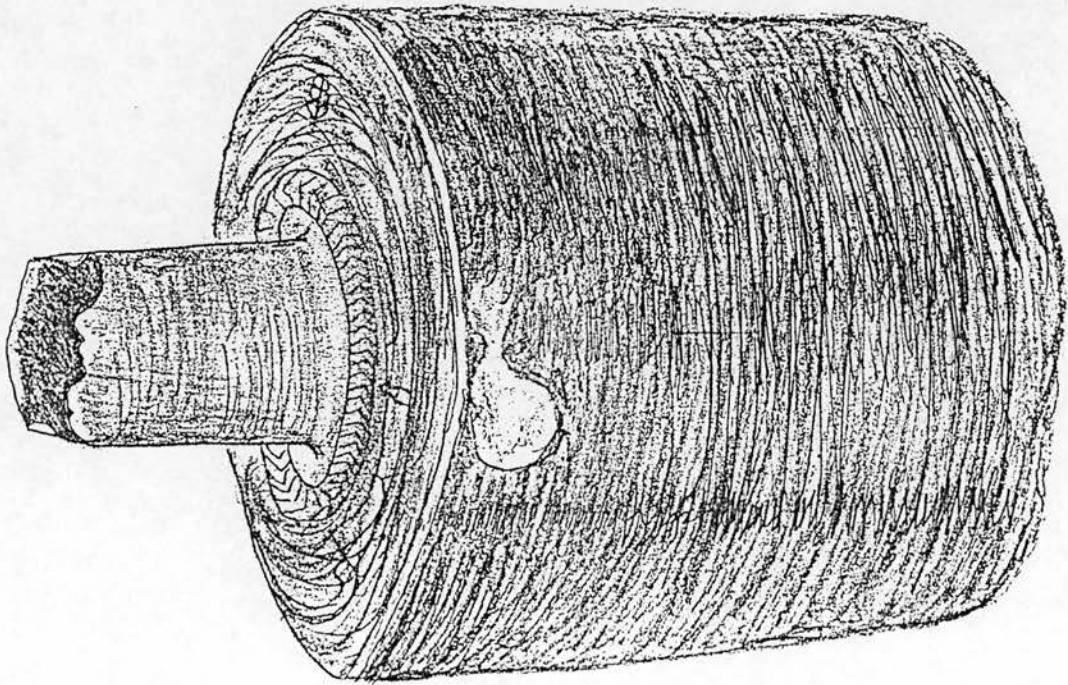
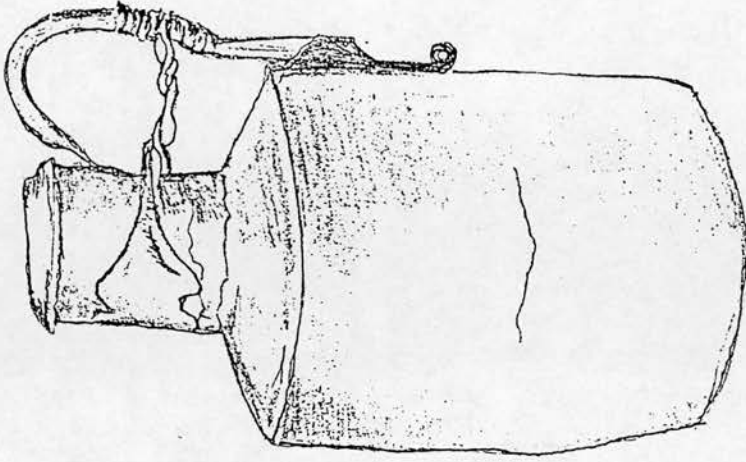


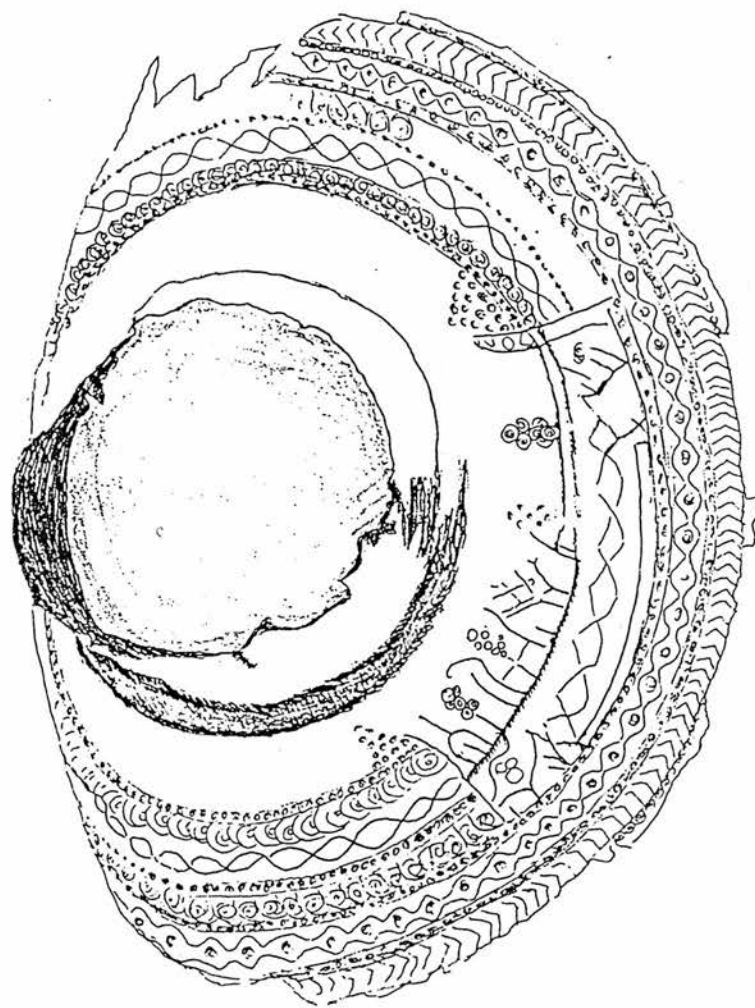
FIG. 12
 ICAW 1/12. Beaten Bronze Ewer (Fragmented).
 h. ca. 21 cm (Baghdad Museum).



beaten ornament

FIG. 13

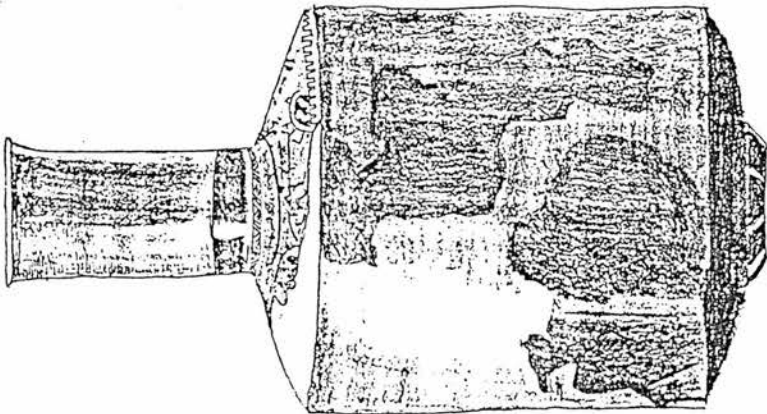
ICAW 1/13. Beaten Bronze Ewer found at Tatarskij
 Tolkish, Chistopol District, Kazan Province, Russia.
 Dimensions unknown (Leningrad, Hermitage).



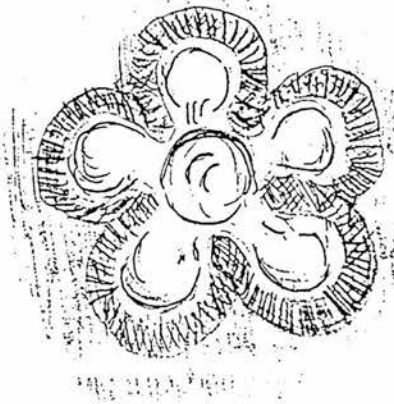
SHOULDER FRAGMENT



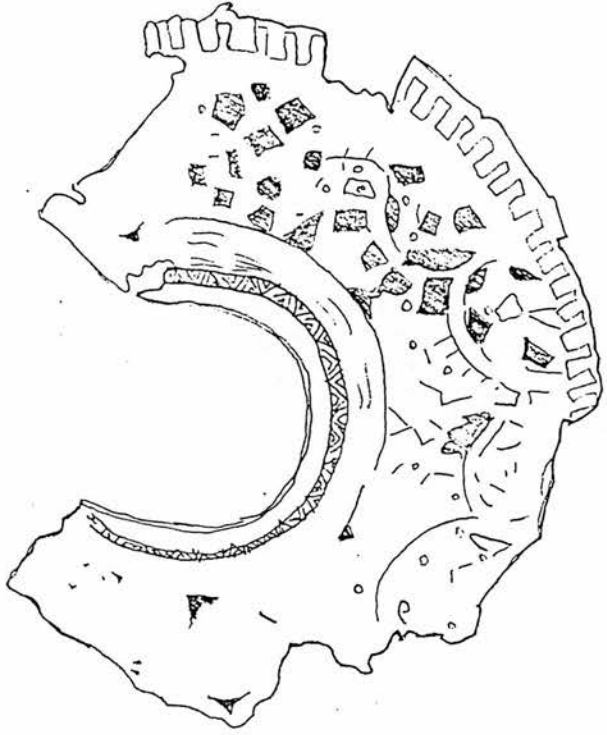
FIG. 14
ICAW 1/14. Beaten Bronze Ewer found at Saltvig-Bertby, Åland,
Finland. Dimensions unknown. (Helsingfors, National Museum).



reconstruction



Base rosette



shoulder fragment

FIG. 15
ICAW 1/15. Beaten Copper Ewer (Fragmented) found
near Foelhagen, Gotland, Sweden. II. ca. 31 cm
(Stockholm, Statens historiska Museum, inv. no. 3547).

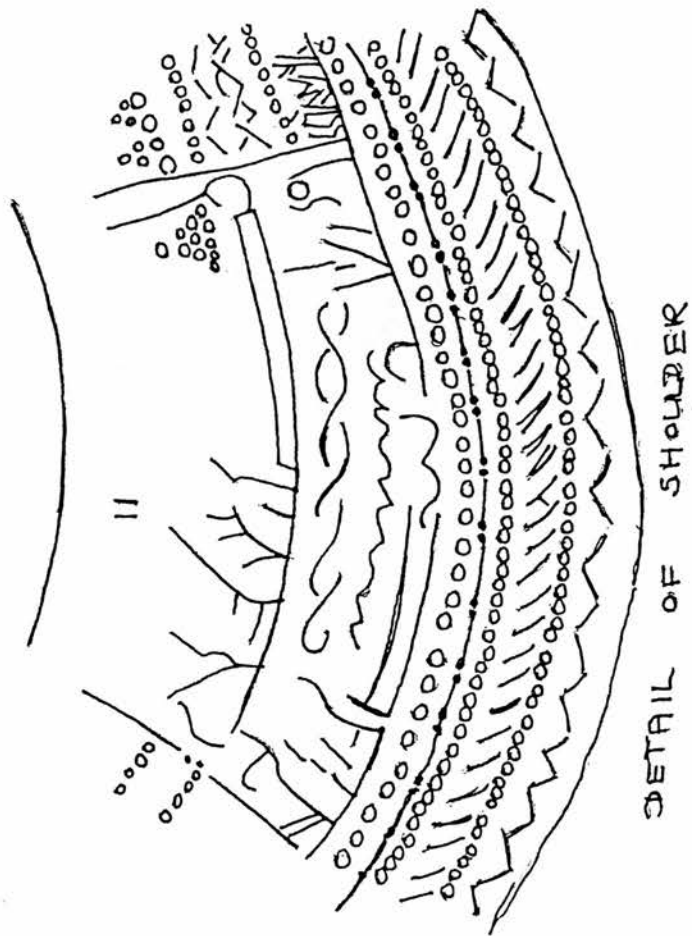
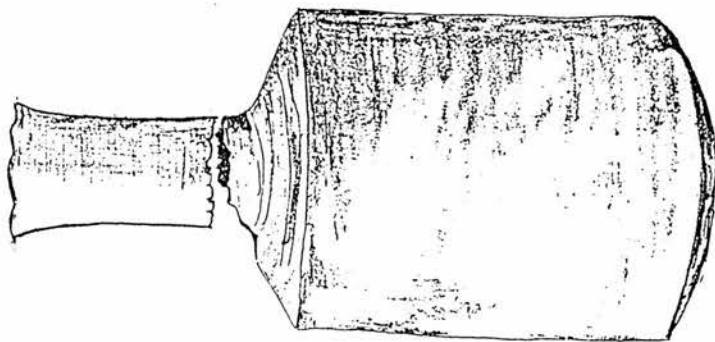


FIG. 16
ICAW 1/17. Beaten Bronze Ewer (Fragmented) found at
Aska Fraelsegard, Oestergoetland, Sweden. H. 31.4 cm
(Stockholm, Statens Historiska Museum, inv. no. 16429:1).

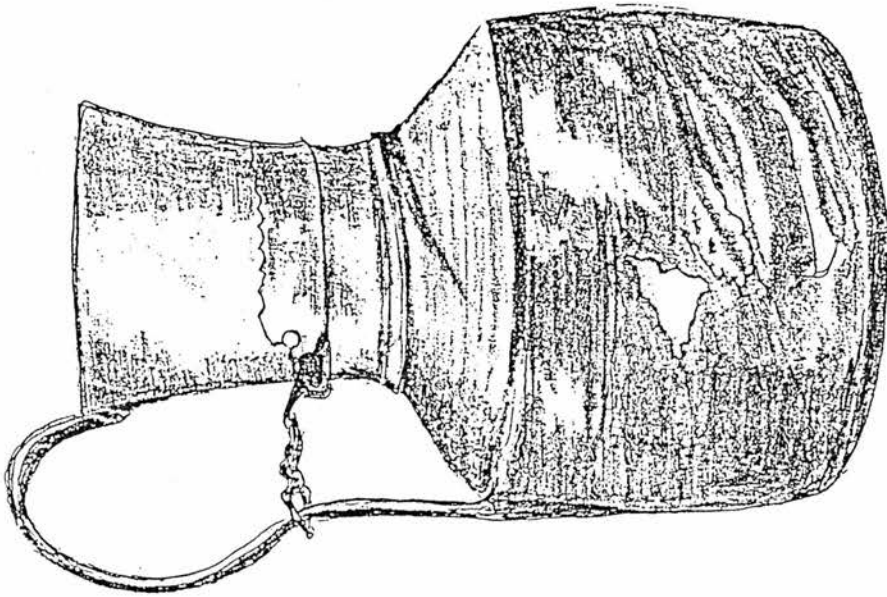


FIG. 17

ICAW 1/18. Beaten Bronze Ewer found at Klinta, Oeland, Sweden.
H. 26 cm (Stockholm, Statens Historiska Museum, inv. no. 25840).

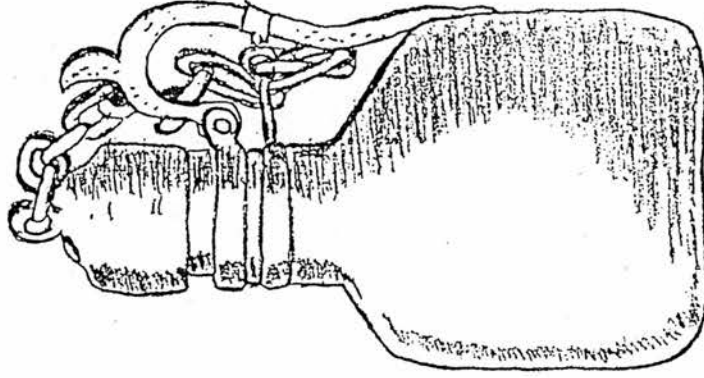


FIG. 18

ICAW 1/19. Hammered (?) Bronze Ewer from Susa.
H. ca. 26 cm (?) (Tehran, Archaeological Museum ?).

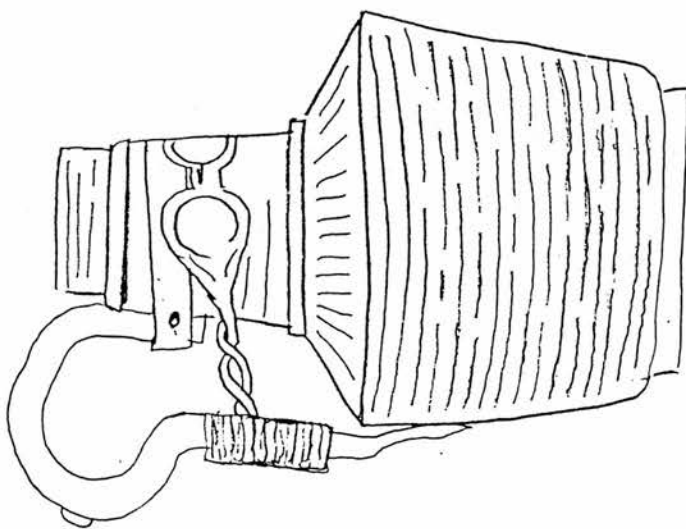


FIG. 20
Hammered Copper-Alloy Ewer. Byzantine, ca. 600 A.D. H. 17 cm
(London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no. M 434-1910).

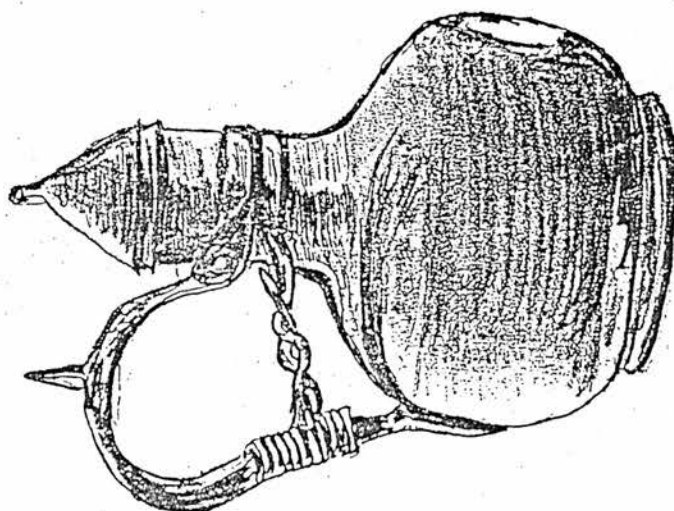


FIG. 19
ICAW 1/20. Bronze Ewer, h. 20 cm
(Christie's 19.2.80, lot 178).

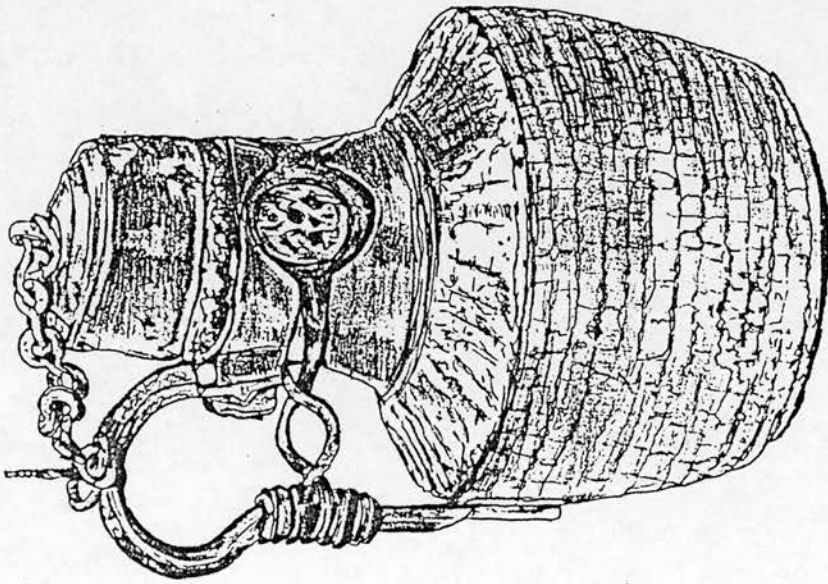


FIG. 21

Hammered Copper-Alloy Ewer. Byzantine, 7th Century A.D.
H. 14.8 cm (London, British Museum, inv. no. 1982, 12-1,1).



FIG. 22

Hammered Silver Ewer with Repoussé Decoration.
North-Western Iran, 9th-10th Century A.D. (Paris, Louvre).

Chapter 12

ICAW 2: Cast Bronze Ewers with Pear-shaped Body on Low Foot and Zoomorphic Spout

A sizeable group of cast bronze ewers, which are generally attributed to Khurāsān and Transoxiana during the 10th and 13th centuries, is distinguished by a horizontal, more or less naturalistically rendered zoomorphic spout section.¹ Within this category three main typological subdivisions have been made.

1. General Description

1.1. Sub-group 1 (Cat. nos. 1-13L, pl. 1, figs. 1-7, pl. 2, figs. 8-9).

Ewers belonging to the first variety have small (15.2 cm - 21 cm) pear-shaped bodies, which can be slender (cat. nos. 1, 3; pl. 1, fig. 2) or bulbous (cat. nos. 2, 4; figs. 1, 3) to very bulbous (cat. nos. 5 - 7; figs. 4-6). In all cases they rest on low, splayed or waisted foot-rings. Most typically, the body surface is separated into three either plain (cat. no. 7; fig. 6) or completely faceted (cat. nos. 1 - 5; pl. 1, figs. 1-4) horizontal parts, either by slightly protruding mouldings (cat. nos. 1, 3, 7; pl. 1, figs. 2, 6) or by incised bands. At the same time, ewers with partly plain and partly faceted sections do also occur (cat. nos. 6, 8, 9; fig. 5).

The body is topped by a bovine head spout, surmounted by horns in most cases. Only in the case of ewer 4 (fig. 3) are both horns broken off. The rendering of the bovine head is mostly stylized (cat. nos. 1 - 6; pl. 1, figs. 1-5). Only for the head section of ewer 7 (fig. 6) was a very naturalistic approach chosen. In the forehead of the bovine spout sections a small aperture was used for filling the

¹ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 216.

vessel. This may originally have been lidded in some cases, but today only ewer 7 (fig. 6) retains its original spout cover.

Likewise, the handles of most of the ewers discussed here do not survive. Only ewer 2 and ewer 5 (fig. 1, 4) retain their handles, the first being of square section and straight, the second flattened and S-shaped with a flat, leaf-like thumbpiece ending in a flattened knob.

Also belonging to this variety of zoomorphic-spouted ewers are four vessels, which are closely akin to those discussed above as far as body shape and the treatment of the bovine spout are concerned. However, they are of larger size, ranging from 26.5 cm to 38 cm in height, and rest on tall feet, which are either splayed (cat. nos. 10L, 11L; fig. 7, pl. 2) or bipartite with a low, waisted foot soldered on to a plain (cat. no. 12L; fig. 8) or fluted (cat. no. 13L; fig. 9) bell-shaped base.

The treatment of the body has also undergone certain changes that set these objects quite apart from the smaller variety of ewers mentioned above (cat. nos. 1 - 9; pl. 1, figs. 1-8). The apparent tripartite division of the body has been abandoned and now only the neck section is demarcated more or less clearly, either by a simple groove (cat. no. 10L; fig. 7), a projecting band (cat. no. 11L; pl. 2), a thin ridge (cat. no. 12L; fig. 8) or, as a result of a bipartite body design, with a plain conical neck resting on a fluted body (cat. no. 13L; fig. 9).

Overall facetting does not occur any longer either. Any remaining facetting is restricted to the neck (cat. nos. 10L, 11L; fig. 7, pl. 2) or the upper body (cat. no. 12L; fig. 8), and is now preferably incorporated into an all-over ornamentation of the body as incised detail, rather than becoming a dominant exclusive feature affecting the whole surface of the vessel.

1.2. Sub-group 2 (Cat. nos. V.1-4, figs. 10-12)

The second category of ewers with zoomorphic spouts assembles four very different and unique objects, which are loosely connected to the objects of the first variety by their pear-shaped or faceted bodies and by the fact that their spouts are rendered as more or less discernible animal heads, belonging, however, to species other than the bull.

The first example (cat. no. V.1; fig. 10) is still very closely related to ewers of the first group. It retains a very similar pear-shaped body on a low foot-ring, a faceted neck and a spout rendered in a very similar style to that found on the aforementioned pieces. However, in this case the identification of the spout as bovine is not possible and another animal could well be intended. The second object (cat. no. V.2; fig. 11) - 7 cm in height and therefore extremely minute in size - is characterized by a very bulbous, pear-shaped body surmounted by a simply drawn yet naturalistic bird's head, the slightly opened beak serving as the spout. Ewer V.3, likewise pear-shaped, apparently features an unidentified animal head.

The most remarkable and peculiar object of this category, however, is ewer V.4 (fig. 12). The shape of its body - of octagonal profile with faceted conical upper and lower bodies joining onto a broad, slightly recessed central band - is so far unparalleled. However, at the same time this unusual body shape does seem like a distorted version of that found on ewers 1 - 5 (pl. 1, figs. 1-4), where the body below the clearly separated neck section is likewise composed of a faceted upper and lower part, with a broad and in this case projecting band in the centre. The body is surmounted by a vertically orientated, very naturalistically rendered ram's head, another unique feature. The horns bend backwards to join the lower one of two projecting ridges around the lower neck, thus serving as handle at the same time.

It is obvious that the ewers of the second sub-group are of very heterogeneous character and can be related only vaguely to objects of the first

group. They have been included, however, as an indication that a large number of very different ewers with zoomorphic spouts must have existed in early Islamic Iran, featuring various sizes and profiles as well as spouts of several different animal species.

1.3. Sub-group 3 (Cat. nos. V.I-V.V, figs. 13-19)

Ewers belonging to the third sub-group have profiles that are closely akin to those of the small-sized vessels of the first group. However, their spouts are in the form of an open beak-shape, and these do in most cases retain certain zoomorphic aspects.²

Like the small vessels of the first group, the ewers of this sub-group are executed on a small scale, varying from 12 cm to 21.5 cm in height. Several examples also feature the characteristic body division of the former into three parts, separated by projecting bands around the lower neck and the lower body (cat. nos. V.I, V.III, V.V; figs. 13, 15, 19). Among these, the body of ewer V.III (fig. 15) is virtually identical to those of the first sub-group, with all three sections faceted, while ewer V.V (fig. 19) features a fluted neck with peculiar oval cavities marking the lower end of each facet and a plain body. Ewer V.I (fig. 13) is made up of three plain sections and in addition stands out by virtue of its large stepped base.

The spouts are rendered very individualistically and none is identical to the other. Thus, the spout of ewer V.I (fig. 13) consists of a round cup-shaped mouth, which was originally lidded, and a narrow beak-like spout with cusped edges. The spout of ewer V.III (fig. 15) is turned slightly upwards and is of beak-like appearance with bovine characteristics, i. e. lateral ears and horns. Finally, the open pointed spout with cusped edges encountered on ewer V.V (fig. 19) has lost all pretence to zoomorphic form, although the wavy outlines of its sides do recall to

² Ibid.

some extent the spouts of ewers V.III and V.IV (figs. 15, 16).³ In addition, the incised vegetal panels on its sides seem further to exclude the possibility of any zoomorphic interpretation.

Ewer V.II (fig. 14) is closely related to ewers V.I, V.III and V.V (figs. 13, 15, 19) with regard to shape. However, in this case the tripartite division of the surface is indicated only by engraved double lines below the neck area and above the lower body. The facetting, which here affects only the lower body, is also only incised. The upturned open beak spout has curved sides and was originally lidded. Its appearance recalls an abstracted bird's head.

A third surface treatment can be observed on ewer V.IV (fig. 16). Here, the whole body, excluding only the lower part, is covered by continuous facetting, yet still retains an underlying tripartite concept. This is achieved by emphasising the neck area with six adjoining facets, which correspond to twelve sides enclosing the main body and terminating in prominent lobes below, while leaving the lower part plain. The spout of this ewer closely resembles that of ewer V.III (fig. 15), and its profile also shows certain reminiscences to that of ewer V.V (fig. 19). However, its zoomorphic aspect is abstracted to a large extent and not even a tentative zoological identification seems possible.

Two additional ewers (cat. nos. V.IVa and V.IVb; figs. 17, 18) have to be mentioned in connection with ewer V.IV (fig. 16), although their spouts are of plain and open horizontal appearance without any zoomorphic attributes. They feature, however, very similar, slender pear-shaped bodies covered by eight facets, which leave the lower body plain. Some generic interrelation is therefore likely between ewer V.IV (fig. 16) and ewers V.IVa and b (figs. 17, 18), and perhaps future research can establish the exact connection between the three pieces.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 218.

2. Decoration

2.1. Sub-group 1 (Cat. nos. 1-7, pl. 2, figs. 8-9).

In sub-group 1 the bands separating the individual sections of the body are always enhanced by ornamentation. The neck band carries either guilloche motifs (cat. nos. 1, 4 - 6; pl. 1, figs. 3-5), scrollwork (cat. no. 2; fig. 1) or interlace (cat. no. 3; fig. 2), the band around the lower body either scrollwork (cat. no. 1; pl. 1), obliquely set round cavities (cat. no. 2; fig. 1), interlace (cat. no. 7; fig. 6) or, most typically, Kufic or pseudo-Kufic inscriptions (cat. nos. 3 - 6, 7[?], 8[?]; figs. 2-6).

If the central body section is plain rather than faceted, as is the case with cat. nos. 6 - 9 (figs. 5-6), this area can carry further decorative details such as roundels with birds and lions (cat. no. 7; fig. 6), vases of flowers (cat. no. 8) or rosettes and arabesque motifs (cat. no. 9). Additional decorative detailing can also affect the spout. It is generally of an abstract nature.

In the case of ewers 10L - 13L (fig. 7, pl. 2, figs. 8-9) incised ornamentation is used to enhance the sides of the bovine spout, the neck the main body and sometimes the foot. The sides of the spout carry most characteristically panels with scrolling stems (cat. nos. 10L, 13L; fig. 7, fig. 9) or individual rosettes with surrounding interlace (cat. no. 12L; fig. 8). The neck can be enhanced by moulded (cat. no. 11L; pl. 2) or incised facetting (cat. no. 10L; fig. 7), which in the latter case is outlined by narrow bands of guilloche and terminated below by a band of herring-bone ornament.

Ewers 12L and 13L (figs. 8-9) have plain necks with decorative panels around their bases. These contain a benedictory Kufic inscription on a floral background in the first case and a very worn, perhaps scrolling motif in the second. The foot-rings of ewers 10L and 13L (figs. 7, 9) additionally feature decorative enhancement. The base of ewer 10L (fig. 7) carries a small guilloche band around

its outer edge, while that of ewer 13L (fig. 9) shows individual knot motifs on each alternate foot lobe.

Three different decorative layouts can be observed on the main bodies of the vessels under discussion (cat. nos. 10L - 13L; fig. 7, pl. 2, figs. 8-9). The first one can be found in very similar fashion on ewers 10L (fig. 7) and 11L (pl. 2). A central polylobed medallion, filled with palmette scrolls (cat. no. 11L; pl. 2) or a peacock-like bird on a floral background (cat. no. 10L; fig. 7) are flanked above by a broad band of either Kufic (cat. no. 10L; fig. 7) or naskhi(?) (cat. no. 11L; pl. 2) inscription on a floral ground and below by a narrow guilloche (cat. no. 10L; fig. 7) or scrolling band (cat. no. 11L; pl. 2), both panels enclosing the entire body. The central medallion is connected by narrow scrolling bands to two lateral medallions, either round (cat. no. 11L; pl. 2) or cusped (cat. no. 10L; fig. 7) and containing birds on a scrolling background. In the case of the Chicago ewer (cat. no. 10L; fig. 7) two inverted heart-shaped palmette motifs occupy the spaces above and below the scrolling bands on either side of the central medallion. The central back of the ewers is kept undecorated in order to allow for the attachment of the handle (which is now wanting in the case of cat. no. 11L; pl. 2).

A slightly different and more comprehensive decoration can be found on the body of ewer 12L (fig. 8). Here, a broad decorative panel around the lower body is bordered above and below by narrow bands of scrollwork. It contains a benedictory inscription of foliated Kufic, enclosing in the centre a medallion containing a bird. Above, a broad section of decorative facetting, interrupted by narrow guilloche borders, has been applied, followed by a Kufic inscription on floral ground.

Finally, the ewer from the British Museum (cat. no. 13L; fig. 9) features a completely different body treatment. The main body is divided into twelve lobes, joining onto a plain neck. Each alternate lobe carries either a vertical Kufic inscription or a panel of scrollwork. Thus, in this case, the extraordinary body profile has been given a clear priority over the decoration, whereas on the bodies of

the other three ewers the ornamentation, to a varying degree, seems to demand most attention.

2.2. Sub-group 2 (Cat. nos. V.1-V.4; figs. 10-12).

On ewer V.1 (fig. 10) the main body apparently carries a large roundel on the front, flanked by floral motifs above. On the sides two vertical and rectangular panels contain curved abstracted motifs. Around the back of the upper body there seems to be a small band, perhaps an inscription frieze, to judge by the available image. The snout of the animal spout and the back of the head (?) carry further floral motifs.

Ewers V.2 and V.4 (figs. 11, 12) remain undecorated, while ewer V.3 is apparently enhanced by incised Kufic inscriptions and bird roundels, thus recalling the decorative elements found on some of the ewers belonging to the first group (cat. nos. 7, 8, 10L - 12L; figs. 6, 7, pl. 2, fig. 8).

2.3. Sub-group 3 (Cat. nos. V.I-V.V, figs. 13-19)

As in the first sub-group, the decoration of the ewers in the third sub-group is mainly restricted to the two bands around body and neck, the former containing either Kufic inscriptions (cat. nos. V.I, V.III; figs. 13, 15) or scrolls (cat. no. V.V; fig. 19), the latter scrolling (cat. no. V.III; fig. 15) or guilloche bands (cat. nos. V.I, V.V; figs. 13, 19). Only in the case of ewer V.I (fig. 13) is the neck area additionally enhanced by a broad panel containing palmettes and scrolls on a ring-matted background.⁴ In addition to the main ornament, secondary incising to

⁴ Fehérvári 1976, p. 63 no. 54, pl. 14c.

recreate a faceted effect on the body or to enhance the spout can be observed on occasion (cat. nos. V.II, V.V; figs. 14, 19).

3. Origin of Ewer Type

Vessels with zoomorphic spouts executed in metal and ceramics are often encountered among the artefacts from early Islamic Iran and seem to have enjoyed their greatest popularity during the 10th and 13th centuries.⁵ Frequently, the spouts are rendered as bird- and particularly cock-heads⁶, but - as has been shown - ram heads do also occur. However, judging from the objects extant today, it was vessels and particularly ewers with bull-heads that seem to have formed the most popular and numerous group among the zoomorphic vessels of the time.⁷ Consequently it seems most constructive for the time being to concentrate on a comprehensive examination of this particular variety of the type discussed here and leave to a later time research regarding the other, very individualistic and most abstracted zoomorphic-spouted vessels included in this chapter.

Bull-headed ewers, like other zoomorphic vessels in early Islamic times, were executed in ceramics as well as metal, and at least one contemporary green monochrome pottery example from north-western Iran in sgraffiato technique survives. It features a frontally positioned man armed with shield and an unidentifiable weapon.⁸

⁵ Marchal 1974, p. 16; Ettinghausen 1969, p. 93; Wilkinson 1963, p. 25.

⁶ Berlin 1986, p. 83 no. 116.

⁷ Ettinghausen 1969, p. 106 note 30.

⁸ Wilkinson 1963, p. 25; Öney 1970, p. 117 note 67; Zick-Nissen 1975, p. 225, fig. 48.1. Animal-headed pitchers, partly fragmented, executed in buff and monochrome ware, were also found in Nīshāpūr. Most famous today is the one-handled pitcher with the head of a horned quadruped excavated in Nīshāpūr by Wilkinson. Although this piece could be likened to a bull-headed ewer, the features of its spout are too generalized and the horns of a disposition too uncharacteristic of bovine horns to justify such an identification; cf. Wilkinson 1963, p. 25; Ettinghausen 1969, pp. 94-5, fig. 9.

However, considering the comparatively large quantity of bull-headed ewers from the Islamic period executed in base metal the absence of comparable pieces from immediately pre-Islamic times is odd.⁹ However, bull-shaped pouring vessels occur as early as the second millennium B.C., if not even earlier, in many regions of the eastern Mediterranean and western Iran. Thus, as early as the 16th century B.C. a bull-shaped vessel was exported from Cyprus to Ugarit (modern Syria), where it was discovered in a grave (fig. 20).¹⁰ In Anatolia vessels of bovine appearance were also known from the earliest times. Several bull's-head *rhyta*, executed in burnished brown clay and datable to between 1950 and 1800 B.C., were found in Kanesh (Kültepe).¹¹ Other bull-shaped vessels from Bogazköy date to the 17th/16th century B.C. (fig. 21).¹² Finally, a silver cup in the shape of a kneeling bull has been given a Turkish provenance and attributed to the 15th/14th century B.C. (fig. 22).¹³

In addition to such material finds ancient sources provide further evidence for the widespread use of bull vessels in the area, such as a collection of ritual texts from Anatolia written between 1400 and 1185 B.C., which repeatedly mention the use of zoomorphic vessels and among them the outstanding importance of those with bovine shape.¹⁴

Most importantly in our context, bull-shaped vessels were extremely popular in ancient north-western Iran. A whole series of bull-shaped pottery vessels meant for pouring have been unearthed in the graves of Tepe Marlik in the region of Dailaman: they are datable to the second millennium B.C.¹⁵ These "Amlash" bulls, as they are called after the town where such objects probably first reached the open

⁹ An animal-headed pitcher datable to the period between the 12th century B.C. and the 6th century B.C. is most probably surmounted by a ram's head, to judge by the characteristic position of the horns and their being bent backwards; cf. Washington 1964, fig. 81.

¹⁰ Mainz 1982, p. 110, p. 139 no. 127.

¹¹ Woolley 1961, p. 125.

¹² Van Loon 1985, p. 40, pl. XIIb.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 45, pl. XL.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁵ Stuttgart 1972, no. 21; Ettinghausen 1969, p. 93, fig. 7; Porada 1965, p. 90.

market, are usually made of red or dark-coloured pottery, and their humped backs and massive horns were meant to be of awe-inspiring effect (fig. 23).¹⁶

Considering this obvious popularity of bull-shaped ewers over large areas of the Near East in antiquity, the dearth of extant vessels of bovine appearance that bridge the centuries between the second millennium B.C. and early Islamic times seems surprising. Yet it is not impossible that such vessels continued to be produced over a long period of time, if one considers their original popularity and apparent ritual importance at the time of their first appearance. Indeed, one Islamic bull vessel at least appears to bear witness to such an alleged process of continuity. This piece, preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum and dated to the 10th-12th century, is rendered in the shape of an ox and executed in unglazed pottery (fig. 24). Although its appearance is certainly more elaborate and naturalistic than that of its ancient predecessors, it still retains a decisively traditional and folkloristic appeal, and most importantly, it apparently still served the same traditional function as an aquamanile or perhaps a rhyton.¹⁷

In view of the evidence assembled above, it seems that the Islamic bull-headed metal ewers dating between the 10th and 12th centuries represent the culminating point in a long history of bull-shaped vessels reaching as far back as the second millennium B.C., and perhaps future discoveries will help to fill the apparent gap that now exists between the ancient pieces and the Islamic pouring vessels under discussion here.

4. Provenance and Date

Allan, who first dealt with the ewer type in this category quite comprehensively in his thesis, stated that most ewers of the type under discussion, if they bear any

¹⁶ Porada 1965, pp. 90, 102.

¹⁷ Ettinghausen 1969, pp. 92-3, fig. 6.

decorative features at all, seem to reveal a link with the decorative conventions current in eastern Iran and Transoxiana during the 10th and 12th centuries.¹⁸

The ewer from Berlin-Dahlem (cat. no. 1; pl. 1), according to Allan, carries a scroll of Persian derivation, but he concedes that its very generalized style does not allow a precise attribution.¹⁹ Most remarkable is the broad band displayed around the lower body of the Motamed ewer (cat. no. 2; fig. 1). Its obliquely set, circular cavities are closely related to virtually identical roundels found on at least one of a group of strangely-shaped ewers found in Transoxiana and Afghānistān and dated to the 11th and 12th centuries (fig. 25).²⁰ On ewer 3 (fig. 2) the interlace finds a close stylistic parallel on a Khurāsāni incense burner, likewise dated to the 11th or 12th century.²¹

The decoration of the Louvre piece (cat. no. 4; fig. 3) is very stylized, with deeply-cut pseudo-epigraphy below and a guilloche above. These features recur in virtually identical fashion on the Berlin ewer (cat. no. 5; fig. 4), which Melikian-Chirvani convincingly dated to the second half of the 10th or the first half of the 11th century.²²

Ewer 6 (fig. 5) was allegedly found in Ghazna. This provenance is not impossible, but will need further investigation as there is at present very little early Islamic metalwork that can be linked to that town beyond any doubt. As for the vessel's date, Allan considers it as belonging to the 10th or 11th century on the basis of the style of Kufic on the lower body and the clearly cut guilloche around the neck.²³

The ewer from the Victoria and Albert Museum (cat. no. 7; fig. 6) differs from the preceding examples in that it displays a frontal lion and two lateral bird medallions as well as a dense interlace pattern around the lower body. According to

¹⁸ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 216-7.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 216.

²⁰ Cf. ewer type ICAW 5; Baer 1983, pp. 93-4; Martin 1902, pl. 29 right.

²¹ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 49-50, no. 11.

²² *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

²³ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 216.

Melikian-Chirvani this decorative layout, characterized by sparingly applied individual motifs and the ornamental emphasis of an object's front, are features typical of the Sāmānid age, i. e. the 10th and 11th century.²⁴ A very similar interlace band can also be found on a 12th-century perfume bottle from eastern Iran,²⁵ and the outstanding naturalistic rendering of the bull's head finds an interesting parallel in the small bronze statue of a reclining buffalo, attributed to the 11th-13th centuries.²⁶ In view of such considerations a dating between the 10th and 12th century should be accepted for ewer 7 (fig. 6) as a basis for further research.²⁷

No constructive comments can be made with regard to ewers 8 and 9 given the lack of pictorial material to hand, and therefore the given attributions, i. e. 12th/13th-century Iran and 11th-13th-century Iran respectively, have to be accepted uncritically at present.

The ewer from the Art Institute of Chicago (cat. no. 10L; fig. 7) still seems to recall the frontally orientated design emphasised by a central motif encountered on the ewer from the Victoria and Albert Museum (cat. no. 7; fig. 6). However, here the decoration has become more lavish. Thus, scrolling bands connect the main medallions, while above and below this central decoration additional heart-shaped palmette motifs as well as Kufic and guilloche bands complete the vessel's ornamentation. This decorative enrichment in comparison to ewer 7 (fig. 6) may indicate a slightly later date for the Chicago ewer, i. e. the 11th/12th century, a dating supported also, according to Allan, by the style of Kufic on the vessel.²⁸

Ewer 11L (pl. 2) has a very similar decorative layout to that found on the preceding piece, and although the worn state of its ornamentation, particularly the epigraphy, detracts from its once impressive visual appeal, a dating not far from

²⁴ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 28, 35. It is at present hardly possible to identify objects as belonging to the "Sāmānid" period and it is probably safer to attribute such pieces more generally to 9th - 11th-century eastern Iran.

²⁵ Berlin 1986, p. 79 no. 104.

²⁶ Fehérvári 1976, p. 91 no. 120, pl. 40b.

²⁷ Melikian-Chirvani in his discussion of this piece came to similar conclusions; cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 52-3, no. 16.

²⁸ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 216.

that of the Chicago ewer may be suggested. Unfortunately, the available image of the Frankfurt ewer (cat. no. 12L; fig. 8) does not allow a precise interpretation of its decorative elements; but, judging merely by the description to hand, the suggested 11th-century dating seems slightly too early.²⁹

The execution of ewer 13L (fig. 9) with its fluted body on a composite petalled foot is very individualistic. Regrettably, the decorative features on this piece are virtually indiscernible. Only one knot motif has been identified by Allan, and this he compared to designs found on 10th/11th-century Transoxanian pottery.³⁰ Nevertheless, the fact that every alternate facet is vertically emphasised by remnants of epigraphy or scrollwork can be paralleled on several early Islamic metal objects from eastern Iran, such as for example a now fragmented rose water sprinkler from 10th-century Sīstān³¹ and, more interestingly, on some globular and fluted bronze ewers with tall beak-spouts, generally associated with 10th - 12th-century eastern Iran and modern Afghānistān (fig. 26).³²

Another feature that can help to identify the ewer's origin is the lobed base, which, as Allan has pointed out already, can be compared in general terms to the lower foot of the Transoxanian ewer type already mentioned above in connection with the Motamed ewer.³³ Similar bases have been attributed to the area around Nīshāpūr and dated to the 10th or 11th centuries A.D.³⁴

No comments can be made regarding ewers V.1 - 4 (figs. 10-12), as they either do not carry discernible features or cannot be interpreted satisfactorily for lack of photographic material.³⁵ As far as ewer V.4 (fig. 12) is concerned, however, it seems relevant to mention that its peculiar body profile seems to find

²⁹ Stuttgart 1972, no. 132.

³⁰ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 216-7.

³¹ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 46 no. 7.

³² Cf. ewer type ICAW 4, chapter 14; Baer 1983, p. 99; Fehérvári 1976, p. 62 no. 51, pl. 15. See also Christie's London 10.10.89, lot 527 as an example.

³³ Cf. ewer type ICAW 5, chapter 15; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 216-7.

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 374; Vol. 2, p. 853 nos. B/3/1 and B/3/2 as examples.

³⁵ It is, however, interesting to note in this context that, according to Emel Esin, ewer V.1 was found in Taraz, one of the residences of the Khakanids (among other Turkic peoples) and attributed, accordingly, to the Khakanid period; cf. Esin 1980, p. 393 no. C/b.

parallels in other polygonal metal objects, such as for example a 12th/13th-century bronze vase from Iran in the Keir collection.³⁶

Ewer V.I (fig. 13), likewise in the Keir collection, has decorative elements relating it to ewers 1 - 9 (pl. 1, figs. 2-6), i. e. a Kufic band below and a guilloche band above. The neck is additionally enhanced with palmettes and scrolls set against a ring-matted background. This feature seems to recall the designs found on Sogdian and Central Asian silverwork. Its origin can therefore also be sought tentatively in eastern Iran, and Fehérvári's suggested 11th/12th-century dating appears acceptable.³⁷ The Beirut ewer (cat. no. V.II; fig. 14) carries only incised fluting and does not lend itself to any precise attribution. Its shape, however, does suggest some relation to the ewers already mentioned, and perhaps it therefore requires a similar dating and geographical attribution. Ewer V.III (fig. 15) has close decorative links with ewers 1 - 5 (pl. 1, figs. 1-4), and its Kufic inscription, according to Allan, again suggests a 10th/11th-century dating and an eastern Iranian provenance.³⁸

Ewers V.IV, IVa and IVb (figs. 16-18) are undecorated, but their body shapes seem to anticipate certain 12th- and 13th-century metal objects from Iran, characterized by bodies with projecting facets that end in prominent lobes above the plain lower body (fig. 27).³⁹ Finally, ewer V.V (fig. 19) shows shallow cavities around the lower neck, which may have some connections with those often employed on the Transoxanian ewers mentioned above. Its simple scrollwork seems to support a provenance from north-eastern Iran and a dating between the 10th and 12th centuries.⁴⁰

To sum up, the objects under discussion seem to have been produced in various regions along the fringes of eastern and north-eastern Iran, including Transoxiana, Khurāsān, modern Afghānistān and Sīstān. As for their date the ewers

³⁶ Fehérvári 1976, p. 65 no. 59, pl. 18b.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 63 no. 54, pl. 14c.

³⁸ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 217.

³⁹ See for example Fehérvári 1976, pp. 64-5, no. 57, pl. 17c.

⁴⁰ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 218.



span the period between the 10th and the 12th centuries. It is to be hoped that future research will be able to identify more precisely the exact location of the various workshops that must have existed and the precise chronological order of the pieces concerned.

5. Function

The apparent preference for the bull motif in the Islamic bronze ewers under discussion presents the only hint that may help to clarify the original function of these vessels. The choice of the bull head as a spout may have some inner significance and may very well be connected with the liquid contained within the vessel. Indeed, this particular assumption seems to be the most fruitful line of investigation to uncover the meaning of this motif. It seems worthwhile, therefore, to examine the symbolic importance of the bull motif throughout the ages and its importance with regard to liquids, aspects which might not have changed much from the times of the earliest Anatolian and Iranian bovine pouring vessels until the early Islamic period.

5.1. The Significance of the Bull in the Ancient Near and Middle East

All over the ancient Middle East bulls were considered as semi-sacred animals and symbols of strength and potency. They were regarded as protective spirits and guardians of paradise, protecting the Tree-of-Life, and because of this property they were repeatedly portrayed at the entrance to palaces and temples to ward off evil.

For the same reason ox-heads were suspended above the doors of ordinary houses, following a deep popular belief in the protective powers of the divine bull.⁴¹

However, their significance lay much deeper still, as they were repeatedly found as companions of the gods, particularly weather and fertility gods. Thus, in ancient Mesopotamia already the bull was the attribute of Adad or Hadad, the omnipotent rain and thunder god, who in ancient representations is often depicted as standing on the back of a bull.⁴² Sometimes the bull could even act as the god's representative, and in places the animal is even called "the son of the storm god".⁴³ The ancient Sumerians honoured the bull with a hymn, addressing the animal as "... the son of Zu, the storm god" and describing it as "the great bull, the supreme bull which treads the holy pastures ... planting the corn and making the field luxuriant...".⁴⁴

Closely connected with the reverence of the bull as an animal and in fact interwoven with it is its astrological significance, i. e. the powerful influence of the constellation Taurus. Thus, in the ancient Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh, Gudanna is the celestial bull, i. e. the constellation Taurus, the bull of heaven which draws the Plough star and announces the hot summer season by its rise in early May. The celestial bull is eventually slain by the solar hero Gilgamesh and his companion Enkidu, when it descends from heaven and threatens seven years of drought and hunger, an act which was the symbol for the release of the earth's riches by the penetration of the sun.⁴⁵

In ancient Anatolia the father deity of the Hittites was the god of the thundering sky and the weather and was known as "the bull god". His attributes were the thunderbolt and the bull, and in his honour images of bulls were repeatedly

⁴¹ Clark 1977, pp. 17, 81; Sayce 1909, p. 888. Prof. Hillenbrand has kindly pointed out to me that similar customs can be observed in Central Asia and Afghānistān, where bovine horns appear on old houses and mausolea, such as for example the 12th-century tombs of Uzgend and Salar Khalīl.

⁴² Sayce 1909, p. 888; Gray and Moore 1931, Vol. V, pp. 47, 60; Frazer 1935, p. 163.

⁴³ Sayce 1909, p. 888.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Clark 1977, p. 81; Gray and Moore 1931, Vol. V, pp. 28-9.

dedicated.⁴⁶ Indeed, several temples meant for bull worship have been found all over Asia Minor, and large quantities of bovine cult objects survive. In Çatal Hüyük (7th/6th millennium B.C.) domestic chapels with ox heads and pairs of ox horns fixed to the walls were probably used for religious ceremonies, enacting a fertility cult associated with the weather god.⁴⁷ In Alaça Hüyük (2500-2000 B.C.) several standards with bovine motifs were unearthed; these emphasised the celestial significance of the bull. Large ox horns support discs, which often have their edge decorated with star shapes. This design clearly hints at ancient beliefs which not only associated the bull with the sky but also saw it as the sole support of the entire universe, a concept still upheld in the Hittite period.⁴⁸

In the Hittite capital of Bogazköy, the largest temple of the Hittite realm, which has been dated to the 13th century B.C., was dedicated to the two greatest deities of the Hittite pantheon, the weather god and his spouse, the sun goddess.⁴⁹ The ceremonies held in temples such as this have come down to us in ritual texts written during the time of the Hittite empire (1400-1185 B.C.). Most interestingly, they refer to the use of bull-shaped vessels for drinking and libation purposes in rituals associated with the thunder god, and according to them these vessels could even sometimes serve as a cult statue and a centre of worship in themselves.⁵⁰ Bulls with cones on their backs often served as cult objects, too: they are representations of the thunder god in the guise of his most significant attribute.⁵¹

Several magnificent examples of bull vessels datable to 1600-1500 B.C. have been excavated at Bogazköy (fig. 21). They are of painted and burnished clay and of significant height (ca. 90 cm). They have funnel-shaped openings on the withers

⁴⁶ Sayce 1909, p. 888; Frazer 1935, p. 134; Akurgal 1980, p. 19.

⁴⁷ Akurgal 1980, p. 13.

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁵⁰ Van Loon 1985, pp. 11-2.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 7, 13. I could not find any explanation for the enigmatic cones on the bulls' back. Prof. Hillenbrand's suggestion to me that they may be meant to identify the animals as zebus, likewise considered as lunar creatures, is interesting. An investigation into the significance of these cones would, however, lead too far in this context and will have to be left to future research.

and ropes connected to a nose ring in painted relief.⁵² Bull masks were probably also used in the cult of the thunder god, and so were *rhyta*, described in cult inventories as a "bull's head and neck".⁵³ The aforementioned silver cup which is datable to 1400-1300 B.C., and rendered very naturalistically in the shape of a kneeling bull, may be related to such objects (fig. 22).⁵⁴

The Anatolian bull cult also reached Transcaucasia and even parts of Central Asia. In Maikop in the Kuban area of the northern Caucasus, gold figurines of bulls as well as other cult objects with bovine features have been excavated and are attributed to the third millennium B.C., and apparently such bull ornaments remained popular in this area until the 5th century B.C., if not later.⁵⁵

Another area in the region where an ancient bull cult apparently existed was Urartu. Here it was Teishab or Teshub, the local god of weather and storms and one of the greatest national gods, who was associated with the bull and is frequently shown standing on his associate animal.⁵⁶ Thus, Talbot Rice for example refers to an 8th/7th-century life-size bronze statue from Toprakkale, now preserved in the Erivan Museum.⁵⁷ From the same period come various (probably ritual) bronze cauldrons with bull protomes, as well as several reddish pottery bulls, apparently closely resembling the famous bulls unearthed at Bogazköy.⁵⁸ Large finds of divine figurines and bulls near Erivan seem further to support the existence of an ancient local bull cult.⁵⁹

The famous "Amlash" bull vessels found in north-western Iran have already been mentioned. They, too, have been clearly identified as cultic objects used in worship.⁶⁰ Further south in northern Syria, the mythological traditions of Anatolia

⁵² *Op. cit.*, pp. 12, 40, pl. XIIb.

⁵³ *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁵⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 45, pl. XL.

⁵⁵ Talbot Rice 1965, p. 13 fig. 1, pp. 14, 19, 26.

⁵⁶ Akurgal 1980, p. 23.

⁵⁷ Talbot Rice 1965, p. 60. Unfortunately, the author does not include an image of this object, neither does she refer to a published image elsewhere.

⁵⁸ *Op. cit.*, pp. 60, 62; Akurgal 1961, p. 54; Woolley 1961, title page.

⁵⁹ Talbot-Rice 1965, p. 62.

⁶⁰ Stuttgart 1972, no. 21.

in particular exerted a significant influence, and thus it is not surprising to find yet another weather and fertility god (known as Baal) in the Syrian pantheon of the second millennium B.C. taking the form of a bull.⁶¹ Silver bulls were erected in his honour in temples throughout the region and at least one drinking vessel, a gold and silver rhyton in the shape of a kneeling bull executed by Syro-Hittite craftsmen in the 7th century B.C., may hint at ritual drinking and libations connected with bull worship similar to those practised in Anatolia.⁶² The palace of Baal, believed to be situated on a mountain south of the Orontes, was the centre of his worship. Even in Hellenistic and Seleucid times this mountain remained the residence of the weather god, first Zeus - his favourite embodiment still being the bull - and then Jupiter. Trajan and Hadrian still sacrificed gilt drinking horns, offerings which had been made to the weather god as far back as Hittite times.⁶³

The Israelites, influenced by northern Syrian religion, also practised a kind of bull worship around the 14th century B.C. The characteristics with which they endowed their god Yahweh at that time have been identified by some as those which had very similarly characterized Baal or Adad in their roles as storm and fertility gods. Not surprisingly, the worship in Israelite sanctuaries, though clearly distinguishable from that devoted to earlier gods, yet again included the bull as a prominent feature of vegetation myths and fertility rituals linked with the local god Yahweh.⁶⁴

Ancient Egyptian civilization was even more famous for the deification of cattle. Already in prehistoric times there was evidence for the worship of a bull-god, and this stood out among the widespread cults of various animal deities.⁶⁵ Many deities were conceived as bulls. Thus, the chief god Osiris, the god of nature,

⁶¹ Mainz 1982, pp. 331, 333; Frazer 1935, p. 163; Sayce 1909, p. 888.

⁶² Woolley 1961, p. 143; Mainz 1982, p. 333.

⁶³ Clark 1977, p. 18; Mainz 1982, p. 335.

⁶⁴ Sayce 1909, p. 888; James 1958, pp. 61-4. It is interesting in this context to recall the episodes regarding the misguided worship of a Golden Calf (on at least one occasion representing Baal) by the people of Israel recorded in the Bible; cf. Exodus 32, 1 Kings 12, 26-30, 2 Kings 17, 16 (for the link with Baal), and, in the Apocrypha, Tob. 1,5.

⁶⁵ Gray and Moore 1918, p. 159; Frankfort 1948, pp. 162-3.

death and life, was often likened to and represented by a black bull, a concept perhaps originally imported from countries further north.⁶⁶ He was also identified regularly with the Apis bull of Memphis, the most popular sacred animal, which was seen as an incarnation of the sun.

The most famous solar divinity of bovine character, however, was Hathor, the cow-shaped goddess of heaven, protector of women and lovers as well as goddess of intoxication.⁶⁷ Ancient Egyptian kings and queens were frequently likened to bovine creatures. The king (and god) was the embodiment of virile fertility symbolized by the bull, and - on a cosmic scale - the personification of the sun, while the queen (and goddess) represented the sky in the form of a cow.⁶⁸

5.2. Bull Cults in the Greek and Roman World

In Mediterranean lands, bull cults were no less popular. In ancient Crete bulls were sacred animals, being considered as an incarnation of the sun.⁶⁹ The king and queen of Knossos would regularly enact the mythical marriage between sun and moon, wearing a bull's and cow's mask respectively, a rite which probably also underlies the legend of the Minotaur, the issue of the union of Pasiphae, the Minoan queen, and a miraculous white bull.⁷⁰

Another form of religious worship adhered to not only by the Cretans, but also by many Greeks in general, is of interest here. It was devoted to the god Dionysus, the god of vegetation.⁷¹ He, too, was often depicted in zoomorphic shape, i. e. either in the form of, or at least with the horns of, a bull.⁷² It was in this particular guise that he was believed to appear to his devotees during his sacred

⁶⁶ Gray and Moore 1918, p. 162; Frazer 1947, p. 476.

⁶⁷ Clark 1977, pl. 14; Gray and Moore 1918, p. 37.

⁶⁸ Frankfort 1948, pp. 162, 168-9.

⁶⁹ Frazer 1935a, p. 72; Gray and Moore 1916, p. 325 note 1.

⁷⁰ Frazer 1935a, p. 71.

⁷¹ Frazer 1947, p. 388; Frazer 1935, p. 123.

⁷² Frazer 1947, p. 39.

rites and it was believed that he met his end as a bull by being torn to pieces.⁷³ The passion of Dionysus was commemorated in Crete regularly by a biennial festival, during which orgiastic rituals took place. A live bull, believed to be the god himself, was torn to pieces, and his flesh eaten and his blood drunk in an attempt to cleanse away sin and gain eternal life.⁷⁴

A very similar ritual was held annually during a spring festival for the western Asian god of vegetation, Attis.⁷⁵ A ritual ox, considered to be the spirit of vegetation, was also slain regularly in Athens. The sacrifice took place in June or July in order to avert the impact of drought.⁷⁶ In later Greek mythology it is above all Zeus, again a storm and weather god and god over life and death, who is associated with the bull, and iron bulls are attested as having been erected in the sanctuary of Zeus Atabyrius in Rhodes.⁷⁷

In Rome a bull sacrifice took place every year at the time of the vernal equinox, which was believed to be the moment of the sky and thunder god's regeneration. During these rituals special importance was attached to the blood and the testicles of the animal, which were considered as powerful charms with regard to fertility and resurrection.⁷⁸ Soldiers and slaves from northern Syria imported another bull-related cult to Italy in later Roman times. Subsequently, the god Jupiter Dolichenus and his associate bull (most probably based on much older Anatolian and Syrian concepts of the thunder god) became firmly established in the Roman pantheon. Monuments were erected in his honour in most parts of the Roman empire as well as in Mesopotamia and a few areas of Iran, depicting him with a Phrygian cap, standing on a bull and holding a double-headed battle axe and a thunderbolt.⁷⁹

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 347, 351.

⁷⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 387-8.

⁷⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 466.

⁷⁷ Sayce 1909, p. 888.

⁷⁸ Frazer 1947, pp. 275-6.

⁷⁹ Sayce 1909, p. 888; Frazer 1935, p. 136.

Alongside the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, Mithraism - inspired by ancient Iranian religious concepts - had infiltrated the Roman empire and particularly the Roman army during the first four centuries A.D.⁸⁰ Central to the cult of this god of light and creation was once again the bull, symbol of fertility and life. Its slaughter by Mithras was meant to release the animal's life-giving properties to the earth. It was simultaneously conceived as a triumph of light over darkness and an act of creation that set the world order into motion.⁸¹

The Mithras legend also had strong underlying astrological implications, the bull-slaying scene symbolizing the equatorial summer constellations.⁸² In this context it has been associated and perhaps assimilated with the Roman astral myth of Orion, fighting the constellation Taurus in the sky.⁸³ Orion was conceived as a divine solar hero, embodied in the largest, most brilliant and nearly sun-like constellation of the sky.⁸⁴ Probably because of his legendary fight with Taurus, his symbolic animal was the bull, and thus votive objects devoted to the god took the form of bronze bulls.⁸⁵

Eventually, despite the attempts under the Emperor Justinian to lead Mithraism to victory in the face of growing adherence to Christianity, gradually pagan religious concepts were replaced forever.⁸⁶

The significance of the bull in antiquity throughout the lands of the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East becomes very clear in the comprehensive

⁸⁰ Gershevitch 1959, p. 61; Speidel 1980, pp. I, 1.

⁸¹ Speidel 1980, pp. 43-45; Zaehner 1961, pp. 99, 125; Campbell 1968, p. 204.

⁸² Speidel 1980, p. 3. It is interesting in this context to recall the Achaemenid palaces of Persepolis which were specifically erected in the 6th century B.C. for the annual Nawruz celebrations. Here the image of a lion slaying the bull recurs frequently. According to Hartner, who dealt with this motif extensively, the lion-bull combat had undoubtedly astrological connotations, the combating animals being identical to the zodiacal constellations of Leo and Taurus. The battle between the two animals symbolizes the position of the constellations at the point of the vernal equinox, i.e. Nawrūz; cf. Hartner 1965, pp. 1-3, 16.

⁸³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 3, 19, 25, 34.

⁸⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 31, 36.

⁸⁵ Mainz 1982, p. 224 no. 210.

⁸⁶ Bernoulli 1973, p. 46.

historical survey attempted above. The most interesting point that emerges is the fact that this animal had legendary characteristics which were nearly identical in all the ancient cultures of the region, transcending cultural borders and apparently surviving for centuries, if not millennia, virtually unchanged: the bull was considered as a spirit which protected from evil. Everywhere it was the animal associated with and representative of various weather and thunder gods, who were considered responsible for life-giving rain and vegetation, and as their symbol it received veneration. The bull was also the universally popular attribute of several solar divinities, again creative forces indispensable for life on earth, and a representative of the constellation Taurus, associated with the vitality of spring.

If one considers the wide geographical distribution of closely related concepts regarding the symbolism of the bull and its virtually unchanged survival over centuries, if not millennia, it seems perfectly possible that the beliefs underlying such concepts still lingered on in the Near and Middle East when Islam arrived.

Indeed, there are indications that the belief in the bull's prophylactic and life-giving properties continued to survive up to Islamic times. Thus, apparently talismanic bull-heads executed in stone and recalling the ancient *bucrania* can be found on certain early Islamic buildings such as for example the Bab al-Futūh (1087 A.D.), where a bull's head is included in one of the columns' capitals.⁸⁷

In Islamic astrology Taurus (conceived as the forepart of a bull, cut into two at the navel and with the head lowered as if he were in the process of attacking) was considered responsible for orchards, pasture land and store-houses for food, as well as for unirrigated fields and crops from the time of setting out the cuttings.⁸⁸ It was also believed to influence human health and was considered indicative of diseases affecting the neck and the windpipe, the two areas of the body associated with this sign.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Öney 1970, p. 108 note 21; Creswell 1952, Vol. I, pl. 66b.

⁸⁸ Wright 1934, pp. 69, 221-2.

⁸⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 216, 223.

Returning to the objects under discussion here, the observations assembled above make it feasible that the application of bull heads as spouts on early Islamic bronze ewers may still have reflected the age-old belief in the animal's traditional association with creative and life-giving forces and its prophylactic, evil-averting properties.⁹⁰ It may also still have been considered in Islamic times as a vital accessory during certain folkloristic rites connected with the celebration of recurring fertility in spring, ceremonies which reflected pagan traditions, and in which, from antiquity onwards, bull-shaped vessels had been used.

5.3. The Significance of the Bull in Pre-Islamic Iran and its Traditional Association with "Soma"

A closer look at the importance of the bull in pre-Islamic Iran, the assumed country of the Islamic ewers' origin, may help further to clarify the precise use of bull-headed ewers in Islamic times. Here, as in all the other aforementioned countries of the ancient world, the bull was considered as having life-giving qualities, and it was in this area that the bull had from earliest time been associated with one particular life-giving liquid that certainly retained its strong symbolic significance up to the Middle Ages - namely soma.

The mythology of ancient Iran owes much to that of ancient India, and a short excursus into the latter is therefore in order. In Indian religious ideology, just as in all the ancient western Asiatic religions discussed above, the bull and cattle in general are of the utmost importance. According to Indian cosmological ideas, the world is made up of the two principles of sky and earth, symbolized by the bull and the cow respectively, both rich in life-giving seed.⁹¹ The rain clouds, often

⁹⁰ H. Marchal already hinted at the possibility of such an interpretation. He suggested that the application of bull-headed and other horned animal heads was to avert the danger of poison; cf. Marchal 1974, p. 17.

⁹¹ Gray and Moore 1917, p. 16.

personified by the fertility god Parjanya, are likened to cows, who bless the earth with seeds and aid the fertility of plants, cattle and women.⁹² References to the Indian pantheon are also full of allusions to bovine characteristics. Indra, the greatest god of the atmosphere and the storm god, is frequently likened to a bull.⁹³ His closest associate, the god of the earth Agni, whose gifts to mankind are rain and prosperity, receives the same byname, and so do Dyaus, another sky god, and Surya, the sun god, who ensures long life for human beings.⁹⁴

Yet another Indian god was likened to a bull, a god that was unique among the other deities in that he could take three forms - as a god, a plant and the juice of that plant. His name was Soma.⁹⁵ As a god Soma is the lord of the waters, who makes the rain stream from heaven, his birthplace.⁹⁶ In his manifestation as a plant he takes form when the shoots of the plant are pressed and the divine juice is extracted, which confers on the drinker exhilarating supernatural powers and immortality.⁹⁷ As such an aqua vitae the soma was the drink of the Indian gods, and Indra in particular is repeatedly mentioned as partaking of soma generously.⁹⁸

In fact Soma played an outstanding role in the Vedic pantheon, and in the Rig Veda, the oldest and most important book of Vedic hymns, 120 of them are entirely devoted to the plant god, whose worship was the focal point of the Vedic religion.⁹⁹ Again and again the priest-poets who composed these religious verses likened Soma to a bull: thus for example in hymn IX, verse 85: "...In the firmament of heaven the seers milk...the bull-Soma seated on the mountain top..." or in hymn IX verse 70: "...He (Soma) bellows, terrifying bull, with might, sharpening his shining horns, gazing afar..." and again in hymn IX verse 27: "This

⁹² Op. cit., pp. 16, 37, 62; Frazer 1935b, p. 368.

⁹³ Gray and Moore 1917, pp. 19, 32-3, 35.

⁹⁴ Op. cit., pp. 21, 26-7, 62.

⁹⁵ Op. cit., pp. 46-7; Gordon-Wasson n.d., p. 3.

⁹⁶ Gray and Moore 1917, pp. 46-7.

⁹⁷ Op. cit., p. 46.

⁹⁸ Op. cit., pp. 19, 35, 37, 46; Gordon-Wasson n.d., pp. 27, 63; Zaehner 1961, p. 88.

⁹⁹ Gordon-Wasson n.d., pp. 4, 5, 95.

bull, heaven's head, Soma, when pressed, is escorted by masterly men into the vessels, he the all-knowing."¹⁰⁰

This recurrent association of Soma with the bull may be based simply on the fact that strength and supernatural power were both personified in this way in the minds of the ancients.¹⁰¹ However, it may also relate to the traditional mythological characteristics which both of them possessed. The sound of the soma juice, as it ran through the press, was likened to thunder, an ancient mythical attribute of the bull, not only in India but, as we have seen, also in the west.¹⁰² Soma is also described as the child of the thunderstorm, who shares his liquid nature with the rain, and his brilliance with the lightning and with the fire that lightning causes, all comparative metaphors traditionally associated with the bull as the animal par excellence of the weather and storm gods.¹⁰³

From India, the worship of Soma reached Iran sometime in remote antiquity, and was subsequently incorporated into the local religious ideology.¹⁰⁴ In fact, it became the central ritual in that part of ancient Iranian religion which was devoted to the god Mithra, the god of light, who likewise originally had Indian roots. Incorporated into this ancient cult, which was traditionally held at night, was the orgiastic ritual slaughter of a bull.¹⁰⁵ While the soma, the fermented and intoxicating elixir of immortality, was consumed, the sacrificial meat was sprinkled with the sacred fluid, roasted and then distributed among the worshippers, priests and laymen alike.¹⁰⁶ This combined rite of the bull and soma sacrifice was intended to secure both physical and spiritual immortality, the first deriving from the bull's flesh, the second from the divine juice.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 36, 41, 42, 45.

¹⁰¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁰² *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹⁰³ *Op. cit.*, p. 39; Campbell 1968, p. 129.

¹⁰⁴ Gordon-Wasson n.d., p. 19.

¹⁰⁵ Nyberg 1938, pp. 51-2, 59, 60, 71, 85.

¹⁰⁶ Zaehner 1961, pp. 38, 85-8, 169; Campbell 1968, p. 221.

¹⁰⁷ Zaehner 1961, p. 90; Nyberg 1938, pp. 189, 199-200.

Under Zoroaster the old religious practices underwent several revolutionary modifications that also affected the soma (in Iranian: haoma) cult.¹⁰⁸ However, despite these changes the latter remained the most important rite in the new Zoroastrian religion, dedicated to Ahura Mazda, the god of life-producing waters and the greatest divinity in the Iranian pantheon.¹⁰⁹ The only modification affecting the celebration of the haoma cult was the abolition of the orgiastic bull slaughter, which was categorically rejected by the prophet. Accordingly, this savage feature had virtually disappeared among Zoroastrian communities by early Islamic times. The mythical unity of cattle and haoma, however, was still upheld symbolically in that now the sacrificial juice extracted from the divine plant of immortality was mixed with cow's milk, considered to be a kind of aqua vitae in itself.¹¹⁰

Throughout the centuries the haoma cult retained its outstanding importance among Zoroastrians, and it is still practised today by their modern successors, the Parsees, a very active community based on the area around Bombay in India.¹¹¹ Its performance was seen as an earthly symbolical act anticipating the final, eschatological haoma sacrifice performed at the end of time. Then, the eschatological saviour Saoshyans would slay the primeval bull of heaven, Hadhayash, and mix his suet with white haoma to obtain the final draught of immortality for the resurrected souls of mankind.¹¹²

Bull and haoma sacrifice recur on several other occasions in Iranian religious thought, as expressed in the compilation known as the "Avesta", the most important book of old Iranian and Zoroastrian religious concepts. Thus, according to ancient tradition, creation began when Ahriman (later Mithra) slew the ox of heaven, who was conceived as a bull plant or bull soul and was associated with the ox-horn tree

¹⁰⁸ Nyberg 1938, pp. 82-3, 287.

¹⁰⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 288; Zaehner 1961, pp. 38, 88; Campbell 1968, p. 15.

¹¹⁰ Nyberg 1938, pp. 198, 199, 287; Zaehner 1961, pp. 39, 88.

¹¹¹ It is interesting to note in this context that the modern Parsees strain the Haoma juice together with consecrated water with the help of a ring entwined with the hair of a sacred bull; cf. Zaehner 1961, p. 86.

¹¹² *Op. cit.*, pp. 87, 90-1, 128, 317-8; Campbell 1968, pp. 218, 261-2; Flattery and Schwartz 1989, pp. 90-1.

from which the white haoma was believed to originate.¹¹³ The seeds and organs spilling from the animal's mutilated body subsequently fertilized the earth and started all life.¹¹⁴

Haoma, as in Indian belief, is conceived as plant and god alike. He is seen as the son of Ahura Mazda, who in his plant form is bruised and mangled in the mortar to extract the life-giving fluid for mankind.¹¹⁵ According to legend, haoma was sacrificed for the very first time by the sun-god Vihahvant, while his son Yima sacrificed a sacred bull, a combined act that led to an initial 1000-year period of spiritual and physical immortality for mankind.¹¹⁶

In the context of this discussion it is most interesting to observe that Iranian tradition, based on ancient beliefs originally imported from India, frequently recognizes a close association between the bull, giver of life and physical immortality, and the divine Haoma, the plant-god that ensures spiritual immortality for those that partake in his consumption. In view of the age-old and far-reaching association of bull and haoma in ancient Iran, and given the fact that particularly in Iran religious practices and beliefs have shown a remarkable underlying stability and persistence over the centuries,¹¹⁷ one might interpret the Islamic ewers under discussion in a non-Islamic religious sense.

This would assume a relation between these bull-headed vessels, whose decoration after all is a very general one which, though corresponding to contemporary taste, does not explicitly refer to Islamic religious concepts, and the ritual pouring of the haoma during a religious, presumably Zoroastrian, ceremony. After all, the haoma cult is assumed to have survived in some esoteric circles under Iranian influence until as late as the 11th century A.D.¹¹⁸ However, after the Islamic conquest adherence to Zoroastrianism dwindled away apart from small

¹¹³ Gershevitch 1959, pp. 62-4; Campbell 1968, pp. 62, 113, 130, 146, 218, 324; Gray and Moore 1917, p. 286.

¹¹⁴ Zaehner 1961, pp. 128, 266-7.

¹¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

¹¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 92-4, 140.

¹¹⁷ Gordon-Wasson n.d., p. 74.

¹¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

pockets of resistance, where tiny communities survived. Moreover, many of the remaining believers began to emigrate to India in the 10th century A.D., and therefore it remains to be seen if it was really feasible that one of these few Zoroastrian enclaves was situated in 10th-12th century eastern Iran, the assumed homeland of the vessels, and could indeed have been responsible for the execution of these small and enigmatic ewers.

The comparatively large number of pieces that survive seems to contradict this suggestion from the onset. Another flaw in this hypothesis would be the fact that the production of these vessels seems to have been restricted mainly to the 10th-12th centuries, a fact that seems dubious. After all it should be expected that the much more widely practised pre-Islamic Zoroastrian religion, which even advanced to the role of Iranian state religion in Sasanian times, should have yielded much larger amounts of such ritual vessels, none of which however seem to survive today.

Perhaps the explanation for the existence of these ewers lies less in a purely religious context than in a ritual context associated with ceremonies current at the various courts of contemporary Islamic rulers.¹¹⁹ Thus, soma or haoma consumption was not restricted to religious circles. In Sasanian times on the occasion of the Iranian New Year, the annual renewal of the king's reign would be marked by cultic drinking in the royal household. The ruler would partake generously of wine in remembrance of the first deified monarch, Yim, the son of the sun god, who was believed to have instituted Nawruz and - as we have seen - had, together with his father, initiated the haoma cult.¹²⁰ Indeed, the wine served during such investiture banquets was seen as a divine aqua vitae, bestowed by the gods and in fact considered identical to the haoma of eastern Iran in its capacity to confer supernatural powers and spiritual enlightenment.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Already R. Ettinghausen has implied that zoomorphic vessels such as bull-shaped or bull-headed aquamaniles had some connection with investiture ceremonies and the ensuing banquets; cf. Ettinghausen 1969, pp. 105-6.

¹²⁰ Zaehner 1961, p. 138.

¹²¹ Op. cit., p. 160; Nyberg 1938, p. 372.

The royal custom of ritual intoxication was upheld throughout Islamic times, when it was associated frequently with spring festivities and interrelated investiture rites. It was not only practised by rulers of Iranian extraction but also by Turkish monarchs, who from the 10th century onwards controlled the areas of Khurāsān and Transoxiana as well as other parts of eastern Iran.¹²²

At this point it is important to recall that the style of decoration found on the Islamic bull-headed ewers attributes them to those very areas which were under Turkish rule during the 10th-12th centuries. It may therefore prove fruitful to examine whether such vessels, apart from serving during the ritual banquets of Iranian rulers, may also have had a connection with Turkish drinking rituals and above all their ritual consumption of soma.

5.4. The Ritual of Soma-Drinking among the early Islamic Turks and their Ancestors

The Turkish rulers of eastern Iran had evidently adopted Iranian monarchic concepts in conscious fashion in early Islamic times, not least in order to justify the legitimacy of their rule over Iranian lands. In fact, however, they had already been familiar with ancient Indo-Iranian traditions since ancient times and particularly with those relating to the heavenly soma.¹²³ They, too, had celebrated the annual investiture and renewal of allegiance on the day of the solar exaltation with certain cup rites, during which the ruler received a goblet containing a liquid symbolizing the divine soma.¹²⁴

Traditionally, the utensils used on such occasions by the Turkic monarchs over the centuries were laden with symbolic significance and the shape of the

¹²² Cf. Grabar 1954, *passim* and Esin 1969.

¹²³ Esin 1969, p. 224.

¹²⁴ Esin 1968, pp. 97, 106; Esin 1969, p. 239.

vessels varied according to the hierarchical position of the recipient.¹²⁵ A special table was set out for the royal ceremony and this carried the relevant ritual objects, above all the main wine recipient - sagrak - which was the royal emblem and could often be surmounted by the head of a bird or animal.¹²⁶ The appearance of such a ceremonial table and of the utensils placed upon it is preserved on a mural found among the ruins of Kotcho, the ancient royal residence of the Uigur Turks (fig.28).¹²⁷ Most interestingly, the flasks depicted here are topped by animal heads, in this case those of a griffin, apparently, according to Emel Esin, alluding heraldically to the Turkic peoples of the Huing-nu group.¹²⁸

Cup rites involving symbolic ambrosia survived, in virtually unchanged form and over a geographically wide area, among the various Turkic peoples down to the Seljuqs and even later.¹²⁹ Therefore, it may not seem too far-fetched to suggest that animal-headed vessels such as the ones depicted in Kotcho may also have played a part in similar ceremonies among the Islamic Turkish rulers in Iran in the early Middle Ages and may still have been considered exclusively royal utensils then. Considering the material the Islamic ewers are made of, i. e. bronze, they may have been used by petty rulers or powerful governors rather than sovereigns, who would probably have had vessels made of precious metal at their disposal.

If one accepts such a context for the ewers' use, the choice of the bull head spout encountered on the vessels discussed here could be explained as referring firstly to the ancient and universally popular beliefs regarding the significance of the bull. In addition it could refer to Indo-Iranian legends (also well known among the Turks as we noted above) relating to soma and to its recurrent association with the bull.

¹²⁵ Esin 1969, pp. 226, 229.

¹²⁶ Op. cit., pp. 225, 238-9; Esin 1980, p. 118.

¹²⁷ Esin 1969, p. 233; Esin 1970, p. 94.

¹²⁸ Esin 1969, p. 233.

¹²⁹ Esin 1969 as a whole deals extensively with the historical survival of the cup rites among the Turkish peoples.

In addition, the choice may be based on another concept, which in fact would be concerned exclusively with Turkic beliefs reaching back to earliest antiquity. From earliest times the bull was considered as one of the royal animals among the Turkic peoples. Thus, rulers of the Chou age (1050-249 B.C.) for example which, according to Esin, were at least partly of Turkic descent, hunted only bovine creatures. These animals alone were the imperial emblems destined for the royal temple, and after their sacrifice the monarchs partook of their meat and blood which, probably mixed with wine, was presented to them in jade cups of bovine appearance.¹³⁰

The royal symbolism of the wild bovine creature survived over centuries, and several Turkish dynasties and tribes actually considered the bull to be their primeval ancestor.¹³¹ According to Emel Esin the *tamgha* (emblem) of the Islamic Kök-Türk dynasty, for example, was a wild bovine creature.¹³² The clearest evidence, however, is that presented by the Oghuz federation, which had dethroned the local Seljuq rulers and established itself as a major force in the region during the 12th century.¹³³ Their name alone already hints at a strong association with the bovine species, for it means "bull" or "young bull".¹³⁴ The choice of this name refers to the tribe's mythical origins, described in the *Oghuznāmeḥ*. According to this chronicle the child of the primeval couple from whom the Oghuz derive their origin was of bovine appearance, and accordingly, the royal emblem of the wild bull was adopted by the tribe as a whole and above all by the Oghuz rulers, who thus emphasised their ancient lineage.¹³⁵

The observations made above suggest that the Islamic bull-headed ewers may have been private ritual decanters, perhaps used by Iranian and Turkish rulers during seasonally recurring, ceremonial banquets involving the serving of *soma*.

¹³⁰ Esin 1980, pp. 12, 40-1.

¹³¹ Roux 1984, p. 181.

¹³² Esin 1980, pp. 41, 102.

¹³³ Esin 1969, p. 246.

¹³⁴ Esin 1980, p. 103; Roux 1971, p. 198 note 2.

¹³⁵ Esin 1980, p. 103; Roux 1984, pp. 182-3.

The purpose of the bull-head may have been to remind the user of the powerful, life-engendering qualities that had associated the divine liquid of soma with bull symbolism for millennia. In a Turkish context the bull-head may concurrently have evoked the ancestral animal of the royal user.

6. Summary

It appears that cast pear-shaped bronze ewers with more or less naturalistically rendered zoomorphic and most commonly bull-headed spouts were mainly executed in eastern Iran and Transoxiana between the 10th and the 12th centuries.

The apparently most popular bull-headed ewers seem to perpetuate a series of bull-shaped vessels of varying appearance, which had been in ritual use particularly during spring and fertility ceremonies in the Middle East and Iran since prehistoric times. The use of the Islamic bull-spouted ewers has been tentatively linked with soma rituals held by rulers of Iranian and Turkish extraction alike. With regard to such rituals among the Turks, this notion is based on the observations that soma is frequently associated with the image of a bull in Indo-Iranian mythology, which was known to the Turks in eastern Iran, and that the ritual decanters already used by pre-Islamic Turkic rulers during ceremonial drinking sessions could be surmounted by various animal heads. Apart from their mythological significance these could also refer to the royal ancestral animal: among several Islamic Turkish dynasties one of these was the bull.

Such a hypothesis, tempting as it may be, has to remain purely speculative at present and requires further investigation. One aspect in particular remains unexplained in this context, and this is the small size of most of the vessels in this category. It seems somewhat unsatisfactory when imagined in the splendid ambience of a courtly banquet of deep ritual significance, and does not compare favourably to

the apparently large ewers lined up on the ceremonial table depicted in the royal banquet scene on the mural at Kotcho.¹³⁶

The other speculative suggestions about the ewers' inner significance perhaps also deserve further research. The bull head may indeed have had protective, evil-averting properties. It may also have been a symbol of fertility and life when depicted on a ewer used during spring festivities. Finally, an astrological significance cannot be excluded either, until further examinations of this ewer type are undertaken.¹³⁷ As for the bird- and ram-headed varieties in this category, they are rare in comparison with the bull-headed pieces. At present we have only one ewer with an identifiable bird-head (V.2; fig. 11) and one with a ram's head (V.4; fig. 12). Undoubtedly, the application of both a bird and a ram head must have had an inner significance, too, and it is hoped that future research may be able to unearth useful evidence in that respect. The abstract nature of the other spouts encountered in this group discouraged speculations regarding the function of the ewers they belong to. Again, further research is needed to elucidate their precise use.

¹³⁶ Prof. Hillenbrand has suggested to me that the drink contained in such ewers may have been very strong and accordingly, only small quantities may have been required. It could also be argued that each participant of a ritual banquet may have had his own vessel. All these points need further investigation.

¹³⁷ Thus, the pottery ewer from north-western Iran evidently has a definitely astrological significance. The armoured man on his bull-headed vessel has been identified as Orion by Zick-Nissen in the past; cf. Zick-Nissen 1975, pp. 217-240. After the completion of this chapter a very recent article by Melikian-Chirvani has come to my notice, which also deals with the significance of bull-shaped vessels in Islam. According to him, such vessels, including the ewers discussed here, were of a ritual nature. At Nawruz they were employed to contain a special wine which was consumed in royal circles during a fertility ritual of ancient Iranian origin. In this context the wine was understood as a symbolic replacement for the blood of the bull which, in ancient times, had been sacrificed on the day of the spring equinox. This interpretation of the ewers discussed here appears to support some of the considerations already put forward in this chapter; cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1991, pp. 101-125.

Catalogue

Sub-group 1

1. Berlin-Dahlem I.5699; n. p.; cast bronze, punched and incised; handle and base plate wanting; foot soldered on (?); h. 18 cm, diam. 7.5 cm.

Slender pear-shaped body, visually divided into three faceted parts by a ridge indicating the base line of the neck and a broad protruding band separating central and lower body; low foot; horizontal spout rendered as hollow bovine head with lozenge-shaped mouth opening and almond-shaped hole in forehead; protruding ridge separating muzzle and head; two horizontally protruding ears at side of head, surmounted by two inward-curving horns. Facets on body outlined by single punched lines; incised outlining also around lower decorative band, filled with simple scrollwork, and the lower edge of the geometric interlace on lower neck; long ovoid side panels on head and ridge around muzzle with punched lines; on upper side of muzzle, three inverted heart scrolls; incised details on inner ears and around central horns (pl. 1).

Lit.: Pope 1938, pl. 1277B; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 627 no. A/2/c/1, fig. 29; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 35, 39 note 70; Berlin 1986, p. 56 no. 36.

2. Motamed Collection; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; dimensions unavailable.

Form as 1, but body slightly more bulbous and sections less accentuated; facets somewhat deeper; flat S-shaped handle attached to back of bovine head and - by means of almond-shaped attachment - to central body; stylized leaf-shaped thumbpiece with surmounting knob; small knob just above lower attachment area. On foot, remains of vertical panelling (?); around widest part of lower body, broad band with two superposed rows of round cavities set obliquely; lower neck enhanced by a band of stylized scrollwork; on head, side panels and muzzle ridge outlined by cast rather than punched lines (fig. 1).

Lit.: Unpublished.

3. Sotheby's 12.10.81, lot 58; n. p.; cast bronze, punched and incised; handle missing; foot soldered on (?); h. 19 cm.

Form as 1. Very accentuated, punched outlining on facets; on large band around lower body, line of floriated Kufic, the inscription reading: bi baraka wa yumn wa shukr wa surū(r) (With blessing and good fortune and gratitude and joy); on band around lower neck, guilloche pattern; side panels of head with plain outlines; foliate ornament on muzzle; horns, which are touching at top, with spiral grooving (fig. 2).

Lit.: Sotheby's 12.10.81, lot 58.

4. Louvre AO 6101; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; separate base plate, handle missing; h. 20.5 cm, diam. 9.5 cm, diam. base 5.5 cm.

Form as 1, but more bulbous body. Around widest part of body, band with pseudo-Kufic (deeply carved cavities in between letters for inlay?); around lower neck, worn band of guilloche (?) with deeply carved central grooves (for inlay?); on side panels of head, twisted design; on muzzle, floral design; horns thicker than on preceding examples, with incised vertical lines below and horizontal ones above (fig. 3).

Lit.: Marchal 1974, pp. 16-7, note 48, fig. 11; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 627 no. A/2/c/4; Paris 1971, p. 99 no. 15.

5. Berlin-Dahlem I.6177; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; horns and thumbpiece missing; h. 15.2 cm, diam. 7.8 cm.

Form as 1, but more bulbous and squat body; continuous profile; foot higher; handle of rectangular section, bends above head and leads straight down to lower attachment area; large rounded plaque just above attachment plate; horizontal grooving along back of central and lower handle. Decoration very worn: lower band

on body with deeply incised pseudo-inscription; upper band lower than on examples 1-3 and comparable in position to 4: very broad, made up of six superposed lines, the two central ones of which join to form short guilloche patterns at regular intervals; ridge of muzzle only on upper sides of spout; sides of spout slightly hollowed; remains of incised decoration on upper edge of muzzle and lozenge-shaped opening in forehead (fig. 4).

Lit.: Berlin 1971, p. 67 no. 229; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 627 no. A/2/c/2; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 35-36, fig. 11.

6. Louvre AA 60; Ghazna(?); quaternary alloy, cast (hammered?), incised; handle and one horn missing; h. 15.5 cm, diam. 7.7 cm.

Form as 1, but body more bulbous; only neck section slightly faceted, remaining body plain. Very broad band outlined by double punched lines around lower body, containing neatly executed, benedictory Kufic inscription; around neck base, clearly cut band of geometrical interlacing; neck facets outlined by double incised lines; on side panels of spout, single twisted design; on muzzle and forehead(?) floral motifs; ears and horn(s) immediately adjoining; incised details on ears and horn(s) (fig. 5).

Lit.: Marchal 1974, pp. 16-7, fig. 11; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 627 no. A/2/c/3, Analysis of metal p. 502 Table 21 no. 20.

7. Victoria and Albert Museum M 107-1945; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; handle and base plate missing; h. 19 cm, diam. body 9.6 cm, diam. underside 4.85 cm - 4.95 cm.

Form as 1, but much more bulbous lower body, which is left plain throughout. Slightly protruding, interlacing band around lower body, stopping short of handle attachment area; narrow, plain and rounded band around lower neck; guilloche band on neck; head very naturalistic with clearly indicated nostrils, mouth and eyes; almond-shaped aperture in forehead covered by hinged lid with central knob easing its opening; central section of lid with engraved palmette; horns curved with ears immediately underneath; on front of central body, worn medallion with seated lion looking towards the left; on sides of body, small roundels with individual birds facing the ewer's front (fig. 6).

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 627 no. A/2/c/5; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 52-3 no. 16.

8. Sotheby's 18.4.84, lot 118; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 15.3 cm.

Form apparently as 1 (no photograph available); base and neck with fluted vertical panelling. Incised decoration on body, with epigraphic bands and roundels, vases of flowers.

Lit.: Sotheby's 18.4.84, lot 118.

9. Sotheby's 19.10.83, lot 23; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 21 cm.

Apparently composite ewer with neck of earlier provenance than body; form as 1(?) (no photograph available), but only base fluted. On body small panels of Kufic inscriptions interrupted by rosettes and arabesque motifs above a line of guilloche.

Lit.: Sotheby's 19.10.83, lot 23.

Sub-group 1: Large Examples (L)

10L. Chicago, Art Institute; n. p.; bronze, cast in pieces, incised; h. 38 cm.

Very bulbous, pear-shaped body (lower part faceted (?)) on tall splayed foot; hollow bovine head spout with laterally protruding ears, immediately adjoined above by two long horns curving inwards and joined at the top; simple, flattened angular thumbpiece. Around outer edge of base plate, guilloche band; around lower body, narrow guilloche; above, on front and sides of body, cusped medallions with large birds on scrolling background, interconnected by narrow scrolling bands; below neck section, broad band of benedictory Kufic on scrolling ground; above,

narrow band of herring bone; neck with facets outlined by small guilloche bands; on sides of bovine head, scrolling stems (fig. 7).

Lit.: Pope 1930, fig. 82; Pope 1938, pl. 1296B; Pope 1945, p. 98, pl. 62; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 628 no. A/2/d/1, fig. 29; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 152 note 1, p. 430.

11L. East Berlin, Islamic Museum I.7013; n. p.; bronze, cast in pieces, incised; handle missing and one horn broken off, leaving only a short stump; h. 31 cm.

Form as 10L, but more accentuated, faceted neck section, stepped back from main body; slightly lower foot. Around lower body, slim band of scrollwork; above, central cusped medallion with four individual scrolls, linked to two small lateral roundels with pheasant-like birds in profile by narrow stylized scrolling bands; below the onset of the neck, broad band with simple *naskhi* on floral ground; on very stylized bovine spout, simple incised eyes, mouth and nozzle (pl. 2).

Lit.: Kühnel 1943, p. 31, fig. 12.

12L. Frankfurt/Main, Private Collection; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 26.5 cm, diam. 10 cm.

Form as 10L, but much less bulbous on short foot stem which expands into domed base; slightly S-shaped, angular handle rises above head and leads down to lower attachment area, the latter emphasised by horizontally protruding thorn; thumbpiece rendered as small peacock; bovine head spout very stylized, with horns joined above by bud motif. Around lower body, broad decorative frieze framed by scroll bands, containing benedictory inscription of floriated Kufic and enclosing at the front central medallion with bird motif; above, broad section with decorative faceting, enhanced by narrow guilloche bands; above, benedictory Kufic inscription on floral ground; on sides of bovine head, single rosettes with surrounding interlace; horns with simple incisions (fig. 8).

Lit.: Stuttgart 1972, no. 132; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 628 no. A/2/d/3.

13L. British Museum 1969, 1-13, 1; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; lower foot soldered on, handle missing; h. 26.5 cm, diam. 12.3 cm.

Form as 10L, but less bulbous; body (below plain neck section) and lower foot both divided into twelve lobes. On alternate body lobes, vertical Kufic inscriptions or scrollwork; on alternate foot lobes, knot motif; on lower neck, worn band of scrollwork(?); on sides of bovine head, remains of incised panels; bud-shaped terminal joins both horns (fig. 9).

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 628 no. A/2/d/V.1; Allan 1976/7, fig. 3.

Sub-group 2: Variants with Non-Bovine Zoomorphic Spouts

V.1. Location unknown; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; dimensions unknown.

Slender pear-shaped body on low foot-ring; narrow moulding around base of neck; neck faceted (?); animal-head spout with small ears projecting horizontally from the sides; originally lidded (?). On head, incised detailing on eyes, ears and muzzle; on neck, inverted arcading; on body façade, medallion with floral detailing (?); on sides of body, vertical panels with abstract designs; additional motifs on upper body (above medallion and near back) (fig. 10).

Lit.: Esin 1980, p. 393 no. C/b, pl. C/b.

V.2. Munich, Museum für Völkerkunde 31-2-3; n. p.; bronze, cast in two pieces, incised; handle missing; remains of email in ears and eyes; h. 6.4 cm, diam. base 5.7 cm.

Bulbous pear-shaped body on low foot; above rounded neck moulding, bird head spout with hinged, drop-shaped lid on forehead; beak slightly opened at tip. Deeply grooved band running below eyes and across beak (fig. 11).

Lit.: Lommel 1963, p. 100 no. 210.

V.3. Sotheby's 16.4.87, lot 306; n. p.; cast (?) bronze, incised; foot not belonging; h. 26.6 cm.

Pear-shaped body; spout in form of animal head; curved handles. Kufic inscriptions and bird roundels on body (no photograph available).

Lit.: Sotheby's 16.4.87, p. 78 lot 306.

V.4. Hotel Drouot Rive Gauche 16./17. 11. 1978, lot 276; n. p.; cast bronze; h. 16.5 cm.

Body of octagonal cross-section with faceted, conical upper and lower body sections joining onto a broad, slightly recessed central band; low, slightly splayed foot; upper body emphasised by two superposed mouldings; above, vertically disposed spout, rendered as naturalistic ram's head; horns bend backwards to join double mouldings, thus serving as handles (fig. 12).

Lit.: Hotel Drouot 16./17. 11. 1978, lot 276.

Sub-group 3: Variants with Open and Abstracted Zoomorphic Spouts

V.I. Keir Collection; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 19 cm, h. with handle 21 cm, diam. base 9.5 cm, diam. mouth 5 cm.

Bulbous pear-shaped body, visually separated into three parts by protruding bands around lower neck and widest part of body; tall, stepped and splayed composite foot; cup-shaped mouth with remaining hinges of original, now wanting, lid; adjoining the mouth section, narrow beak-like spout with cusped edges; slightly S-shaped, angular handle joins back of mouth and back of lower body; lower attachment area enhanced by six superposed beads and a hoof-like extension below; small flat knob just below handle's upper loop; thumbpiece, peacock-like bird. On foot, incised double line with short guilloche motifs at regular intervals; around lower body, broad band with worn floriated Kufic; around lower neck, four lines interrupted by central guilloche motifs; on neck, broad panels with palmettes and scrolls on ringmatted background (fig. 13).

Lit.: Fehérvári 1976, no. 54.

V.II. Beirut, Private Collection; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; lid and handle missing; h. 21.5 cm.

Form as V.I, but no profiled division of body; simple, low and very slightly splayed foot; long, slightly upward-turning open beak-spout with curved sides, perhaps meant to recall bird's head. On lower body, incised arcading with simple double line border above; double line border also around lower neck; on both sides of spout, simple motif (half-palmette?) and small rounded knobs behind (fig. 14).

Lit.: Beirut 1974, pp. 62, 136 no. 133; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 629 no. A/2/e/2.

V.III. British Museum 1956,7-26,1; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; base plate separate, handle missing; weighted with lead; h. 13.3 cm, diam. 6.3 cm.

Form as V.I, but less bulbous (very similar to bodies of cat. nos. 1-3); clear partition of body into three parts by protruding bands around lower neck and body; all body parts faceted; low waisted foot; open, slightly upward-turning beak-like spout with bovine characteristics, particularly regarding the ear and horn forms. Body facets outlined by incised arcading with individual bud motifs in between the upper and lower arches respectively; around lower body, benedictory Kufic; around lower neck, narrow scrolling band; on spout, incised details outlining the sides and indicating eyes and nostrils (fig. 15).

Lit.: D'Allemagne 1911, Vol. II, p. 51 top left; Allan 1976, Vol. 2 p. 629 nos. A/2/e/1 and A/2/e/3; Allan 1976/7, fig. 4.

V.IV. Sotheby's 16.4.85, lot 28 (ex D'Allemagne collection); cast bronze, incised; h. 19.1 cm.

Form like V.III, but moulded faceting: six adjoining facets around the neck correspond to twelve adjoining ones covering most of the remaining body below and ending in prominent lobes, leaving only the lower body plain; low, stepped and splayed foot; open, slightly upward-pointing beak-spout resembling a fantastic animal or bird head; slightly S-shaped handle, attached to back of mouth, bends up above spout and then down to join body by means of small bridge, before turning outwards and terminating in small, horizontal lobed protrusion; on lower handle, four beads separated by narrow mouldings; thumbpiece, rounded knob on cylindrical base; on lower foot, succession of vertical lines. On spout, incised details outlining it and indicating "eyes" and "nostrils" (fig. 16).

Lit.: Sotheby's 16.4.1985, lot 28.

V.IVa. Keir Collection; n. p.; white bronze; h. 13 cm, h. with thumbpiece 14.5 cm, diam. mouth 3.5 cm, diam. base 4.0 cm.

Slender, eight-sided pear-shaped body with each facet ending in a lobe above the lower body section; very low foot with flat base plate; small double rib below open beak-shaped spout; curved angular handle terminates below in three-lobed, profiled half-palmette; thumbpiece, stylized bird figure. Undecorated (fig. 17).

Lit.: Fehérvári 1976, p. 31, p. 36 no. 9, pl. 3c no. 9.

V.IVb. Sotheby's 19.10.83, lot 24; n. p.; bronze; h. 12 cm.

Form virtually identical to V.IVa, but slightly longer spout; arched handle terminates in three-lobed half-palmette; thumbpiece, stylized bird. Undecorated (fig. 18).

Lit.: Sotheby's 19.10.83, lot 24.

V.V. Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe 1960-18; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; handle and foot soldered on; h. 21 cm, diam. base 5.2 cm, diam. mouth 4.6 cm.

Form as V.I, but faceted neck with oval cavities set into lower part of each facet; low, slightly splayed foot; open pointed spout with cusped edges (recalling the spout profiles of V.III and V.IV); S-shaped, rounded handle surmounts mouth slightly and adjoins lower body; lower handle section with superposed grooves; single grooves on upper handle; thumbpiece, rounded knob on low cylindrical base. Around lower body, stylized scrollwork; around lower neck, double band with interspersed guilloche designs; on sides of spout, enigmatic abstract design (fig. 19).

Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 631 no. A/2/g/1, fig. 30.



Plate 1
ICAW 2/1. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 18 cm
(West Berlin, Islamic Museum, inv. no. I.5699).

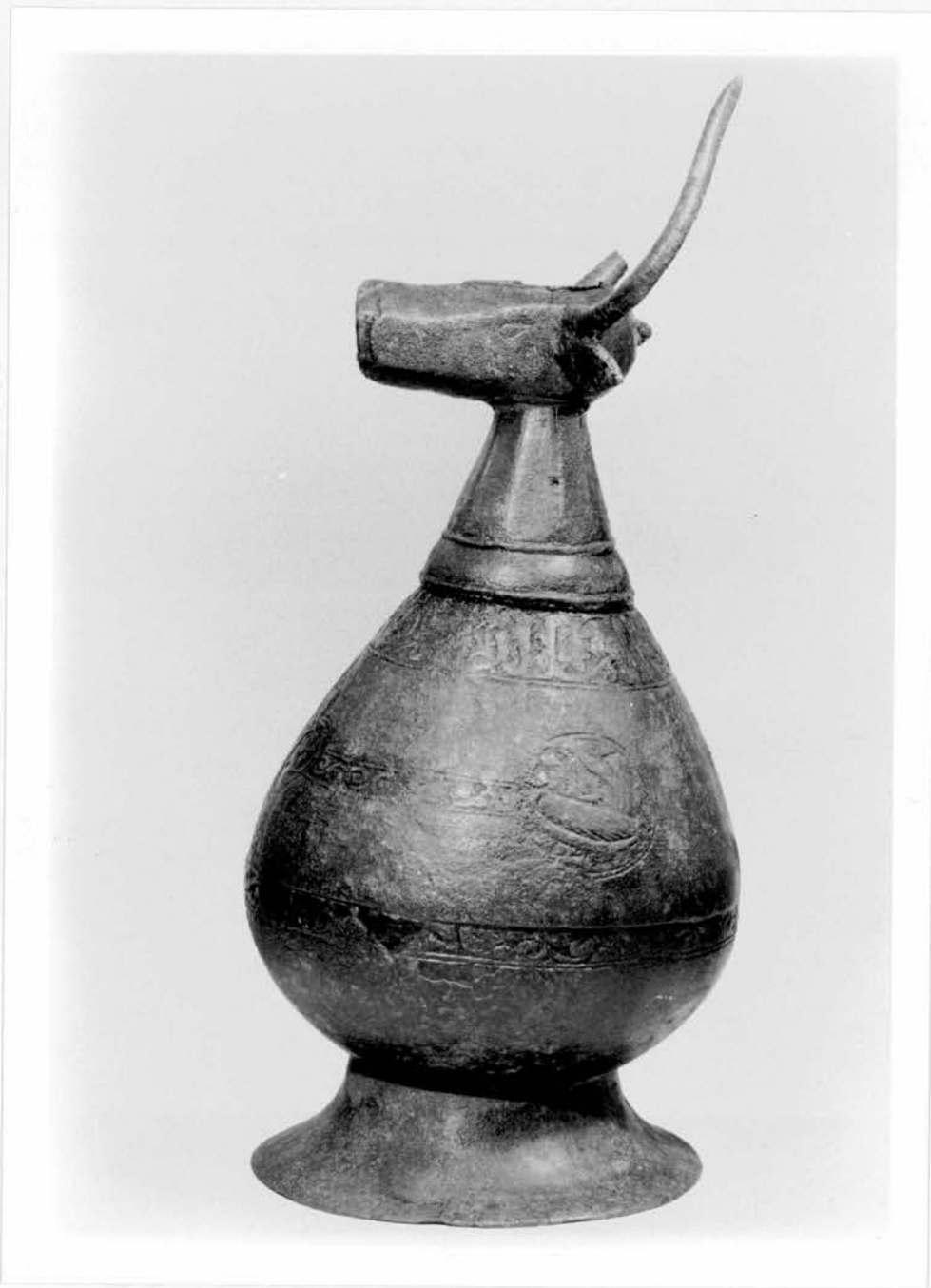


Plate 2
ICAW 2/11L. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 31 cm
(East Berlin, Islamic Museum, inv. no. I.7013).

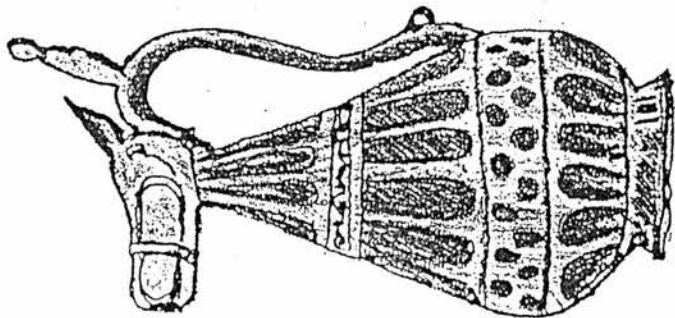


FIG. 1
ICAW 2/2. Cast Bronze Ewer. Dimensions unknown
(Frankfurt, Motamed Collection).

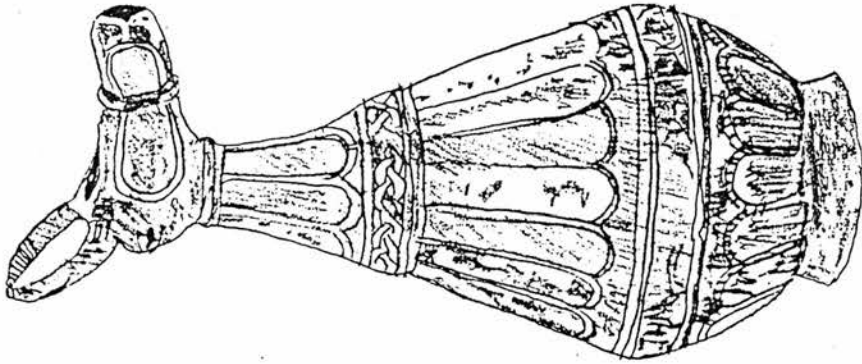


FIG. 2
ICAW 2/3. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 19 cm
(Sotheby's 12.10.81, lot 58).

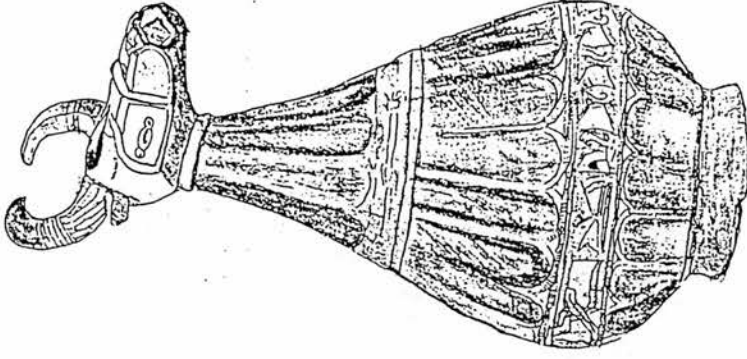


FIG. 3
ICAW 2/4. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 20.5 cm
(Paris, Louvre, inv. no. AO 6101).



FIG. 4

ICAW 2/5. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 15.2 cm
(West Berlin, Islamic Museum, inv. no. I.6177).

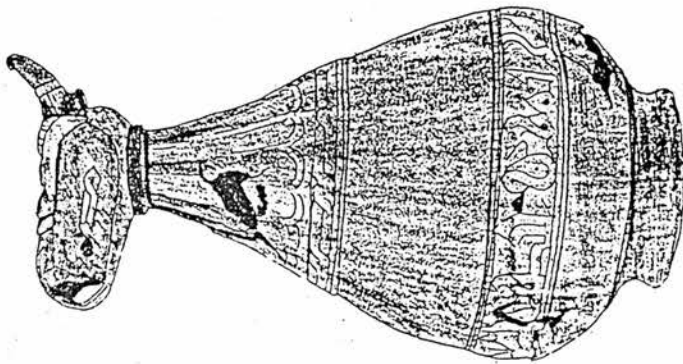


FIG. 5
ICAW 2/6. Ewer of Cast Quaternary Alloy,
h. 15.5 cm (Paris, Louvre, inv. no. AA 60).

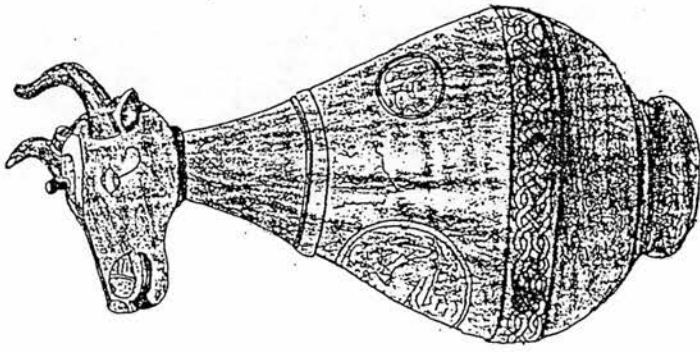


FIG. 6
ICAW 2/7. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 19 cm
(London, V & A, inv. no. M 107-1945).



FIG. 7
ICAW 2/10L. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 38 cm
(Chicago, Art Institute).

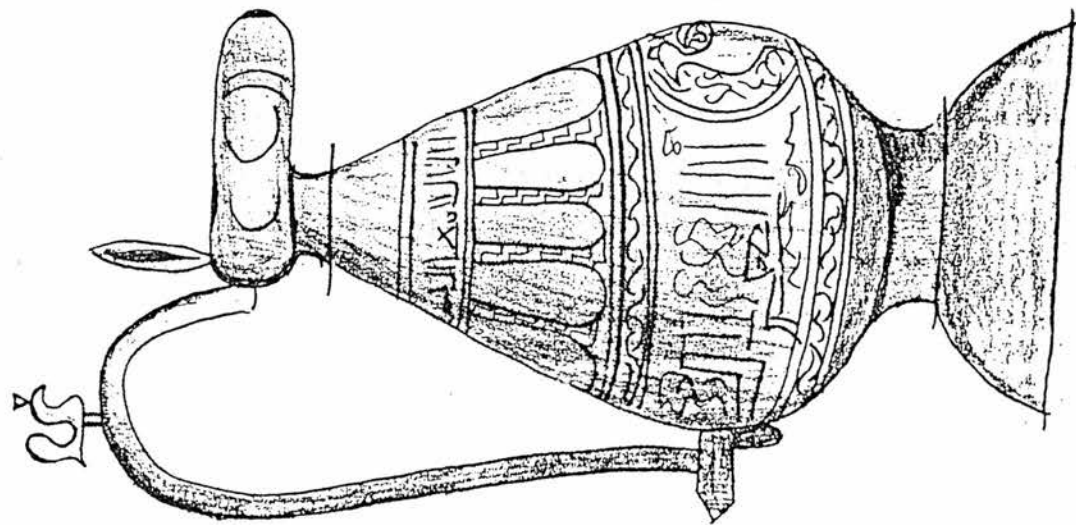


FIG. 8
ICAW 2/12L. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 26.5 cm
(Frankfurt, Private Collection).

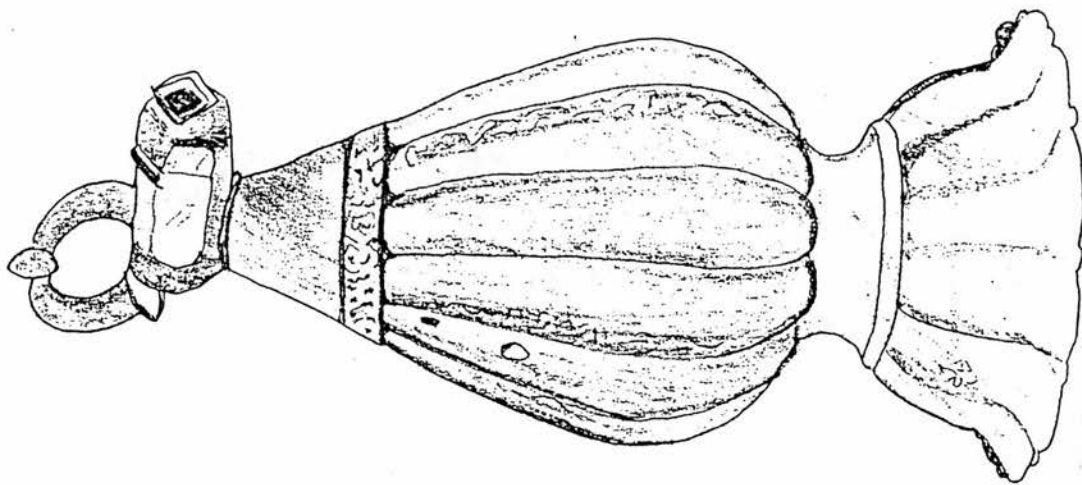


FIG. 9
ICAW 2/13L. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 26.5 cm
(London, British Museum, inv. no. 1969, 1-13, 1).

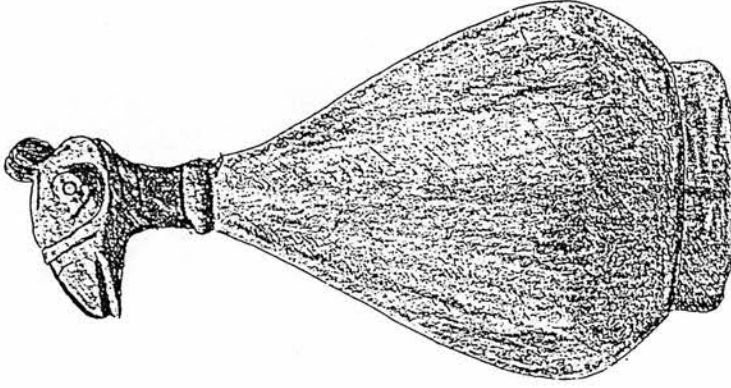


FIG. 11
ICAW 2/V.2. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 6.4 cm
(Munich. Museum für Völkerkunde. inv. no. 31-2-3).

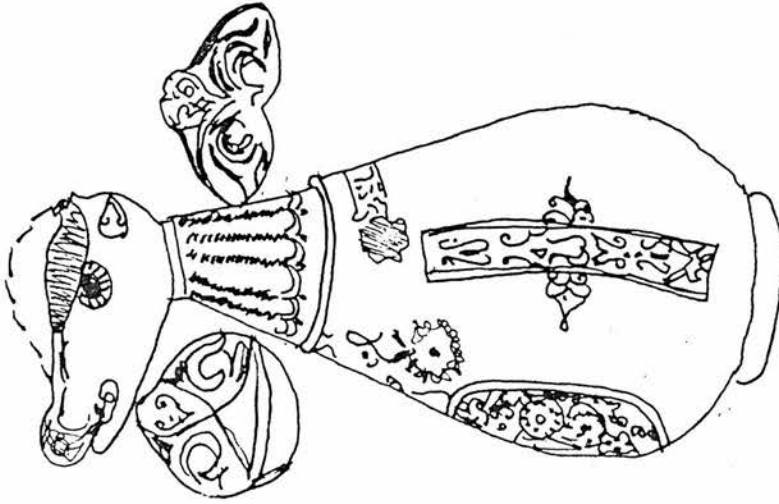


FIG. 10
ICAW 2/V.1. Cast Bronze Ewer. Dimensions unknown
(Location unknown; after Esin 1980, pl. C/b).

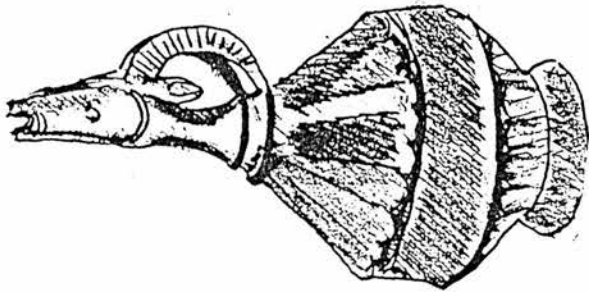


FIG. 12
ICAW 2/V.4. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 16.5 cm
(Hotel Druouot Rive Gauche 16./17.11.1978, lot 276).

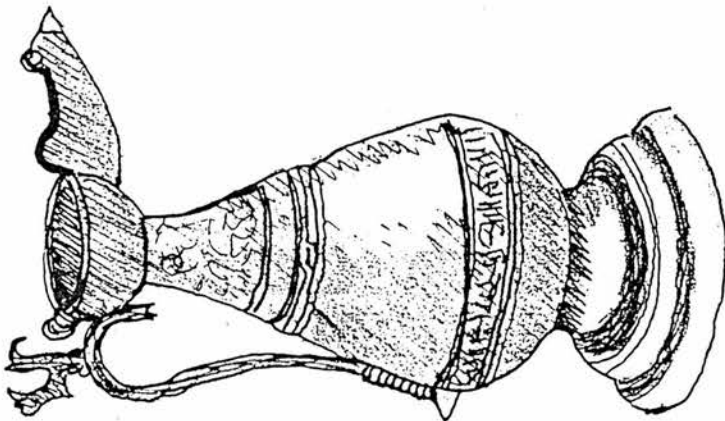


FIG. 13
ICAW 2/V.1. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 21 cm
(London, Keir Collection).

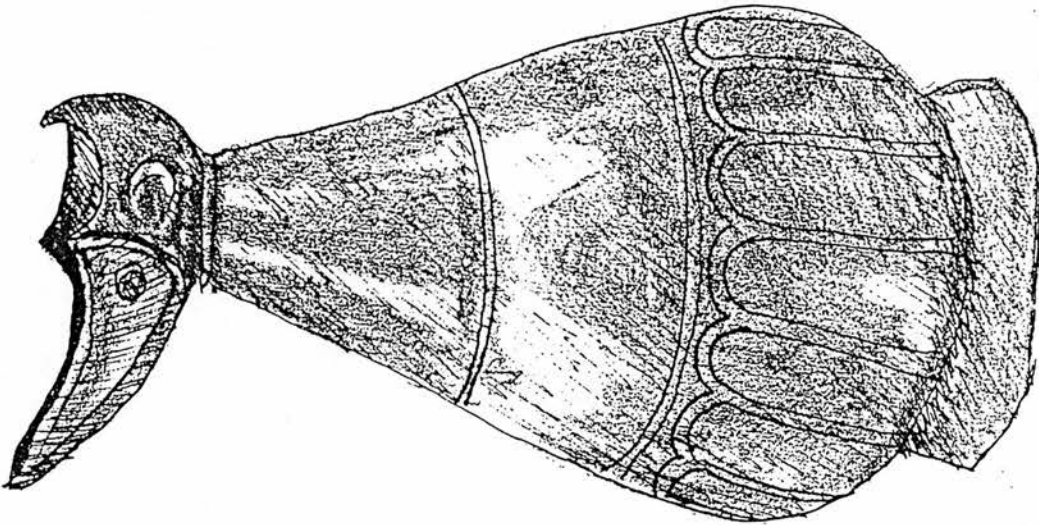


FIG. 14
ICAW 2/V.II. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 21.5 cm
(Beirut, Private Collection).

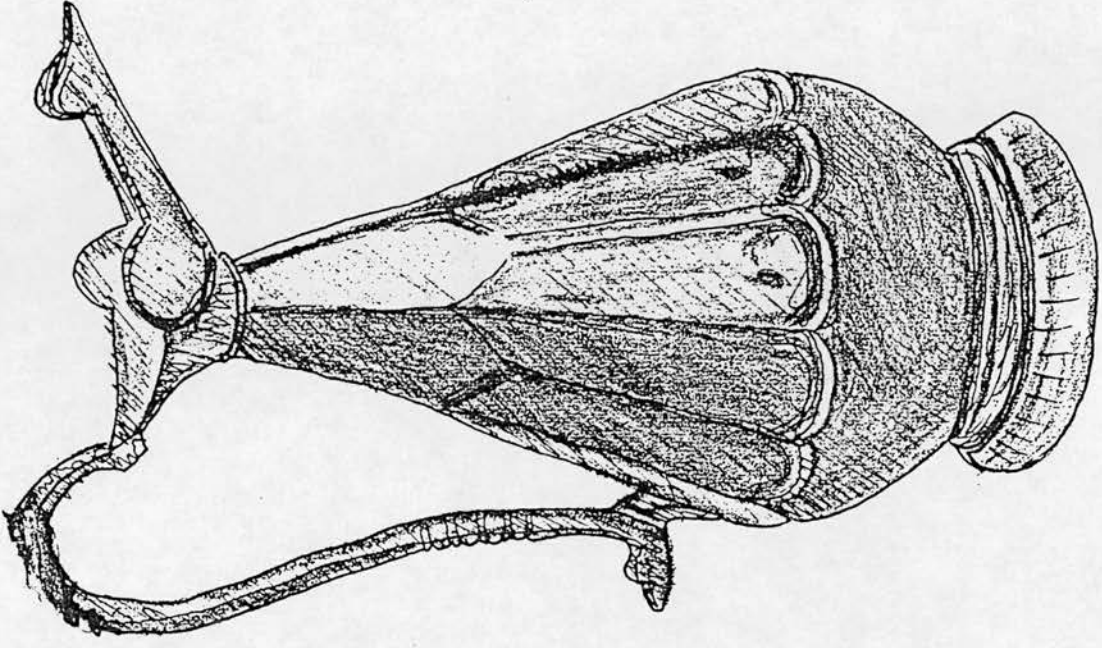


FIG. 16
ICAW 2/V.IV. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 19.1 cm
(Sotheby's 16.4.85, lot 28).

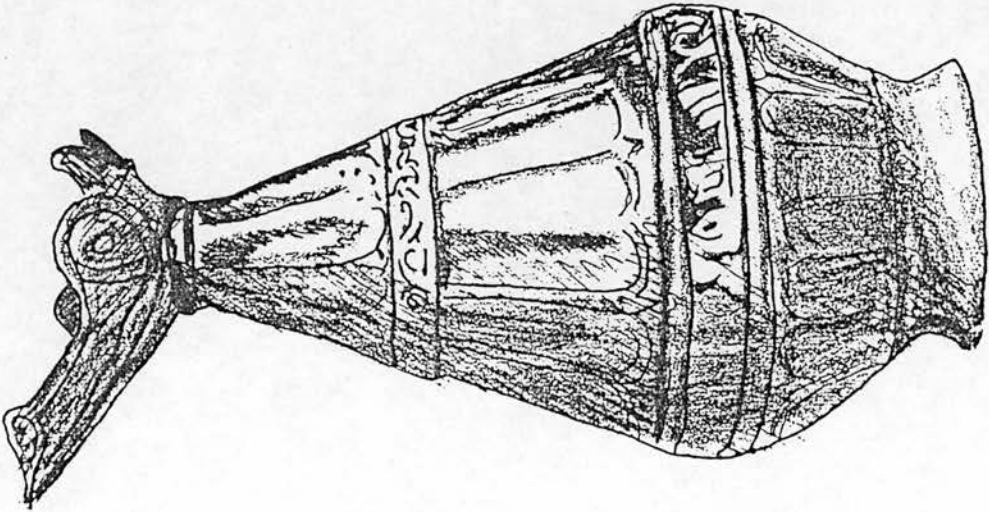


FIG. 15
ICAW 2/V.III. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 13.3 cm
(London, British Museum, inv. no. 1956.7-26.1).

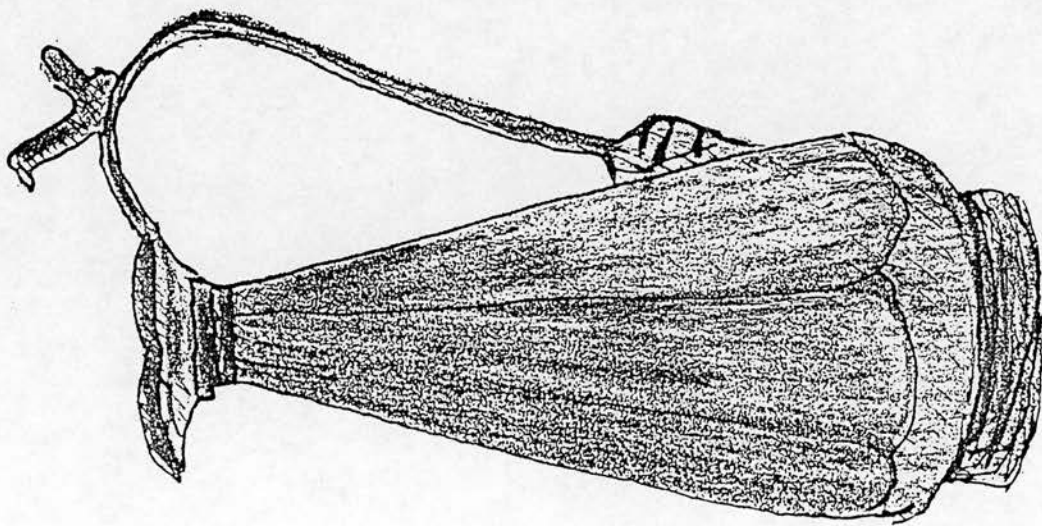


FIG. 17
ICAW 2/V. IV a. White Bronze Ewer, h. 13 cm
(London, Keir Collection).

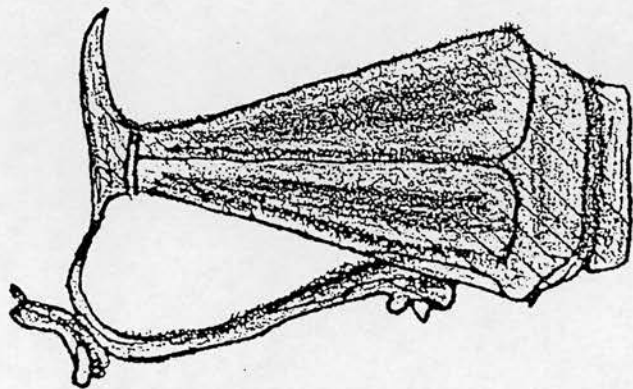


FIG. 18
ICAW 2/V. IV b. Bronze Ewer, h. 12 cm
(Sotheby's 19.10.83, lot 24).

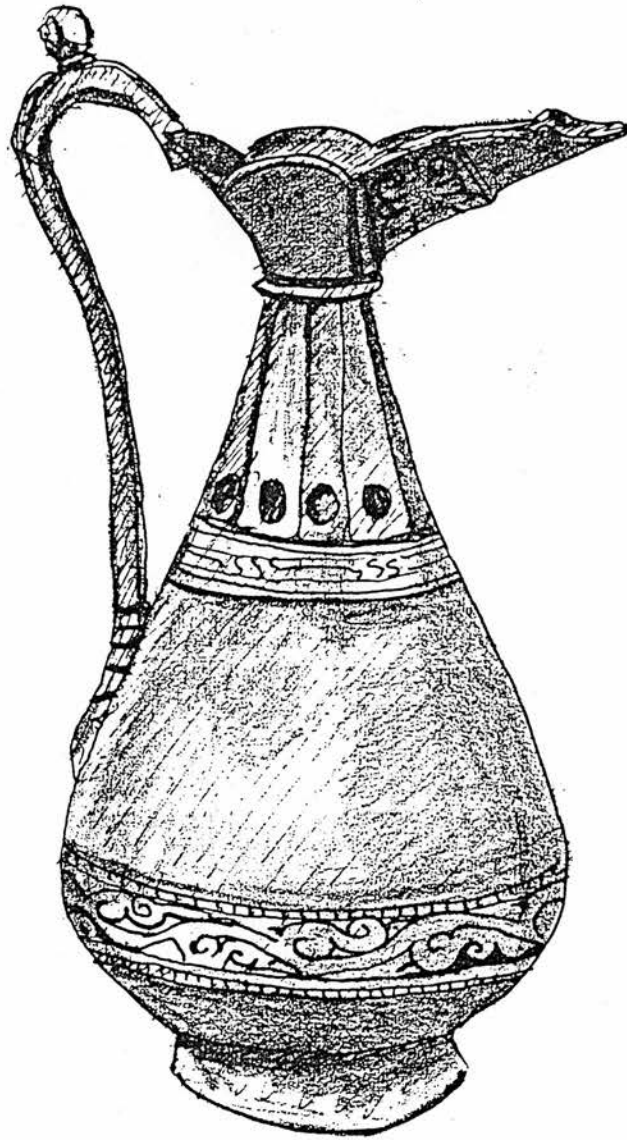


FIG. 19

ICAW 2/V.V. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 21 cm

(Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, inv. no. 1960-18).



FIG. 20
Bull-shaped Terracotta Vessel from Cyprus. Discovered in a Grave in Ugarit (modern Syria). 16th-14th Century B.C.

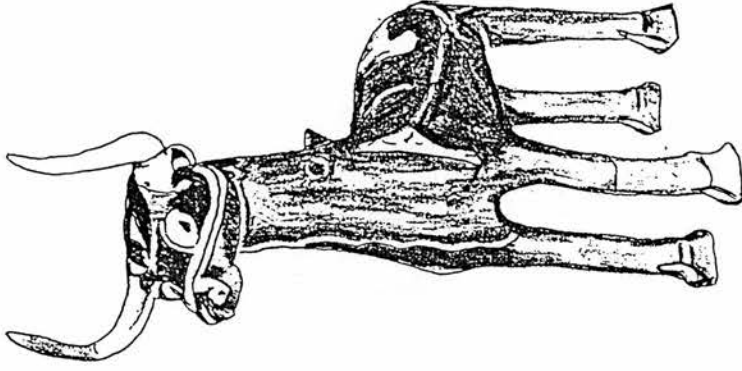


FIG. 21
Bull-shaped Vessel from Bogazköy. Painted and Burnished Clay. 17th/16th Century B.C.

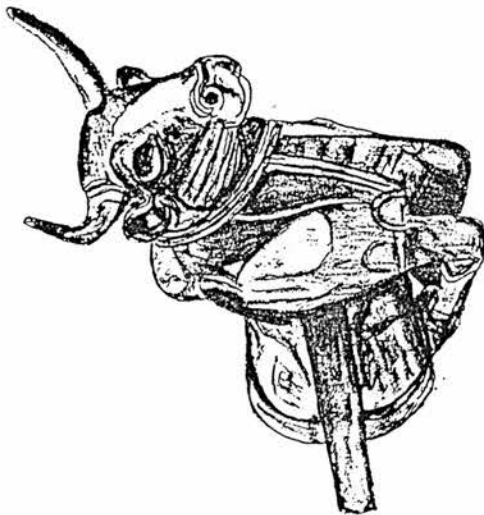


FIG. 22
Silver Cup in the Shape of a Kneeling Bull.
Turkey, 15th/14th Century B.C.

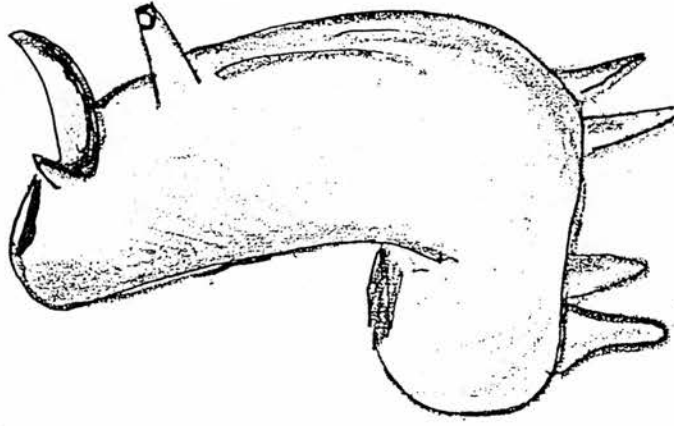


FIG. 23
"Amlash" Bull Vessel made of Clay.
North-Western Iran, 2nd mill. B.C.

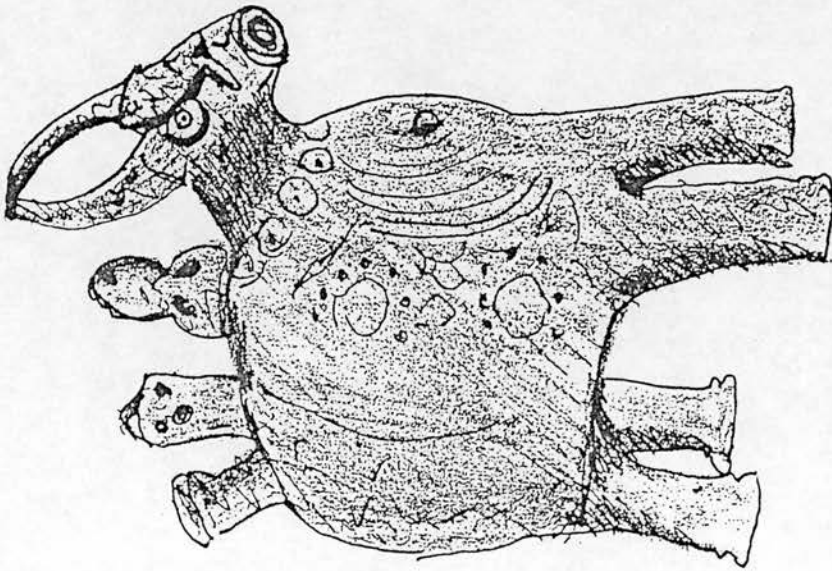


FIG. 24
Islamic Bull-Shaped Pottery Vessel.
Iran (?), 10th-12th Century A.D.

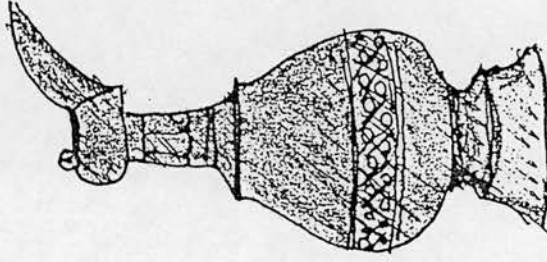


FIG. 25
Cast Bronze Ewer (ICAW 5/7), probably from Transoxiana
or North-Eastern Iran. 11th/12th Century A.D.



FIG. 26

Cast Bronze Ewer (ICAW 4/V.2/3). Eastern Iran
or Modern Afghānistān, 10th-12th Century A.D.

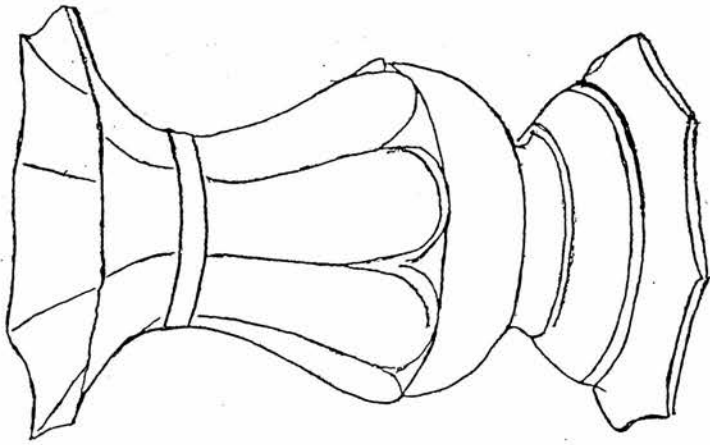


FIG. 27
Cast Bronze Vase. Iran, 12th/13th Century A.D.

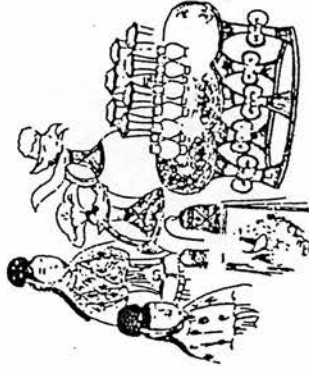


FIG. 28
Mural found among the ruins of Kotcho, the Ancient Royal Residence of the Uigur Turks (after Esin 1980, pl. LXXXVI/d).

Chapter 13

Ewer Type ICAW 3: Cast Bronze Ewers with Pear-shaped Body on Low Foot and Oil-lamp Spout

The bronze ewers assembled in this category are clearly distinguished from other Islamic ewer types by their peculiar spout, which closely resembles a certain variety of contemporary Iranian oil-lamp current in the 10th-11th centuries A.D.

1. General Description

The ewers were given a pear-shaped body, which varies in appearance. In two cases it is comparatively slender (cat. nos. 1, 2; figs. 1-2), but mostly it tends to be bulbous (cat. nos. 6, 9-14; figs. 5, 8-13), in some cases additionally widening out considerably near the base (cat. nos. 3-5, 7, 8, 15-18; pl. 1, figs. 3-4, 6-7, 14-17). The bodies rest on wide foot-rings, which are either low (cat. nos. 1-4; figs. 1-2, pl. 1, fig. 3; stepped in the case of no. 18; fig. 17) or high (cat. nos. 5-17; figs. 4-16) and mostly splayed to a varying degree. Above, the base of the conical and sometimes faceted (cat. nos. 3, 12; pl. 1, fig. 11) neck is emphasised by various means. On ewer 1 (fig. 1) two superposed bands with strongly projecting ridges mark this area. On ewer 2 (fig. 2) this treatment recurs, but in a much more subtle way, with two bands bordered by narrow horizontal lines, which here do not project to interrupt visually the vessel's otherwise fluent profile. On ewers 4 & 5 (figs. 3-4) a flat projecting collar surrounds the lower neck. Most common on this part of the body, however, is a broad band or collar with thin ridges above and below, which project from neck and body to a varying degree (cat. nos. 6-18; figs. 5-17).

The neck can be squat and conical with straight sides (cat. nos. 1, 2, 16; figs. 1-2, 15) or, in most cases, more or less elongated with waisted sides. Above,

it terminates in an angular ridge of varying width, which receives the spout. This, as has been mentioned before, is fashioned to resemble closely a popular type of domestic Iranian oil lamp popular in the 10th - 11th centuries. Originally, the apertures of these spouts were all lidded, but many pieces have now lost their cover (cat. nos. 2-4, 6, 11, 13, 15; fig. 2, pl. 1, figs. 3, 5, 10, 12, 14).

Where lids do remain, they are of four different types. In one case only the cover is conical with waisted sides (cat. no. 1; fig. 1). Ewers 8 & 9 (figs. 7-8) feature a low rounded lid surmounted by a peacock, while the covers of ewers 10 and 16 (figs. 9, 15) are flattened with abstract grooving on top. In most cases, however, the lid is fashioned as a feline mask, executed with varying degrees of naturalism and artistic detail (cat. nos. 5, 7, 12, 14[?], 18[?]; figs. 4, 6, 11, 13, 17).¹

Finally, an array of different handle forms can be observed on the ewers in this group. Three vessels (cat. nos. 4, 14, 18; figs. 3, 13, 17) feature a handle that is rendered as an elongated feline, a treatment also to be found on several other early Islamic ewers.² More often, the handle is flattened and S-shaped with its lower termination linked to the body by a bridging element of varying elaboration (cat. nos. 7, 8[?], 9, 12, 16, 17; figs. 6-8, 11, 15-16). The treatment of the handle attached to ewer 13 (fig. 12) presents a much simplified version of the preceding form. Ewers 5 and 11 (figs. 4, 10) feature a very flat and virtually straight handle, while that of ewer 3 (pl. 1) is very broad and of angular section with a rectangular projection in the centre. The handle of ewer 6 (fig. 5) is thick and rounded with superposed indentations in several places. It joins the spout horizontally and is attached to the body below with its lower termination bending outwards. Finally, ewer 10 (fig. 9) displays a handle form undoubtedly adopted from another

¹ Allan mentions in his thesis that this form of lid is similar to that found on his ewer A/2/a/5 (MW2/1 in this thesis); cf. Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 218.

² Cf. ewers A/1/b/1 and A/1/b/2 in Allan's thesis (MW3/I & II in this thesis); *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 218.

contemporary ewer type current in Transoxiana (cf. ewer type ICAW 5). Ewers 1, 2 and 15 (figs. 1, 2, 14) have lost their handles.

In some cases the handles are surmounted by thumbpieces, mainly rendered as birds or peacocks (cat. nos 5, 8, 11-13; figs. 4, 7, 10-12), but palmette leaves (cat. nos. 7, 19; fig. 6) and stylized quadrupeds (cat. no. 16; fig. 15) do also occur.³

Most remarkable is the profile of ewer V.1/1 (fig. 18). It was included here mainly because of its "oil lamp" spout, which however is of a form different from those on the other pieces. The ewer's profile, an inverted pear-shaped body on a low splayed foot with tall conical neck and perfectly horizontal rather than upwards bending spout, remains unparalleled so far, and the obliquely set rows of relief diamonds with incised stars on the body are also unique to this group.

1.1. Manufacturing Technique

The ewers, which vary from 14.8 cm to 28 cm in height, are cast and were probably assembled from a number of individual components, i. e. the body, base plate, neck, spout and handle.⁴ Indications for this manufacturing process can be found on several pieces in this group. Thus, the neck of ewer 11 (fig. 10) was obviously made separately and joined onto the body. On ewer 15 (fig. 14) a clear joint appears between neck and body, and on ewer 17 (fig. 16) the base plate is a replacement, which implies that the lost one must have been soldered onto the foot originally.⁵

³ This ewer type was briefly discussed by Allan; *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 217-8.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 217.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 217-8.

2. Decoration

All the ewers in this category carry more or less extensive incised decoration, which in many cases is additionally enhanced by copper and sometimes silver inlay. In a few cases the ornamentation is extremely modest and only incised.

Thus, ewers 1 and 7 (figs. 1, 6) display only a simple roundel on the front of the body, leaving its remaining areas completely plain.⁶ Ewer 13 (fig. 12) displays two small lateral roundels with floriated wing motifs on the upper body. In the case of ewer 4 (fig. 3) the ornamentation of the body has been extended to involve its sides, which are occupied by large roundels with abstracted floral motifs identical to the central one displayed on the façade of the body.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, the body has been even more extensively decorated, retaining, however, in all but two cases (cat. no. 16, 18[?]; figs. 15, 17) a central medallion or cartouche as the main focus. Most typically, this motif - which is either filled with a bird (cat. nos. 6, 8, 10, 11, 15; figs. 5, 7, 9, 10, 14) or an interlacing floral design (cat. nos. 2, 5, 12, 14; figs. 2, 4, 11, 13) - is placed at the centre of a decorative system, which displays bands, panels, roundels and vase motifs in two or three superposed horizontal zones separated by areas of plain surface. In some cases (cat. nos. 8, 9; figs. 7-8) the central element is flanked by Kufic panels above and in the centre. These can be interrupted in either zone by small tear-shaped or round cartouches.

Typically, this decorative layout is terminated by a narrow guilloche band around the lower body. On ewers 10 and 11 (figs. 9-10) the upper Kufic panels, here with central crescents (cat. no. 11; fig. 10) or intermediate floral roundels (cat. no. 10; fig. 9), and the guilloche around the lower body are retained. The central

⁶ Ewer 18, to judge by its description, may display a similar central ornament, but no further comments could be made for lack of a photograph.

zone to either side of the cartouche, however, is occupied by large panels with a system of broadly outlined, interlacing circles filled with palmette motifs.⁷

On ewers 5 and 12 (figs. 4, 11) the central floral cartouche is flanked above by benedictory naskhi panels with rosettes on the outside, and in the centre by individual vase motifs, which in the case of no. 5 (fig. 4) are followed towards the back by panels containing a walking sphinx. On ewer 14 (fig. 13) the naskhi panels and the individual vases below also occur, but the decoration is here further enriched by a narrow Kufic panel around the lower body. The small naskhi inscription running across the central body naming the owner was, according to Melikian-Chirvani, probably not part of the original design and was added after the vessel's completion, a suggestion based on the observation that the first section of the inscription is laid out in an awkward fashion.⁸

The same basic decorative scheme as that on no. 14 (fig. 13) can also be observed on ewer 3 (pl. 1), but here it is executed in a much more lavish style. Thus, the naskhi letters above have human heads, and the vase motifs are linked to the central cartouche and an additional roundel containing a winged quadruped by a narrow scrolling band. Further towards the back, the remaining space is occupied by panels containing an elongated dog. The maker's signature was applied above the dog panels without, however, forming an integral part of the original decorative layout.

A similar decorative layout adorns ewer 2 (fig. 2). Here, however, the vase motifs do not appear and the lateral roundels, here filled with interlaced scrollwork, are directly linked with the central medallion and a corresponding cartouche, designating the handle attachment area diametrically opposite, by panels with animal scenes. A Kufic inscription naming the owner and the maker was applied on either side of the central cartouche and below the panels flanking it.

⁷ It is worth mentioning here that ewer 11 in addition features a scrolling band with bird-head terminations below the handle.

⁸ Cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 75.

Finally, yet another version of the above-mentioned decorative scheme with naskhi panels above and a narrow Kufic band below is displayed on ewer 17 (fig. 16). Here, the central zone features three knotted medallions with abstracted intertwined bird pairs on the front and the sides, leaving the remaining surface entirely plain, apart from the aesthetically pleasing layout of the owner's name and the date of the vessel's manufacture, disposed in sections between the medallions.⁹

The decorative layout adopted on ewer 6 (fig. 5) is less homogeneous. Thus, rather than achieving a well-balanced distribution of the various individual motifs, which results in an equal consideration of all surface areas, there is a clear emphasis on the lower body. Here, a comparatively small bird cartouche is flanked by animal panels, vase motifs and large floral crescent motifs, all disposed around the most bulbous area of the body, just above a narrow guilloche band. The upper body, on the other hand, was apparently left plain, apart from a small floral roundel and a Kufic panel on its sides.¹⁰

A slightly more unusual combination of decorative elements can also be observed on ewer 18 (fig. 17), where large copper-inlaid sphinxes are displayed against the plain surface of the frontal body, flanked by the familiar vase motifs and somewhat rarer harpy roundels. Above, as on the preceding ewer, the incised inscription panels and roundels were shifted to the body's sides, apparently leaving the centre free for a large copper-inlaid inscription. Below, the arcading recalls a similar panel on ewers 15 and 16 (figs. 14, 15).

Finally, on ewer 15 (fig. 14), the superposed decorative zones flanking the central cartouche have been increased to four, and more emphasis is given to floral rather than zoomorphic and epigraphic elements. Thus, three of the zones either display scrollwork or at least evoke floral detail in the case of the inverted arcading

⁹ On this vessel, the position of the signature may have been considered when the decorative layout was planned. In any case, it forms a much more integral part of the ornamentation than is the case on ewers 2, 3 and 14; cf. note 8.

¹⁰ The entry in Christie's auction catalogue regarding this ewer mentions copper-inlaid ciphers above the cartouche, tentatively identifying them as a date. I was not able to comment on this observation on the basis of the photograph available to me.

on the lower body, while in addition a floral roundel accompanies the Kufic panel in the second decorative zone. A very unusual motif occurs below the handle attachment, which displays a curved guilloche band terminating in two dragon heads. A similar motif, though much smaller in scale and with bird- rather than dragon-heads, occurs on ewer 16 (fig. 15). On this piece, the above-mentioned element serves to separate three identical decorative sections. These in their turn are again made up of three horizontal, though much curtailed, zones with Kufic above, floral roundels flanking an angular panel in the centre and a narrow guilloche below, a combination which appears like an abbreviated version of the decorative layout encountered on ewers 8 and 9 (figs. 7, 8).

Apart from the bodies of the ewers, the feet, necks and spout sections also receive various forms of decorative enhancement. Inverted arcading, which is perhaps meant to evoke faceting, is one popular treatment for the foot (cat. nos. 6, 9, 11, 16; figs. 5, 8, 10, 15), while in one case (cat. no. 3; pl. 1) a panel of real facets with incised outlines and borders runs around the centre of the foot. In other cases a band of benedictory Kufic was chosen to enhance the foot, usually interrupted by floral roundels or crescent motifs (cat. nos. 5, 8, 10; figs. 4, 7, 9). In one case quadrupeds replaced the epigraphy, again alternating with ornamental roundels (cat. no. 14; fig. 13). Finally, scrollwork was chosen for the feet of ewers 15 & 17 (figs. 14, 16).

On the neck decorative elements could cover the collar as well as the lower and central parts. The collar and lower neck, if decorated, received guilloche (cat. nos. 14, 15; figs. 13-14) and scrolling bands (cat. nos. 2, 5, 14, V.1/1; figs. 1, 4, 18), while the central section was adorned by pseudo-faceting (cat. nos. 2, 13; figs. 2, 12), inverted arcading (cat. nos. 4, 6, 9, 14, 15; figs. 3, 5, 8, 13, 14) or small almond-shaped floral medallions, mostly on a triangular base (cat. nos. 10, 11, 16, 17; figs. 9, 10, 15, 16). In one case, the neck received only a single floral triangle on the front (cat. no. 8; fig. 7), while that of ewer 5 (fig. 4) features a large scrolling panel.

On the spout it was the area below the mouth, its sides and, in a few cases, its under- and upper sides that were decorated. In the overwhelming majority of cases the spout sides received panels of various types of scrollwork or arabesques (cat. nos. 2-7, 10, 11, 13-16, 18; fig. 2, pl. 1, figs. 3-6, 9-10, 12-15, 17). Ewer 17 (fig. 16) alone displays winged quadrupeds in this area, set against a scrolling background. The sections below the mouth are only occasionally filled - with either floral or ornithomorphic roundels (cat. nos. 1-3; figs. 1-2, pl. 1) or in one case (cat. no. 12; fig. 11) with individual rosettes.

Finally, ewer V.1/1 (fig. 18) features a knot pattern and a hollowed-out roundel here. On rare occasions the underside of the spout can also be ornamented, as in the case of ewer 3 (pl. 1), which displays a curious human face. On ewers 17 & V.1/1 (figs. 16, 18) it is the upper side that receives additional enhancement, the former with floral, the latter with abstract almond-shaped motifs.

3. Origin of Ewer Type

To judge from the objects extant today, it appears that this type occurred for the first time around the late 10th century A.D. Before that no typological predecessors which could have inspired such an unusual vessel profile can at present be put forward, neither among earlier Islamic nor pre-Islamic objects known today. Accordingly, it seems most likely, as has indeed been suggested before, that the type discussed here was developed by eastern Iranian metalworkers at the time, who were also famous for the execution of other unusual vessel types, such as animal-headed ewers and various containers with obliquely rising beak spouts.¹¹

The reason for designing this new ewer type in addition to the considerable variety of pouring vessels already in use by the 10th century is unknown. However, it is most likely that it was a concrete practical need rather than merely artistic fancy

¹¹ Allan 1986, p. 126.

which led contemporary metalworkers to produce this innovative vessel form. Their motives will be considered below when discussing the function of this ewer type.

4. Provenance and Date

Apart from ewer 7 (fig. 6), which was excavated at Ribāt-i Sharaf in Khurasan, none of the ewers assembled in this group has a known provenance. In fact most of them seem to have appeared on the art market at irregular intervals rather than stemming from a known archaeological site.

However, an analysis of their manufacturing technique, their body shape and their decoration provides sufficient evidence to establish the general region of their original manufacture and a general chronological framework for them in relation to other early Islamic metalwork.

To start with the technical aspect of their manufacture, the fact that the pieces all seem to have been assembled from several cast components relates this group to another category of Islamic bronze ewers current in Transoxiana and north-eastern Iran during the 10th - 12th centuries (ewer type ICAW 5). Moreover, the body profile of the ewers discussed here, and particularly their peculiar spout type, provide further links with ewers and other metal objects from these areas.

Thus, Melikian-Chirvani, in discussing ewer 1 (fig. 1), compared the body shape and splayed foot of this piece to that of a beak-spouted ewer of composite shape coming from Shahrīstān (cf. ewer type ICAW 5/5; fig. 19).¹² A second piece of this group - ewer 10 (fig. 9) - displays yet another structural element related to the Transoxanian group. This is the handle. The application of this particular handle type to the ewer is worth noting, as apparently it was not widely popular but restricted nearly exclusively to the Transoxanian ewers mentioned above.

¹² Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 201.

The most significant detail affecting the body profile of the ewers examined here is, however, the extraordinary "oil lamp" spout. Its shape is directly comparable to one particular lamp form current in 10th/11th-century eastern Iran and Sīstān, where several pieces have come to light in Maimāna and Ghazna (fig. 20).¹³ The feline lids covering several of the ewers' spouts are likewise borrowed from the structural repertoire of the contemporary oil lamp.¹⁴

To sum up, it already emerges from the examination of the ewers' manufacturing technique and individual structural details of their profile that this group shows certain typological links with other bronze objects current mainly in 10th/11th-century-Transoxiana and eastern Iran. A closer look at the decorative elements chosen to enhance the pieces' surface may additionally help to define their geographical provenance and dating.

To start with the merely incised pieces, Melikian-Chirvani related the small lateral roundels with three abstract bilobed palmettes on the spout of ewer 1 (fig. 1) to a very similar motif encountered on the body of another bronze ewer acquired in Ghazna and dated to the 10th/11th century.¹⁵ The frontal roundel with geometric interlace, a motif also applied in similar fashion on the ewer from Ghazna, may further refer the piece to eastern Iran, as, according to Melikian-Chirvani, the emphasis of an object's façade by various decorative devices seems to have been a decorative technique in metalwork, which was particularly popular in this region during the 9th - 11th centuries.¹⁶ Ewer 7 (fig. 6), which likewise displays only a round medallion on its front, was excavated at Ribāt-i Sharaf in Khurāsān. It has, however, a somewhat more sophisticated profile than ewer 1 (fig. 1), and reveals great care in the execution of the feline lid as well as the handle and its palmette

¹³ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 217, 270; cf. also Negmatov and Khmel'nitzky 1966, pl. XXIV; Mortimer Rice and Rowland 1971, pl. 199; Scerrato 1964, pl. XI figs. 23a-b, 24.

¹⁴ Cf. Fehérvári and Safadi 1981, p. 100 no. 42.

¹⁵ This particular piece can actually be seen as an intermediate version of both types. It shares the composite body and foot, the manner in which the body is decorated and the layout of the craftsman's signature with ewer type ICAW 5, while displaying a spout that is more closely related to the "oil lamp" spouts of the category discussed here; cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 201.

¹⁶ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 28.

thumbpiece. Accordingly, a slightly later dating than that of no. 1 (fig. 1), i. e. perhaps the late 11th century could be suggested.¹⁷

The style of scrollwork enhancing the side of the spout on ewer 13 (fig. 12) may suggest an early 12th-century dating for this piece¹⁸ and the wing-like palmette design in the small roundels on the upper body seems to confirm such a dating, as it occurs again in virtually identical form on a cast bronze lion attributed to 11th/12th-century Iran (fig. 21).¹⁹ A similar dating may also be assumed for ewer 4 (fig. 3), although the feline handle is an archaic feature harking back to earlier vessel types.²⁰

Ewers 10 and 11 (figs. 9-10) are closely related by the layout of their decoration and especially by the panel of interlaced circles appearing on both. This motif also occurs on contemporary Iranian lustre ware such as for example on a late 12th-century vase (fig. 22). Here, the design of the interlacing circles is virtually identical to that on ewer 11 (fig. 10) except that it is executed on a larger scale and filled with different ornaments and script.²¹ The interlacing circles on no. 10 (fig. 9), on the other hand, can be paralleled on a 12th/13th-century bucket from Iran, where in addition the split palmette motifs in the interstices are very similar to the filler motifs on the ewer (fig. 23).²² The inscription friezes, either with integral crescent motifs or intermediate floral roundels, are likewise part of the artistic repertoire current in 12th/13th-century Iran.²³

The same attribution applies to ewers 15 and 16 (figs. 14-15) with all their decorative elements belonging to the mainstream artistic repertoire of eastern

¹⁷ Fehérvári and Kiani 1982, p. 341 no. 12, p. 343 fig. 11.

¹⁸ Similar scrollwork forms the background of an inscription on the upper neck of ewer MW4/VI, tentatively dated to the 11th/12th century.

¹⁹ Fehérvári and Safadi 1981, p. 108 no. 48.

²⁰ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 218; Ettinghausen 1972, pp. 9-10.

²¹ Safadi 1978, p. 87 fig. 92.

²² Fehérvári 1976 pp. 80-81 no. 91, pl. 30b, d, no. 91. In book illumination similar interlacing circles can already be observed in the 11th century, as for example on a Qur'ān page, executed in Iraq or Iran in 1092; cf. Lings 1976 p. 18 no. 16, pl. 16; for a similar motif on a 10th/11th-century Khurāsānian jug cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 30 fig. 4; on a 12th-century basin cf. Pope 1938, pl. 1289A; on a 13th-century dish cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 108 fig. 39.

²³ Cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 64 fig. 30, pp. 92-93 no. 25, fig. 25B.

Iranian metalwork at the time.²⁴ More unusual are the curved bands with animal head terminations displayed on both ewers in two different ways. On ewer 15 (fig. 14) a knotted dragon-headed guilloche encloses the lower handle attachment. Such a band occurs in the same position on at least one other ewer which was purchased in Iran and attributed by Fehérvári to the 11th or 12th century (cf. ewer type MW 3/12).²⁵ Its use amidst an otherwise conventional decoration with floral, geometrical and epigraphic elements is enigmatic, and it seems highly likely that it was some specific symbolic or talismanic significance of this motif that justified its inclusion in the ornamentation of the piece.²⁶

The iconographic significance of the much reduced and here bird-headed guilloche crescent on ewer 16 (fig. 15) remains elusive at present, but the profile of the heads appears in very similar fashion on a 10th/11th-century tripod stand preserved in the Kabul Museum as well as on several Iranian incense burners of the same period.²⁷

Apart from the merely incised vessels, there are also vessels in this group which carry additional copper inlay (cat. nos. 6, 8, 9; figs. 5, 7-8), though only to a very limited degree. Mostly, the copper fillets were used to highlight the central or most important aspect of the ewer's ornamentation, as for example on ewer 6 (fig. 5), which apparently shows traces of a copper-inlaid date on its front.²⁸ The remaining decorative details on this piece are incised. The central element of the ewer's decorative layout - a bird medallion flanked by panels with running

²⁴ The scrollwork on the foot of ewer 15 is for example very similar to that on a 12th-century Khurāsānian oil lamp; cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 100-101 no. 31, fig. 31; the split palmette roundels on both ewers can be paralleled on a late 12th/early 13th-century oil lamp from the same region; cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 103-4 no. 34, fig. 34.

²⁵ Fehérvári 1976, no. 50, pl. 14a..

²⁶ Perhaps the motif had magical as well as astrological connotations like the numerous intertwined dragon images encountered in contemporary architecture and minor arts, where the knots in the dragons' bodies were to enchain, according to popular belief, evil spirits and avert any negative astrological influences; cf. Al-Khamis 1990, p. 113.

²⁷ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 34 fig. 9; for the Iranian incense burner with bird-head motifs cf. Montgomery-Wyaux 1978, pl. 10. A similar but much larger band runs around the handle base of ewer 11 as well.

²⁸ This piece will need further attention, as it could neither be determined whether the fragmented ciphers were really part of a date nor whether they were contemporary with the other decoration.

quadrupeds - can be paralleled on a late 12th-/early 13th-century lamp stand base from eastern Iran, though the motifs are executed in a more elaborate fashion.²⁹ The elongated vase motifs on the sides of the ewer, on the other hand, occur for example on a late 12th-century Iranian perfume container (fig. 24).³⁰ Given such ornamental parallels, a late 12th-century dating may be proposed for this piece.

On ewers 8 and perhaps 9 (figs. 7-8) the central medallion - flanked by Kufic inscription panels, floral roundels and guilloche bands - displays a broad copper frame, thus immediately focusing the onlooker's attention on the façade of the object and at the same time highlighting the only animated element of the decoration - a bird in the case of no. 8 (fig. 7). Allan attributed this ewer to 12th-century eastern Iran or Afghānistān, an attribution most probably also applicable in the case of ewer 9 (fig. 8).³¹

Finally, the last ewer with only copper inlay in addition to the incised decoration - no. 18 (fig. 17) - can be dated not only on the basis of its design in general, but particularly by the occurrence of the sphinx motif. According to Baer this image does not seem to appear on Islamic metalwork before the middle of the 12th century and then first on eastern Iranian pieces.³² Accordingly, the later years of the 12th century seem to be the most likely date for this object.

All the remaining pieces of this group (cat. nos. 2, 3, 5, 12, 14, 17; fig. 2, pl. 1, figs. 4, 11, 13, 16) display extensive silver and copper inlay in addition to the incised decoration. In these cases the metal fillets are no longer confined to highlighting one central element of the design. They are rather used to emphasise the outlines of panels and roundels. In addition they now help to distinguish the main ornamental elements such as inscriptions, animals or scrollwork from their background to such a degree that a nearly three-dimensional visual effect is evoked in the eyes of the onlooker.

²⁹ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 59 fig. 16.

³⁰ Berlin 1986, p. 82 no. 112.

³¹ Allan 1986, p. 126 no. 32.

³² Baer 1965, p. 13.

Ewers 2 and 3 (fig. 2, pl. 1), as has been mentioned before, are closely related in their decorative layout. At the same time, however, there are certain details in the execution of the ornamentation of no. 3 (pl. 1) that set it apart from the other piece. Thus, the area below the spout tip of ewer 3 (pl. 1) is enhanced by an enigmatic and to my knowledge so far unparalleled human face with extremely large eyes, perhaps a device to avert the "evil eye".

Furthermore, the clearly demarcated, square terminations of the elongated *hastae* with anthropomorphic heads that characterize the *naskhi* script on this piece are noteworthy. Anthropomorphic script is first attested on a dated piece on the Bobrinsky bucket, dated 1163, and remained popular well into the 13th century.³³ Its existence on this ewer is thus a helpful indicator as to its approximate date. However, usually the heads are inlaid with silver and the fact that the heads in this case are inlaid with copper remains unparalleled at present. Despite the unusual type of inlay for this artistic detail Melikian-Chirvani identified the epigraphic style of both the *naskhi* and the Kufic as well as the style of the decorative elements as belonging to late 12th-century Khurāsān. The geographical attribution of this piece may be even more precisely specified, if one can rely on the reading of its maker's *nisba*, which relates him to Isfara'īn, a town to the north-west of Nīshāpūr.³⁴

An eastern Iranian provenance and 12th-century dating can also be assumed for ewer 2 (fig. 2), to judge by its close stylistic ties with the preceding piece. Its place of origin could perhaps be sought further south, however, keeping in mind that its owner Shaikh Muhammad b. 'Alī carries the *nisba* al-Sijzī, which indicates ties with the area of Sīstān to the south of Khurāsān.³⁵

The attribution of ewer 5 (fig. 4), like that of ewer 18 (fig. 17) discussed above, may again be assigned to late 12th-century eastern Iran because of the

³³ Baer 1983, pp. 202-6; Allan suggested that these human *hastae* may originally have been inspired by secular book illumination; cf. Allan unpubl., p. 7.

³⁴ Allan 1986, p. 126.

³⁵ Paris 1977, pp. 156-7 no. 322. Melikian-Chirvani discusses the potential significance of the *nisbas* on the pieces in this group and finds their evidence inconclusive; cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 75.

occurrence of the sphinx motif on its side as well as the style of the other motifs. Ewer 12 (fig. 11) may be dated similarly, but perhaps slightly later, to judge in particular by the elaborate vase motifs which find parallels on a 12th/13th-century bronze kettle (fig. 25) and on several cylindrical-bodied bronze ewers with large beak-spouts belonging to the same period (cf. ewer type ICAW 6/21-24).³⁶

Ewer 14 (fig. 13) with its compact spout profile and feline handle is somewhat different from the other pieces, and since it was allegedly found in Hamadan this may perhaps hint at a different origin for this object. On the other hand, however, the decoration corresponds well with the artistic conventions encountered on 12th/13th-century metalwork from Khurāsān.³⁷ In addition, the owner mentioned in the signature flanking the central cartouche is one 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Tāhir al-adīb al-Sijzī, i. e. the Sīstāni man of letters - an additional link between the object and a region of eastern Iran.³⁸

Ewer 17 (fig. 16), according to the inscription around the central body, was made for 'Uthmān b. Sulaymān al-Nakhjavānī in 1190-1 A.D., and thus requires no further examination as to its dating. Its decoration connects it clearly with the preceding pieces and thus justifies its attribution to the same region. In this context the fact that the owner has a *nisba* relating him to the town of Nakhjavān in north-western Iran is interesting, as it may indicate that the vessels under discussion were enough in demand to be exported to areas far away from their original centre of manufacture.³⁹

³⁶ Pope 1938, pl. 1292A. This piece is now in the Keir Collection in London; cf. Fehérvári 1976, p. 80 no. 90, pl. 30a no. 90.

³⁷ Allan, in dealing with this piece, pointed to the curious manner in which an ogival central cartouche and two vase motifs were chosen to occupy the spaces between the horizontal inscription bands, as neither seems to be an appropriate filler for an otherwise horizontally orientated design. He concluded that such motifs must have been borrowed from another medium, most probably 11th/12th-century book illumination, where very similar cartouches and vase motifs can be observed; cf. Allan unpubl., p. 2.

³⁸ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 75-6.

³⁹ Here again (according to Allan) some of the motifs, such as the three cusped and knotted roundels with intertwining birds which enhance the ewer's body counteract the object's rotundity and the much more appropriate horizontal inscription panels. Again, the source for such medallions and their knotted terminations can be related to comparable elements appearing in secular and religious book illumination of the 11th century; cf. Allan unpubl., p. 2. In his article Allan presents several other aspects of Seljuq metalwork

Finally, the relief ornamentation of ewer V.1/1 (fig. 18) is, as has been mentioned before, quite unique at present, and an attribution on this basis is therefore virtually impossible. Similar relief lozenges with incised stars do, however, occur on the sides of a stirrup from Ghazna datable perhaps to the late 10th/11th century (fig. 26).⁴⁰

To sum up, the method of construction, the peculiar spout design and the various decorative details relate the vessels of this category to objects current in Transoxiana and various areas of eastern and north-eastern Iran from the 10th to the 13th century. During that time ewers of this type were executed to varying standards, including simple pieces with only modest incised ornamentation, examples with incised and copper-inlaid motifs and those with more extensive decorative layouts enhanced by copper as well as silver inlay.

5. Function

At present, the original use of the objects discussed here remains entirely elusive, and it seems surprising, given their enigmatic shape, that no scholar has as yet attempted a functional analysis of this type.

Firstly, it is necessary to enquire into the reason that led the creator of this type to combine a traditional ovoid ewer body with a lamp body and spout, a design which until now has been attributed somewhat uncritically only to the inspired versatility of eastern Iranian metalworkers at the time. However, it seems unlikely from a practical point of view that the shape was developed merely as a result of the

ornamentation - apart from individual motifs - which are clearly related to contemporary book illumination, such as overall patterns and background designs as well as perhaps the use of human-headed *hastae* in epigraphy. I would like to add another connection between both media here, which, if confirmed, is extremely significant. This relation concerns the use of silver and copper inlay to highlight inscriptions and ornamental features. Thus, the interlaced rosettes and *naskhi* inscription heading a Qur'ān page dated to 1073-4 immediately evokes the silver-inlaid inscriptions and motifs on 12th/13th-century bronze vessels like some of the ewers discussed here; cf. Lings 1976, p. 18 no. 11, pl. 11.

⁴⁰ Scerrato 1971, p. 458, pl. VI fig. 14.

ingenious fancy of an inspired metalworker. In fact, at least as far as early Islamic ewers from Iran are concerned, such incidents are very rare indeed. Of all the surviving Iranian bronze and brass ewer types datable between the 8th and 13th centuries, the overwhelming majority are basically no more than developments of well-tried pre-Islamic types, featuring in all cases versions of only four clearly distinguishable spout concepts universally popular throughout the centuries. These are a round mouth, a horizontal spout issuing from the mouth, an obliquely rising beak spout or a tubular body spout.⁴¹

Strictly speaking, only one ewer type was in fact newly developed within Islamic Iran. In this case a familiar utilitarian ewer shape with a cylindrical body and neck hammered from sheet bronze and again based on pre-Islamic prototypes was combined with an obliquely rising beak spout - a spout concept adopted from a ewer type most probably introduced to Iran through Turkish influence sometime in the 10th century.⁴² This synthesis was obviously not undertaken for aesthetic purposes alone. It was meant to create a vessel type which combined increased functional versatility and artistic potential stemming from the extensive workability of the sheet metal.

Such observations make it likely that the creator of the type under discussion here also had a specific functional purpose in mind rather than the desire to create an innovative vessel shape. Why did he decide not to utilize only structural elements borrowed from other ewer designs but to combine a "ewer" body with a "lamp" spout? This synthesis seems the more surprising, as the pouring quality of the latter, as far as can be judged by looking at the objects, may not have been as satisfactory as that of the four other main spout concepts current in the Islamic world at the time. Here, the liquid would have to escape firstly through a very small round

⁴¹ See the conclusion of this thesis.

⁴² Cf. ewer type ICAW 6.

opening in the neck, then flow along the spout and finally up over the tip, to my mind a strangely awkward route.⁴³

Apparently, some experts who have dealt with objects of this type were also puzzled by this peculiar spout design and its existence led them to question the pieces' identity as ewers, and on one occasion even venture the suggestion that they could in actual fact have been intended to function as lamps.⁴⁴ In view of the technical observations made above, it seems worth considering the validity of such a suggestion, unusual as it may appear at first sight.

If, then, the pieces under discussion are indeed to be considered as lamps, the first problem that arises is the fact that there was at the time of their production, i. e. the 10th-13th centuries, already an array of lamp types in use in Iran, apparently designed to cater for most occasions when lighting was required.⁴⁵ Accordingly, the vessels of this category would have had to be created for a very specific purpose, which could not be fulfilled as satisfactorily by any of the existing lamp forms.

The first clues to such a purpose lie in their proportions and structural elements. All objects in this category are of a fairly small size and they have bulbous bodies with broad bases and handles. Accordingly, their bodies would have been able to contain much more oil than any of the other conventional lamps, thus providing fuel for a longer period of uninterrupted light. Their handles would have ensured mobility and their bases stable positioning on most surfaces.

The only problem with this hypothetical analysis of the objects' structural features seems to concern a satisfactory insertion of the wick into the spout, as it

⁴³ Nahla Nassar, Assistant Curator of the Khalili Collection, very kindly tried to test the pouring quality of one of the pieces in her care, but unfortunately the available quantity of the liquid used in the experiment did not suffice to shed light on the problem.

⁴⁴ Melikian-Chirvani in dealing with some of the pieces in this group describes them as ewers, but adds a question mark to his designation; cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 75. Another anonymous expert in a catalogue entry describes a silver example of this type as "ewer" followed by the term "lamp", again followed by a question mark; cf. Paris Hotel Drouot 16./17.11.1978, no. 278.

⁴⁵ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 268-279.

would have had to be of considerable length in order not to accidentally fall into the body of the vessel, where it would obviously have been virtually irretrievable.⁴⁶

Apart from the vessels' shape, their epigraphy may also help to hint at their use as lighting utensils. As mentioned before, three objects bear the names of their owners, two of which are not only - as Allan pointed out - members of the middle classes but (more precisely and significantly in this context) members of the scholastic stratum of society. The first person is referred to as al-adīb, i.e. a man of letters or even a writer, the second as al-shaikh al-faqīh, which denotes a theologian and teacher of religious law.⁴⁷ Certainly, it could be argued that the occurrence of two scholastic titles on these ewers does not suffice to prove the use of these objects by academic circles in particular, as other pieces with more general owners' names may have existed as well. However, additional evidence clearly links that particular social group to the objects discussed here.

In a miniature preserved in a copy of the Kitāb al-Diryāq probably executed in Mesopotamia in 1199 A.D. (fig. 27) the two lateral sections of the tripartite picture each depict a famous medical doctor instructing a young disciple. In the picture to the left both personages hold a document in their hand and, quite appropriately, two opened pencases ready for use are placed before them. Above their heads, just below the baldachin or curtain suspended from the ceiling, an oil lamp-spouted object identical to the ones discussed here is displayed. In the picture on the right a similar vessel is positioned on the floor in front of the two scholars, together with a jug and what appears to be a beaker.

Significantly, this is, to my knowledge, the only surviving miniature in early Islamic book painting where this type of object is depicted, a fact which is relevant in several respects. Firstly, it may not have been in general use since otherwise the chance of finding it as a filler motif in other miniatures would have been greater.

⁴⁶ I am very grateful to Rachel Ward and Donald Bailey of the British Museum for passing this information on to me.

⁴⁷ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 75; Makdisi 1981, p. 153.

Thus, for example, other objects like pencases, lamps, and glass ewers feature regularly in illustrations of all types.

Secondly, its depiction twice in the same place in connection with scholars may suggest that its presence is not merely due to the artist's desire to fill an empty space (any object would have sufficed in that case) but that it was chosen to complement the scene depicted and help to evoke the appropriate setting for it in the eyes of the reader of the book. Thus, the depiction may perhaps even have an emblematic or symbolic value, just like the open pencases, which undoubtedly identify the men in the first picture and also the person in the central panel as educated and intellectual members of society. Such an alleged link between the oil lamp-spouted vessels and the scholastic class is significant, as this specific environment is the one in which their use as lamps could best be imagined.

An important part of scholastic life was obviously study, for teachers and students alike. During the day the acquisition of knowledge or teaching was undertaken in the mosques and madrasahs of the Islamic world, as well as in the educational establishments of the other confessions. Private study and revision was reserved for night time, and in many places of teaching appropriate illumination was accordingly ensured throughout the night in order to enable students to continue their work, which often lasted until daybreak.⁴⁸ Other scholars returned to their rooms at night and continued their work there. Here, of course, they had to provide their own lighting. Sometimes the sources also mention that the studies were undertaken "by the light of the night watchman's lamp".⁴⁹

In such circumstances a good and continuous source of light was obviously indispensable and it is here that a lamp of the design discussed here could have been useful. Its height would have been just right for a reader seated crossleggedly on the floor with the kursi in front of him. In its bulbous body it could contain enough oil

⁴⁸ Goitein 1971, pp. 83, 192; Makdisi 1981, p. 87; Goitein 1973, p. 19.

⁴⁹ Makdisi 1981, pp. 85, 87, 183-4.

to provide a constant amount of light for a considerable period of time; and, finally, it would have been portable to whatever location the student chose to settle in.⁵⁰

Tempting as such considerations are, it has to be stressed that they are purely hypothetical at present until further evidence about the vessels' original purpose can be presented. One most important aspect of such investigations must be the examination of the spout's pouring performance: its quality must be satisfactory enough to justify the choice of a "lamp shape" - originally designed for a primarily non-pouring purpose - as the pouring section of a new ewer type.

The function of the objects as ewers may not be rejected, at present, and if they were indeed meant to serve as such, then their obvious use in scholastic and medical circles may point to the possibility that they were to contain certain medical preparations and potions.⁵¹

6. Summary

Cast bronze ewers with pear-shaped bodies and oil lamp spouts seem to have been developed in late 10th-century eastern Iran and remained popular until the 13th century. During that period modestly incised, copper-inlaid and lavishly executed copper- and silver-inlaid examples were all on the market. Their function remains elusive at present, but they appear to have been popular in academic circles, where they may have served as ewers for medical potions or indeed as lamps.

⁵⁰ It is most desirable that future research would test the approximate duration of a conventional oil lamp and if it is indeed technically possible for the type discussed here to be used according to the purely hypothetical considerations forwarded in this discussion.

⁵¹ At that time many scholars acted as physicians and most physicians were accomplished scholars.

Catalogue

1. Mūza-i Rawza, Ghazna; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 23.2 cm, diam. body 14.3 cm, diam. foot 9.6 cm.

Bulbous pear-shaped body on high and broad foot which widens considerably towards base; above, body tapers towards three spaced-out superposed ridges which decrease in size and introduce a conical neck with slightly waisted sides; thin ridge below "oil lamp"-shaped spout with conical lid. On sides of spout below mouth, small roundels with three bilobed palmettes; on body façade, round medallion (fig. 1).

Lit.: Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 201, pl. XV fig. 11.

2. MMA 54.64; n. p.; bronze, incised, silver and copper inlay; h. 18.4 cm.

Form similar to 1 but more bulbous lower body on broader and lower sloping foot-ring; thin rounded ridge separating body and foot; body tapers towards neck, introduced by several superposed grooved bands of varying size; neck short and conical; rounded ridge between neck and spout section; mouth originally lidded; handle missing. On body, broad benedictory naskhi panel above and narrower Kufic panel below, both on floral background; in between, on body façade, ogival cartouche with scrolling stem; on sides, roundels with vegetal scrolls, at back cartouche corresponding to that on front, all joined by rectangular panels containing animal combat scenes; surrounding frontal motifs Kufic inscription naming owner and maker: "Owned by al-shaikh al-faqīh Muhammad b. 'Alī al-Sijzī. Made by Payedar"; on lower neck, scrolling band; on neck, pseudo-facetting; on spout below mouth, bird roundels; on sides of pouring section, scrollwork (fig. 2).

Lit.: Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 74 fig. 43, 75-6, 84 note 83, 152 note 1.

3. Louvre MAO 428; n. p.; cast bronze, incised, silver and copper inlay; h. 14.8 cm, diam. 7.8 cm.

Form similar to 2, but more clearly demarcated, bulbous and squat body and tall, conical faceted neck, introduced by rounded moulding; low, slightly sloping foot with central facetting; more elongated spout introduced by stepped angular ridge, lid missing; broad angular handle with pointed attachment plates; hinge-like projection on lower, projecting rectangular panels with oblique grooving on central handle. On body, broad naskhi frieze with human hastae above, narrower Kufic panel below; in between, roundels with winged quadrupeds and vase motifs, linked by narrow scrolling band; on either side of handle, panels with quadrupeds, running above inscription naming maker: "'amala 'Alī b. 'Awf al-Isfara'īnī (?)" ; all ornamentation on spiral scrolling background; on neck and foot, incised outlining of facets; on spout underneath mouth, bird roundels; on sides, scrolling panels; below tip, human face with exaggerated eyes; on handle, four virtually illegible epigraphic panels, one reading "al-sa'āda" (pl. 1).

Lit.: Paris 1903, no. 3036, pl. 151; Kühnel 1910, p. 370; Sarre and Martin 1912, no 3036, pl. 151; Migeon 1927, Vol. II, p. 42; Aga-Oglu 1931, p. 91; Paris 1931, p. 145 no. 229B; Wiet 1932, pp. 19, 170, App. no. 34; Wiet 1932a, p. 78; Wiet 1933, p. 32 no. 29, pl. 5 (left); Pope 1938, pl. 1309D; Dimand 1941, p. 207; Aga-Oglu 1946, p. 121; Dimand 1947, p. 141; Mayer 1956, p. 21; Mayer 1959, p. 38; Harari 1964-5, pp. 2488, 2491, 2527; Scerrato 1966, p. 62; Paris 1971, pp. 95-6 no. 128; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 217-8, Vol. 2, p. 629 no. A/2/f/1; Paris 1977, p. 157 no. 322; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 72, 83 note 71, 152 note 1; Baer 1983, p. 322 note 220; Allan 1986, p. 126.

4. Sotheby's 16.4.85, lot 34; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 20.3 cm.

Form similar to 3, but flat protruding ridge separating neck and body; low splayed foot; broad angular ridge underneath spout; spout more curved; lid missing; feline handle. On body, three palmette roundels; on neck, inverted arcading; on sides of spout, scrolling panels (fig. 3).

Lit.: Sold at Sotheby's 16.4.85, lot 34 (information about this piece came directly from the auctioneers).

5. Sotheby's 16.4.85, lot 33; n.p.; bronze, incised, silver and copper inlay; h. 27.8 cm.

Very bulbous pear-shaped body separated from elongated conical neck by flat protruding ridge; broad splayed footring; spout like that on 4, but covered by zoomorphic lid; very flat plain handle with large bird thumbpiece. On foot, benedictory Kufic panels alternating with split palmette roundels; on body façade, cusped cartouche with scrolling palmettes, flanked above by cursive inscription panels and rosettes; on body sides, vase motifs and panels with walking sphinxes on scrolling ground; on neck, abstract wavy band, above large scrolling panel; on spout sides, simple scrollwork (fig. 4).

Lit.: Sold at Sotheby's 16.4.85, lot 33 (information about this piece came directly from the auctioneers).

6. Sotheby's New York 20.11.75, lot 72; n. p.; bronze, incised, copper inlay; h. 15.8 cm.

Bulbous pear-shaped body separated from conical neck by broad band bordered by thin ridges; broad splayed footring; spout like 4 and 5, lid missing; angular S-shaped handle with irregular indentations (not original (?)). On foot, inverted arcading; around lower body, narrow guilloche; on front, cusped bird medallion flanked by rectangular animal panels, vase motifs surmounted by palmette roundels and large crescent motifs with interior scrollwork, surmounted by Kufic panels; on neck, inverted arcading; on spout sides, vegetal scroll; a date (?) inlaid with copper above central niche (fig. 5).

Lit.: Sold at Sotheby's New York 20.11.75, lot 72; Christie's Fine Persian and Islamic Works of Art, 20.4.79, lot 16, pl. 2.

7. Tehran 12156; Ribāt-i Sharaf; bronze, incised; h. 20.5 cm, diam. base 9 cm.

Form as 6, but more elongated neck; animal-headed lid; flat S-shaped handle with abstract zoomorphic lower attachment and floral plaque as thumbpiece. Roundel on body façade (fig. 6).

Lit.: Kiani 1981, p. 93 no. 12; Fehérvári and Kiani 1982, p. 343.

8. Aron Collection; n. p.; cast bronze (quaternary alloy), cast in pieces: body, foot, neck, spout; incised, copper inlay; h. 25.5 cm, diam. foot 10 cm.

Form as 7, but taller foot and slightly shorter neck with more projecting collar; base plate replacement; handle and lid finials perhaps from other objects. On body façade, bird roundel with trefoil finial and triangular base flanked by two superposed Kufic inscriptions, the lower one divided by pear-shaped roundels with central arabesque; around lower body, interlace band; on foot, four Kufic panels alternating with roundels; on neck, frontal triangular cartouche with arabesque; on spout sides, curvilinear arabesque panels (fig. 7).

Lit.: Allan 1986, p. 126.

9. ex. Momtaz Gallery; n. p.; bronze, incised, copper inlay; h. 23 cm, diam. base 9 cm.

Form as 8, but less bulbous body and slightly lower foot; peacock finial on lid; flat S-shaped handle. On foot and neck, inverted arcading; around lower body, guilloche band; (?) on front, cartouche flanked by two superposed Kufic panels on either side, the upper ones followed by pear-shaped cartouches with arabesques and two more Kufic panels towards the back, the lower ones by pear-shaped arabesque cartouches (fig. 8).

Lit.: Fehérvári 1977, no. 120.

10. Sotheby's 15.10.85, lot 199; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 22.2 cm.

Form as 9, but undecorated, grooved lid; angular curved handle with large horizontal thorn near base and two small annular projections on lower and upper part, the latter one surmounted by oblique protrusion; polygonal knob thumbpiece. On foot, Kufic inscription with intermediate crescent roundels; around lower body - stopping short of central cartouche and handle - narrow guilloche band; central cusped bird medallion flanked by Kufic panels with crescent roundel, above, and larger frieze with interlacing circles filled with split palmettes in centre; all friezes stop short of handle; on sides of neck, small floral almond shapes on triangular base; on spout sides, curvilinear floral panels (fig. 9).

Lit.: Sold at Sotheby's 15.10.85, lot. 199 (information about this piece came directly from the auctioneers).

11. London, British Museum 1956,7-26,2; n. p.; cast (?) bronze, base missing, neck made separately and joined on; incised, copper inlay; h. 26.5 cm, diam. base 10 cm.

Form as 8, but lid missing; very flat, virtually straight handle with (perhaps not belonging) inserted cock thumbpiece facing backwards. On foot, inverted arcading; on lower body, narrow guilloche band; in centre, cusped bird medallion with Kufic inscription panel on either side of upper part, flanked by split palmette roundels and more Kufic panels towards the back; flanking centre of medallion large panels with interlacing circles on scrolling ground, filled with split palmettes; all panels stop short of handle; around lower handle attachment, scrolling band terminating in bird heads up the sides; copper-inlaid neck collar; on neck, three almond-shaped floral medallions with trefoil finial and triangular base; on spout sides, simple scrollwork (fig. 10).

Lit.: Unpublished.

12. Khalili Collection MTW 585; n. p.; cast bronze, incised, silver and copper inlay; h. 28 cm with thumbpiece.

Form as 8, but ridge near outer edge of foot; flat, strongly S-shaped handle with flat plaque depicting bird with wings folded over its front as thumbpiece and feline lower attachment; feline lid; neck faceted. In centre of base hollowed out, six-petalled rosette surrounded by concentric double bands, further bands around outer edge; foot plain; on body, large elongated cartouche with stylized floral motif, flanked above by benedictory naskhi panels on spiral scrolling ground, terminated near the handle by small rosettes; on sides, vase motifs with extensive tendrils; copper-inlaid neck collar; on spout sides, small rosettes (fig. 11).

Lit.: Unpublished.

13. Christie's 13.6.83, lot 325; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 20 cm.

Form as 8, but slightly less bulbous body; flat, slightly curved handle with peacock(?) thumbpiece and small curved and pointed projection near base. On upper sides of body, small floral roundels; on neck, simple central panelling; on spout sides, fleshy scrollwork (fig. 12).

Lit.: Christie's 13.6.83, p. 125 no. 325.

14. MMA 33.96; said to have been found in Hamadan; cast bronze, incised, copper and silver inlay; h. 18.4 cm.

Form as 8, but less sloping foot; broad angular ridge around neck base; shorter spout with simple lid; feline handle with incised scales on neck and vegetal panels on body. On foot, frieze with elongated quadrupeds against scrolling ground, alternating with crescent roundels; around lower body, benedictory Kufic; below neck, large naskhi panels flanking upper part of central medallion; on sides of body, vase motifs; name of owner "ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Tāhir al-adīb al-Sijzī" in naskhi flanking centre of medallion; on neck collar, scrollwork; on lower neck, narrow interlace band; above, inverted arcading; on spout sides, vegetal ornament (fig. 13).

Lit.: Dimand 1934, pp. 25-6; Pope 1938, pl. 1309C; Dimand 1941, p. 207; Dimand 1945, pp. 91-2; Mayer 1959, p. 37; Scerrato 1966, pp. 38, 42, 62, no. 14; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 217-8, Vol. 2, p. 630 no. A/2/f/3; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 75, 84 note 83, p. 430; Baer 1983, p. 322 note 220; Allan 1986, p. 126.

15. Detroit Institute of Arts; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; handle and lid missing; h. 25.4 cm.

Extremely bulbous, pear-shaped body on fairly low and very broad, splayed foot-ring; clear joint between body and broad conical neck. Around foot edge, scrollwork; on lower body, floriated arcading; in centre, bird medallion flanked on either side from above to below by a) a narrow scrolling band, b) a broad Kufic panel flanked by a floral roundel and c) a scrolling frieze; around original handle base, scrolling band terminating in dragon heads up the sides; on neck, guilloche band and inverted floriated arcading; on spout sides, scrollwork (fig. 14).

Lit.: Aga-Oglu 1931, pp. 89, 91; Pope 1938, pl. 1296A; Aga-Oglu 1940, p. 10; Dimand 1941, p. 207; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 217-8, Vol. 2, p. 630 no. A/2/f/4; Baer 1983, p. 322 note 220.

16. C.L. David Collection 34/1969; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 20.5 cm.

Form similar to 15, but less bulbous body, squatter neck; flat, grooved lid; strongly S-shaped angular handle with worn quadruped thumbpiece. On base, rosette; on foot, inverted arcading; on body, three identical decorative units: a broad Kufic panel above and narrow interlace band below enclose a narrow vertical scrolling panel flanked by scrolling roundels; units separated by crescent-shaped scrolling band on triangular base ending in two bird (?) heads up the sides; on sides of neck, drop-shaped medallions with floral detail; on spout sides, scrollwork (fig. 15).

Lit.: Christie's 9.12.68, no. 125.

17. Louvre AO no. 6314; n. p.; cast bronze, incised, copper and silver inlay; base plate replacement; h. 23 cm, diam. 12.3 cm.

Form as 15, but flattened lower body on slightly lower foot; broad angular collar below spout; animal head lid with extensive detailing; angular S-shaped handle with reclining animal above base and remaining base of now wanting thumbpiece. On central foot, leafy scrollwork; on upper body, large benedictory *naskhi* panel, on lower body, benedictory Kufic frieze; in between, three knotted roundels with intertwined birds on front and sides; in intermediate spaces, cursive inscription giving name of owner "ʿUthmān b. Sulaymān al-Nakhjavānī" and the date 586 A.H./1190-1 A.D.; on neck, three drop-shaped medallions with intertwining scrolls; on spout collar, cable pattern; on spout sides, winged quadrupeds against scrolling ground; on upper side, simple floral motif (fig. 16).

Lit.: R.C.E.A., Vol. IX, p. 171 no. 3444; Paris 1903, no. 65; D'Allemagne 1911, Vol. 2, p. 51 (top right); Migeon 1927, Vol. II, pp. 41-2, 44, fig. 232; Dimand 1930, p. 109; Aga-Oglu 1931, p. 91; Pope 1938, pl. 1309A, p. 2491; Dimand 1941, p. 207; Paris 1971, p. 96 no. 129; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 217-8, Vol. 2, p. 630 no. A/2/f/2, fig. 30; Paris 1977, p. 157 no. 323; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 75, 84 note 84, 126; Baer 1983, pp. 94-5, 322 note 219; Allan 1986, p. 126.

18. Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire IS.58; n. p.; bronze, incised, copper inlay (partly re-inlaid); h. 19 cm.

Bulbous pear-shaped body on very low stepped base; broad band with protruding ridges introduces conical neck; spout section lidded; thin feline handle. On lower body, inverted floriated arcading; around central body, succession of harpy roundels, vase motifs and sphinxes; above, cursive inscription panels near handle, terminated by crescent roundels towards the front; across the front, broad copper-inlaid letters(?); on neck, pseudo-facetting with round lower terminations; on spout, roundels with central trefoil underneath mouth and scrolling (?) panels on sides (fig. 17).

Lit.: Montgomery-Wyaux 1978, p. 7 no. 13, pl. 13.

19. Sotheby's 15.10.86, lot 114; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 24.5 cm.

Pear-shaped body and *boteh*-shaped spout; handle with palmette thumbpiece; body incised with two concentric circles (no photograph available).

Lit.: Sotheby's 15.10.86, p. 25 lot 114.

V.1/1. Khalili Collection MTW 146; n. p.; bronze, relief decoration, incised; h. 26 cm.

Slender, inverted pear-shaped body on low splayed foot; in centre of flattened shoulder slightly concave area demarcated by thin projecting ridges above and below; tall conical neck with projecting band around upper part; pointed and perfectly horizontal "oil-lamp" spout with protruding lateral panels, vertical lip around mouth with pearled lid (not belonging?); slightly curved angular handle with rectangular knob thumbpiece. On body, two rows of obliquely set squares with grooved star in centre; on neck collar, scrollwork; on spout sides, knot pattern and hollowed-out roundel; on top, two almond motifs (fig. 18).

Lit. Unpublished.

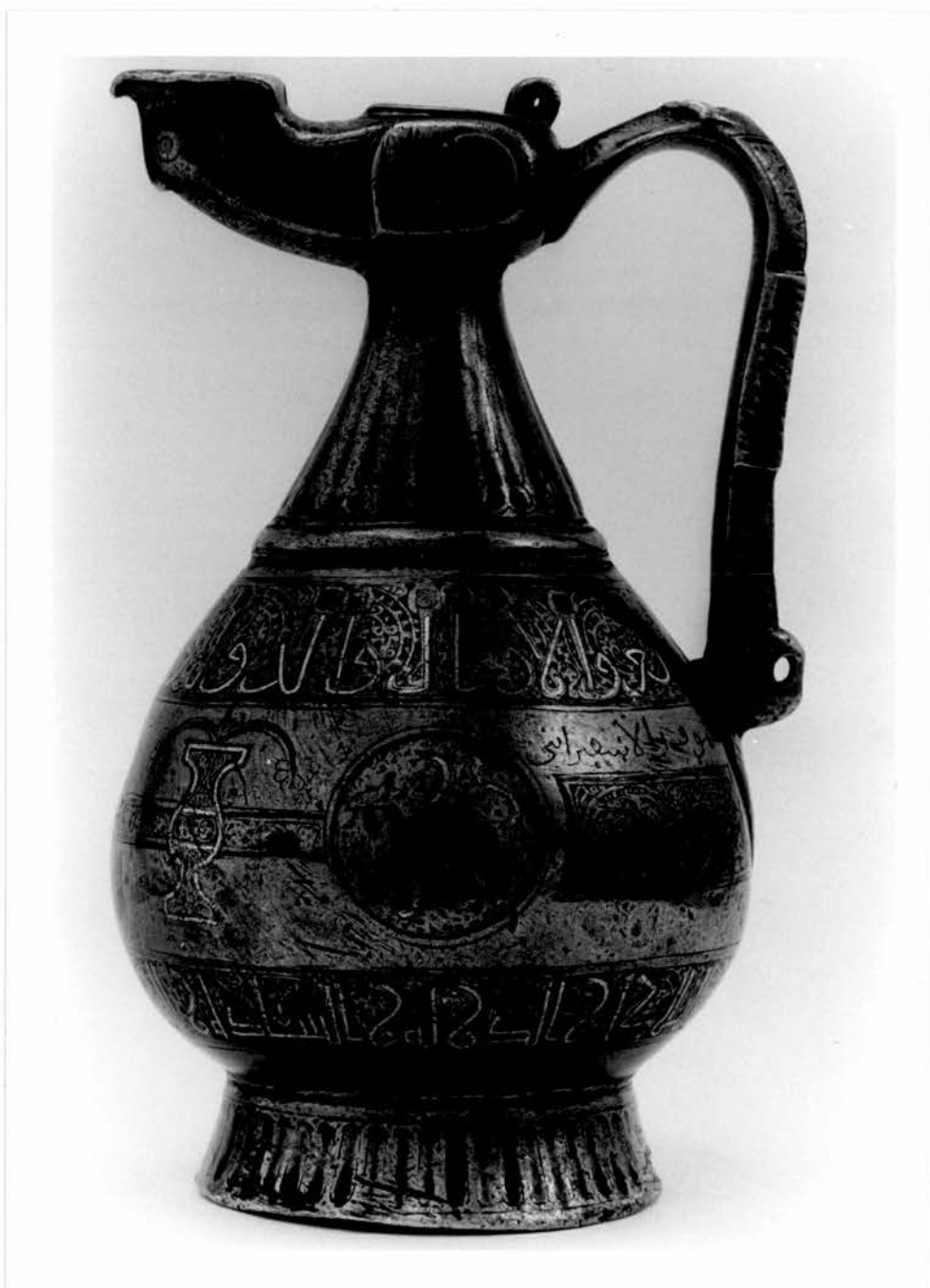


Plate 1

ICAW 3/3. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 14.8 cm
(Paris, Louvre, inv. no. MAO 428).

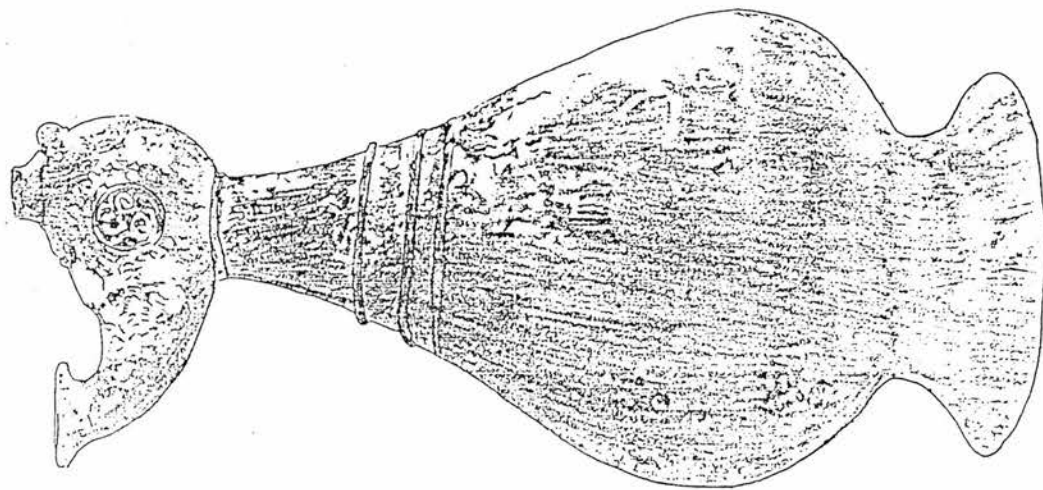


FIG. 1

ICAW 3/1. Bronze Ewer, h. 23.2 cm
(Ghazna. Muza-i Rawza).



FIG. 2

ICAW 3/2. Bronze Ewer, h. 18.4 cm
(New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 54.64).

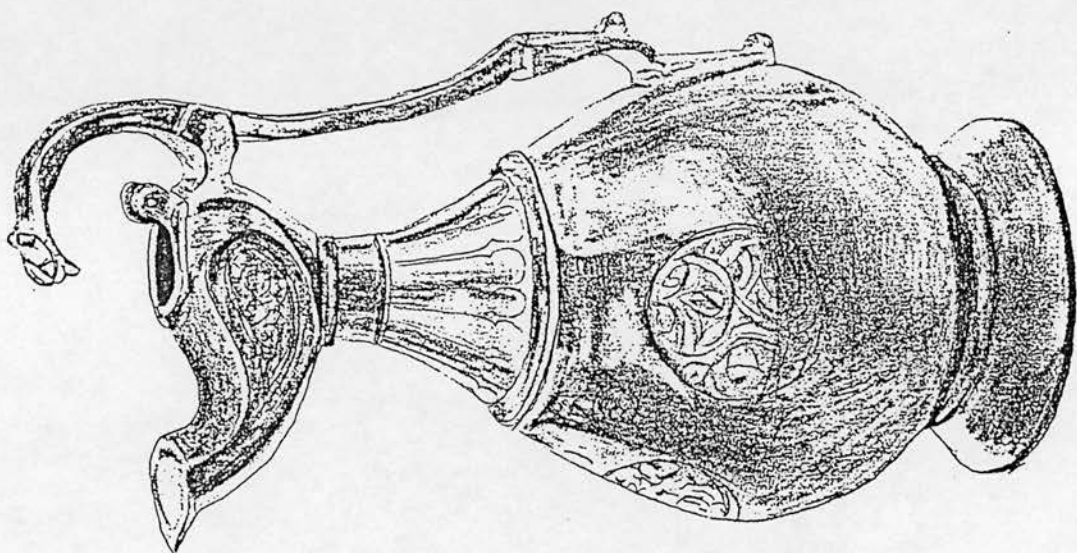


FIG. 3
ICAW 3/4. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 20.3 cm
(Sotheby's 16.4.85, lot 34).

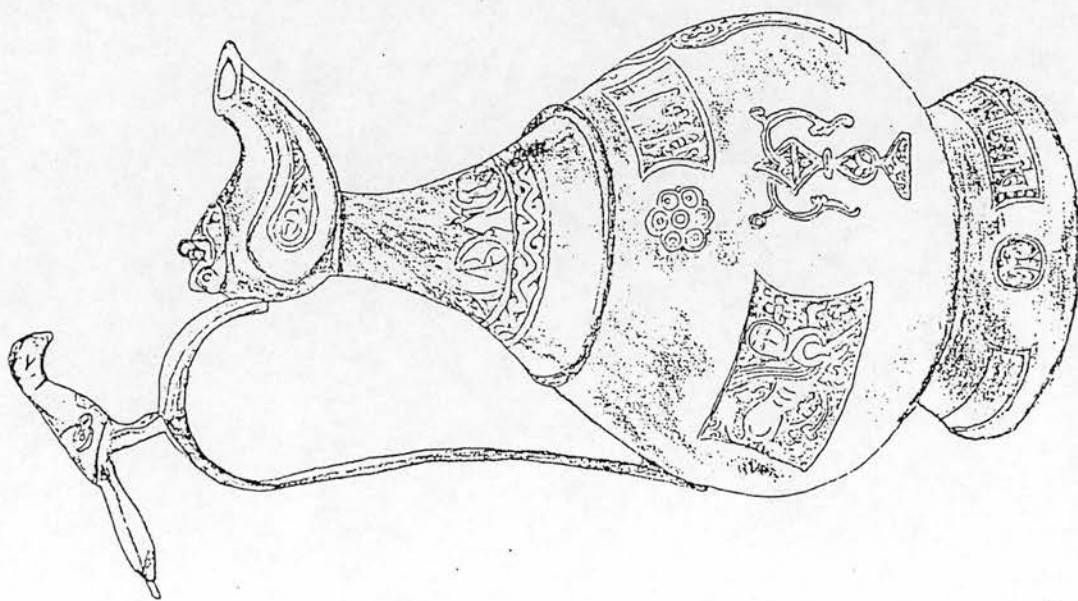


FIG. 4
ICAW 3/5. Bronze Ewer, h. 27.8 cm
(Sotheby's 16.4.85, lot 33).

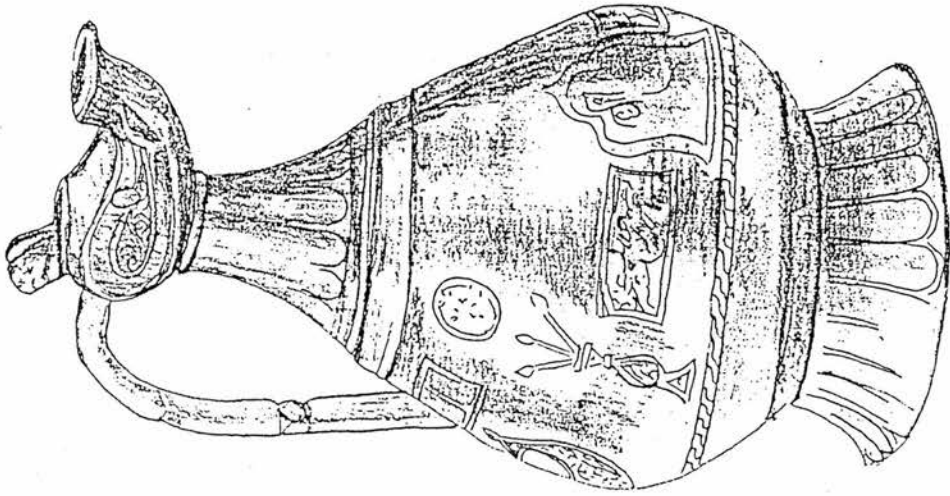


FIG. 5

ICAW 3/6. Bronze Ewer, h. 15.8 cm
(Sotheby's New York, 20.11.75, lot 72).

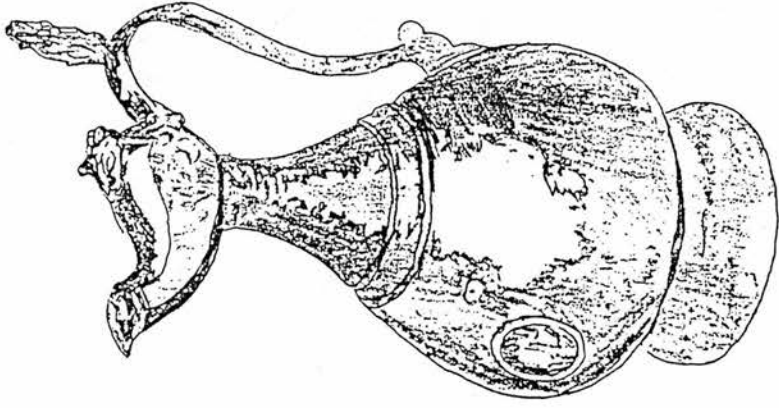


FIG. 6

ICAW 3/7. Bronze Ewer found at Ribāṭ-i Sharaf, Khurāsān.
H. 20.5 cm (Tehran Museum, inv. no. 12156).

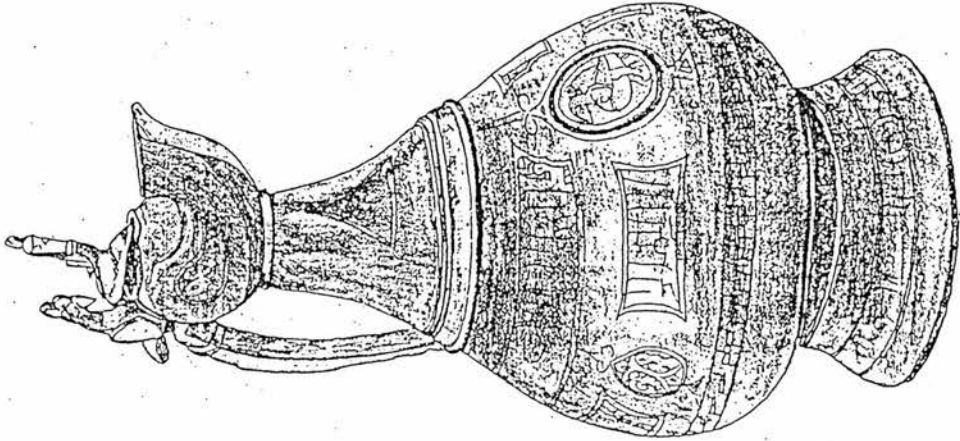


FIG. 7
ICAW 3/8. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 25.5 cm
(Aron Collection).

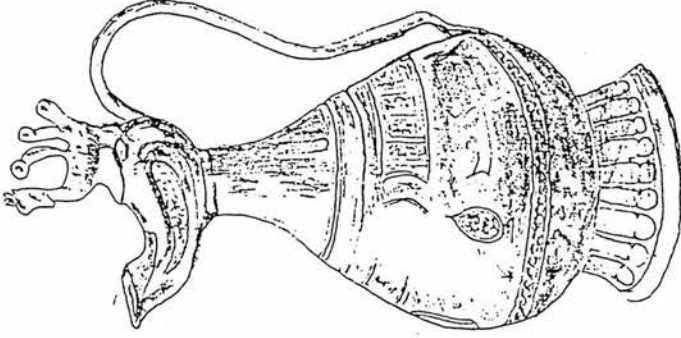


FIG. 8
ICAW 3/9. Bronze Ewer, h. 23 cm
(ex Momtaz Gallery).

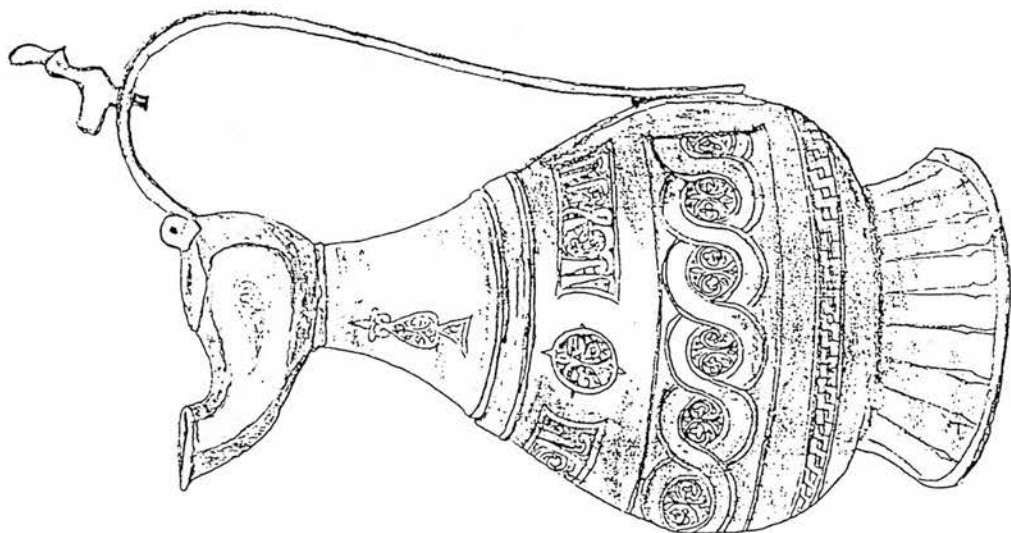


FIG. 10
ICAW 3/11. Cast (?) Bronze Ewer, 26.5 cm
(London, British Museum, inv. no. 1956, 7-26, 2).

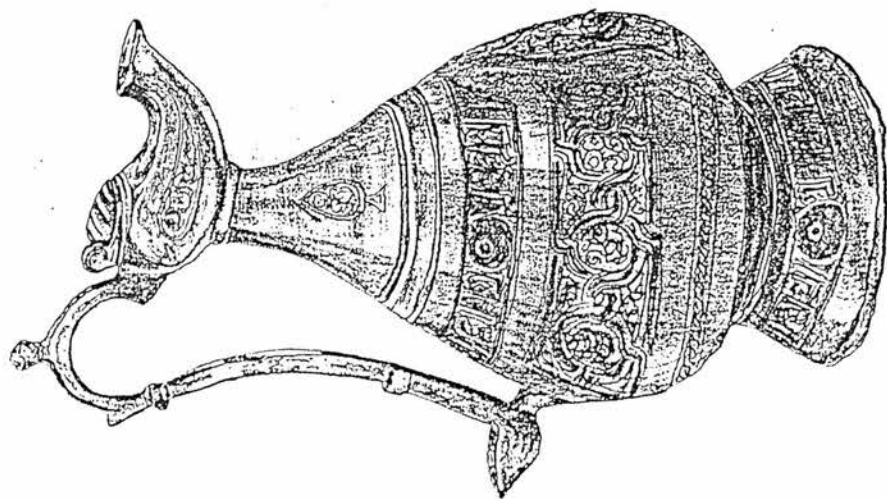


FIG. 9
ICAW 3/10. Bronze Ewer, 22.2 cm
(Sotheby's 15.10.85, lot 199).

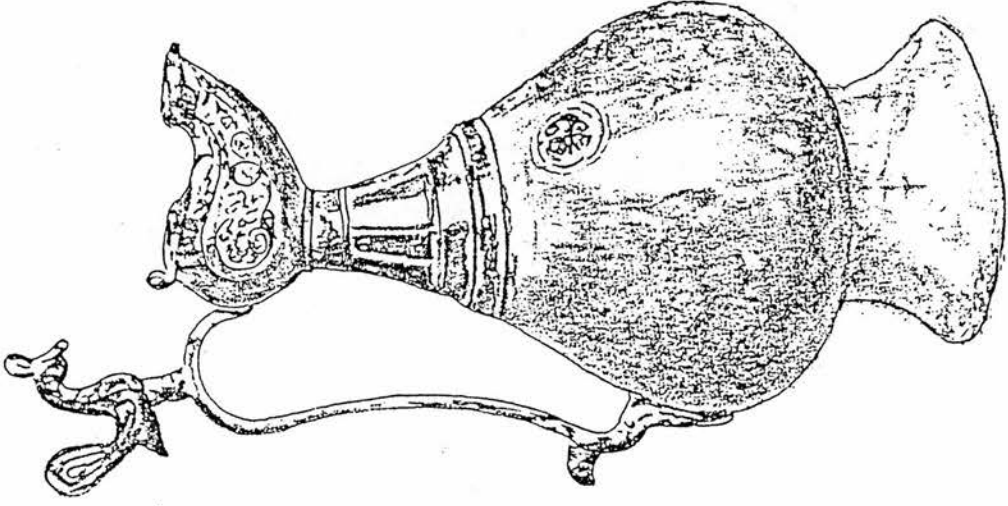


FIG. 12
ICAW 3/13. Bronze Ewer, h. 20 cm
(Christie's 13.6.83, lot 325).

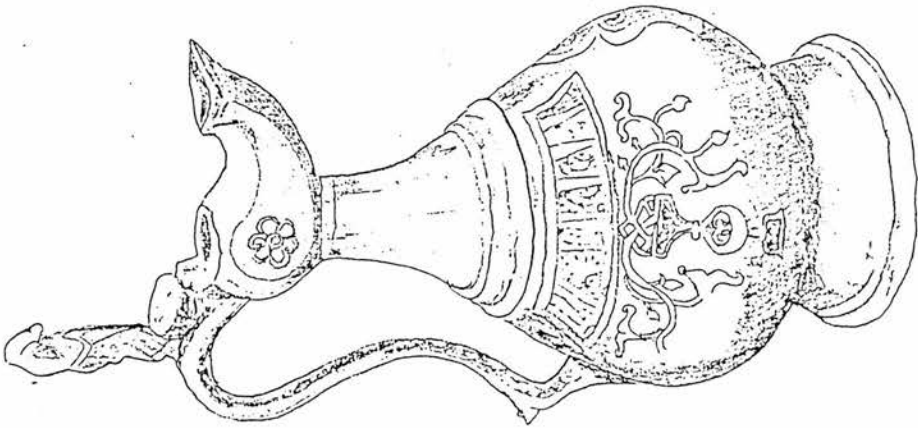


FIG. 11
ICAW 3/12. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 28 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 585).

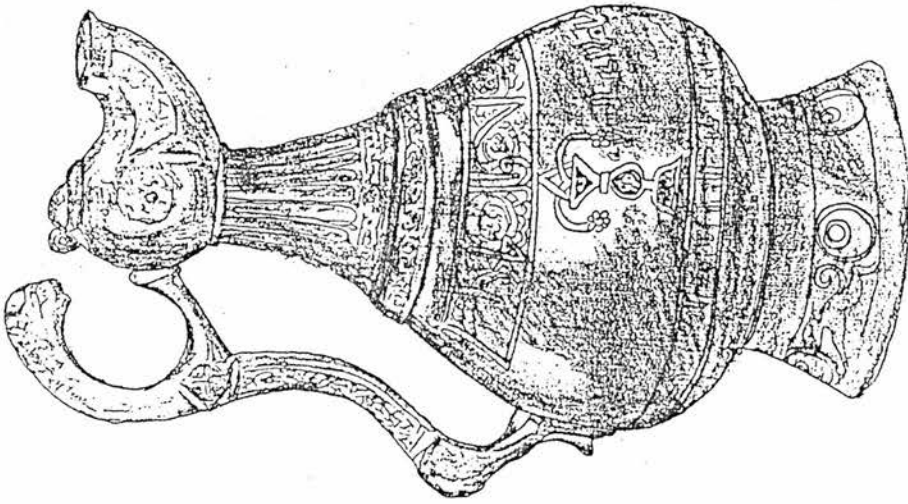


FIG. 13

ICAW 3/14. Cast Bronze Ewer allegedly found in Hamadan, Iran.
H. 18.4 cm (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 33.96).

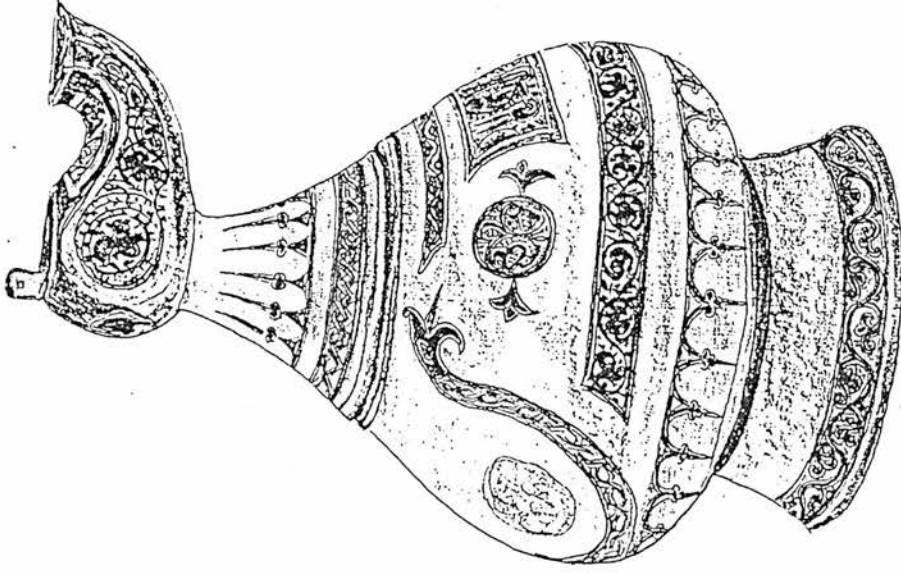


FIG. 14

ICAW 3/15. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 25.4 cm
(Detroit, Institute of Arts).

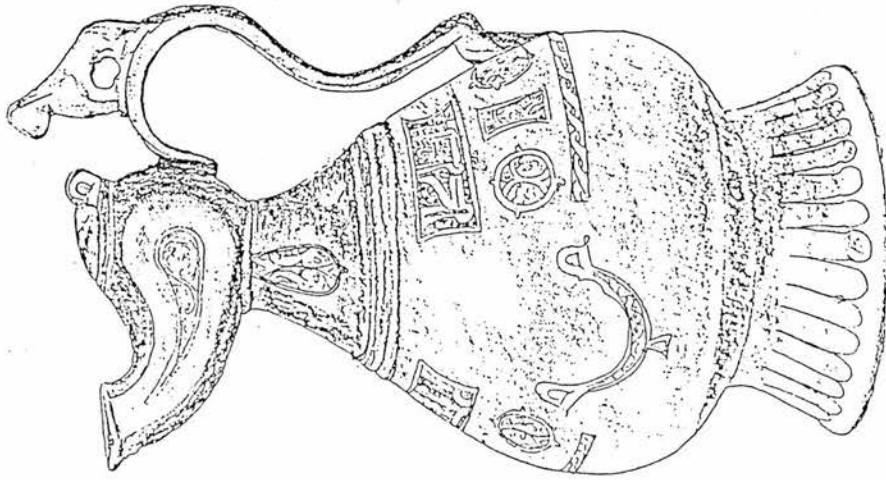


FIG. 15

ICAW 3/16. Bronze Ewer, h. 20.5 cm
(Copenhagen, C.L. David Collection, inv. no. 34/1969).

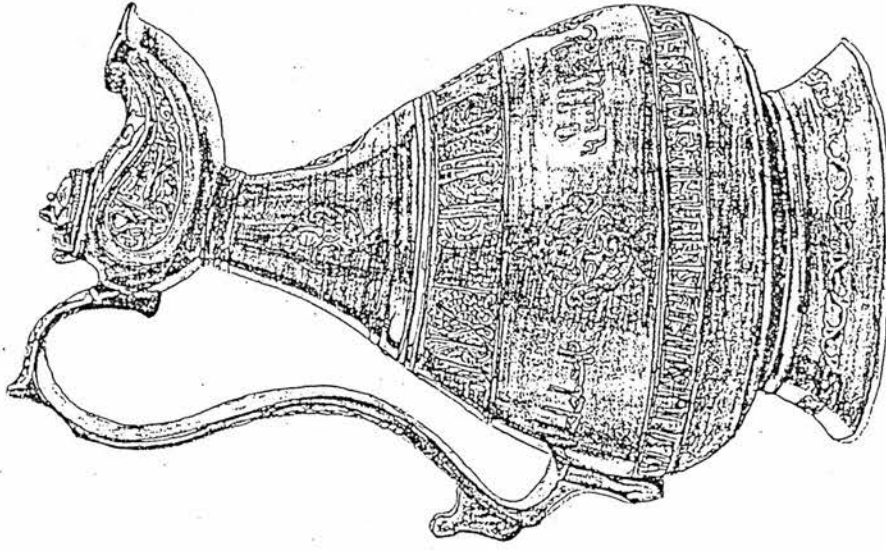


FIG. 16

ICAW 3/17. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 23 cm
(Paris, Louvre, inv. no. AO no. 6314).

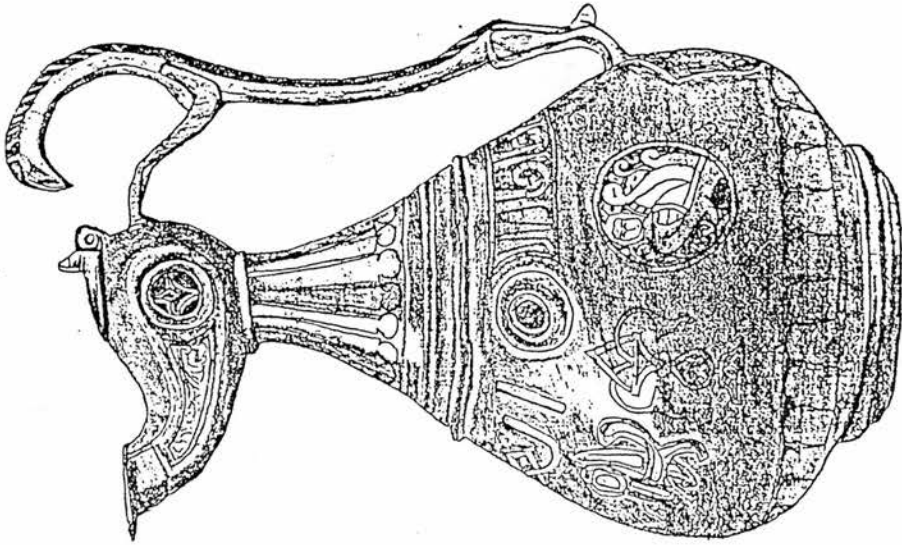


FIG. 17

ICAW 3/18. Bronze Ewer, h. 19 cm
(Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et
d'Histoire, inv. no. IS 58).

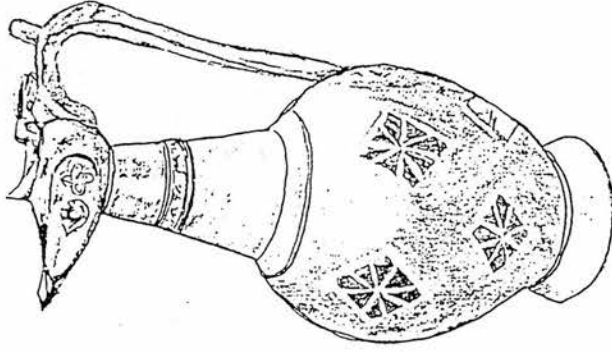


FIG. 18

ICAW 3/V.1/1. Bronze Ewer, h. 26 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 146).

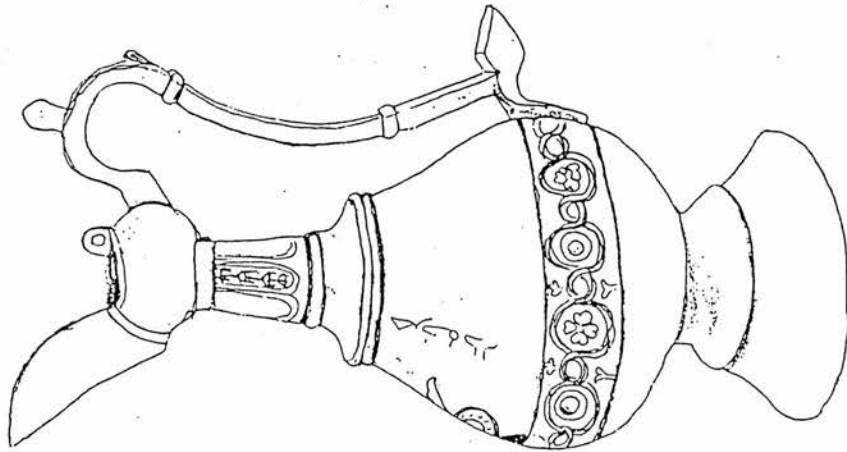


FIG. 19
Cast Bronze Ewer of Composite Shape.
Found in Shahrīstān, Ushrūshāna (ICAW 5/5).



FIG. 20
Bronze Oil Lamp. Eastern Iran, 10th/11th Century A.D.
(After Negmatov and Khmel'nitsky 1966, pl. XXIV).

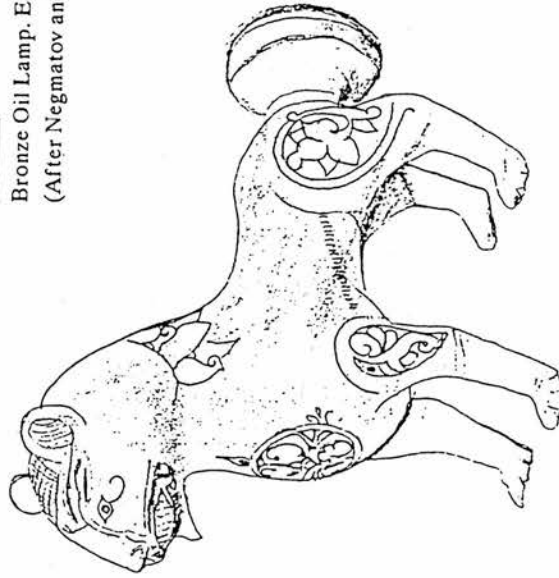


FIG. 21
Cast Bronze Lion attributed to 11th/12th-Century Iran.

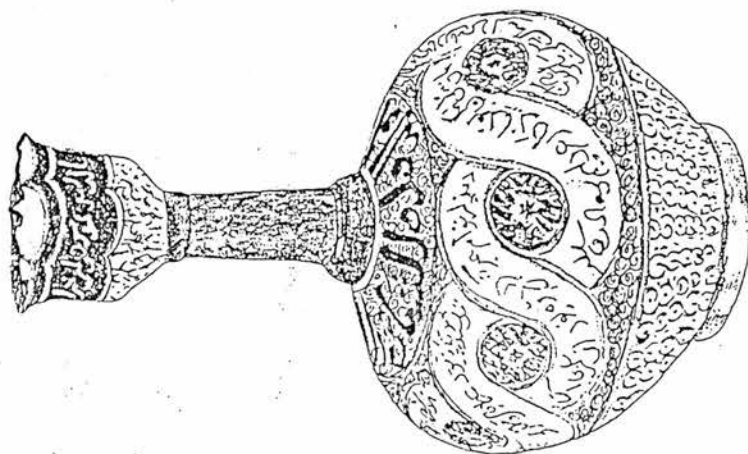


FIG. 22
Lustrine Vase. Iran, late 12th Century A.D.



FIG. 23
Bronze Bucket from Iran. 12th-13th Century A.D.

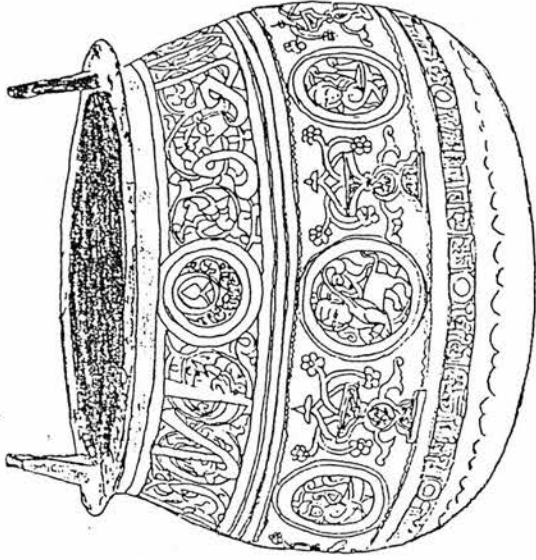


FIG. 25

Bronze Kettle from Iran. 12th-13th Century A.D.



FIG. 24

Bronze Perfume Container. Iran, late 12th Century.

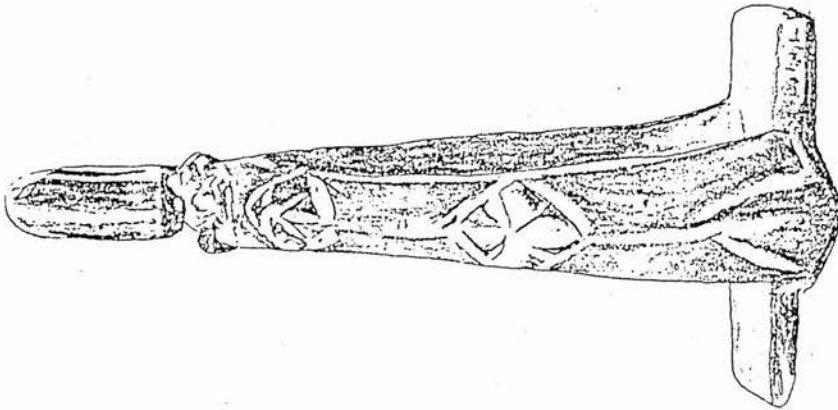


FIG. 26
Bronze Stirrup from Ghazna. 10th-11th Century A.D.



FIG. 27
Doctors and Their Disciples. Miniature
from the *Kitāb al-Diryāq*. Iraq, 1199 A.D.

Chapter 14

Ewer Type ICAW 4: Cast and Hammered Bronze Ewers with Globular Body on Low Foot, Cylindrical Neck and Obliquely Rising Beak-Spout

1. General Description

The ewer type to be considered in this chapter is characterized by a squat spherical or rather elliptical **body**, which can be plain (cat. nos. 1-13; figs. 1-7, pl. 1, figs. 8-11) or covered with petal-shaped facets (cat. nos. V.1/1-4; figs. 12-15). In yet other cases (cat. nos. V.2/1-V.2/7; pl. 1, figs. 16-21) the body surface is divided into broad lobes, which are either rounded throughout or display a narrow angular panel in the centre of each alternate lobe. Only one ewer - cat. no. V.2/1/1 (fig. 22) - displays a succession of concave facets around its body.

Generally, the body rests on a low straight, waisted or splayed **foot-ring** with a base plate, which is usually flat and is introduced by a thin ridge.¹ In the case of ewer 1 (fig. 1), however, this feature is lacking. Instead, the vessel has a concave hexagonal base with a likewise concave, circular centre.

Above, the flattened **shoulder** area is, in every case but one (cat. no. 1; fig. 1), accentuated by a narrow recessed shoulder plate, which is mainly circular but can also be polygonal, as is the case on ewers 4 and 5 (figs. 4-5). From the centre the lower base of the **neck** rises, either directly or introduced by a narrow projecting ridge (cat. nos. 2, 4, 7, 8, 9[?], 10, 12, V.1/1, V.2/2-7; figs. 2, 4, 7,

¹ In the case of ewer 11 a strongly protruding area around the lower body additionally emphasises the visual demarcation of body and foot. In the cases of ewers 5 and V.2/1/1 the base plate is concave. It is, however, not certain whether the base plate of 5 is really original. The reason for this uncertainty lies in the curious fact that this element was apparently hammered around the outer edge of the foot, an attachment method highly unusual for an otherwise cast object and more frequently used on a group of beaten cylindrical-bodied bronze and brass ewers with obliquely rising beak spout (ewer type ICAW 6); Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 221.

pl. 1, figs. 8, 9, 11, 12, 16-21). On occasion this element can be stepped (cat. no. 11; fig. 10).²

Above, the base of the neck is usually clearly demarcated from the main, squat cylindrical section by a strongly projecting collar of varying breadth. On ewers 11, V.1/2 and V.2/5 (figs. 10, 13, 19) this feature is missing and, judging these pieces merely by the available photographs, it appears possible that this fact may be due to later alterations rather than a contemporary variation of the original design of this ewer type.³

Halfway up the neck, the sides often receive small hinges, which in several cases still hold ring- or crescent-shaped pendants (cat. nos. 1, 8, 10, V.1/3, V.1/4[?], V.2/1, V.2/3; fig. 1, pl. 1, figs. 9, 14-5, pl. 2, fig. 17). Their function is not ultimately clear, but it has been suggested that they, together with additional loops sometimes discernible on the sides and underside of the spout as well as on the handle, may once have held chains to attach a cover to the ewers' mouths and upper spouts.⁴

In its frontal part the neck widens toward an obliquely set, strongly protruding band, which marks the base of the **spout**. The latter, which is very large in proportion to the ewers' overall dimensions, is curved to a varying degree and rises at an oblique angle. Its appearance is not uniform, and several varieties can be observed. The most popular version has very broad sides with curved and sometimes pierced edges and an open rounded tip which in some cases joins the upper spout at a slight angle (cat. nos. 3-8, 10, 12, V.1/3, V.1/4[?], V.2/3-V.2/7; figs. 3-7, pl. 1, figs. 9, 11, 14-5, 17-21). The lower spout is - with this design - covered by a rectangular plaque, which can be either solid or pierced.⁵

² In the case of ewer 1 a similar ridge surrounds the base of the neck.

³ This assumption seems particularly justified in the case of ewer 11, which was undoubtedly assembled from elements belonging to several different ewer types.

⁴ Baer 1983, p. 99; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 220; al-'Ush 1972, p. 191.

⁵ The spout of ewer V.2/2 seems to represent a somewhat degenerated version of this particular spout type.

Another spout type appears more pointed in profile and seems at least sometimes to evoke zoomorphic or, more precisely, ornithomorphic associations (cat. nos. 1, 9, V.1/1; figs. 1, 8, 12). Here again, a small solid plaque closes the spout's lower section on ewers 9 and V.1/1 (figs. 8, 12), while in the case of ewer 1 (fig. 1) nearly the whole spout is covered, leaving only the area immediately adjoining the tip open.

The third major spout design is at the same time the most intriguing one. Here, a tubular spout of generally polygonal section and, on occasion, with an openwork back, is surmounted by a feline or other abstracted animal head which serves as the tip (cat. nos. 2, V.2/1, V.2/1/1; fig. 2, pl. 2, fig. 22). The small **mouth** area found on all the ewers in this group is generally horseshoe-shaped and surrounded by a flat protruding lip.

The angular **handle** varies from very broad to very flat and is of simple appearance. It bends straight down from its upper attachment area at the back of the mouth or upper neck to its lower attachment area at the rear of the central body. Sometimes the handle's attachment plaques are more or less almond-shaped and, on several occasions, feature a hinge-like loop or a bird-head projection on or near their lower end (cat. nos. 3, 10-12, V.2/3; figs. 3, 9-11, 17). In several cases the handle has been lost (cat. nos. 5, 7, V.2/4, V.2/5; figs. 5, 7, 18-9).

The most frequent type of **thumbpiece** is a small globe, sometimes surmounted by a tiny hemisphere (cat. nos. 6, 9, 11, V.1/1, V.2/3, V.2/6-8; figs. 6, 8, 10, 12, 17, 20-2). However, conical finials (cat. nos. 8, 10, V.1/2; pl. 1, figs. 9, 13) and bird-shaped thumb-rests can also be observed (cat. nos. 12, 13, V.1/1; figs. 11, 12).

1.1. Manufacturing Technique

Most of the bronze ewers in this category, which vary from 12.5 to 39.5 cm in height, appear to have been assembled from four cast components, comprising the

neck and spout section, the body and foot, the base plate and the handle, all of which were soldered together.⁶ Ewers 1 and V.1/1 (figs. 1, 12), on the other hand, differ from the remaining pieces in that they were apparently made from individual segments raised from bronze sheet.⁷ Thus the body, for example, was created from two hemispherical halves which were joined, either by castellation (cat. no. 1; fig. 1) or tiny nails (cat. no. V.1/1; fig. 12), around the circumference.⁸

Other separate parts included the neck and spout section as well as the handle which was rivetted on with small nails. The latter, unlike the other parts of these two ewers, was probably cast.⁹

2. Decoration

On the **plain-bodied ewers**, decorative motifs were applied partly in relief and partly by means of incising, and in some cases copper inlay may also have formed part of the original design.¹⁰ Ornamented areas include the body and shoulder plate, the neck and the spout as well as, in certain cases, the mouth plate, the foot and the handle.

On ewers 2-5 and 9 (figs. 2-5, 8), relief decoration on the **body**, enhanced by incised detailing, is the most prominent feature. Thus, on ewer 2 (fig. 2) the upper front of the body is occupied by a panel filled with lozenges and two lateral concentric roundels. Below, a panel with deeply grooved criss-crossing, which curiously adjoins the left of the handle but terminates some distance from its right, highlights the body's central circumference. Small incised motifs like simple

⁶ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 221; Baer 1983, p. 322 note 222. The collar so frequently encountered on the lower neck was apparently intended to conceal the point where the spout joins the neck; cf. Baer 1983, p. 96.

⁷ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 221; Scerrato 1964, p. 696 no. 9, p. 699 no. 10.

⁸ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 221.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ In his book "Persian Metal Technology" Allan discussed in detail the technical process which was used to achieve the relief decoration on ewer 3 in this category; cf. Allan 1979, p. 61.

medallions framing the panels and concentric roundels, partly with scrolling border, as well as whirling roundels, complete the ornamentation on the body of this vessel.

The decoration on ewer 3 (fig. 3) is nearly all epigraphic. On the shoulder three incised cartouches with benedictory Kufic as well as the name of the artist, probably "al-Qasīr", alternate with three decorative medallions.¹¹ The visually most prominent inscription, however, runs around the centre of the body: a monumental Kufic inscription containing a succession of benedictions executed in high relief.¹²

Ewers 4 and 5 (figs. 4-5) feature a virtually identical layout. As with the decorative treatment of the shoulder of ewer 3 (fig. 3), so here, too, three individual Kufic cartouches, flanked by concentric roundels with abstract detailing, are disposed on the façade and sides of the upper body, in this case, however, executed in relief. In the case of ewer 4 (fig. 4) the central panel again reveals the name of the artist - Nāsīr - while the Kufic on 5 (fig. 5) is purely benedictory.¹³ Below, a broad and very elaborate epigraphic band encloses the central body, interrupted on the front and on the side by large medallions of varying appearance.

On ewer 4 (fig. 4) the lateral roundels contain an intricate geometric interlace design while the frontal motif displays a "tree" design placed on a triangular stepped base with two addorsed birds perching in the tree's branches. Above, a small lozenge pointing at the artist's name higher up terminates this decorative feature, which is in addition surrounded on the outside by incised ray-like motifs.¹⁴

In the case of ewer 5 (fig. 5), on the other hand, the two roundels in the centre and on the ewer's left hand side (as seen from the back) correspond in design, each containing again two addorsed birds, their beaks touching, within a leafy tree-like setting; and above, a small inscribed roundel with another bird figure in profile. The third medallion, oddly placed on the right side of the body rather

¹¹ al-'Ush 1972, p. 189.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ On this ewer the artist's name - Hassan - appears on the base.

¹⁴ Baer 1987, p. 5.

than on the front as one would expect, contains a fantastic Tree-of-Life design on a triangular base with two addorsed birds perching on a column-like stem in the centre - a scene nearly identical to that encountered on ewer 4 (fig. 4). Finally, on both ewers the ornamentation of the body is completed by four small identical roundels with abstract designs placed beneath the central inscription panels.

On ewers 8 and 9 (pl. 1, fig. 8) motifs executed in relief are much less prominent. In the case of no. 8 (pl. 1) the relief decoration is restricted to the panel on the central upper body containing the copper-inlaid name of the artist - Ibn Sa'id. All the remaining motifs, i. e. the floral roundels flanking the inscription and the three large cartouches below, are incised.¹⁵ On ewer 9 (fig. 8) the raised inscription panel again occupies the upper façade of the body, and in this case three small roundels executed in relief and filled with incised arabesques occupy the front and sides of the central body.

The remaining pieces with plain globular bodies reveal only incised enhancement on the body. Interestingly, the body decoration of ewer 6 (fig. 6) seems to echo the decorative layout of ewers 4 and 5 (figs. 4-5) closely. It consists of a benedictory Kufic inscription around the central body interrupted by three roundels with geometric interlace stars, which are placed oddly off centre, i. e. they do not correspond precisely to the central and lateral axes of the body. The shoulder area above the "central" medallion is filled by another, narrower Kufic inscription panel, which perhaps again contains the name of the artist. It is flanked by two roundels with abstract wavy motifs flanking a central lozenge. The very same feature also occurs on ewers 7, 8, 10(?) and 11 (fig. 7, pl. 1, figs. 9-10).

On 7 (fig. 7) the panel is flanked by two lozenges inscribed within small roundels and reads 'amala 'Alī al-Ghaznavī. The importance assigned to this epigraphic frieze is not only, as on the other pieces, reflected by its central position

¹⁵ Most of the incised decoration is very worn indeed, while the large floral cartouches are very crisp and clearly drawn. This fact suggests that the latter were re-engraved. However, I was unable to establish whether they were re-engraved parts of the original design or motifs chosen at a later date to occupy the spaces left by motifs that had disappeared through wear and tear.

on the body but again, as on ewer 4 (fig. 4), by an ornament pointing to it from below: in this case a small roundel on a pedestal base with trilobed finial and a central inlaid copper disc. In addition another small trefoil, which springs from a palmette band surrounding the shoulder collar above, points to the same spot. A simple vase motif to the right of the central design completes the decoration on the ewer's body.

On ewer 10 (fig. 9) the central inscription panel, yet again flanked by roundels, is purely benedictory. On the body's sides, two large roundels containing a rosette composed of six circles complete the decoration. The decorative layout of ewer 11 (fig. 10) is very similar to that on no. 10 (fig. 9) with the exception that the small roundels of the epigraphic frieze are here filled with simple knots and placed on the panel's lower outer sides. They are also repeated near the handle. The large lateral roundels again contain rosettes made up from six circles, but here the design is of a clearly vegetal nature with the circles developing out of scrolling branches and each containing a small trefoil in the centre. The bodies of ewers 1, 12 and 13 (figs. 1, 11) remain undecorated.

On the **faceted bodies** of ewers V.1/1 - V.1/4 (figs. 12-15) it is again the central circumference which receives the most attention as far as the decoration is concerned. On ewer V.1/1 (fig. 12) the facets are interrupted by a succession of upright, silver-inlaid lozenges with pearly borders. At their centre the copper circle is actually the head of a nail, which is part of the support system which keeps the upper and lower halves of the body together. On ewers V.1/2-4 (figs. 13-15) the body's petal-like facets are interrupted around the centre by a horizontal inscription frieze with intermediate roundels containing abstract rosette designs. Interestingly, each alternate upper petal receives a simple benedictory inscription, which runs vertically from the shoulder downwards.

On ewers V.2/1 - 7 (pl. 2, figs. 16-21) it is the surface of each vertical lobe which is enhanced, generally in a way that emphasises their verticality. However, in at least one case (V.2/1; pl. 2) the verticality of the body structure is enhanced and

counteracted decoratively at the same time, thus creating an interesting visual tension. Thus, narrow bands of abstract scrollwork outline each lobe, clearly emphasising their physical appearance. At the same time, a succession of alternating interlaced rosette roundels and whirling motifs, disposed in the centre of each lobe, highlights the horizontal expansion of the body and thus clearly counteracts the vertical impact created by the structural elements of the body and their ornamental outlining.

A similar, yet perhaps at first sight less obvious, aesthetic tension of verticality and horizontality is created on the body of ewer V.2/3 (fig. 17), where the vertical friezes of palmettes and pseudo-Kufic compete visually with the implied horizontal band of rosettes in the centre of most of the remaining vertical lobes.¹⁶

On the remaining pieces the same aesthetic concept is even more hidden, but it is still tangible. Here, at first sight, each lobe or, more commonly, every alternative lobe, receives a vertical ornamental panel which highlights the relevant element of the body structure. However, in every case a closer study of these decorative panels also invites or indeed requires another "reading" than the vertical one. Thus, in the case of ewer V.2/2 (fig. 16), where a large elongated and interlocked band of abstract scrollwork occupies the centre of each lobe, the close physical proximity of the motifs clearly invites the beholder to perceive the body's horizontal circumference rather than the verticality of each lobe.

On ewers V.2/4 - 7 (figs. 18-21) the abstract vegetal or scrolling panels on some of the lobes can doubtlessly be read vertically. The epigraphic panels, on the other hand, which incidentally are assigned wider portions of the individual lobe and are therefore clearly superior to the ornamental friezes in their decorative importance, only make true sense if perceived in a horizontal position.¹⁷

¹⁶ It is interesting to note in this context that the same decorative technique of contrasting vertical and horizontal decoration can be observed on several ewers belonging to ewer type ICAW 6, to whom the pieces discussed here are typologically related; cf. chapter 16.

¹⁷ It is perhaps significant that in at least one instance the central lobe on the front of the body again contains the signature of the artist, unfortunately as yet unread (V.2/7).

Ewer V.2/1/1 (fig. 22), with its concave facets, is a unique piece in this group. Here, the only body decoration consists of incised outlining and simple fleur-de-lys motifs which occupy the area between the raised shoulder plate and the onset of the grooves below.

Several ewers in this category not only show a more or less extensive enhancement of the body but may reveal ornamentation on the shoulder plate, the neck and spout section, the mouth and the handle.

The **shoulder plate** often displays a frieze of benedictory or pseudo-epigraphy, mainly Kufic (cat. nos. 2, 3, 4[?], 5, 7, 8, 12, V.1/1-4, V.2/2, V.2/7-8; figs. 2-5, 7, pl. 1, figs. 11-16, 21-2). On several occasions the epigraphic band can be interrupted by individual motifs such as whirls and floral motifs (cat. nos. 7, 12; figs. 7, 11) or flanked by various geometric or abstract borders (cat. nos. 2, 5, 7, 8; figs. 2, 5, 7, pl. 1). On other ewers the shoulder plate can also carry an abstracted vegetal frieze (cat. nos. 6, V.2/1; fig. 6. pl. 1) or various geometric designs (cat. nos. 9, 11, V.2/3, V.2/5-6; figs. 8, 10, 17, 19, 20).

Turning to the **neck**, the base remains plain in all but one case (cat. no. 11; fig. 10), where it displays a Kufic inscription. The neck collar can be enhanced by various designs such as a guilloche band (cat. no. V.1/1; fig. 12), panelling (cat. no. V.1/3; fig. 14) or beading (cat. nos. 12, V.1/4; figs. 11, 15). The area below the spout most typically receives a rectangular panel across the front, terminating below the lateral ring protrusions. Its borders and the filler motifs within vary a great deal. Generally speaking, the former are of an abstract, geometric, epigraphic or floral nature, while the latter are mainly floral or again geometric.

Additional vertical panels with varying decoration (Kufic, geometric designs) can adjoin the panel towards the back of the neck (cat. nos. 4-6, 9; figs. 4-6, 8). Only few vessels diverge from this pattern. Thus, ewer 3 (fig. 3) displays an all-enclosing system of vegetal designs on its neck, while the neck of ewer V.2/2 (fig. 16) shows a band of scrollwork crossed at the front, filled with intermediate

guilloche and floral designs. Ewer V.2/3 (fig. 17), finally displays a composition of abstract and geometric bands.

The projecting ridge which introduces the spout is enhanced in various ways. It can receive a succession of round cavities or circles (cat. nos. 4, 7, 12, V.1/1, V.1/4; figs. 4, 7, 11-2, 15), panelling (cat. nos. 5, V.1/4; figs. 5, 15), a wavy band, often with small filler motifs (cat. nos. 5, 6, V.2/3, V.2/6; figs. 5, 6, 17, 20), or a guilloche pattern (cat. nos. 8, V.2/7; pl. 1, fig. 21).

On the **spout** itself it is mainly the outer edges which receive ornamentation. Most typically a decorative band, generally filled with scrolls or a guilloche and enclosing a central floral motif below, runs across the lower front and up the sides. More often than not its ends curl inwards, and on occasion the latter can be emphasised by bird heads (cat. nos. 8, V.2/5; pl. 1, fig. 19). The upper edges of the spout can also receive narrow decorative bands of varying, mainly abstract, design. On occasion this band runs down the sides and its ends curl inwards (cat. nos. 7, V.1/1; figs. 7, 12). In the case of no. 7 (fig. 7) this treatment corresponds to that of the band which rises from below. Only on occasion is the remaining space on the spout enhanced with floral and other elements, too (cat. nos. 4, 5, V.2/2, V.2/6; figs. 4, 5, 16, 20).

The small **spout cover** encountered on several vessels in this category can also display ornamentation. This is generally of an abstract, geometric or floral nature (cat. nos. 1, 5, 6, 8, 9[?], 12, V.1/1, V.2/3, V.2/6-7; figs. 1, 5, 6, pl. 1, figs. 8, 11, 12, 17, 20-1).

The same applies to the decoration of the **lip** (cat. nos. 2, 5[?], 6; figs. 2, 5, 6), although, interestingly, bird heads can appear in this area, too (cat. nos. 5?, 7; figs. 5, 7).

In several cases decorative enhancement can also be observed on the handle. Mainly it is placed on raised panels situated on the lower handle, and again abstract, geometric or floral designs such as interlace, guilloche or scrolling bands are most popular (cat. nos. 1, 2, 6, V.1/1, V.2/7; figs. 1, 2, 6, 12, 21). The handle

decoration of ewer V.2/1/1 (fig. 22) is unique in that it displays a system of palmettes executed in openwork.

If the foot is decorated it receives a Kufic or pseudo-Kufic inscription (cat. nos. 4, V.1/1; figs. 4, 12).

3. Origin of Ewer Type

The profile of the ewers in this category is highly unusual and cannot immediately be traced back to pre-Islamic prototypes of any kind. Allan in his thesis considered the body and neck profile on the one hand and the obliquely rising beak spout on the other as separate typological entities.

He explained the body and neck as originating from a glass bottle style and noted that the same shape also occurred in bottles executed in monochrome lustre, underglaze-painted and mina'i wares, which are contemporary to the bronze vessels.¹⁸ As for the origin of the spout, he speculated that it may have derived from an originally removable accessory of such a glass bottle, shaped out of leather or metal.¹⁹ Another scholar, dealing with the ewer in Berlin (no. 6; fig. 6) states that the spout design revives an ancient Iranian design, without, however, giving any evidence for this claim.²⁰

In fact the concept of an obliquely rising beak spout remains quite unprecedented in Iran, in early Islamic as well as pre-Islamic times, and vessels with such spouts seem to appear quite suddenly in the eastern regions of the Islamic empire, i.e. in the areas of eastern Iran and modern Afghānistān, around the late 10th century A.D. Before that no predecessors among the well-known ewer types of the early Islamic or Sasanian periods can be cited as far as their apparently innovative shape and in particular their spout design are concerned. This fact is

¹⁸ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 222; Louisiana 1987, p. 71 fig. 40, p. 74 no. 40.

¹⁹ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 222; Louisiana 1987, p. 74 no. 40.

²⁰ Berlin 1979, p. 115.

remarkable, because the other three common spouts encountered on Islamic ewers, i. e. a round mouth, a horizontal spout issuing from the mouth and an obliquely rising body spout, have all been shown in this thesis to have derived ultimately from Hellenistic and, occasionally, related Sasanian or Sogdian prototypes.

In an attempt to trace the origin of the ewer type discussed here the first clues may be found in the historical climate from which the vessels emerge from the late 10th century onwards. Interestingly, their subsequent distribution seems to coincide quite closely with the rise of the Islamic Turkish dynasties in the East, namely the Qarakhānids (992-1211), the Ghaznavids (977-1186), the Ghūrīds (ca.1000-1215) and eventually the Great Seljuqs (1038-1194).²¹ The original homelands of these dynasties are situated in modern Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and a closer look at pre-Islamic and early Islamic objects produced in these areas reveals the existence of certain ewers which seem immediately to anticipate the profile of the Islamic bronze vessels considered here.

Thus, among the pottery excavated in several Turkic sites in Central Asia, a Turco-Sogdian site datable to between the 5th and the 8th century A.D. yielded a bulbous pottery jug with a slight beak spout and triangular shoulder motifs (fig. 23). Two similar vessels came to light in an 8th - 10th-century Karluk site (fig. 24), and yet another one, though later in date and in fact contemporary with the Islamic bronze ewers, was discovered in a site of the Qarakhānid period, i.e. the 11th/12th century A.D.²²

On the basis of such admittedly preliminary evidence it appears that beak-spouted ewers with globular bodies had been in use among the Turkic population of Central Asia for centuries. However, the story does not end here.²³

Long before the apparently first occurrence of such ewers in eastern regions, various ewer shapes with large, obliquely rising beak spouts had been popular in the

²¹ Fehérvári 1976, p. 56; Bosworth 1980, pp. 111, 115, 181, 184.

²² Esin 1969, p. 243 fig. 12A, p. 244 fig. 12B; Bernstam 1950, pl. XCV.

²³ What follows is a summary of a theory I published in *Persica* 1990-2; cf. Al-Khamis 1990-2.

West, where the first examples, executed in metal and pottery, appear in Asia Minor as early as the 3rd millennium B.C. Subsequently, they spread, in several typological varieties, all over the eastern Mediterranean to Greece, Italy and eventually into central Europe, where they were still popular well into the 3rd century B.C.

Considering the remarkable extent of this geographical distribution and the long survival of such ewers in the West, it seems quite likely that at some point during this time vessels with this particular type of spout may also have travelled eastwards. Perhaps the first historical opportunity for such a transmission eastwards involving more than the occasional vessel occurred during the days of Scythian supremacy in the steppes, when intense trade with the Greeks led to a steady flow of western and in particular Greek and Hellenistic artefacts into Central Asia and further east. Later such ewers may have also travelled along the Silk Road after its establishment in the 2nd century B.C.

Within Central Asia the region of Bactria with its strong Hellenistic links would have been one of the foremost recipients of such artistic imports from the West, and if beak-spouted ewers were indeed known in this region, then it was most likely here that the Turkic nomads who gradually infiltrated the area were first introduced to them as well as to other Hellenistic artefacts. Subsequently, such objects may then have been gradually absorbed into their own cultural and artistic heritage.²⁴

If we accept that the Turkic peoples were already familiar with the ewer type discussed here in their Central Asian homelands long before their increasing influx into eastern Iran and Afghānistān in early Islamic times, the enigma regarding the apparent link between the sudden distribution of such ewers from the 10th century onwards and the concurrent establishment of Islamic Turkish dynasties in the East appears solved and one may assume that the subsequent far-reaching Turkification

²⁴ For a more detailed elaboration of this hypothesis and references used see Al-Khamis 1990-2.

of the eastern regions of the Islamic empire led to a gradual introduction of globular-bodied ewers with obliquely rising beak spouts into the early Islamic metalwork produced in Iran. It is to be hoped that future research will consolidate and substantiate the preliminary ideas put forward in this chapter and provide the missing historical and material links, which for the moment have to be treated as purely hypothetical.

4. Provenance and Date

So far neither the precise date nor the geographic provenance of the ewers assembled in this category can be determined with absolute certainty.²⁵ However, with regard to their place of origin there are certain indications which seem to point to eastern Iran, modern Afghānistān and Central Asia. Thus, ewers 1 and V.1/1 (figs. 1, 12) were found in Maimāna, located to the south-west of Balkh and, in medieval times, a flourishing city situated on the important commercial route which connected Balkh, Merv and other centres in Khurāsān.²⁶ Ewer V.2/4 (fig. 18) was discovered in the region of Khasaw-Jurt (Cummuck), and in the case of ewer 7 (fig. 7) a certain 'Alī al-Ghaznavī, clearly originating from if not living in Ghazna, signs himself as responsible for its manufacture.²⁷

In addition to the admittedly scanty evidence provided by these particular pieces, an examination of the decorative motifs featured on the vessels in this group is at present the best way to uncover extra clues as to provenance and indeed dating.

The decoration on ewer 1 (fig. 1) is unfortunately so meagre that it can hardly serve to date the vessel with any accuracy. However, one preliminary indicator may be the simple knot design encountered on both sides of the neck. This

²⁵ Baer 1983, p. 99.

²⁶ Scerrato 1964, p. 675.

²⁷ Baer 1983, p. 99. Baer mentions another piece in this context, which was acquired in Ghazna - without, however, giving any additional identifying details.

motif appears in virtually identical form on a 10th/11th-century shaft of a stand preserved in the Kabul Museum, which, incidentally, was likewise recovered at Maimāna, and also on a contemporary rose-water sprinkler from Khurāsān.²⁸ The same detail also occurs on the neck of ewer 2 (fig. 2), but in this case the pierced feline which serves as the spout provides a much more significant clue as to the piece's chronological position.

Very similar lion figures, also executed in bronze and often with an identical pierced or hollow neck, came to light in Nīshāpūr and have been dated by Allan to the 10th and 11th centuries. Fehérvári, on the other hand, attributes similar lion figures to 11th-13th-century Iran (fig. 25).²⁹ In addition the interlaced palmettes executed in openwork along the back of the zoomorphic spout can also be paralleled on a contemporary bronze shaft of a stand from the same site (fig. 26).³⁰

Ewer 3 (fig. 3) with its unique and highly artistic Kufic inscription in relief, has been dated to the 12th century by al-'Ush, probably taking into consideration the existence of silver inlay, which became popular around that time.³¹ Allan, on the other hand, compared the style of the epigraphy with early 12th-century architecture in northern as well as western Iran and arrives at an 11th-century dating.³²

As for the ewer's exact provenance, there is little evidence at present, but it undoubtedly comes from the same general region as the other pieces, i. e. the fringe areas of eastern Iran. Such a suggestion seems to be supported indirectly by the fact that the relief cast style applied on it appears to have been used first in eastern Iran

²⁸ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 34, p. 35 fig. 10, p. 44 no 5. A 10th/11th-century dating for the ewer would more or less correspond to an original suggestion made by Allan, who speculated that both the ewers from Maimāna (cat. nos. 1 and V.1/1) may date to between the 10th and the early 12th century; cf. Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 221.

²⁹ Allan 1982, p. 86 fig. 101, p. 87 no. 101, p. 100 nos. 173-175, p. 101 figs. 173-5. Additional examples can be found in Fehérvári 1976. Here such figures are dated 11th-13th century A.D; cf. Fehérvári 1976, pls. 38-9.

³⁰ Allan 1982, p. 103 no. 180, pp. 53-4.

³¹ al-'Ush 1972, p. 190. This dating was also put forward by Scerrato; cf. Scerrato 1966, p. 33 pl. 13.

³² Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 221.

around 1100, after it had been introduced to the region from China via the main Central Asian trade routes.³³

Ewer 4 (fig. 4) was dealt with recently by Eva Baer, who dates it to the late 11th century and attributes it to either Transoxiana or the region of modern Afghānistān, with Ghazna as one potential centre for its production.³⁴ Allan takes the presence of the intricate interlace roundels on the sides of the ewer as an indication for a similar, 11th - 12th-century dating.³⁵ Ewer 5 (fig. 5), whose decoration includes a Tree-of-Life motif which is virtually identical to that on the preceding piece, was originally dated to the 10th or 11th century by al-'Ush, based in particular on his consideration of the epigraphy, which he compared to several artefacts of 10th - 11th-century date.³⁶

However, as Allan pointed out quite rightly, a dating on epigraphic grounds alone is in fact very difficult, as there is as yet no clear understanding of the stylistic changes which affected the Arabic and Persian scripts in Iran between 1000 and 1200 A.D.³⁷ Considering the close similarities between ewer 5 (fig. 5) and the preceding pieces, both with regard to their profile as well as their decorative layout and detailing, it appears that ewer 5 (fig. 5) should be dated very close to ewer 4 (fig. 4), i. e. into the 11th century or even slightly later. In addition, one would also expect the provenance of both pieces to be rather similar, and indeed, this seems to be the case, as several of the decorative motifs encountered on ewer 5 (fig. 5) are linked by Allan to designs applied to the Transoxanian slip wares from Samarqand as well as to certain bronze and high tin bronze bowls and dishes produced in that area.³⁸

³³ Allan 1979, pp. 61-2.

³⁴ Baer 1987, p. 15. A similar attribution, i. e. to 12th-century Sistan, was already suggested by Marchal; cf. Marchal 1974, pp. 17-8, fig. 12. The fact that certain technical peculiarities as well as iconographic details like the Tree-of-Life motif link the ewer to ancient Sogdian and Central Asian artefacts indirectly underlines the probability of that attribution; cf. Baer 1987, pp. 8-13.

³⁵ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 221.

³⁶ al-'Ush 1972, pp. 195-6.

³⁷ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 221.

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 222.

Ewer 6 (fig. 6) has been attributed, somewhat enigmatically, to Rayy. In fact, its profile, its decorative layout, which appears to be a simplified, and in this case merely incised version of the decoration encountered on ewers 4 and 5 (figs. 4-5), and its individual decorative features all favour an eastern Iranian provenance.

Thus, the large interlaced star patterns which interrupt the large central inscription band for example can be found on several artefacts from that area, like for example a 12th-century bowl, which, according to Melikian-Chirvani, may have been produced in Samarqand (fig. 27).³⁹ The same motif, in slightly more elaborate form, also occurs in an illuminated *sūra*-heading of a 12th-century Qur'ān manuscript, which is now in Tehran (fig. 28).⁴⁰ The roundels which flank the artist's signature on the upper body appear again in identical form on an early 11th-century bronze incense burner acquired in Sīstān and today preserved in the Louvre (fig. 29).⁴¹ Considering these few comparable examples and assessing not only the individual motifs discussed here but also the style of the decoration in general, it seems that the rather simple execution seems to come closer to that on the early 11th-century incense burner than to the more sophisticated style encountered on the Samarqand bowl. However, to be prudent, an 11th- to early 12th-century dating should be considered as a basis for further research.⁴²

Ewer 7 (fig. 7), executed by 'Alī al-Ghaznavī, was discussed recently by Eva Baer. Regarding its dating she assigned major importance to the lateral vase designs on the ewer's body, which are characterized by a relatively small globular body and a dome-shaped neck with a short stalk terminating in a lozenge rising from its centre.⁴³ According to the scholar the profile of the motif, crudely executed as it might be, reflects contemporary taste and a sense of proportion that

³⁹ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 92 no. 25.

⁴⁰ Rice 1953 (II), p. 65, p. 66 figs. 5 & 6.

⁴¹ Baer 1983, p. 53 fig. 37.

⁴² This dating was already suggested by al-'Ush; cf. al-'Ush 1972, p. 196, p. 198 note 14.

⁴³ Baer 1987, pp. 3, 5-8.

can be paralleled in shapes of extant vessels, which have been attributed to 11th- or 12th-century Afghānistān.⁴⁴

Be that as it may, the ewer's profile itself, as well as its decorative layout and several of the individual motifs on neck and spout, relate the vessel closely to the preceding pieces and indicate a provenance in Transoxiana or modern Afghānistān and a late 11th-century dating, an attribution also incidentally arrived at by Baer.⁴⁵ The same attribution may also be assumed for ewer 8 (pl. 1), again based on profile and decoration.⁴⁶

Ewer 9 (fig. 8) was attributed to 12th-century Khurāsān by its auctioneers, but the possibility of a slightly earlier date and a provenance from a region further to the east or north-east should not be discounted, especially if one compares the particular spout design on this ewer to that on ewer 6 (fig. 6) on the one hand, which was tentatively dated to the 11th or early 12th century, and that on the hammered spout of ewer V.1/1 (fig. 12) on the other hand. The latter piece was excavated in Maimāna and dated to some time between the late 10th and the early 12th century.⁴⁷

Ewer 10 (fig. 9) was discussed by Allan, who ascribes the piece to 10th/11th-century Transoxiana and points out that this origin for the ewer is further implied by the fact that the decoration on the neck and spout are derived from artistic traditions current in 7th- and 8th-century Sogdia.⁴⁸ The attribution of ewer 11 (fig. 10) is somewhat difficult as the vessel is undoubtedly composite. Among

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 5. On the basis of this alleged similarity Baer then speculates whether the vase may not in fact have been a trademark of the workshops which produced vessels of that profile. I find the latter idea rather far-fetched, and whatever truth may be in it, it remains pure hypothesis until concrete evidence can be put forward to consolidate such claims. I believe rather that the motif may have a symbolic significance and perhaps refers to the Fountain of Life in paradise, a motif familiar since classical and Hellenistic times. However, the validity of this suggestion will also have to be tested by future research.

⁴⁵ Baer 1987, p. 15.

⁴⁶ I prefer at this stage not to include the three large medallions on the body in the discussion, as I could not establish whether they were simply re-engraved original designs or later additions to cover the worn remnants of the original decoration.

⁴⁷ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 221.

⁴⁸ Louisiana 1987, p. 74 no. 40.

the motifs enhancing the body, the small knotted designs can be paralleled on 10th - 12th-century artefacts from eastern Iran and Afghanistan.⁴⁹

The large rosette motif with central trefoils, on the other hand, seems like a simpler version of similar medallions placed along the margin of a certain Qur'ān page which was copied by one Ibrahīm ibn 'Alī - probably working in Iraq - in 1036 (fig. 30).⁵⁰ On the basis of such evidence, a 10th - 12th-century dating seems most prudent as far as the body of the ewer is concerned. Its provenance remains unclear, although its profile seems to link the piece to the other eastern Iranian and Transoxanian vessels in this group.

Ewer 12 (fig. 11) is yet another rather enigmatic piece, which, though sharing the general characteristics of the group, stands somewhat apart because of certain variations in profile, structural accessories and decoration. The pseudo-inscription on the shoulder, interspersed with floral stalks and scrolls and interrupted by whirling and petalled roundels, is particularly intriguing. The presence of silver inlay and the elongated triangular shape of the *hastae* seem to suggest an early 13th-century dating at the earliest, but further study will be necessary to place this ewer with any degree of accuracy. Similar uncertainty must remain with regard to ewer 13, attributed to 12th-century eastern Iran, as no photo was available on which any more substantial analytical comments could have been based.

Ewers V.1/2 - V.1/4 (figs. 13-15) are virtually identical in structural design and decorative programme, if one leaves aside the rather peculiar neck and spout design of V.1/2 (fig. 13). Accordingly, they may well come from the same area in either eastern Iran or Transoxiana, though where exactly seems at present impossible to say. The dating also remains unclear, although the 11th - 13th century has apparently been suggested for ewer V.1/4 (fig. 15).⁵¹

⁴⁹ Baer 1983, p. 63 fig. 45. See also the discussion of ewer 1 above.

⁵⁰ Safadi 1978, p. 62 fig. 48.

⁵¹ Khozhageldtsev 1990, p. 29, pl. 11.

On ewer V.2/1 (pl. 2) the zoomorphic feline spout appears to be a less sophisticated version of that encountered on ewer 2 (fig. 2), which we tentatively linked to artefacts dated to the 10th/11th century A.D. The simple style of the decorative motifs applied to body and neck seems to confirm a dating around the same period.⁵² The cock-shaped thumbpiece, on the other hand, can be paralleled on a 9th- or 10th-century bronze hook (fig. 31).⁵³

Ewer V.2/2 (fig. 16) was attributed to 13th-century Iran by its auctioneers. Nevertheless, if one is to judge by the style of the decoration an earlier date seems rather more likely. Be that as it may, both the structural peculiarities and the decoration of this piece set it apart from the other vessels. Both aspects will need more thorough investigation in the future in order to establish beyond doubt this ewer's true chronological and indeed geographical position within the group discussed here.

Ewer V.2/3 (fig. 17) was discussed by Fehérvári, who suggested a late 12th- or 13th-century and an Iranian provenance.⁵⁴ Allan, on the other hand, basing himself on the style of the vegetal designs and the knot motifs, put forward an 11th-century dating and assumed links with Transoxanian workshops. I would consider the latter suggestion as more feasible, not least in view of the attribution attempted for the other pieces in this category with which the Keir ewer has close typological as well as stylistic links.⁵⁵

Ewers V.2/4-7 (figs. 18-21) also justify an 11th-century dating. Their ultimate provenance is again unknown, but the narrow abstract panels on some of their lobes closely recall the "bevelled style" so common among the nomadic tribes of Central Asia and Mongolia since pre-Islamic times and still popular during the

⁵² It should be noted, however, that similar feline spouts and related protomes have also on occasions been dated to later periods, i.e. the 11th-13th centuries; cf. Fehérvári 1976, pls. 38-9.

⁵³ Dahncke 1988, pp. 22-3. Here again it has to be said that similar bird finials have also been attributed to later centuries; cf. for example Baer 1983, pp. 51-2, fig. 36 for 12th-century bird finials on bronze incense burners.

⁵⁴ Fehérvári 1976, p. 62 no. 51.

⁵⁵ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 221-2.

10th and 11th centuries in regions inhabited by Turkish peoples along the fringes of eastern Iran.⁵⁶

Ewer V.2/1/1 (fig. 22), finally, is undoubtedly of later date than the previously mentioned vessels in this group, a suggestion underlined by several aspects of the ewer's appearance. Apart from the rigid outlines of its profile there are certain innovations not encountered earlier, such as the treatment of the body with its concave facets, the considerably higher shoulder plate, the thick angular handle and its precarious attachment to the ewer by means of disproportionately thin attachment plaques and the spout design.

With regard to the latter, the feline head which serves as the tip is no longer an integral part of the spout proper but clearly demarcated from it. The spout itself is of a form unparalleled in this group but clearly linked generically to the spout design encountered on a group of bronze and brass ewers generally attributed to 12th- and 13th-century eastern Iran. Such considerations make the 12th or 13th-century dating suggested by Fehérvári and Safadi seem reasonable as a basis for further research. The location of the ewer's workshop on the other hand remains a mystery at present, and although it is quite feasible that it can again be sought in the fringe areas bordering on eastern Iran, other regions should not be excluded from future speculations.⁵⁷

To sum up it appears that the bronze ewers assembled in this category were produced in at least three eastern regions of the Islamic empire between the 10th

⁵⁶ Ettinghausen 1961, pp. 129-130, figs. 1a, 2-4, 7-8. In this context the small abstract motifs applied to the spout covers of these and indeed other ewers of this group are of additional interest. Individual ornaments such as these can sometimes be traced back directly to ancient symbols used by the Inner Asian nomads. Thus, the two S-shaped elements joined in the centre by a central lozenge encountered on ewer V.2/7, for example, seem to be derived directly from an ancient design symbolizing two dogs fighting for a bone (cf. Jettmar 1967, p. 16 fig. 1). The ornament on ewer V.2/6 on the other hand may include in degenerated form the ancient symbol of the tiger (cf. *ibid*). Traditional nomadic symbols like these entered not only the cultural sphere of the east, but can also often be found - in strikingly similar form - in the West; cf. Noll 1958, p. 45 for a 7th-century Germanic belt buckle with an ornament closely comparable to that on the spout cover of ewer V.2/7 mentioned above.

⁵⁷ Fehérvári and Safadi 1981, p. 92 no. 37.

and 12th or early 13th centuries. These are Transoxiana, Khurāsān and Sīstān.⁵⁸ Within these areas the cast ewers were probably produced in larger metalworking centres: places like Ghazni, Herat, Nīshāpūr, Merv and Bukhāra spring to mind. Hammered pieces like the two rather crudely executed vessels from Maimāna probably represent provincial copies.⁵⁹

5. Function

At present there are no immediate indications as to what might have been the original use of the ewers assembled in this group. However, if we return to the apparent links these vessels had with pre-Islamic and early Islamic Turkish culture in Central Asia and the other regions bordering on eastern Iran, it is challenging to examine whether their function, too, might not, at least originally, have been linked with specifically Turkic or Turkish traditions and social habits and whether these vessels did not indeed form a very characteristic part of Turkish cultural life.

In an attempt to establish the ewers' significance in a specifically Turkish environment, the first clues can be extracted from their somewhat peculiar profile and their often unusual decorative detailing. These aspects alone suggest that the ewers might not have served merely as everyday utensils, but that they may in fact have been used in a more specific ambience.

First indications that such an assumption is valid can be found when analyzing the figural decoration of a silver dish in the Hermitage. This object has most recently been attributed to a Sogdian workshop active in Merv in the early 9th

⁵⁸ This suggestion has already been put forward by Allan in 1976; cf. Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 221-2.

⁵⁹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 222. Interestingly, this ewer type with all its variant forms was also repeatedly copied in pottery and this in workshops located throughout Iran: for monochrome, lustre, underglaze-painted and moulded pieces of this group see Fehérvári 1977, no. 89; Scerrato 1964, figs. 70-1; Wilkinson 1963, pl. 65; Lane 1947, pl. 42d; Berlin 1979, p. 115 no. 431.

century A.D. (fig. 32).⁶⁰ In its centre a ruler, his head surrounded by a halo and adorned by a fantastic winged crown, is seated cross-legged on a richly ornamented carpet which probably covers the actual throne structure (carried by lions) underneath. In his right hand he holds a drinking bowl. The ruler is flanked by two servants above and by two seated musicians, a lutanist and a flautist, below.

From a purely stylistic point of view, there can be no doubt that the imagery owes a great deal to Sasanian as well as Sogdian traditions, particularly as far as its technical execution and the rendering of certain iconographic details are concerned.⁶¹ However, the scene depicted and the positioning of its figures can be traced back directly to Buddhist and Turkish conventions of ruler imagery and royal banquet scenes.⁶² In all these the ruler is shown seated frontally with his ankles crossed, a position which according to Emel Esin symbolically maintained the equilibrium of the world and justice between all components of society, while all the elements of the world in personified form converged around him centripetally.⁶³

On the dish the figural set-up is perfectly in line with these ancient conventions. The monarch, holding a cup in his raised hand, is seated crosslegged in the centre. He is being attended by two standing servants flanking him symmetrically, and entertainment is provided by the two musicians playing the flute and the lute below. All of these secondary figures create a circle around the central princely figure, and that circle is completed by the disposition of the two lion figures in between, positioned in the centre below the throne.

As regards the setting of this scene, at first sight it merely indicates that a royal banquet is taking place. However, the ritual significance of this scene lies deeper still, and again the examination of Turkic cultural traditions provides important clues in this respect. Among the Turkic peoples, various cultic cup rites

⁶⁰ Marshak 1986, p. 79, pl. 30, pl. 32, p. 426 no. 31, p. 429 nos 30 & 32.

⁶¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 303.

⁶² *Ibid.*; Esin 1968, pp. 86, 93.

⁶³ Esin 1968, pp. 86, 103.

involving their chieftain were of the utmost significance. These were mainly performed on the occasion of royal investitures and concurrent allegiance ceremonies.

The ruler, with his vassals and servants aligned symmetrically around him, would be enthroned with his regalia, sitting cross-legged with ankles crossed in a pose of royal ease, which he alone was allowed to use.⁶⁴ Before the cup was served to anybody else he would receive the first bowl from the cup-bearer, who poured the drink from a special jug, *sagrak* in Turkish, while a special orchestra including instruments like the lute and the flute would play ritually significant melodies.⁶⁵ This cup was laden with symbolic significance. In the eyes of the people present it contained *soma*, which was the traditional drink of the Indo-Kushan kings and was from ancient times considered a nectar bestowing immortality. According to Indian myths it was originally drunk by the legendary king of heaven.⁶⁶ The rulers of the nomads drank it in homage to the gods, while at the same time it symbolized to them the divinity of the monarch himself and his unique right to enjoy power over his lands. More generally, the cup was also considered a symbol of life, which one drinks as the course of life continues and finally drains only at the time of death.⁶⁷

Most interestingly, this very moment in the performance of the various Turkic cup-rites is often depicted in Buddhist and Manichaean-Turkic art.⁶⁸ One example is a funerary stele executed by Turkish artists for the Kök Türk prince Bilge Kagan (d. 734) (fig. 33). Its composition, the frontally squatting prince with a cup in his hand flanked by two standing, symmetrically disposed attendants, directly anticipates the 9th-century imagery of the plate under discussion here. More generally, it forms an important prototype for other representations of cup-holding monarchs in cross-legged frontal position down to the end of the Seljuq period.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 97, 100, 106; Esin 1969, pp. 224, 243.

⁶⁵ Esin 1968, pp. 97, 99, 101-2, 108; Esin 1969, pp. 229, 247.

⁶⁶ Esin 1968, p. 106; Esin 1969, pp. 224, 226, 246.

⁶⁷ Esin 1968, p. 106; Esin 1969, pp. 228, 238.

⁶⁸ Esin 1969, p. 230 fig. 4A, p. 236 fig. 9A as examples.

⁶⁹ Esin 1968, pp. 103-4; Esin 1969, pp. 230-2.

In the context of these observations the suggestion that a Turkic scene may be depicted on the dish seems feasible. This fact is of vital importance because the servant attending the ruler on his left carries a ewer in his lowered hand, which most interestingly has an obliquely rising spout springing from the upper neck of the ovoid body,⁷⁰ and in its general shape seems to anticipate directly the Islamic ewers which emerged around the 10th or 11th centuries A.D.

We know that ewers were of great importance during the performance of Turkic cup-rites as they, together with ritual cups, constituted the most important emblematic implements of the rites. The jug (sagra) bore the royal seal and was considered a sign of royal power. Its name even came to symbolize the person of the ruler himself: "Thy conversation may lead thee to the sagra" was a saying which indicated that the ability to be a good conversationalist could lead to the company of kings.⁷¹

Most interesting is the appearance of such decanters which according to several sources were mainly executed in gold and silver.⁷² Their shape is known, according to Emel Esin, from many Central Asian artefacts dating mainly from the 6th to the 8th centuries.⁷³ Typically, they are represented with spouts in the form of bird and animal heads, or they are rendered as complete bird or ram shapes.⁷⁴ Such treatment immediately recalls the small ewer on the 9th-century dish, whose abstracted beak-spout could certainly relate to the same symbolic function which the more naturalistically rendered bird spouts on these jugs were intended to express.⁷⁵

In summarizing the observations made above, it seems feasible that the scene on the plate refers to a particularly Turkic banquet scene and that ewers with

⁷⁰ A very similar ewer also appears on another object executed in the very same workshop in Merv in the first half of the 9th century A.D; cf. Marshak 1986, pp. 50-1, pl. 34, p. 426 tab. no. 41, p. 429 no. 34; Jullian 1954, p. 17, pl. 60; Anon 1897, p. 360; Vasselot n.d., pp. 65-6, 1 plate.

⁷¹ Esin 1968, p. 101; Esin 1969, pp. 225, 238.

⁷² Esin 1980, p. 244 n. 188 (Ch. III).

⁷³ Op. cit., p. 118.

⁷⁴ Op. cit., pp. 118, 244 n. 188 (Ch. III); Esin 1969, p. 238 fig. 10B.

⁷⁵ For the symbolic meaning of bird imagery in Turkish art see Esin 1980, pp. 100-1. Certain birds were considered messengers from heaven or auspicious emblems relating to holiness and high rank.

globular and rounded bodies and large beak-spouts rising obliquely from the neck played a significant part during such apparently ritual drinking bouts.

Interestingly enough, such cup-rites did not cease with the conquest of Islam, but continued to be performed throughout early Islamic times by Islamized Turkish rulers. Even the Great Seljuqs still upheld the custom of these drinking ceremonies, and Ibn Bībī gives us lively descriptions of such feasts.⁷⁶

Again, such rituals are also depicted in Seljuq art, and in the context of this examination one bronze bowl is of particular interest (fig. 34). It closely follows the composition of the dish from Merv.⁷⁷ Again the frontally squatting ruler with the cup in his left hand is flanked symmetrically by two standing attendants. The servant to the right of the ruler holds up a cup, while yet again a beak-spouted ewer is placed in front of him. The re-appearance (or perhaps persistence) of this peculiar vessel type after a gap of several centuries in connection with Turkic ritual drinking feasts, as depicted on contemporary artefacts, is relevant, because it indicates that beak-spouted ewers, particularly those with rounded bodies, continued to be used in a ritual context peculiar to Turkic peoples between at least the 9th and roughly the early 12th century.

More evidence is certainly needed to substantiate the claims made above, but for the time being the hypothesis put forward here seems to provide enough preliminary evidence to establish at least one valid line of enquiry.

6. Summary

Cast (and occasionally hammered) bronze ewers with globular bodies, cylindrical necks and large, obliquely rising beak spouts appear around the 10th century A.D. in regions bordering on the eastern fringes of Iran, i. e. modern Afghānistān,

⁷⁶ Esin 1968, p. 102.

⁷⁷ Esin 1968, p. 108 pl. XV B; Esin 1969, p. 246 fig. 13A.

Turkestan and Central Asia. They remain popular throughout the 12th and probably into the 13th century.

As for their typological origin, it was suggested that they may have been in use among the Turkic population of Central Asia long before the advent of Islam and that they may ultimately have been introduced from the West, where ovoid-bodied ewers with large, obliquely rising beak spouts had a very long history and considerable distribution. The ultimate function of the Islamic vessels is unknown, but there seems to be some circumstantial evidence that they may have been used in the context of ritual cup rites specifically popular among Turkic and Turkish peoples before and after Islamization.

Catalogue

1. Kabul Museum; Maimāna; bronze, body assembled from two hammered hemispherical halves with castellated joints around its circumference, joint additionally secured by copper nails; handle and neck with spout cast (?), handle rivetted on; incised; h. 24 cm.

Squat and bulbous globular body on flat base, which has a concave hexagonal centre with likewise concave, circular area inscribed within; above, small raised moulding around neck base; cylindrical neck with angular collar near base and two lateral hinges to receive large rings (one now wanting); curved, obliquely rising beak spout joined to neck by diagonal, slightly projecting ridge; spout covered apart from small area near the tip; horseshoe-shaped mouth area with flat projecting lip; angular handle with slightly projecting lower part, globular knob thumbpiece and heart-shaped attachment plates. Body undecorated; on neck, narrow guilloche band running down from the lateral hinges and across the front encloses two lateral knot motifs beneath spout ridge; on spout cover, two superposed guilloche bands; on lower handle, simple interlace panel (fig. 1).

Lit.: Scerrato 1964, p. 699 no. 10, pls. XVI, XVII figs. 30-32, pl. XXX fig. 52; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 220-2, Vol. 2, pp. 632-3 no. B/1/6.

2. Khalili Collection MTW 754; n. p.; cast bronze, base joined on; relief and incised decoration; h. 36.5 cm.

Shape similar to 1 but more rounded; low waisted foot; raised narrow shoulder plate; neck collar higher up and very narrow; broader spout ridge; obliquely rising tubular spout with openwork back and tip rendered as feline head; flat angular handle with globular thumbpiece on columnar base; ring projection on lower handle; above, broad leaf-shaped attachment ending in small projecting ring. On body, across the upper front, relief panel containing lozenges flanked by concentric roundels; panel adjoined above and below by small pointed medallions spaced out between the lozenges and by lateral lancet-shaped extensions; around lower body, larger relief band, adjoining left of handle but terminating some distance from its right, with deeply grooved crosses, incised detailing and flanking geometric and whirling roundels above and below; on shoulder plate, benedictory Kufic, flanked by incised hatching near neck base and very worn system of concentric circles around outer edge; lower neck plain; on neck, system of abstract vertical panelling, horizontal guilloche below and benedictory Kufic above enclosing lateral knot roundels; palmette motif beneath centre of spout ridge; on underside of spout: below, small palmette and guilloche above; on mouth rim, abstract scrollwork; on lower handle, raised panel with abstract scrollwork (fig. 2).

Lit.: Unpublished.

3. MMA 59.53; n. p.; bronze, cast in four parts: body and foot; base plate (missing), neck and spout, handle; relief decoration, incised, silver inlay; h. 29.5 cm, diam. 18.7 cm.

Form as 2 but straight foot, neck collar broader and lower down, neck shorter; pierced boss on either side of neck; spout slightly broader with two lateral bosses on central upper edge and ring protrusion on underside; lower spout aperture covered; on angular handle, leaf-shaped attachment plates with small ring protrusions and projecting lower part with horizontal bird-head extension; knob thumbpiece with cut corners on low triangular base. On shoulder plate, silver-inlaid benedictory Kufic executed in champlevé technique; across centre of upper body, three cartouches with benedictory Kufic alternate with three decorative medallions containing baraka lī ṣāhibihī and the name of the maker "al-Qaṣīr (?)"; large benedictory Kufic in relief around central body; benedictory Kufic also around base and on sides and back of handle; on neck and spout, all-over decoration of abstract vegetal designs; around lower underside and up the sides of spout, two decorative strands curling inwards at the top (fig. 3).

Lit.: Scerrato 1964, p. 697 fig. 69; Scerrato 1966, p. 33 fig. 13; Ettinghausen 1970, fig. 2; al-'Ush 1972, pp. 188-190, figs. 1-6; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 220-2, Vol. 2, p. 631 no. B/1/1, fig. 30; Allan 1979, pl. 3a.

4. Private Collection; n. p.; cast bronze, worked in several parts; raised, incised, pierced, remains of copper inlay; h. 39.5 cm, diam. 19 cm.

Body shape as 1 but with low, very slightly waisted base; all remaining features as on 3, but pierced lower spout cover and pierced polygonal thumbpiece on low cylindrical base; raised polygonal shoulder plate; lower handle with irregularly placed, horizontal grooves and ring protrusion; lower handle termination projecting horizontally and pierced. Around central body, raised decoration: large polylobed central motif with hatched border and ray-like extensions, depicting a stylized tree design on a triangular stepped base with a pair of confronted birds perched in the tree's branches; flanking medallion, broad intricate Kufic panels with grooved borders, adjoining large lateral roundels with patterns based on interlaced triangles and semi-circles; further connecting inscription(?) panels adjoining handle; positioned above medallions, three Kufic inscription panels, each flanked by lozenges inscribed in concentric circles, the central panel naming the maker Nāṣir; additional lozenge-filled circles on lower body corresponding to centres of inscription friezes; on foot and shoulder(?), Kufic inscriptions; on upper neck, concentric roundels flanked by geometric bands below and up the sides; behind the latter, vertical Kufic inscriptions; on spout ridge, decorative band with spaced out circles; round lower underside and up the sides, abstract scrolling band curling inwards at the top; remaining spout surface with vegetal designs; geometric and cable bands around outer edges (fig. 4).

Lit.: Marchal 1974, pp. 17-8, fig. 12; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 220-2, Vol. 2, p. 632 no. B/1/4; Baer 1983, p. 95, fig. 72, p. 322 note 222; Baer 1987, pp. 1-15, figs. 5, 6a-b.

5. Damascus National Museum 15381; n. p.; bronze, cast in four parts: spout and neck, body and base, bottom of base, handle (missing); raised, incised; h. ca. 35 cm, diam. ca. 20 cm.

Form as 3, but body more angular in profile; slightly concave foot; broader, more curved spout with pierced lower spout cover; raised hexagonal shoulder plate. Around neck base, zig-zag band followed by benedictory Kufic frieze; corresponding to three alternate edges of shoulder plate, small benedictory Kufic cartouches flanked by concentric roundels; on central body, large benedictory Kufic frieze interrupted at front by large tree motif with confronted birds (surrounded above by leafy branches); below, corresponding to epigraphic sections, one or two concentric roundels with heart-shaped abstract motifs inside; on base, name of maker: Hassan; on neck below spout ridge, triangular palmette panels flanked by geometric band below and up the sides; behind the latter, vertical benedictory Kufic; on spout ridge, wavy line with intermediate circles; around spout edge, grooved band; wavy line with intermediate circles across lower underside and up the sides, terminating in inward-curving loops; in centre of underside, lancet leaf; on mouth, incised circles and (?) bird heads; on spout cover, simple incised motifs (fig. 5).

Lit.: al-'Ush 1972, pp. 191-6, figs. 7-13; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 220-2, Vol. 2, pp. 631-2 no. B/1/2.

6. West Berlin, Islamic Museum I. 1598; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 24 cm, diam. 13.6 cm.

Form as 4 but more waisted foot; round shoulder plate; slightly shorter spout without ring on underside; solid lower spout cover; handle attached to lower rather than upper neck; expanded lower handle and bulbous globular thumbpiece with hemispherical finial. Around central body, benedictory Kufic inscription interrupted by roundels (slightly off centre) filled with six-pointed geometric interlace stars; across the upper front of body, again off centre, Kufic inscription panel naming the

maker ('amala ... ?), flanked by two roundels with adjoining vertically positioned, sinuous lines framing a central lozenge; on shoulder plate, stylized scrolls; above neck collar, across front of lower neck and up the sides, narrow band of abstract scrolls, interrupted at the corners by small squares with central cross; band encloses fleshy palmette motifs below the spout ridge; towards the back of the neck, adjoining the vertical scrolling panels, vertical panels with superposed y-shaped motifs; on spout ridge, sinuous line with intermediate, hollowed-out triangles and central crossed diamond motif; on spout, across lower front and up the sides, abstract scrollwork with crossed corner squares; around spout tip, panelled border; on spout cover, two confronted bands with inward-curving ends; on lip, row of circles; on lower handle, abstract scrolls (fig. 6).

Lit.: Pope 1938, pl. 1277c; Rice 1953 (II), p. 65-6, fig. 5; Scerrato 1964, pp. 697-8; Erdmann 1967, no. 21; Berlin 1971, no. 429; al-'Ush 1972, pp. 196-8, fig. 14; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 220-2, Vol. 2, p. 632 no. B/1/3.

7. Private Collection; n. p.; bronze cast in separate parts; traces of copper inlay, incised; handle fallen off and now separate; h. 31.7 cm, max. diam. 18 cm.

Form as 6 but slightly slimmer neck collar and additional (now damaged) ring on underside of spout. On central upper body, artist's signature in Kufic: 'amala 'Alī al-Ghaznavī, flanked by two lozenges inscribed in circles; inscription emphasised visually by two decorative elements: a) floral ornament springing from a narrow palmette band above and pointing to the name 'Alī and b) crescent-like, copper-inlaid disk on flat base with trefoil finial, pointing to the artist's name from below; to right of crescent motif, abstract vase design; on shoulder plate, benedictory Kufic with floral motifs in between; above neck collar, across the front, row of squares with traces of copper inlay; above, cursive inscription starting below left ring projection (as seen from handle), running across the front and up the other side, terminating below right ring; remaining space below spout ridge with triangular palmette panels; on ridge, large circles with central dot (traces of copper inlay); across lower front and up the sides of spout, wavy band ending in inward-curving loops; above, guilloche running below tip and down the sides and ending in small, inward curving loops corresponding to the ones below; along outer spout edges, traces of cable patterns; on lip, lateral birds' heads; lower spout covered(?) (fig. 7).

Lit.: Baer 1987, pp. 1-15, figs. 1a-b, 2a-d, 3a-d, 4a-c.

8. Khalili Collection MTW 168; n. p.; cast bronze; incised, copper inlay; h. 29 cm. Form as 6, but thin neck collar, large crescent-shaped rings suspended from sides of neck; ring on spout underside; flat handle with pine cone-shaped thumbpiece.

On central body and on sides, large roundels with stylized palmette scrolls against a hatched background, the central one with additional lobed frame (roundels perhaps re-engraved?), the lateral ones with faint pointed extensions; in between medallions, small roundels with three whirling leaves and pointed motifs; above central medallion, copper-inlaid and raised Kufic panel with artist's signature 'amala Abī(?) (Ibn?) Sa'ad, flanked by small roundels with abstract vegetal motifs; above, enclosing shoulder plate, remains of joined circles; on shoulder plate, Kufic followed by lobed band identical to that around central medallion; lower neck plain; across front of neck above, circles joined by stepped motifs; large lateral scroll below ring protrusions; below spout ridge, triangular panels with abstract floral motifs; on ridge, cable pattern; above, across the lower front and up the sides of the spout, abstract scrolls terminating in inward-curving bird heads with obliquely set almond motifs corresponding to the latter above; in centre of underside, trefoil; on lower spout cover, addorsed and adjoining S-shaped motifs terminating in leaf-like extensions above (pl. 1).

Lit.: Unpublished.

9. Sotheby's 16.10.85, lot 185; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 24.5 cm.

Form as 6, but slightly more globular; slightly narrower spout with covered lower part; ring on spout underside; globular thumbpiece with squared finial on high

conical base. On body, three roundels in slight relief with central whirling motifs(?), obliquely grooved borders and floral extensions above and below; between roundels, incised arabesque sprays(?); across the upper front of the body, inscription panel; on shoulder plate, repetitive geometric motif; on neck, above collar, identical motifs, enclosed by grooved borders, across lower front and up the sides and flanked towards the handle by abstract panel of superposed lozenges; remaining space below spout ridge with simple floral motifs; along lower underside of spout and half up the sides, abstracted scrolling band; panels along upper sides of spout, enclosing lateral knobs, evoke animal heads with eye, muzzle and (?)mouth; on spout cover, probably floral design(?) (fig. 8).

Lit.: Sotheby's 15/16. 10. 85, lot 185.

10. Kuwait, Private Collection I/270; n. p.; cast quaternary alloy; incised, copper and silver inlay; h. 33.8 cm, diam. 19.54 cm.

Body similar to 1, but wider and on low splayed base; raised shoulder plate with thin ridge around neck base; large lobed rings suspended from sides of neck; bosses on sides and underside of spout; additional loops on upper and lower handle terminations and lower handle at shoulder height; pine cone-shaped thumbpiece. On body, lateral roundels containing rosettes created from seven circles; on upper front, flanked by small roundels, benedictory inscription; decoration on shoulder plate (not discernible from available photograph); neck collar, neck pendants and spout ridge with successions of small round cavities; across front of neck and up the sides, scrolling band; above, floral motifs; along front of lower spout and up the sides, abstract scrolling band enclosing floral motif in the centre; terminations of band curve inwards and enclose small cavities; remaining areas of spout with indiscernible decoration, but along its outer edges, slightly raised and hatched bands (fig. 9).

Lit.: Louisiana 1987, p. 71 fig. 40, p. 74 no. 40.

11. Sotheby's 27.4.81, lot 47; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 26 cm.

Form as 10, but straighter foot (base with rosette in relief not belonging); neck collar higher; upper neck not belonging; round cavities on handle, hinge near base; globular thumbpiece. On body, large rosette roundels with central trefoils, small roundels with geometric interlace and, on upper front, Kufic inscription; on shoulder, raised band of incised geometric design; on lower neck, Kufic (fig. 10).

Lit.: Sotheby's 27.4.81, lot 47.

12. Khalili Collection MTW 1067; n. p.; cast bronze; incised, silver inlay; h. 21 cm.

Squat ovoid body on rounded base; flat projecting shoulder with slightly rounded collar introducing neck similar to that of 10; arched handle with bird head as lower attachment and bird thumbpiece. Body plain; on shoulder, pseudo-inscription with alternating whirling and rosette roundels; simple scrollwork below spout collar and up the sides as far as ring projections; on raised collar and spout ridge, circles with central dot; on spout, above ring projection, and on spout cover abstract scroll motifs (fig. 11).

Lit.: Unpublished.

13. Christie's 11.4.89, lot 477; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 12.5 cm.

Spherical body and tubular neck with obliquely rising, curved and partly covered trough spout; loop handle. The body cast with a band of fine horizontal ribs, the neck and spout with panels of engraved and applied (sic) arabesques within stylized inscription borders, the spout also crossed by two bars of washers; the handle with bird thumbpiece (ewer probably composite) (no image available).

Lit.: Christie's 11.4.89, lot 477.

V.1/1 Kabul(?); excavated at Maimāna, Afghanistan; hammered bronze (body bipartite: two hemispheres joined by copper frame and nails); foot replacement(?); handle rivetted on; incised; copper and (?)silver inlay; h. 25 cm.

Squat globular body on low angular foot, its surface with shallow vertical facets interrupted by central lozenges; slightly raised shoulder plate; low cylindrical neck base with projecting ridge above; tall cylindrical neck with ornithomorphic beak-spout rising obliquely from its upper part (lower part of spout aperture covered); flat projecting lip around horse shoe-shaped mouth; angular arched handle with almond-shaped attachment plates terminating in small hinges; small globular thumbpiece with hemispherical finial on conical base. On foot, pseudo-Kufic(?); on body, central lozenges with frames of round cavities; on alternate facets and on shoulder, pseudo-epigraphy; on neck collar, guilloche; on lower neck and up the sides, pseudo-Kufic, above floral roundel flanked by large roundels framed by circles with central cavities; similar motifs on incised spout demarcation; on spout edges, guilloche curling inwards below, enclosing copper button on either side; on spout cover, simple palmette; on handle, plaiting and geometric designs (fig. 12).

Lit.: Scerrato 1964, pp. 696-699 no. 9, figs. 25-9; Mortimer-Rice and Rowland 1971, p. 90 no. 174, pl. 174; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 220-222, Vol. 2, p. 632 no. B/1/5; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 173 note 7, p. 430; Baer 1983 pp. 95-6, fig. 73, p. 322 note 223.

V.1/2 C. L. David Collection 10/1970; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 30 cm.

Form as V.1/1, but facets petal-shaped and interrupted by central band; very narrow shoulder plate; neck widening towards obliquely set mouth with flat, nearly vertical lip; vertical ridge at front of neck introduces curved, funnel-shaped spout; broad angular handle with attachments terminated by hinges and pine cone-shaped thumbpiece. On central body, Kufic inscription interrupted by rosette roundels; on alternate upper facets and on shoulder, Kufic; on lower neck, indiscernible decorative panel (fig. 13).

Lit.: Unpublished.

V.1/3 Khalili Collection MTW 1246; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 30 cm.

Form as V.1/2, but neck and spout like 7 with large crescent pendants on neck and underside of spout; flat angular handle with globular thumbpiece. On central body, Kufic inscription interrupted by rosette roundels; on alternate upper petals, baraka written in between remains of pointed design; pseudo-Kufic on shoulder; panelling on neck collar and spout ridge; on neck, abstract scrollwork and vegetal motifs; spout underside framed by abstract scrolling band forming loops on sides; above, on outer spout edge, zig-zag pattern with central curve (fig. 14).

Lit.: Unpublished.

V.1/4 Ashkhabad Museum (?); Turkmenistan; bronze, incised; dimensions unknown.

Form as V.1/3, but no handle and spout tip broken. On central body, pseudo(?)Kufic interrupted by beaded roundels; on alternate facets, inscription(?); on shoulder, Kufic; on neck collar and spout ridge, beading; on neck, indiscernible decoration; on lower spout, decorative band curling inwards on sides (fig. 15).

Lit.: Khozhageldtsev 1990, pl. 11.

V.2/1 C. L. David Collection 58/1974; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 30 cm.

Form similar to V.1/3 but body more rounded with convex facets; broad neck with large, funnel-shaped spout rising from mouth level and terminating in animal head; arched angular handle with indentations below and cock-shaped thumbpiece. On body facets, alternating rosettes and whirling roundels with narrow scrolling panels framing each facet; on shoulder, abstract scrolls; on neck, similar band running from sides down, crossing at the front and continuing up the sides of the spout; spaces in between filled with simple geometric interlace (pl. 2).

Lit.: Baer 1983, p. 322 notes 223, 224.

V.2/2 Christie's 23.11.84, lot 555; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 25.5 cm.

Form as V.2/1 but squatter and wider body and shoulder plate; wide open beak spout rising from mouth; thumbpiece polygonal knob. On body facets, intertwining guilloche and abstract scrolling bands; on shoulder, Kufic; on neck, crossed abstract scrolling band with floral motifs and guilloches in the intermediate spaces (fig. 16).

Lit.: Christie's 23.11.84, p. 219 lot 555.

V.2/3 Keir Collection; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 32 cm, diam. base 9.7 cm, h. neck and spout 17 cm, h. foot 2.5 cm.

Form as V.2/1, but neck and spout as 8; flat angular handle; conical thumbpiece with globular finial. On the 16 body facets, either pseudo-Kufic flanked by palmettes or central rosettes, three facets plain; on shoulder, zig-zag lines with intermediate circles, framed by a band of *lām-alifs* in relief; similar patterns in two registers on neck; on spout ridge, wavy lines; on spout and spout cover, scrollwork and vegetal motifs (fig. 17).

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 220-2, Vol. 2, p. 633 no. B/1/7; Fehérvári 1976, p. 62 no. 51, pl. 15 no. 51; Baer 1983, p. 322 note 223; Tabbaa 1987, p. 104 fig. 14.

V.2/4 Tiflis Museum; Khasaw-Jurt (province of Cummukhsh); bronze (copper?); incised, copper inlay; h. body 18 cm, h. neck 11 cm, h. spout 9 cm, overall h. 38 cm.

Form as V.2/3, but alternating rounded facets and those with either wide or narrow, flattened central panel; no ring suspensions; handle missing. On flattened facets, either Kufic with central bird(?) roundel or superposed vegetal designs; shoulder decoration not visible on available photograph; on neck, Kufic across front; above, plant motifs; on sides of neck, scrolls and guilloche; on spout, vegetal band curling inwards up the sides; outer edges of spout pierced (fig. 18).

Lit.: Uvarov 1902, pp. 181, 199 no. 134, pl. XIV.

V.2/5 Christie's 10.10.89, lot 527; n. p.; bronze; copper inlay, incised; h. 30 cm.

Form as V.2/4, but no collar around lower neck and round cavities on spout ridge; only front rib(?) and central ribs on sides flattened. On frontal rib, benedictory Kufic; on side ribs, abstract vegetal motifs, on some of the other ribs very worn crude Kufic; on shoulder, geometric band; on neck, floral panels flanked by geometric band below and on sides; on spout, scrolling band terminating in two inward-facing bird heads up the sides (fig. 19).

Lit.: Christie's 10.10.89, lot 527.

V.2/6 Khalili Collection MTW 170; n. p.; cast bronze. incised; h. 37 cm.

Form as V.2/4, but with original angular handle and globular thumbpiece. On flattened ribs, alternating Kufic flanked by floral designs and stylized scrollwork; underneath handle, superposed volute and bud designs; on outer shoulder, geometric design interrupted by concentric circles; around neck base, zig-zag pattern with intermediate semi-circles; on neck, vegetal panels framed by geometric band below and on sides; on spout ridge, wavy line and circles; on spout, band of wavy scrolls curving inwards up the sides; above, band on outer edges forming knot around hinge on underside; on spout cover, volute design (fig. 20).

Lit.: Unpublished.

V.2/7 Khalili Collection MTW 171; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 36 cm.

Form as V.2/6. On ribs with wide flattened centre, Kufic on punched ground, flanked by stylized floral roundels and geometric motifs; on ribs with narrow flattened centre, scrollwork; on central rib in front, maker's name (unread); on outer shoulder, Kufic; around inner area, zig-zag pattern; neck decoration as on V.2/6; guilloche on spout ridge; on spout, scrolling band curling inwards up the sides; heart-shaped motifs around lower hinge and on spout cover; on lower handle,

stylized scrollwork, below floral roundel and geometric motif identical to those on epigraphic panels on facets (fig. 21).

Lit.: Unpublished.

V.2/1.1. ex. Khalili Collection; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 30 cm, diam. mouth 5.5 cm, diam. base 10 cm.

Form similar to V.2/7, but squatter body with convex facetting and wider foot; base plate with small depression in centre; strongly protruding, wide shoulder plate with thin ridge around neck base; cylindrical neck with strongly projecting rounded beak-spout, curving outwards from mouth level and terminating in a lion's head; arched, broad angular handle with globular thumbpiece attached below the mouth and - by means of flat extension only - to body. On body, simple incised outlining of facets with small fleur-de-lys patterns above; on shoulder, floriated benedictory Kufic; on lower neck, stylized scrollwork; above, geometric interlace roundels; around spout edges, stylized scrollwork; top of spout with palmettes in openwork; on handle back, undulating palmettes (?) in openwork (fig. 22).

Lit.: Fehérvári and Safadi 1981, p. 92 no. 37.



Plate 1

ICAW 4/8. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 29 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 168).

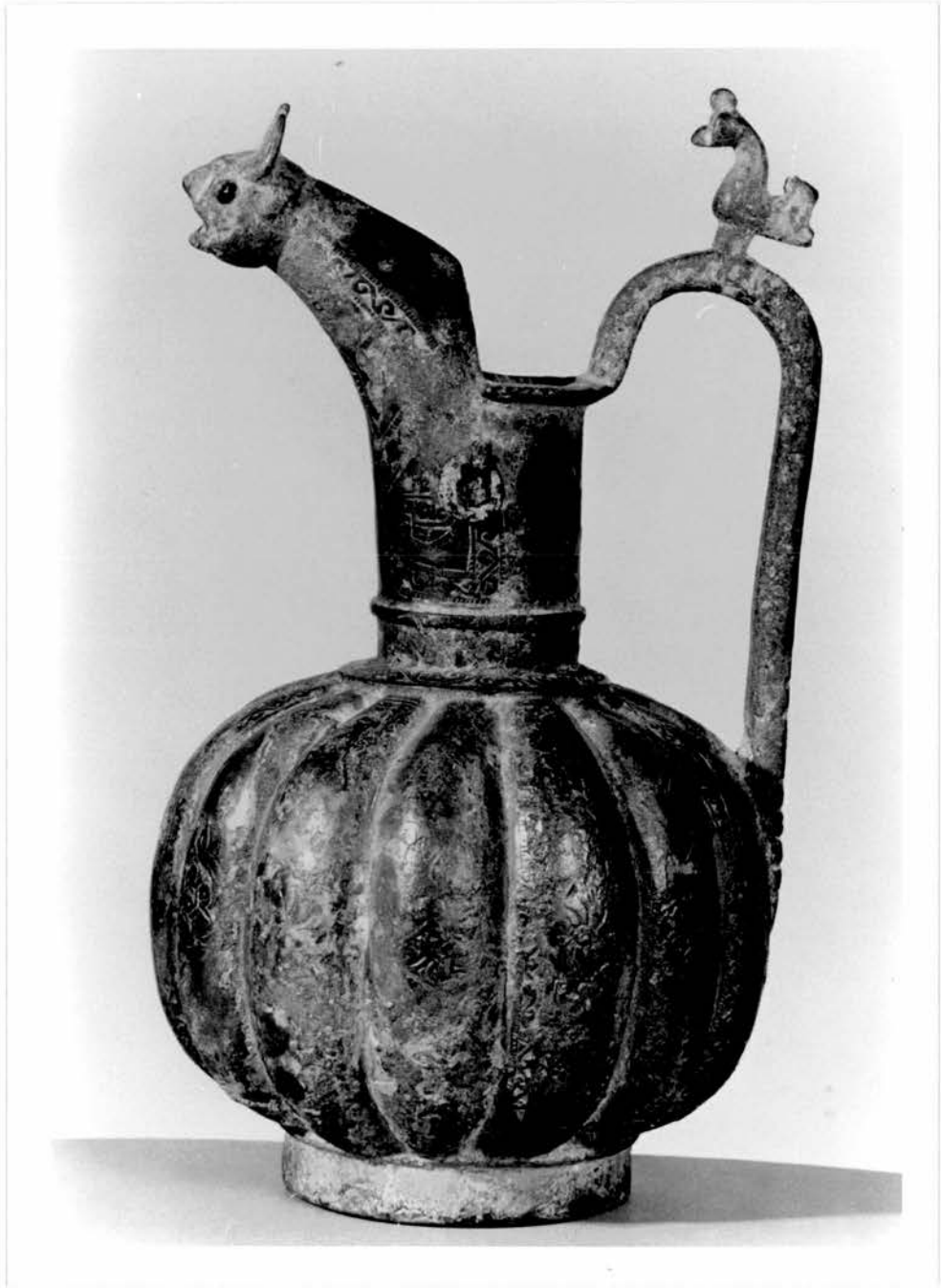


Plate 2

ICAW 4/V.2/1. Bronze Ewer, h. 30 cm
(Copenhagen, C.L. David Collection, inv. no. 58/1974).

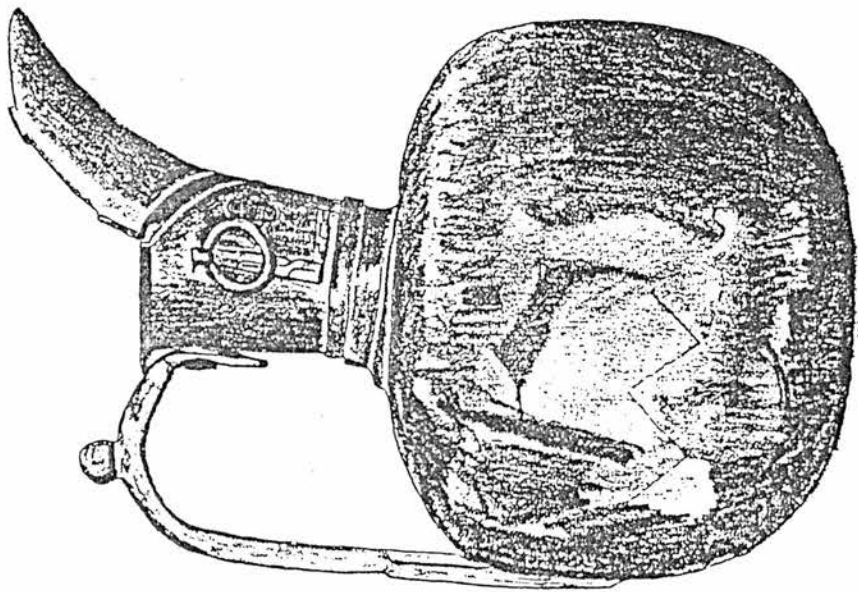


FIG. 1
ICAW 4/1. Hammered Bronze Ewer from Maimāna,
Afghanistan. H. 24 cm (Kabul Museum).

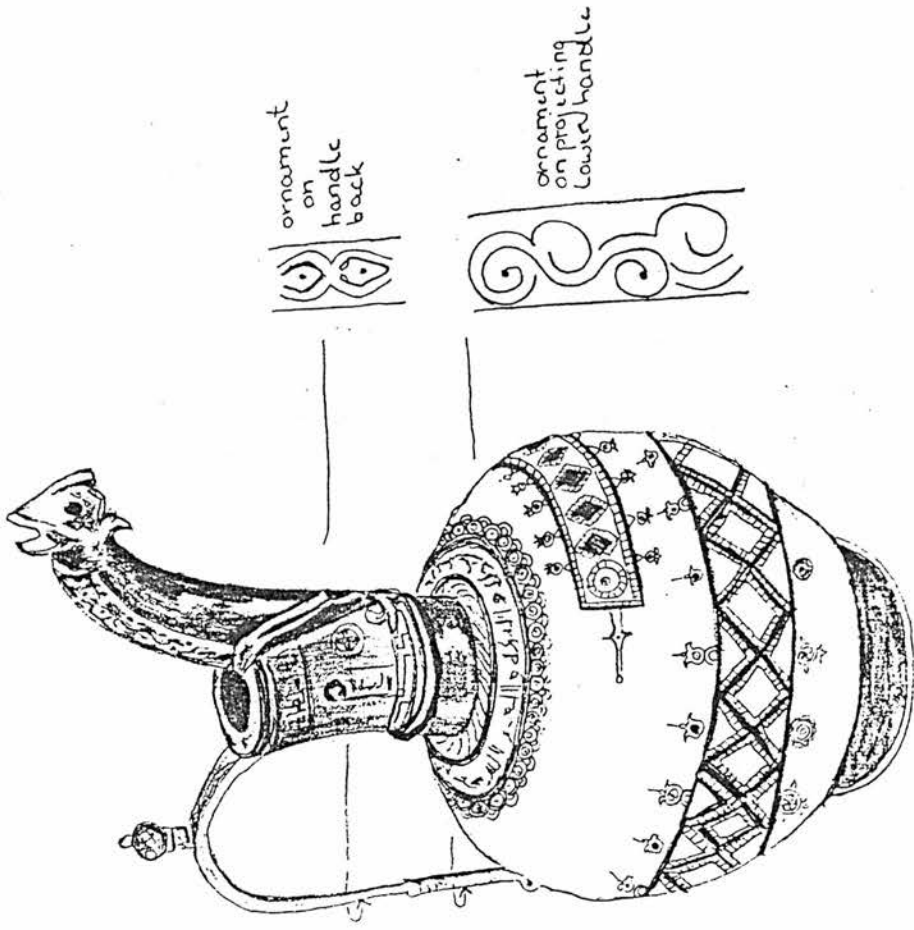


FIG. 2
ICAW 4/2. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 36.5 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 754).

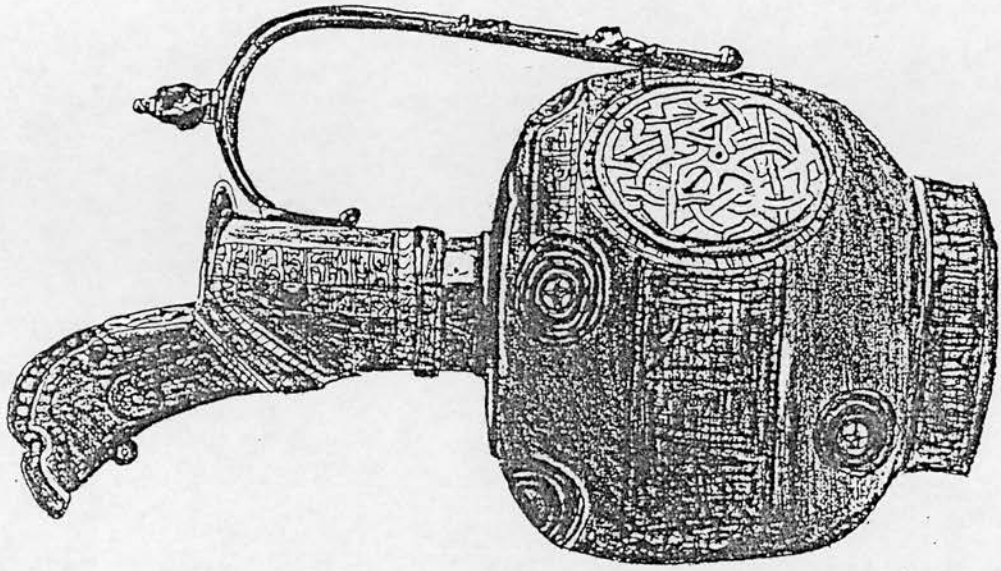


FIG. 4
ICAW 4/4. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 39.5 cm
(Private Collection).

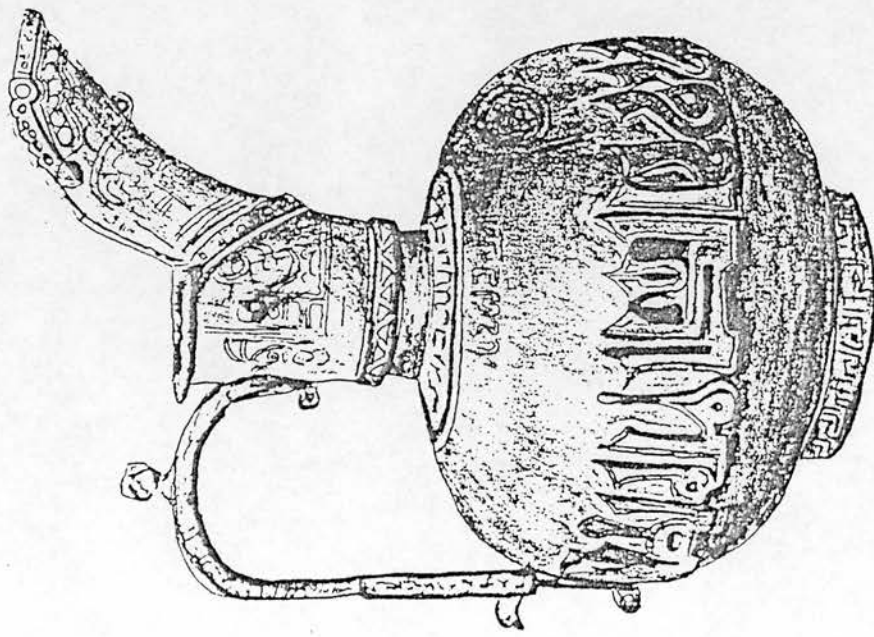


FIG. 3
ICAW 4/3. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 29.5 cm
(New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 59.53).

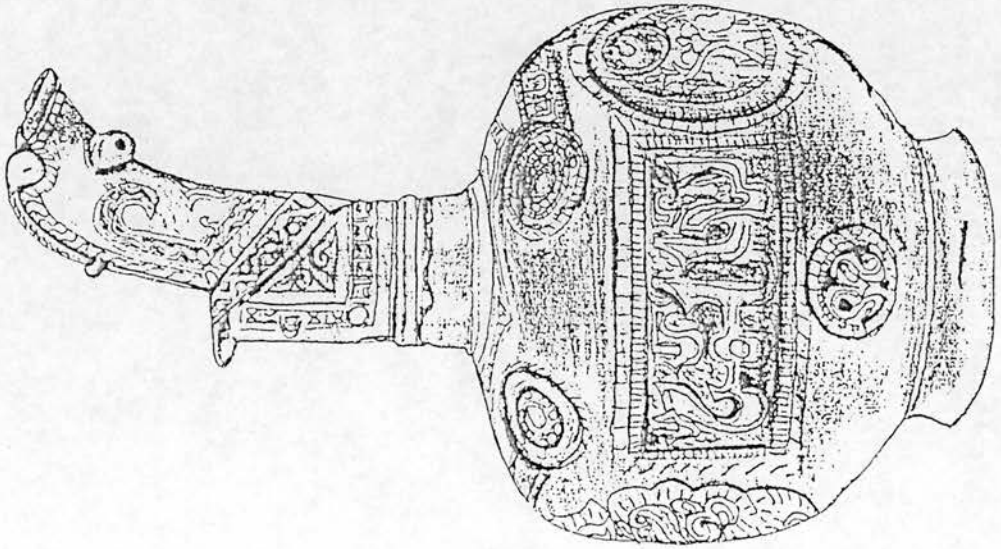


FIG. 5
ICAW 4/5. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. ca. 35 cm
(Damascus, National Museum, inv. no. 15381).

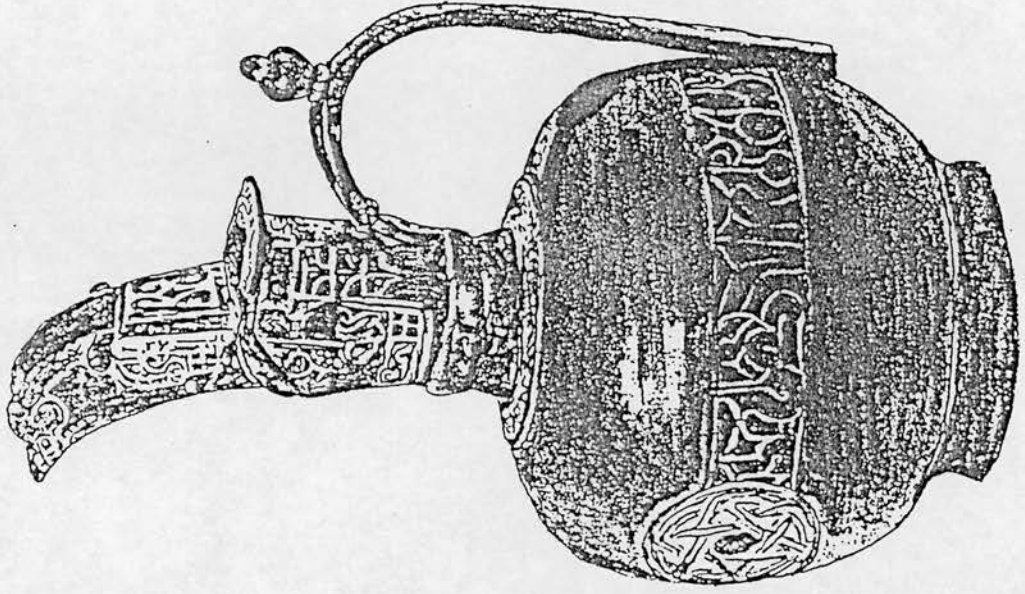


FIG. 6
ICAW 4/6. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 24 cm
(West Berlin, Islamic Museum, inv. no. I. 1598).

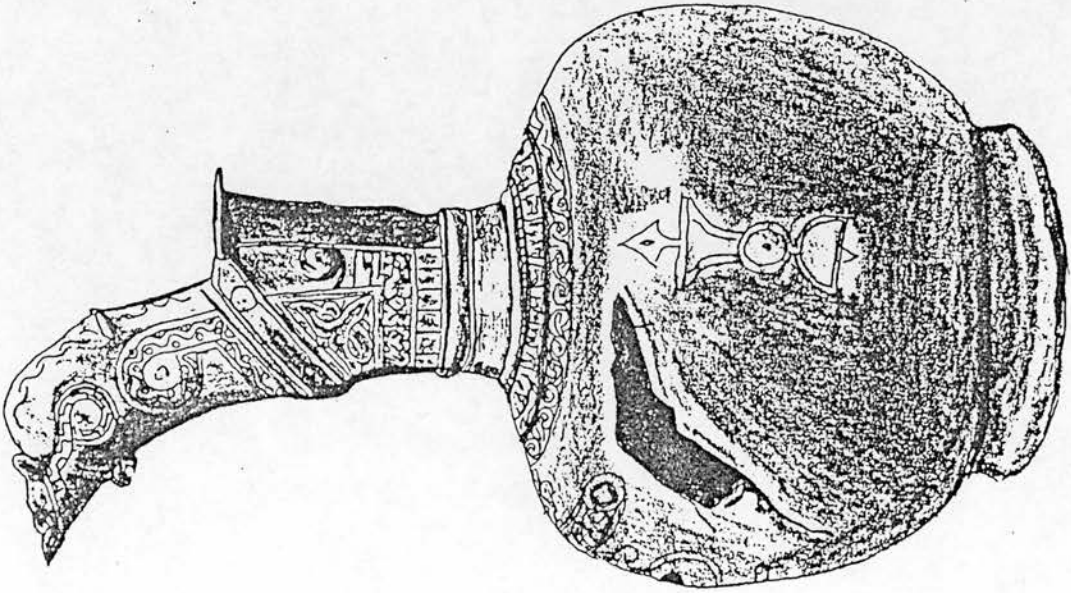


FIG. 7
ICAW 4/7. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 31.7 cm
(Private Collection).

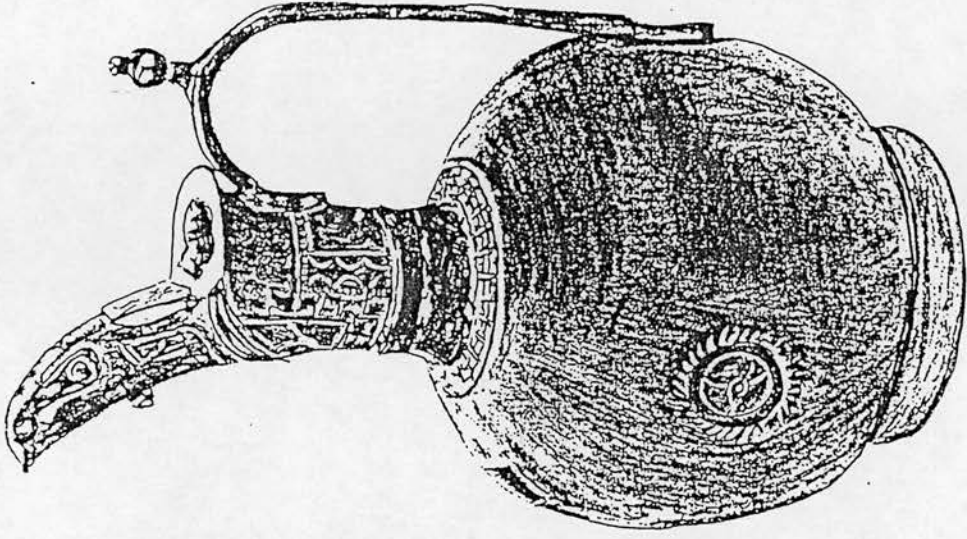


FIG. 8
ICAW 4/9. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 24.5 cm
(Sotheby's 16.10.85, lot 185).

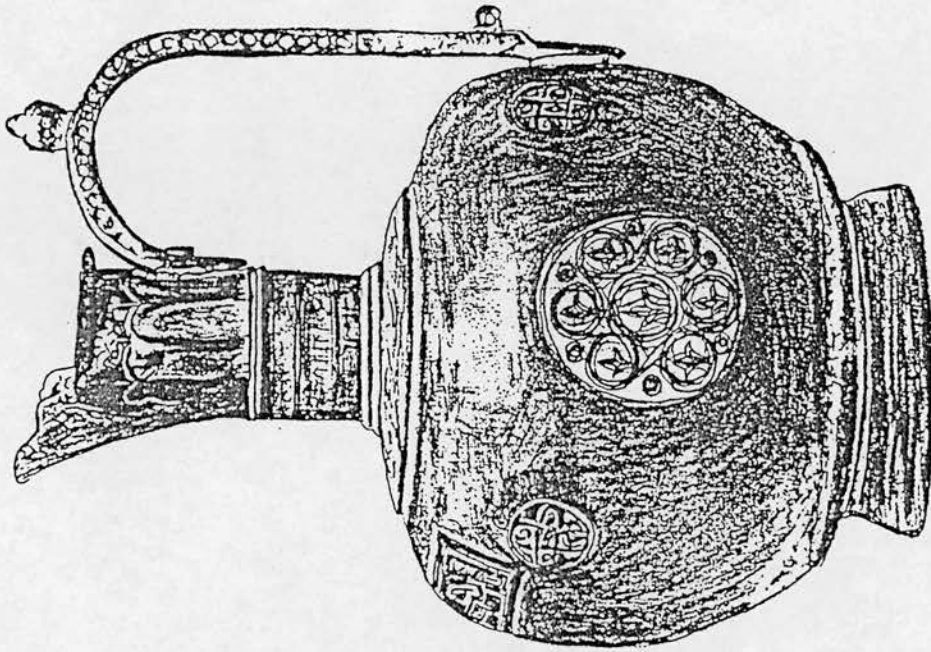


FIG. 10
ICAW 4/11. Bronze Ewer, h. 26 cm
(Sotheby's 27.4.81, lot 47).

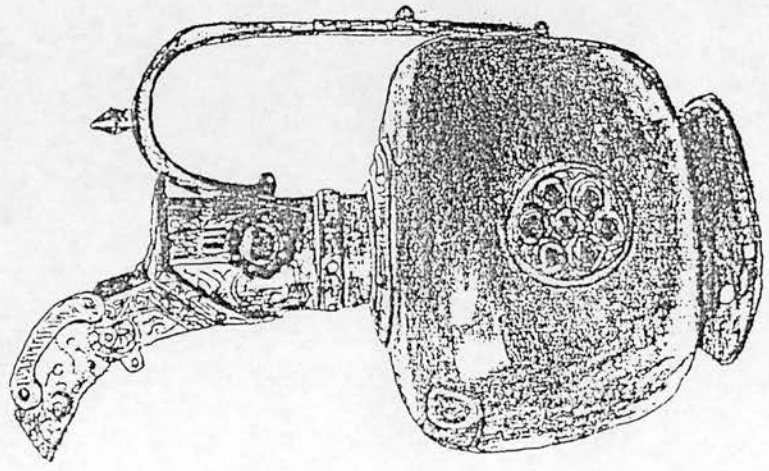


FIG. 9
ICAW 4/10. Ewer of Cast Quaternary Alloy, h. 33.8 cm
(Kuwait, Private Collection, inv. no. 1/270).

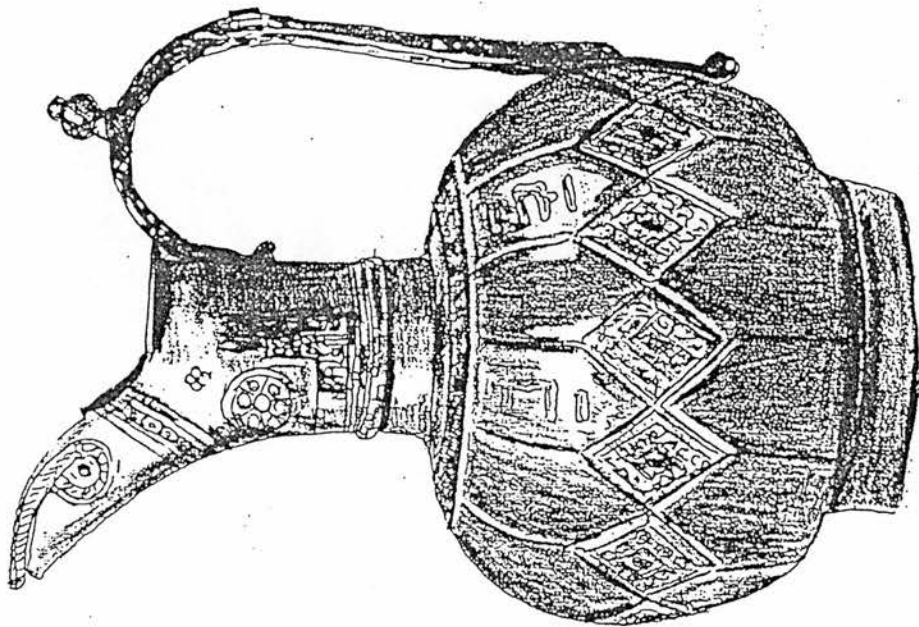


FIG. 12
 ICAW 4/V.1/1. Hammered Bronze Ewer excavated at
 Maimana, Afghanistan. H. 25 cm (Kabul Museum?).

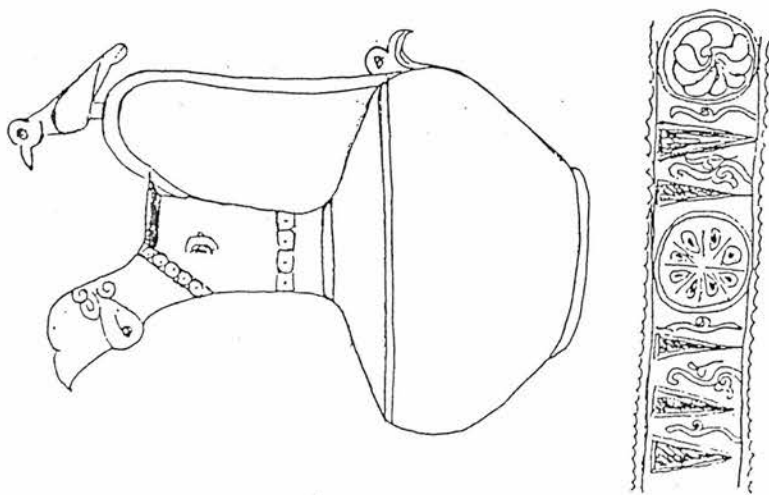


FIG. 11
 ICAW 4/12. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 21 cm
 (London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 1067).



FIG. 13

ICAW 4/V.1/2. Bronze Ewer, h. 30 cm

(Copenhagen, C.L. David Collection, inv. no. 10/1970).

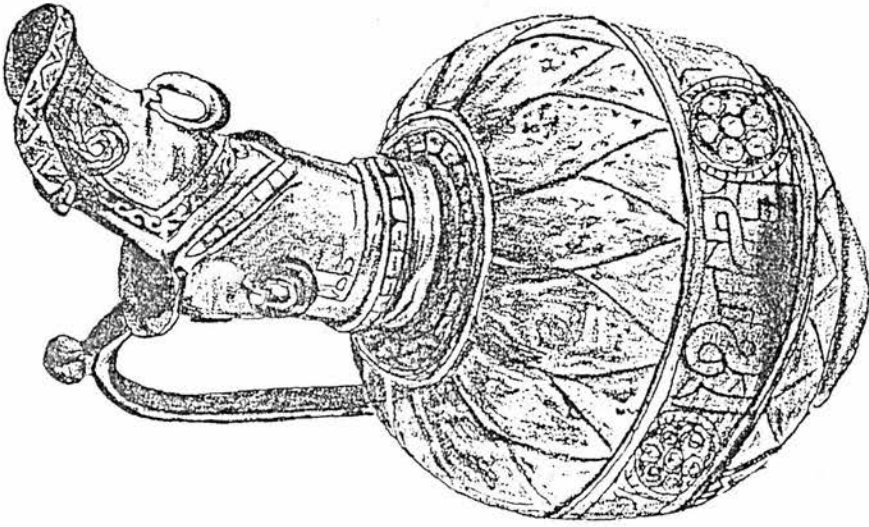


FIG. 14

ICAW 4/V.1/3. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 30 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 1246).

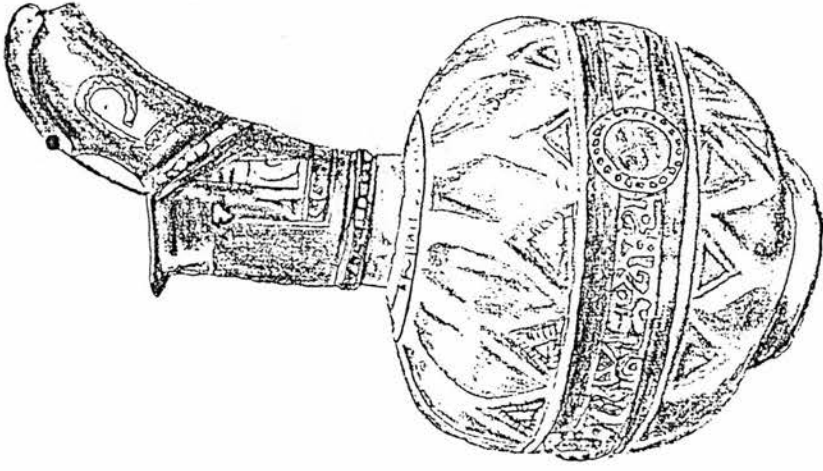


FIG. 15

ICAW 4/V.1/4. Bronze Ewer. Dimensions unknown
(Ashkhabad Museum?)

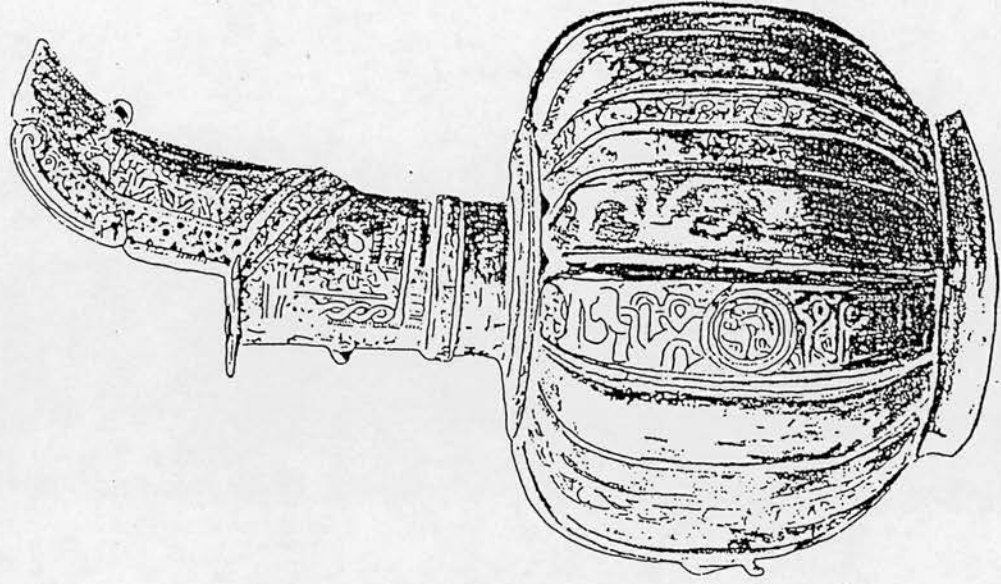


FIG. 18

ICAW 4/V.2/4. Bronze (?) Ewer from Khasaw-Jurt (Cummukhsh Province, Russia). H. 38 cm (Tiflis Museum).

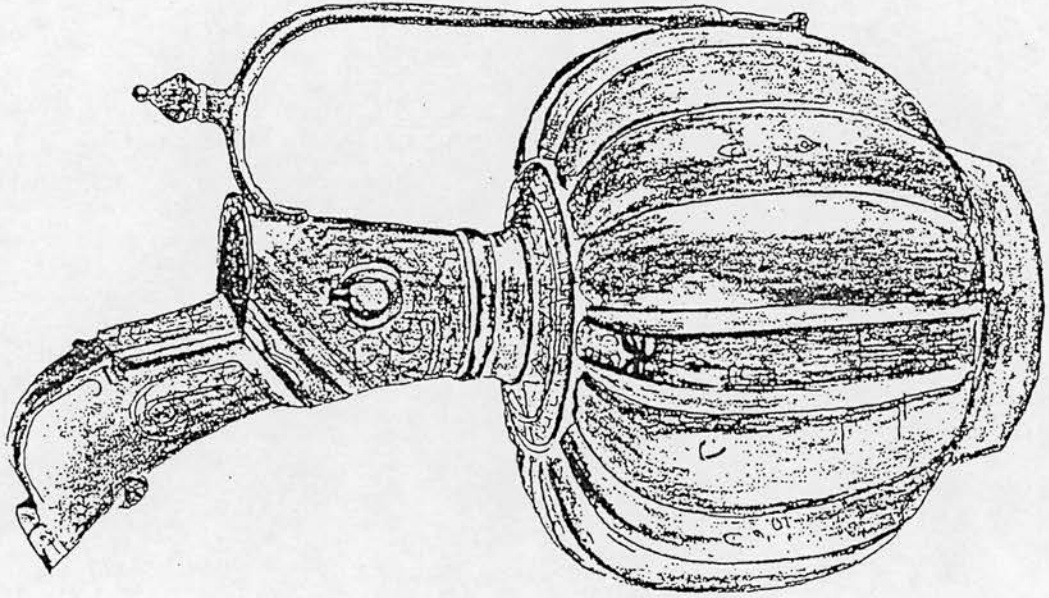


FIG. 17

ICAW 4/V.2/3. Bronze Ewer, h. 32 cm (London, Keir Collection).

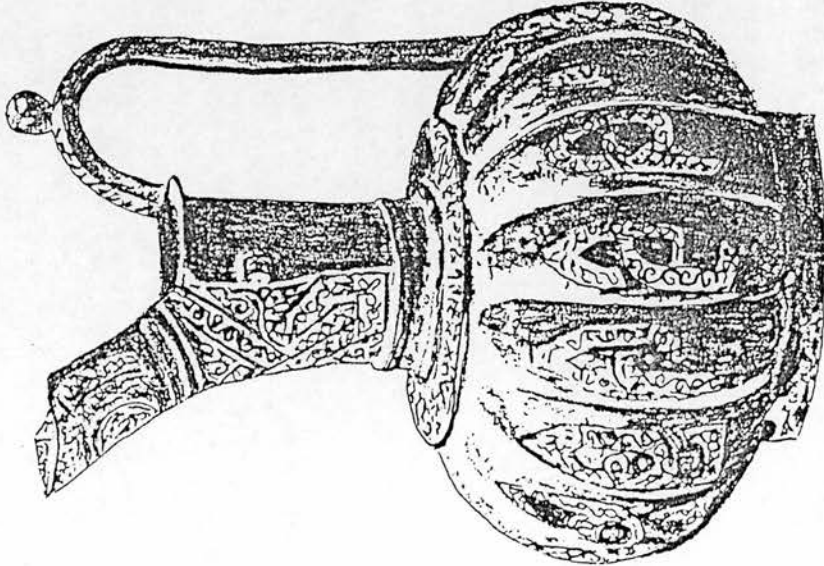


FIG. 16

ICAW 4/V.2/2. Bronze Ewer, h. 25.5 cm (Christie's 23.11.84, lot 555).

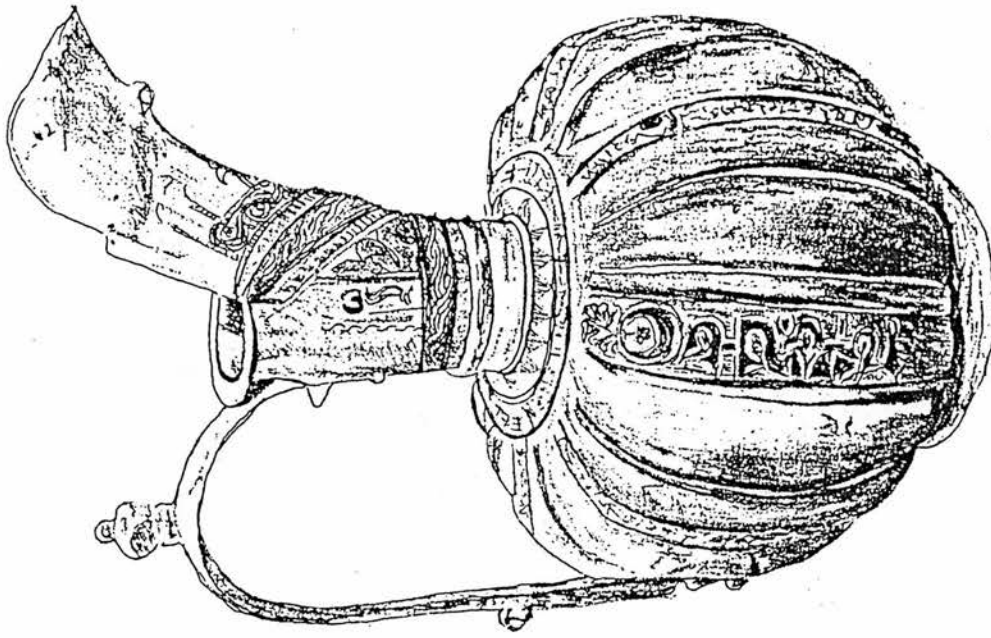


FIG. 21
 ICAW 4/V.2/7. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 36 cm
 (London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 171).

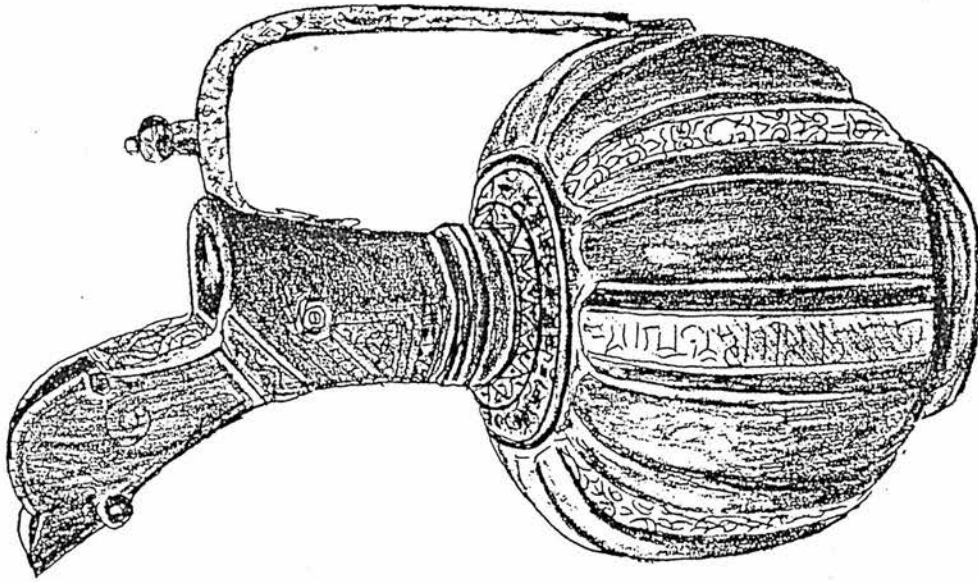


FIG. 20
 ICAW 4/V.2/6. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 37 cm
 (London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 170).

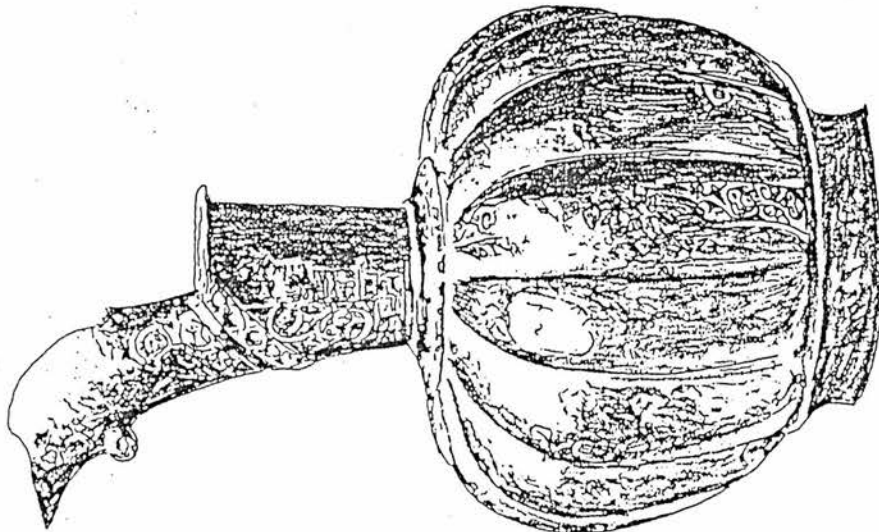


FIG. 19
 ICAW 4/V.2/5. Bronze Ewer, h. 30 cm
 (Christie's 10.10.89, lot 527).

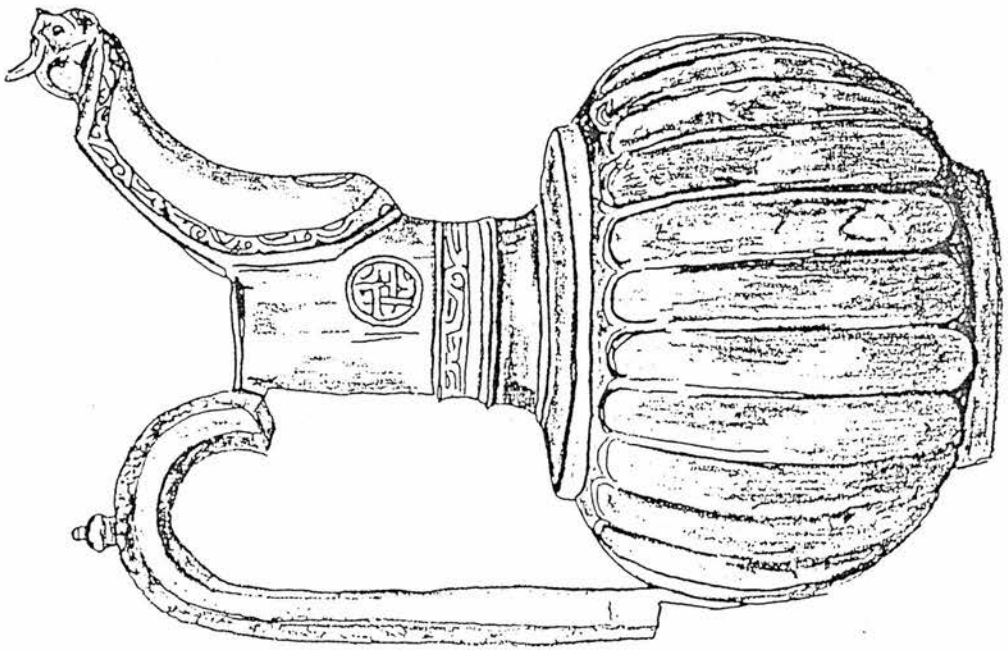


FIG. 22
ICAW 4/V.2/8. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 30 cm
(ex Khaliji Collection).

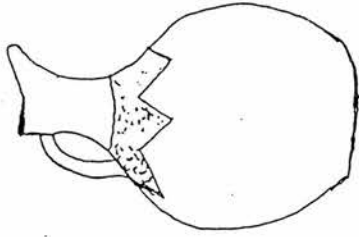


FIG. 23
Pottery Jug with slight Beak-Spout from a
Turko-Sogdian Site in Central Asia.
5th-8th Century A.D. (after Bernstam 1950, pl. XCV).

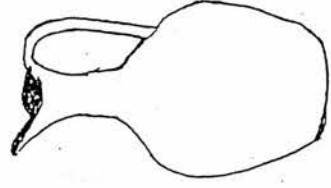


FIG. 24
Pottery Ewer with Beak-Spout from a Karluk Site
in Central Asia. Ca. 8th-10th Century A.D.
(after Esin 1969, fig. 12A).

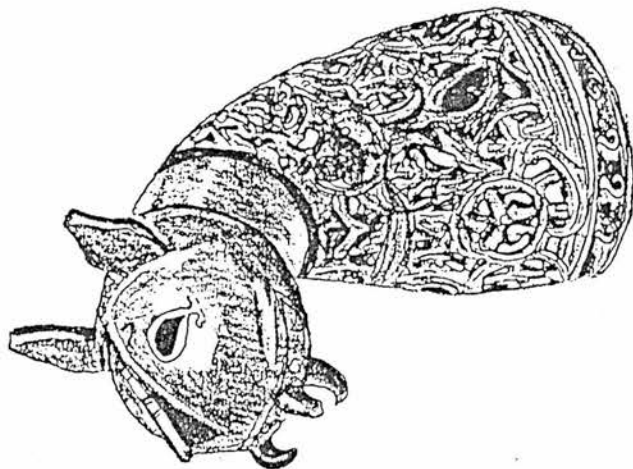


FIG. 25
Lion Figurine in Bronze. Iran, 11th-13th Century A.D.

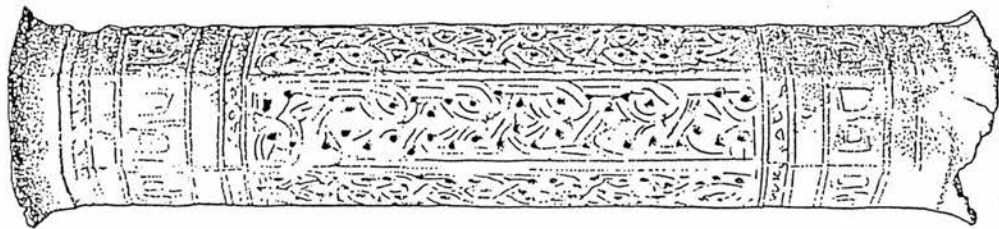


FIG. 26
Bronze Shaft from Nīshāpur.
Iran, 10th/11th Century A.D.
(After Allan 1982, fig. 180).

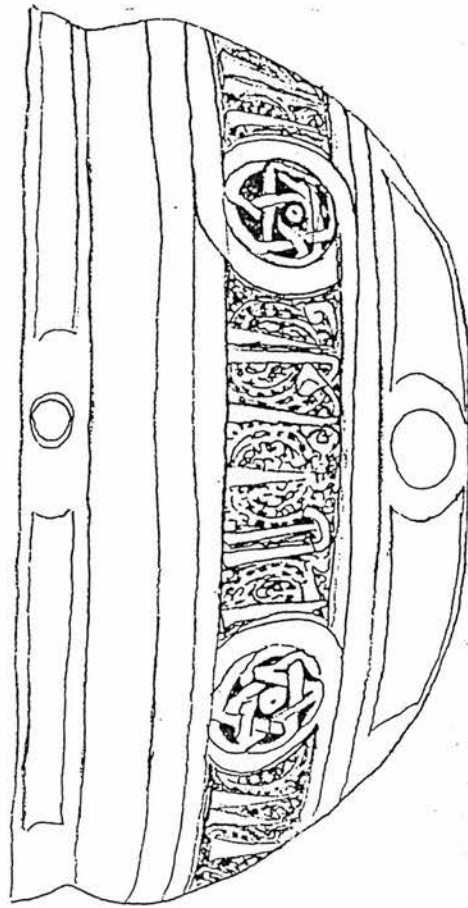


FIG. 27
Detail of a 12th-Century Bronze Bowl
allegedly produced in Samarkand.

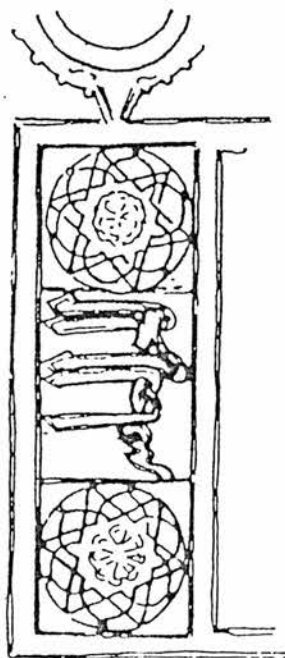


FIG. 28
Detail of a Sūra-Heading belonging to a 12th-Century Qur'an (after Rice 1953 (II), p. 66 fig. 6).

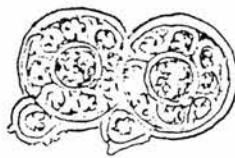


FIG. 30
Margin Medallions belonging to a Qur'an
Page executed in Iraq(?) in 1036 A.D.

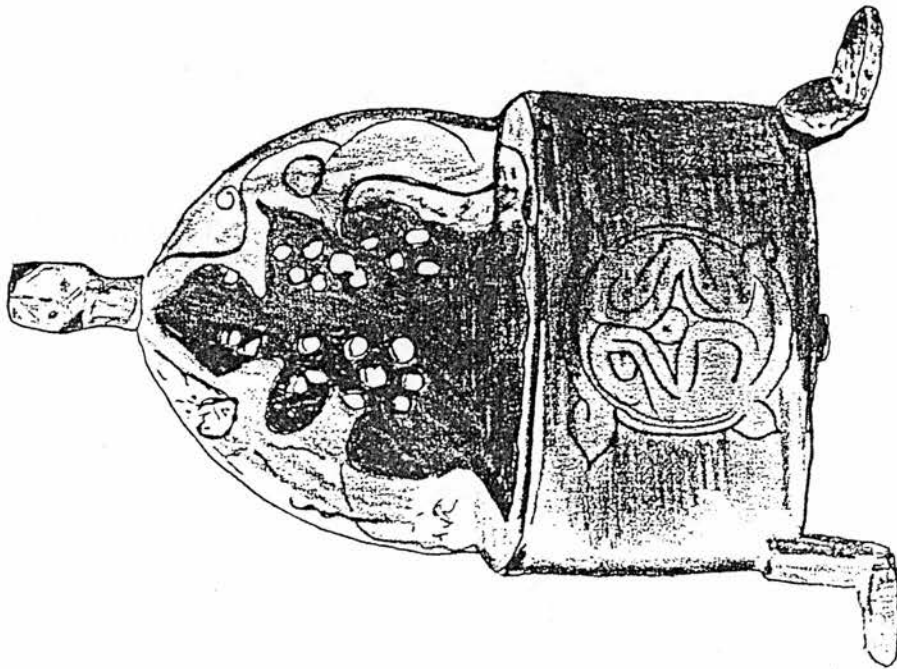


FIG. 29
Early 11th-Century Bronze Incense Burner acquired in Sīstān.

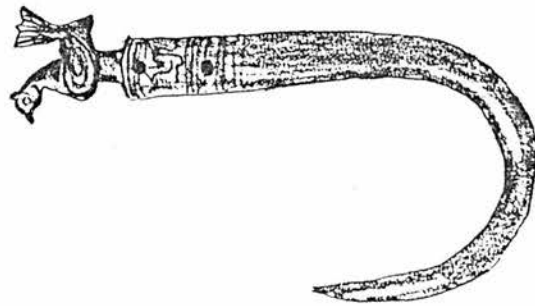


FIG. 31
9th/10th-Century Bronze Hook from Iran.



FIG. 32
Silver Dish with Royal Banquet Scene.
Attributed to a Sogdian Workshop active
in the early 9th Century A.D.

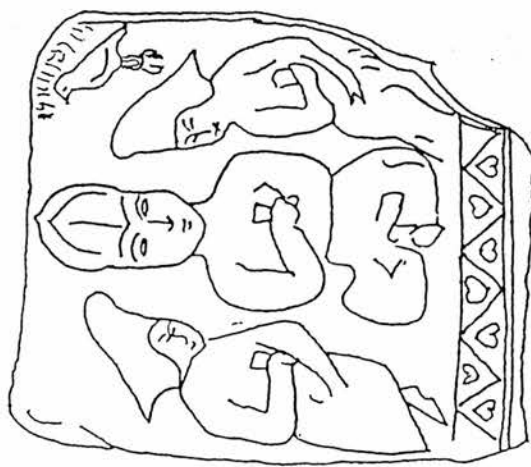


FIG. 33
 Funerary Stele for the Kök Türk
 Prince Bilge Kagan (d. 734 A.D.)
 (After Esin 1980, pl. XLVIII/a).

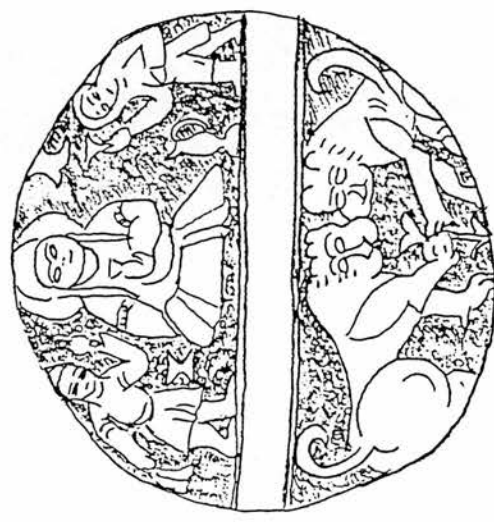


FIG. 34
 Seljuq Bronze Bowl showing an Enthroned King during
 a Drinking Feast (after Esin 1968, pl. XV B).

Chapter 15

Ewer Type ICAW 5: Cast Bronze Ewers with Bulbous Pear-shaped Body on Bipartite Foot, Flat Shoulder with Conical Neck and Large Beak-Spouted Head

1. General Description

The next ewer type, which seems to have been a local speciality of 11th/12th-century Transoxiana alone,¹ is distinguished by a most unusual profile.²

The main body is pear-shaped and more or less bulbous. It rests on a stepped composite foot, consisting of a low waisted upper part and a broad conical base of varying height with very slightly curved sides. Above, the upper body has its sides drawn in and is terminated abruptly by a flat round shoulder plate with two superposed projecting lines around its outer edge. From the shoulder rises a narrow cylindrical neck, slightly tapering towards the spout section. Around the lower neck there usually runs a more or less projecting ring. In two cases, however, (cat. nos. 2 & 6; pl. 1, fig. 5) the neck actually seems to emerge from a low cylindrical collar rising from the central shoulder.

The spout section joins onto the neck by means of a short projecting collar. It consists of a bulbous and squat globular mouth and a large, but narrow, obliquely rising beak spout of varying length and degree of curvature. The hinges that survive on the back of all the ewers' mouths indicate that these, if not the spouts as well, were originally lidded. If handles remain (on cat. nos. 2, 3, 5, 6; pl. 1, figs. 2, 4, 5), they are of strongly S-shaped appearance and of angular section. Above, they

¹ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 218; Marshak 1972, p. 86; Kuwait 1990, p. 14 no. 22 (p. 45 no. 22 for Russian/Arabic text and plate).

² Of the twenty pieces (fragments included) mentioned by A.A. Ivanov only twelve have come to my notice so far; cf. Kuwait 1990, p. 14 no. 22.

are attached directly to the back of the mouth. Below, they join the central (cat. no. 2; pl. 1) or lower (cat. nos. 3, 5, 6; figs. 2, 4, 5) body, sometimes directly (cat. no. 2; pl. 1) and sometimes by means of an obliquely set angular joint (cat. nos. 3[?], 5, 6; figs. 2, 4, 5).

A horizontal thorn projects from the area just above the lower attachment. Slightly further up a tiny rounded moulding encloses the handle. A similar one, surmounted by a minute triangular protrusion, is positioned just below the upper curvature of the handle. The thumbpiece is always rendered as a small polygonal knob.

The profile of ewer V.1/1 (fig. 7) deviates significantly from that of the other pieces described above, despite certain general similarities. It has therefore been given a separate sub-category in the catalogue. Its body consists of five clearly demarcated parts. The lower body is extremely bulbous and cup-shaped, resting on a bipartite foot, with its upper part short and waisted, and the lower one flat and splayed.

Above is positioned a tall conical part with waisted sides, stepped back from the section below. It receives in its turn a recessed, short and slightly tapering cylindrical neck with protruding double lines around its base.

The spout, introduced by a narrow ridge, consists of a comparatively small, globular mouth section and - projecting sideways from the latter - a very slightly upward-turning and bent funnel with a hexagonal aperture and curved outer edges.

1.1. Manufacturing Technique

The exact technique of executing these fanciful pieces seems not entirely clear. B. Marshak describes them as being of cast bronze,³ while Eva Baer, referring to ewer 6 (fig. 5), assumes that at least that particular object was assembled from several

³ Marshak 1972, p. 86.

raised components.⁴ The available photographs suggest that most pieces were cast, judging from the smooth even surfaces and joints. However, certain details may indeed bear out the suggestion that these ewers, or at least their immediate prototypes, were assembled originally from various parts. Whether these were cast or raised will be a matter for future researchers to determine on the basis of direct access to the objects concerned.

Thus, the clear groove between shoulder plate and main body encountered on ewers 1 - 7 (fig. 1, pl. 1, figs. 2-6) may suggest one original joint, the neck collar on ewer 2 (pl. 1) and perhaps even the rings around the lower necks of nos. 1, 4-6 (figs. 1, 3-5) another one, and the ridge below the spout a third one. The handle may also have been a separate component and the same is true of the composite foot. Subsequently, up to six separate parts may have been utilized in the original design of this particular ewer type: composite foot, main body, shoulder plate with collar, neck, spout and handle.

Any such structural analysis of ewer V.1/1 (fig. 7) has to remain even more speculative given the need to work from the image available. However, from the superficial point of general appearance, even here a multiplicity of components is discernible in the original construction of the object, involving a bipartite foot, cup-shaped lower body, conical upper body, cylindrical neck and spout.

2. Decoration

Among the twelve objects included in this category, three are undecorated (cat. nos. 1, 3(?), 4; figs. 1-3). The other objects are enhanced by decorative features affecting mainly the lower body (cat. nos. 2, 5-7; pl. 1, figs. 4-6), but in some cases also their façade (cat. nos. 5, 6; figs. 4-5), upper body (cat. no. V.1/1; fig. 7), neck (cat. no. 5; fig. 4) and spout (cat. no. V.1/1; fig. 7).

⁴ Baer 1983, p. 93.

The most characteristic ornamental element to be found on the decorated pieces of this group is a band of varying width enclosing the most bulbous area of the lower body. It contains one of three main decorative treatments.

One is epigraphy, as in the case of ewer 2 (pl. 1), where a simple Kufic inscription has been applied. The second type of design can be found in very similar fashion on ewers 5 & 6 (figs. 4-5). It uses a succession of roundels, which in the case of no. 5 (fig. 4) are additionally enclosed by a system of continuous bands intertwining between each roundel. Each alternate roundel is hollowed out and pierced by a central hole in places. This feature may suggest that there was originally inlay there, as it closely recalls the style of inlay which James Allan has described on some of the pieces in this group.

The technique applied here involved the application of a round hollow cavity with a narrow centre pierced through the body of the object and the filling of it with a small piece of copper or even silver, a practice apparently confined to Transoxiana alone.⁵ The decorative circles set in between enclose either floral motifs composed of four axial hearts pointing towards each other (cat. no. 5; fig. 4) or an abstract quatrefoil or cross (cat. no. 6; fig. 6). Apart from these motifs, which are confined to the band around the lower body, ewers 5 & 6 (fig. 4-5) have additional roundels with central cavities on their façade; in the case of no. 5 (fig. 4) these rise from the band below.

While the available image of no. 6 (fig. 5) does not permit any additional description of this particular motif, the roundel encountered on no. 5 (fig. 4) has a small bead frame around the central cavity, surmounted by a small trefoil, which supports a large stylized split palmette flanking a small flame-like motif that ends in a dot. Ewer 5 (fig. 4) also shows decoration on its neck. Broad engraved pseudo-facets with rounded lower terminations occupy the space between the lower neck moulding and the ridge below the spout, each one alternately left plain or filled with geometrical or stylized floral motifs.

⁵ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 218-9.

The third type of decoration, applied on the lower bodies of ewers nos. 7 & V.1/1 (figs. 6-7), is related to the second one in that this one, too, makes use of hollowed-out roundels. However, in these two cases, they either make up the ornamentation entirely on their own (cat. no. 7; fig. 6) or at least present a most dominant aspect of it (cat. no. V.1/1; fig. 7). Thus, the frieze on ewer 7 (fig. 6) utilizes two rows of obliquely set circular cavities embedded in a system of engraved and hatched interlacing bands.

On ewer V. 1/1 (fig. 7), covering the entire lower body, a third row has been added, so that here the hollowed roundels above and below enclose a central row of larger circular medallions, filled either by beading around a central abstract motif, or by three stylized bilobed palmettes.⁶ Again, all the elements of this design are interconnected by a continuous intertwining band. The entire frieze is set off above and below by narrow panels of stylized scrollwork, thus completing the overall decoration of the lower body.

Ewer V.1/1 (fig. 7) carries additional motifs on the façade of its conical upper body - a simple rosette design made up from seven round cavities set into a system of interlace inlaid with copper⁷ - and on the spout. Here, two roundels enclosing a beaded frame for a central cavity occupy the sides of the mouth section, while stylized bilobed split palmettes cover the sides of the spout proper.⁸

Several of the pieces in this group (cat. nos. 4-7, 11, V.1/1; figs. 3-7) are inscribed with the names of artists who were responsible for their manufacture. Most conspicuous is the recurring inscription that states that the object was made by a certain Aḥmad - 'amala Aḥmad (cat. nos. 4-6, 11; figs. 3-5).⁹

⁶ Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 201.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 200.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Ewer 3 from Akhsikath (fig. 2) carries an unclear text; cf. Marshak 1972, p. 86; Kuwait 1990, p. 14 no. 22. Unfortunately, this particular Aḥmad cannot be identified from medieval Iranian sources, but judging from the frequency with which his name occurs on these objects, he must have been quite dominant in their manufacture, if not their designer as such. The close similarity of all the ewers that carry his name seems to suggest that they all come from his workshop or at least were made under his supervision. However, Marshak, observing the considerable geographical distances that separate the various findspots of the ewers, rejects the possibility that the vessels were made by one master. He

Only one object (cat. no. V.1/1; fig. 7), which has already been noted for standing somewhat apart from the other pieces with regard to profile and decoration, carries the name of a different craftsman.

His signature is displayed in two lines on both sides of the conical upper body and is executed in simple Kufic. The first section, reading from the neck downwards, appears on the right side of the vessel when seen from the front. It reads 'amala Husayn ibn... - "the work of Husain son of...". On the other side the inscription continues - this time reading from the base of the section upwards: Muhammad ibn Sagzī(?).¹⁰ Interestingly, the peculiar layout of the inscription on this ewer is apparently paralleled on the ewer from Shahristān (cat. no. 5; fig. 4), where the first line also appears on the right side of the ewer's body, reading from the top downwards: 'amala Ahmad.¹¹

The practice of displaying the artist's signature vertically on both sides of a ewer's body is unique to these objects and cannot, to my knowledge, be paralleled on other early Islamic ewer types. The reasons why the names should be thus displayed are not known and it remains to be seen in the future whether their positioning was merely due to aesthetic conventions current in the area of the vessels' manufacture at the time or whether it had a deeper significance.

rather assumes that craftsmen of different generations imitated an outstandingly innovatory shape that was perhaps originally created by Aḥmad at a time of artistic stagnation, and which had subsequently become famous. In order to claim the artist's patronage they would then start to put his name on their products. According to Marshak, Aḥmad's original products were probably undecorated, while the 12th-century imitators refused to leave the ewers without any decorative enhancement; cf. Marshak 1972, p. 86.

¹⁰ Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 200.

¹¹ Op. cit., pp. 200-201.

3. Origin of Ewer Type

Judging from the extant artefacts, this particular ewer type seems to appear suddenly in Transoxiana during the late 10th century.¹² Its peculiar heterogeneous profile attests an innovatory combination of shapes derived from functionally different objects which were current particularly in contemporary Khurāsān.¹³ The great majority of the objects seem to be constructed from a bulbous "vase" or "jug" shape and a spout section perhaps deriving from contemporary oil-lamps, joined by a cylindrical neck and placed on a biparite foot.¹⁴ The lower body, demarcated by the ornamental band, recalls the profile of certain cup shapes in use at the time.¹⁵ In the case of ewer V.1/1 (fig. 7) the original design of the vessel apparently involved even more components. Thus, according to Melikian-Chirvani, the base recalls exactly the profile of a pedestal cup set on a second foot. Above, the conical section, if turned, resembles certain other footed cups and bowls. The spout, joined onto the short neck section, again shows certain, even closer reminiscences to an oil-lamp, while at the same time resembling a highly stylized, mythical animal head.¹⁶

It seems remarkable that such a complicated and laborious procedure should have been used in order to create a new ewer type. This is particularly true as the end result appears somewhat awkward and the combination of all these heterogeneous components does not entirely succeed in creating a pleasing and visually satisfying, harmonious entity. This fact might explain why these ewers

¹² According to Zick-Nissen the shape of these vessels, judging from ceramic parallels from Nīshāpūr and Rayy, can be traced back to the 9th and 10th centuries and recalls Sasanian silver ware. Unfortunately, the author gives no references to support this claim and I was unable to verify these assertions; cf. Berlin 1979, p. 99 no. 363; Baer 1983, p. 93.

¹³ Baer 1983, p. 93; Melikian-Chirvani 1975, pp. 187, 199.

¹⁴ Cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 65 fig. 31: jug, eastern Iran, Khurāsān or Sīstān, 12th/13th century, Mūza-i Rawza at Ghazna; p. 100 no. 30, p. 101 figs. 30 & 30A: 12th-century Khurāsānian two-wick oil-lamp as examples for similar contemporary shapes; Baer 1983, pp. 93, 321 note 215.

¹⁵ Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 199.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 187, 199.

were apparently restricted to a certain area without enjoying enough popularity to ensure a more far-reaching distribution.¹⁷

It would be highly interesting if future research could establish what motivated artists such as Ahmad to design such vessels in which a principle of all-determining geometrism replaced the fluency of profile found on other objects. Was it merely the result of the far-reaching contemporary fashion for geometrism observed by Melikian-Chirvani? And, if it was, what led the craftsmen to assemble forms of existing objects to create a new one, rather than design a completely new, specific shape for a ewer? All these questions deserve further thought.

4. Provenance and Date

It has already been indicated that the enigmatic vessels assembled in this group are generally believed to have been produced only in the area of Transoxiana and at a time somewhere between the 10th and 12th centuries.¹⁸

This attribution has been based mainly on the pieces' findspots and places of acquisition, which are all located in Central Asia.¹⁹ Thus, ewers 1 & 7 (figs. 1, 6) were acquired in Tashkent by F. R. Martin. Ewer 3 (fig. 2) comes from Akhsikath, the ancient capital of Ferghana. It was found together with a hoard of coins minted around the year 1047 A.D., a discovery which helped to date this particular piece and related pieces fairly closely, even if one takes into account the possibility that the ewer may already have been in use for some time before its disposal or burial.²⁰

¹⁷ Melikian-Chirvani already noted the fact that the forms combined in the ewer design were badly chosen; cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 199.

¹⁸ see note 1.

¹⁹ Marshak 1972, p. 86.

²⁰ Baer 1983, p. 93; Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 199; Kuwait 1990, p. 14 no. 22; Marshak 1972, p. 86; Negmatov and Khmel'nitzky 1966, p. 180.

Ewer 5 (fig. 4) was excavated in the region of ancient Ustrūshana.²¹ A very similar ewer (cat. no. 6; fig. 5)) was acquired in Ghazna, but the fact that this vessel shares the comparatively rare profile of this group, that it has a decorative scheme closely related to that on ewer 5 (fig. 4), and above all carries the signature of the same artist - Ahmad - may justify the assumption that this piece, too, originally came from further north. Finally, ewers 10 & 11 also come from Central Asia, the first one from Chi-Dukhtarov, the second one from Ketmen-Tyube. The only ewers without known provenance are nos. 2 and 4 (pl. 1, fig. 3), but their close typological similarity to the pieces with a more or less certain Transoxanian provenance justifies the suggestion that they, too, were produced somewhere in that area.

The only piece that cannot readily be added to the objects listed above is yet again ewer V.1/1 (fig. 7), which was acquired in Ghazna. As mentioned before, this vessel stands clearly apart from the other pieces as far as the structural appearance and ornamentation are concerned. On the other hand, its spout relates it to some extent to a group of pear-shaped bronze ewers with "oil-lamp" spouts, current in Khurāsān and Sīstān during the 10th to 13th centuries (cf. ewer type ICAW 3, chapter 13). Finally, the artist's name differs from those on the other pieces. All these factors, when taken together, may indicate a somewhat different provenance or at least a different workshop for this particular piece. An examination of the decorative features found on the ewers under discussion emphasises the latter ewer's singularity in relation to the other vessels.

The decorated ewers generally attributed to Transoxiana are all united by a single conspicuous ornamental element, i. e. the decorative band enclosing the lower body of an otherwise plain ewer. In two cases (cat. nos. 5, 6; figs. 4-5) a small central medallion has been added on the ewers' façade. Both these features reveal the influence of some contemporary vessels attributed to Khurāsān during the

²¹ Baer 1983, p. 93; Marshak 1972, p. 86.

10th - 12th centuries²² and particularly that of a group of bull-headed ewers, where the panel around the lower body is likewise of predominant decorative importance (cf. ewer type ICAW 2, chapter 12).²³ The link between the two ewer types can be most fruitfully demonstrated by comparing the frieze of ewer 7 (fig. 6) to that on the bull-headed vessel in the Motamed collection (chapter 12, cat. no. ICAW 2/2, fig. 8), which features a virtually identical design.²⁴

The ewer in the Mūza-i Rawza at Ghazna (cat. no. V.1/1; fig. 7) has a related but at the same time very individualistic and more elaborate design, which has been painstakingly analysed by Melikian-Chirvani.²⁵ Most blatant is the overwhelming geometrism expressed in the motifs on the lower and upper body as well as on the spout, which is applied in a much more visually forceful way than on the other vessels under discussion.²⁶

This taste for geometrism has been associated by Melikian-Chirvani with early Islamic art in eastern Iran in general and with 10th/11th-century conventions in particular.²⁷ The style of the signature bears out such a dating, as it reveals a style typical, according to Melikian-Chirvani, of the Sāmānīd period and probably datable therefore to the second half of the 10th or to the early 11th century.²⁸

To sum up, ewers 1 - 7 (fig. 1, pl. 1, figs. 2-6) can be attributed to Transoxiana during the 10th-12th centuries on the basis of several of their findspots and their decorative motifs. The precise attribution of ewer V.1/1 (fig. 7) needs further investigation, as its shape, decorative layout and artist's signature set it apart from the other pieces and may hint at a different centre of manufacture.

²² Marshak 1972, p. 86.

²³ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 52-3 no. 16 as an example.

²⁴ It should be mentioned here that another feature linking at least some of the pieces of both types is the composite foot. Thus, for example, the large lower foot of the bull-headed ewer in the British Museum (ewer type ICAW 2/13L) may be regarded as an elaboration of the foot style found on the ewers under discussion; cf. Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 216-7.

²⁵ Melikian-Chirvani 1975, pp. 200-201.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 23-35.

²⁸ Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 200.

5. Function

Unfortunately, neither the circumstances in which some of the ewers were found nor the objects themselves reveal anything that might help to establish their original function. As contemplated above, they might have been part of a drinking or table service.

However, the fanciful shape of these ewers might even suggest a very specific ambience, especially if one notes the peculiar beak-spouts, which seem faintly to recall birds' or animal heads. Zoomorphic spouts such as might have been evoked here were - according to Emel Esin - apparently often applied on vessels used particularly by Turkic peoples in the course of ceremonial and ritual drinking sessions.²⁹ Regrettably, none of these suggestions can be any more than speculation at present and it would be futile to hypothesise further until a closer study of these enigmatic pieces sheds light on their true function.

6. Summary

Bronze ewers with a bulbous pear-shaped body, bipartite foot, abruptly joined, round shoulder plate, short cylindrical neck and large beak-spout seem to have been developed out of several other contemporary vessel forms in 10th/11th-century Transoxiana, and their production apparently continued in that area down to the 12th century or slightly later.³⁰ The vessels carry either no decoration at all or only very modest ornament which is confined mainly to an ornamental band around the lower body, and sometimes extends to an additional central medallion. Several of the ewers (four out of twelve) are inscribed by the same artist, Ahmad, perhaps an indication of a common workshop.

²⁹ Esin 1980, p. 118, Ch. 4, note 188.

³⁰ Ivanov 1970, p. 105. Ivanov suggests a production period up to the 13th century.

Only one piece (cat. no. V.1/1; fig. 7) stands clearly apart from the rest with regard to profile, decoration and artist's signature and may thus indicate a different place of manufacture. The function of this group of ewers is unknown and only very speculative suggestions could be proposed, indicating either that they were part of a table or drinking service in which the component objects were of shapes reflected in the ewers' fanciful profile, or their use in a more ritual ambience like a symbolic banquet, if one is to interpret their beak-spouts as abstracted animal heads like those found on certain Turkic ritual drinking vessels.

Catalogue

1. Ex-Martin collection; acquired in Tashkent; bronze; no dimensions available. Bulbous pear-shaped body on bipartite, stepped foot, the upper part low and waisted, the lower one high, conical and splayed; flat round shoulder separated from body by double ridge; in its centre short conical shaft receives cylindrical neck tapering towards spout section; small rounded ridge around lower neck; thin ridge around upper neck; composite spout section with bulbous globular mouth and large but narrow, obliquely rising beak-spout; remaining hinge on back of lip indicates former existence of lid; handle missing. Apparently undecorated (fig. 1).
Lit.: Martin 1902, pl. 29 left; Ivanov 1970, p. 102 fig. 6, 104 no. 25; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 218; Berlin 1979, p. 99.
2. West Berlin, Islamic Museum I 85/63; n. p.; cast (?) bronze, incised; h. 20.8 cm, diam. 8.8 cm.
Shape as 1 but slightly more slender body and shorter spout; slightly shorter lower foot; angular S-shaped handle attached to back of mouth and central body; horizontal thorn projecting from lower attachment, above rounded moulding; another moulding, surmounted by small triangular protrusion, just below upper curve of handle; thumbpiece small polygonal knob. Around lower body, very worn epigraphic (?) frieze (pl. 1). Lit.: Berlin 1979, p. 99 no. 363; Baer 1983, p. 321 note 216.
3. Location unknown; Akhsikath, Ferghana; bronze, incised; no dimensions available.
Shape as 1; handle as 2. Unclear inscription (no details available) (fig. 2).
Lit.: Smirnov 1963, pp. 37-8, plate p. 38; Negmatov and Khmelnitzky 1966, p. 180, note 260; Ivanov 1970, p. 102 fig. 6, p. 104 no. 20; Marshak 1972, p. 86; Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 199; Baer 1983, p. 93; Kuwait 1990, p. 14 no. 22 (English text), pl. on p. 45 (Arabic and Russian text).
4. Hermitage SA 12675; n. p.; cast bronze (or brass?), incised; h. 25.7 cm.
Shape as 1, but slightly more rounded and with projecting collar around lower neck; handle missing.
Inverted arched lines incised around lower neck; inscribed 'amala Ahmad - made by Ahmad (fig. 3).
Lit.: Ivanov 1970, p. 104 no. 24, p. 102 fig. 6; Ivanov 1987, pp. 98-102; Kuwait 1990, p. 14 no. 22 (p. 45 no. 22 for Arabic and Russian text and plate).
5. Location unknown; Shahristān (Ushrūshana); bronze, incised and inlaid (?); h. 21.5 cm.
Shape as 2, but body more bulbous; lower foot flatter and more splayed (?); ridge between spout and mouth; handle attachment on mouth lower than on 2. Around lower body, slightly protruding decorative band with succession of circular medallions formed by continuous bands intertwining between each roundel; inside each roundel, alternatively round cavity or four axial hearts pointing towards each other; in between medallions above and below, small bilobed motifs (?); on body façade, roundel surmounted by palmette design; to left of motif, Kufic inscription running from shoulder downwards: 'amala Ahmad - the work of Ahmad; on neck, broad pseudo-facets with rounded lower terminations outlined in double lines, every second one filled alternately with geometrical and stylized floral motifs (fig. 4).
Lit.: Negmatov and Khmelnitzky 1966, pl. XXIIIa & b, pp. 179-80; Ivanov 1970, pp. 102 fig. 6, 104 no. 21; Marshak 1972, p. 86; Melikian-Chirvani 1975, p. 199; Fehérvári and Kiani 1982, p. 343; Baer 1983, pp. 93, 321 note 216.

6. Private Collection; acquired in Ghazna; bronze, raised in separate parts (?), traced and incised; h. 19.5 cm, max. diam. 11.5 cm, diam. foot 5.5 cm.

Shape as 5, but slightly less bulbous; lower foot missing; spout broken off. Decorative band around lower body very similar to that on 5: succession of roundels containing alternatively a round cavity and an abstract cross or quatrefoil; perhaps central medallion on body façade above decorative band; inscription on upper left side (seen from handle) running downwards from shoulder: 'amala Ahmad - made by Ahmad (fig. 5).

Lit.: Baer 1983, pp. 93-4, fig. 71, 321 notes 214 & 217.

7. Ex-Martin Collection; acquired in Tashkent; bronze, incised; dimensions unavailable.

Shape as 1; handle missing. Around lower body, broad decorative band with two rows of obliquely set circular cavities, enclosed in a system of engraved lines filled with simple hatching, creating lozenge-shaped sections around each roundel; band bordered above and below by hatched double lines; around lower neck, inverted arched line (fig. 6).

Lit.: Martin 1902, pl. 29 right; Ivanov 1970, pp. 102 fig. 6, 104 no. 26; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 218; Berlin 1979, p. 99.

8. Private Collection; n. p.; no details available.

Lit.: Baer 1983, pp. 93-4.

9. Ex-Martin Collection; n. p.; no details available; fragmented: only body and foot remain. No photograph available.

Lit.: Martin 1897, Schrank 7; Ivanov 1970, pp. 102 fig. 6, 104 no. 27.

10. Location unknown; Chi-Dukhtarov; no details available.

Lit.: Negmatov and Khmelnitzky 1966, p. 180; Ivanov 1970, pp. 102 fig. 6, 104 no. 22.

11. Location unknown; Ketmen-Tyube, Khirgizia; no details available.

Inscribed: 'amala Ahmad - made by Ahmad.

Lit.: Ivanov 1970, pp. 102 fig. 6, 104 no. 23.

V.1/1 Mūza-i Rawza, Ghazna; bought in Ghazna; bronze, cast in several sections, incised and inlaid with copper; h. 23 cm, diam. body 12.5 cm, diam. base 9.6 cm. Composite body: bulbous cup-shaped lower part, conical upper part, short slightly tapering cylindrical neck; all sections clearly separated; foot bipartite; handle missing; spout with globular mouth section and slightly bent funnel with hexagonal aperture; mouth originally lidded, only hinge remains. On lower body, three horizontal rows of 14 circular medallions set obliquely: large roundels in central row filled alternately with abstract rosette or three bilobed palmettes, smaller roundels above and below with central cavities; all roundels connected by continuous border two by two, i.e. two small ones above and below with two large ones in between; the whole decorative frieze flanked by simple scrolls above and below; on body façade (conical section), simple rosette design with six cavities enclosing a central one, all surrounded by copper-inlaid band; on both sides of conical section, written vertically from above downwards on one side and from below upwards on the other, two inscriptions in simple Kufic: first part to left of spout reads: 'amala Husayn ibn - "made by Husayn ibn...", the continuation to the right of the spout: Muhammad ibn Sagzi (?); on sides of mouth section, two roundels with central cavity; on funnel, bilobed palmettes (fig. 7).

Lit.: Melikian-Chirvani 1975, pp. 198ff, pl. XIII fig. 9; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 12 note 4, 35, 39 note 74, 430; Baer 1983, p. 321 note 216.

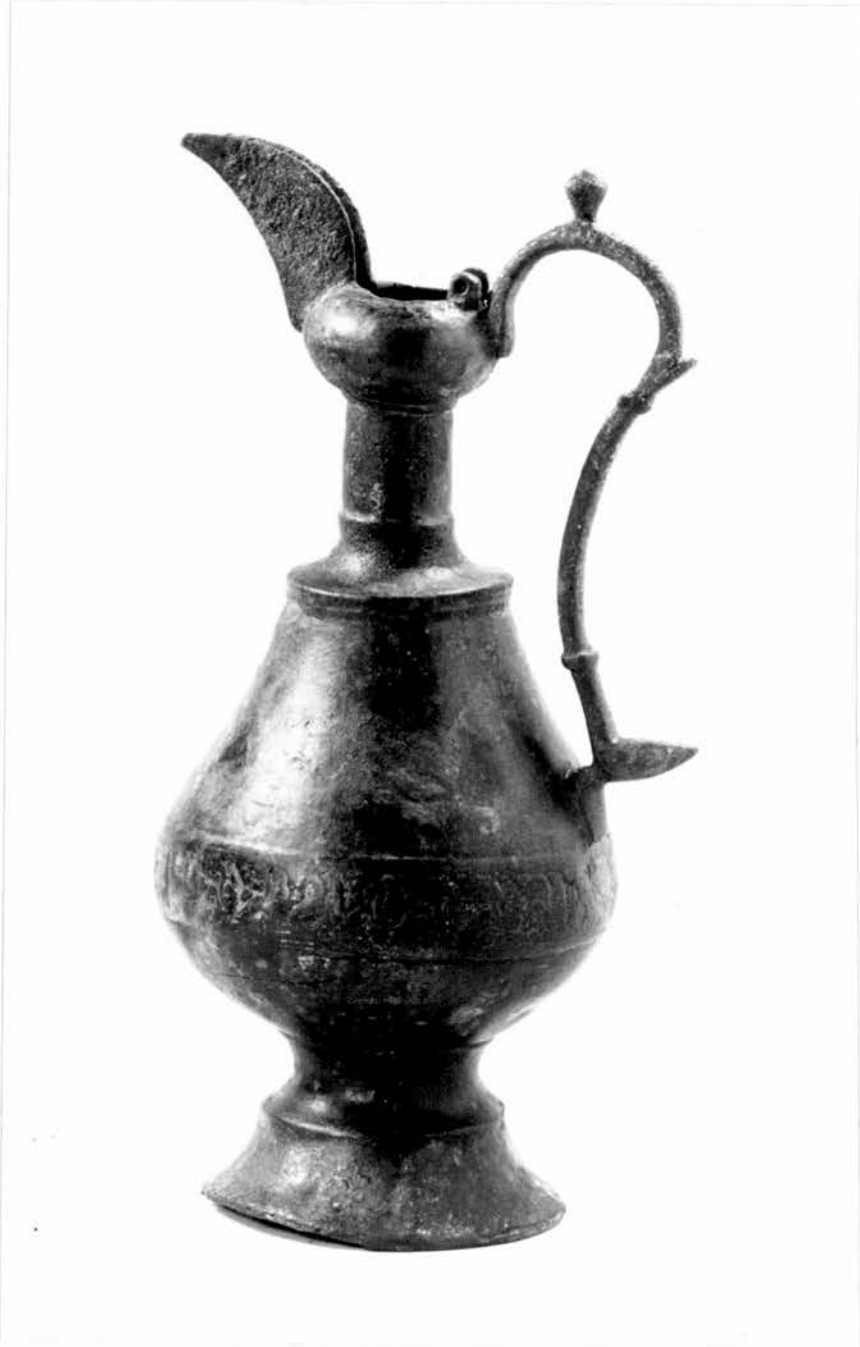


Plate 1

ICAW 5/2. Cast (?) Bronze Ewer, h. 20.8 cm
(West Berlin, Islamic Museum, inv. no. I 85/63).

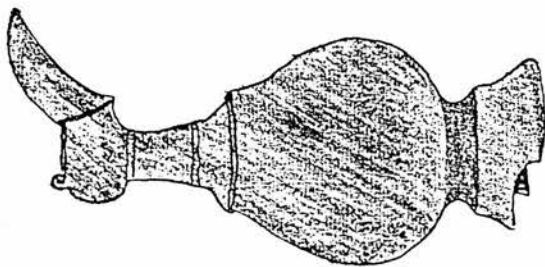


FIG. 1
ICAW 5/1. Bronze Ewer acquired in Tashkent.
No Dimensions available (ex Martin Collection).

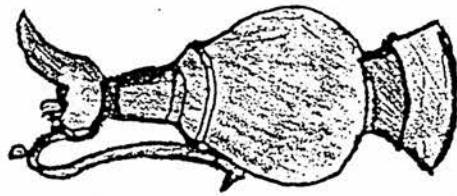


FIG. 2
ICAW 5/3: Bronze Ewer from Akhsikath, Ferghana.
No Dimensions available (Location unknown).

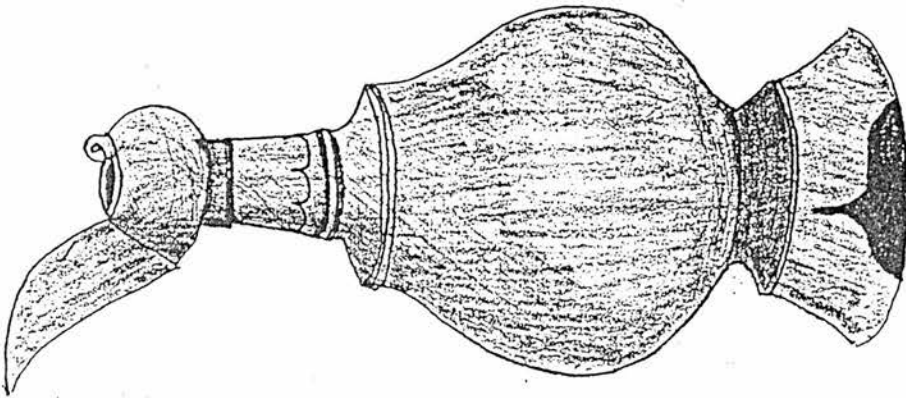


FIG. 3
ICAW 5/4: Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 25.7 cm
(Leningrad, Hermitage).

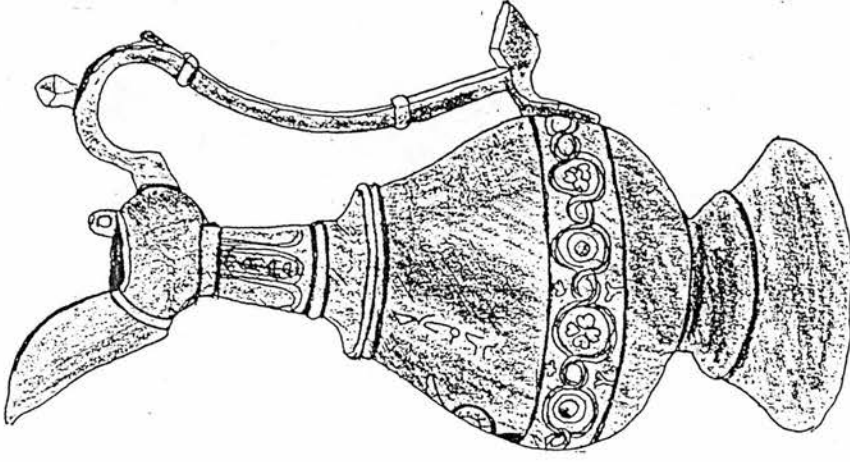


FIG. 4
ICAW 5/5: Bronze Ewer from Shahrīstān,
Ushrūshāna. H. 21.5 cm (Location unknown).



FIG. 5

ICAW 5/6: Hammered(?) Bronze Ewer acquired in Ghazna. H. 19.5 cm (Private Collection).



FIG. 6

ICAW 5/7: Bronze Ewer acquired in Tashkent. Dimensions unknown (ex Martin Collection).



FIG. 7
ICAW 5/V.1/1: Cast Bronze Ewer acquired
in Ghazna. H. 23 cm (Ghazna, Mūza-i Rawḡa).

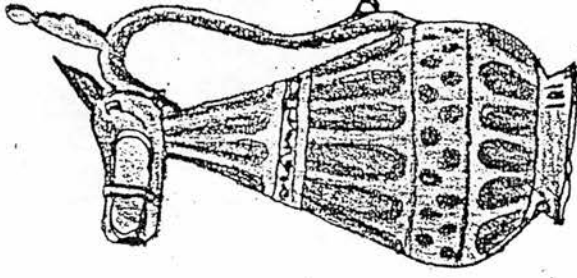


FIG. 8
Cast Bronze Ewer with Bull-Head Spout (ICAW 2/2).

Chapter 16

ICAW 6: Hammered and Cast Bronze and Brass Ewers with Plain or Facetted Cylindrical Bodies, Cylindrical Necks and Obliquely Rising Beak-Spouts

The vessels assembled in this category make up the most numerous and certainly one of the most diverse typological groups in the compilation of early Islamic bronze and brass ewers attempted in this thesis. The 75 pieces which have come to my notice so far¹ can be subdivided into four clearly distinguishable sub-categories.

The first one comprises hammered and occasionally cast bronze and brass ewers with barrel-shaped, plain cylindrical bodies on low waisted feet and cylindrical necks with obliquely rising beak spouts. The second sub-group assembles those ewers where the body, instead of being plain, has been enhanced with alternatingly round and triangular facets. Ewers in the third and fourth sub-group, finally, are characterized respectively by convex and concave facets.

Each sub-group will be dealt with separately, where appropriate, in order to keep the discussion of this group accessible. To give a context to these individual analyses, general considerations relevant to the group as a whole will be undertaken towards the end of this chapter.

¹ Undoubtedly, additional pieces exist either in museums' stores or private collections.

1. General Description

1.1. Sub-group 1 (cat. nos. 1-31; figs. 1-21, pls. 1-4)²

This sub-group is by far the largest one, incorporating 31 pieces. The ewers belonging to it vary from 25.4 cm to 44.5 cm in **height**. The appearance of their profiles is very varied in technique of manufacture and the elements affecting the shape, as well as the decorative techniques and the iconographical features, which will concern us at a later stage.

Two main varieties of the **body profile** of ewers belonging to the first sub-group can be observed. One of them is characterized by a broad and generally rather squat, cylindrical body. On ewers 1-4 this is of angular profile with a very flat, recessed shoulder plate and either a flat or recessed base, the latter of rounded or angular appearance. On some of these ewers the section of the base on which the body actually rests is not perfectly flat: in the case of ewer 1 a concave cavity occupies the centre of the recessed base section.

On ewers 6 - 7 the squat cylindrical body, again resting either on a flat base or on a low foot-ring, is surmounted by a stepped plain shoulder with a rounded transitional zone, clearly demarcated from both the body below and the slightly sloping shoulder plate above. The same is the case with ewer 8, but here the shoulder plate itself is not plain, as is usually the case, but receives an unusual succession of repoussé birds.

On ewers 9-11 and 13-14, finally, the squat cylindrical body is more rounded and generally rests on a low and sometimes waisted foot-ring. In these cases the transitional zone between the shoulder plate above and the body below joins both sections very smoothly rather than consciously interrupting them, as was

² In order to avoid extending the already long brackets with the relevant catalogue numbers within the text even further by adding the corresponding figure numbers, the latter have been omitted in the descriptive parts of this chapter. They can, however, be easily found by referring to the catalogue.

the case with the the three preceding pieces. Ewer 15 alone features a squat and very simple, barrel-shaped body with flat base and shoulder-plate.

Turning to the second major variety in body profile, its basic feature is a rather more elongated cylindrical body. Most frequently, its sides are perfectly straight, but on occasion they can also be either very slightly waisted (cat. no. 5) or tapering towards the base (cat. nos. 19, 20). The base is generally flat, sometimes enhanced by a central motif like a repoussé rosette (cat. no. 20). Only in the case of ewer 5 has the base plate been recessed from the main body above.

As for the **shoulder area** on this variety, again several different treatments can be observed. Ewer 5 shows a flat recessed shoulder plate similar to those encountered on ewers 1-3. Ewers 16-19 feature a shoulder plate which rises towards the neck to a varying degree and is characterized by a simple angular or rounded edge. Ewers 20 and 21 have a rounded transitional zone linking the actual shoulder plate and the body, a treatment not unlike that encountered on ewers 6-8. In the case of ewer 21, however, the transitional zone continues smoothly into the actual shoulder area without an interrupting ridge. On ewers 12 and 22-25, finally, the transitional zone is much less rigidly stepped back from body and shoulder. Rather does it curve down gently from the the edge of the shoulder plate to join the body below, a treatment already encountered on ewers 8-14.³

The varieties encountered with regard to the **design of the pouring section** of the ewers in the first sub-group are even more diverse than those of the body profile. Generally speaking, the pouring section comprises a tall cylindrical neck of varying length and an obliquely rising beak-spout of variable appearance. On cast pieces the neck is occasionally enhanced by lateral ring protrusions, which originally held or indeed still hold annular pendants (cf. cat. no. 21). On hammered pieces, seated repoussé lions often occupy the centre of the neck's lateral surfaces.

³ As I have no photographs of ewers 26 - 31 at my disposal I cannot make any comments as to their precise body profile or indeed any other details of their appearance.

As for the **spout**, several versions can be observed. Thus, in the case of ewer 1 the steeply rising and only slightly curved beak-spout terminates in an abstracted animal or bird head. A very similar spout profile can be observed on ewer 5. Here, however, the tip is left open, i. e. without any decorative enhancement. A second variety of obliquely rising beak-spout can be observed on ewers 2-4, 10, 12 and 14. On these vessels the spout, which can be of square, rectangular or pentagonal section, clearly projects from the upper or central neck. It develops from a triangular base and tapers towards the tip while bending slightly outwards at mouth level. On ewers 2 and 3 this particular spout treatment is in itself slightly modified by being executed in a very much narrower fashion than on the other pieces.

Several ewers feature narrow spouts of triangular section which rise either diagonally from the lower neck straight to the tip (cat. nos. 6, 16) or rise in this fashion as far as the central neck or mouth level and then bend out- and upwards (cat. nos. 7, 11). Yet another spout treatment with curved underside and flat pierced filter covering the length of the spout from mouth level to the tip can be observed on ewer 9. Interestingly, the front of the tip itself is not left open, as one might expect, and the liquid contained in this vessel had to escape through a small hole near the upper end of the spout cover.

Finally, a very large and wide open spout with cusped edges rises from the neck of ewer 21, clearly demarcated from the latter by an oblique decorative ridge executed in relief. This spout type can also be observed on another group of early Islamic ewers, with which the ewer type discussed here has certain generic links (Cf. ewer type ICAW 4, chapter 14).

All the remaining pieces in the first sub-group feature a spout design that can be likened most adequately to a pelican's beak, executed in varying widths, lengths and degrees of curvature. On occasion, the upper side of this spout type can be covered by a metal plaque hammered out into a reclining repoussé lion in the centre (cat. no. 18).

The **handle** type encountered on ewers of the first sub-group is generally arched and of angular section. Its width can vary. Occasionally, the centre of the handle can receive pseudo-beading, as is the case on ewers 3 and 5. In the case of ewer 2 this handle design was slightly modified in that the handle body is S-shaped, its centre again enhanced by pseudo-beading. Generally, the handle is attached to the upper neck and the central body by means of soldering or rivetting. Its attachment areas are rendered in several ways. Sometimes the handle merely tapers towards small almond-shaped terminations. In other cases the angular handle body abruptly gives way to a flat leaf-shaped attachment plate.

Some of the handles are surmounted by **thumbpieces**, again characterized by diversity rather than uniformity. Thus, ewer 2 received a pomegranate, ewers 3, 11 and 14 globular knobs and ewer 6 a bird.

1.2. Sub-group 2 (cat nos. V.1/1-15; figs. 22-30, pls. 5-10)

Apart from the neck and spout section on ewer V.1/1, which is closely related to that on ewer 9 of the first sub-group, and the strongly tapering body as well as the unusually high foot of ewer 8, the pieces of this second sub-group show a remarkable consistency with regard to their general profile, a point worth emphasising in view of the great diversity of shapes encountered in the first sub-group.⁴

In **size** the vessels vary from 33 cm to 44.8 cm in height. Their profile can be closely related to that of ewers 15, 17, 18, 20 and 22-24 in the first sub-group, with which they basically share their general profile, including the design of the

⁴ The unique handle encountered on ewer V.1/1 is most certainly a replacement and should therefore not be considered as part of the vessel's original profile. In addition to the ewers assembled in this sub-group there appears to exist at least one more piece in the Museum of Fine Arts in Kiev, which instead of repoussé lions displays relief stars on the shoulder; cf. Aga-Oglu 1943, p. 98 note 16. I was unable to trace any further information about this piece, but it seems to be dealt with in Krachkovskaya 1927, p. 3 no. 7.

neck and the characteristic pelican-like beak-spout as well as the repoussé lions on the neck. The repoussé star applied to the centre of the shoulder plate in the cases of ewers 22-24 also occurs on these pieces.

At the same time, the main feature which sets the vessels of the second sub-group clearly aside from those of the first one is the **body treatment**. Here, the cylindrical body, rather than being plain, has been hammered out into alternately convex and triangular facets, numbering between 20 and 24 in all.⁵ In the majority of cases both facet types are more or less of the same width, but on two of the objects the convex panels are nearly double as wide as the triangular ones (cat. nos. 14, 15).

Above the body ribs, the transitional zone often corresponds to this treatment: each convex facet is surmounted by a small rounded zone, each triangular one by a small pointed one. On some occasions, however, the section above each facet is actually occupied by repoussé animals, a succession of birds in profile on ewer V.1/11, addorsed lions on ewer V.1/14 and addorsed harpies in the case of ewer V.1/15.

1.3. Sub-group 3 (cat. nos. V.2/1-15; figs. 31-38, pls. 11-15)

Vessels in the third sub-group vary from 32.7 cm to 44.5 cm in **height** and again share all their main structural features with the ewers of the preceding sub-groups.⁶ Their **body**, however, is distinguished by a succession of convex facets throughout, which are again echoed in the now rounded sections of the transitional zone.

Only ewer V.2/1 stands somewhat apart in that it shares its neck and spout design with ewer V.1/1 and its all-over profile with ewer 9 of the first sub-group. It is obviously of a somewhat more archaic type and has been included here because

⁵ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 226.

⁶ Two vessels in the third sub-group feature polylobed rather than round shoulder-plates (cat. nos. V.2/8 and V.2/11).

of the dense and rather shallow, concave facets on its body, which are separated in this case by thin vertical ridges.

On the bodies of the remaining ewers, the convex faceting is treated in various different ways. Thus, ewers V.2/2-6 feature alternately wide and narrow facets, ranging from 16 or 18 to 24 in number. This arrangement is closely related to that encountered on certain ewers of the second sub-group (cat. nos. V.1/14-15), where wide convex and narrow triangular ribs alternate around the body. The bodies of the remaining ewers all display more or less projecting convex facets of equal width. Again, their number can vary, from 12 in the case of ewers V.2/9-14 to 24 in the case of V.2/7.

Interestingly, the visual impact of the latter again recalls certain pieces of the second sub-group (cf. V.1/6), on which a similar impression of density is achieved in this case by the close succession of very narrow triangular and convex facets. As mentioned above, in most cases the appearance of the individual sections of the transitional zone corresponds to that of the facets below. In the case of ewer V.2/8, however, they are rendered as bulbous, strongly projecting units, which introduce the polylobed shoulder plate.

On ewers V.2/12 and V.2/13 the area above each facet is again occupied by repoussé animals (cf. ewers V.1/11, 14-15 of the second sub-group), namely a pair of addorsed harpies and a pair of addorsed birds with overlapping tail feathers, respectively.

1.4. Sub-group 4 (cat. nos. V.3/1-15; figs. 39-41, pls. 16-25)

The fourth sub-group comprises those ewers distinguished by a ten- or twelve-sided **body**, made up of flat or slightly concave facets. In most cases, the sections of the transitional zone above again correspond to the latter in appearance. Only in the case of ewers V.3/4 and V.3/5 do repoussé birds occupy this area: on V.3/4 they

are arranged in addorsed pairs, each one surmounting one facet (cf. ewers V.1/11, 14, 15; V.2/12, 13), on V.3/5 they are shown in profile walking clock-wise. The shoulder plate on the ewers in this group is either twelve-sided or rather more star-shaped, and in both cases each corner or "ray" meets the ridge, where the sections of the transitional zone are joined together.

The remaining structural features are practically identical in appearance to those of the preceding pieces⁷, with the exception of ewer V.3/15, which features slightly different body proportions and a distinct, though typologically related, spout with a steeper and more curved upper part. The latter, moreover, lacks the characteristic ridge along the outer edge as well as the often encountered spout cover with a reclining repoussé animal, which extends into a filter laid across the tip.

As many as five pieces in this sub-group are fragmented to a varying degree, and several of them have subsequently been reworked into different objects (cat. nos. V.3/5-7, V.3/10, V.3/12), including a bowl in the case of V.3/6, a casket in the case of V.3/7 and a bucket in the case of V.3/12.⁸

2. Manufacturing Technique

2.1. Sub-group 1 (cat. nos. 1-31; figs. 1-21, pls. 1-4))

To start with, the working material utilized appears to have been mainly bronze, although brass does also occur in a few individual cases (cat. nos. 14, 20[?, composite], 22, 27, 28).⁹ Most typically, the pieces were hammered from several

⁷ The handles of V.3/1, V.3/3, V.3/4 are probably replacements.

⁸ I feel somewhat uncertain about the suggestion that V.3/12 was originally part of a ewer, as in my opinion the walls of the objects have a stronger proportional taper than one would expect from a curtailed ewer body of the type discussed.

⁹ Most recently, Rachel Ward in her book on Islamic metalwork claims that the metal used for most objects executed in the early Islamic period was actually brass. As I have at present no way of testing the accuracy of this statement, I have perforce had to accept the

individual parts formed from sheet metal. These include the base, the foot, the central body, the shoulder plate with the neck base, the neck, the spout, a section forming the lip and sometimes a spout cover issuing from the former, and the handle.¹⁰ Often these sections were soldered together, but there are also occasions when the elements were at least partially joined by castellating the edges and alternately under- and overlaying the tongues thus created. These were then hammered together until the joint became virtually invisible. Several ewers in this sub-group still bear witness to this manufacturing technique, and on most of them the joints are still clearly visible today - particularly near the edge of the shoulder, around the lower body and towards the back, alongside the lower handle attachment (cat. nos. 5, 16, 21, 23-25).¹¹

Most interestingly, some of the ewers with hammered bodies feature a cast neck, designed as one piece together with the spout. Thus, in the case of ewer 1 the neck develops into a steeply rising spout with a clearly zoomorphic tip, while the neck of ewer 21 as a whole seems to have been borrowed from a series of early Islamic ewers of cast bronze with globular bodies and large, obliquely rising beak-spouts with cusped edges (ewer type ICAW 4, chapter 14), here somewhat inappropriately attached to the hammered body below.

On a few occasions, finally, the entire vessel appears to have been cast. This seems to be particularly true for a handful of ewers characterized by a squat cylindrical body and stepped shoulder area. Thus Allan took the strong contours and apparent solidity of the construction of ewers 11 and 12 as an indication of their being cast.¹² Ewer 4 is certainly cast, to judge by its extraordinary weight, and the

identification of the material on the basis of the published literature dealing with an individual piece or the details supplied to me by museums or private collectors; cf. Ward 1993, p. 29.

¹⁰ According to Allan the handle of ewer 16 appears to be cast; cf. Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 637 no. C/3/a/1.

¹¹ This manufacturing technique can also be observed in identical fashion on another group of early Islamic ewers. We will return to this point later in this chapter, when the origin of the ewer type will be discussed; cf. ewer type ICAW 1, Chapter 11.

¹² Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 225-6.

sturdy profiles of ewers 2, 3, 7, 9, 19, 13-15 suggest the same manner of production.¹³

2.2. Sub-group 2 (cat. nos. V.1/1-15; figs. 22-30, pls. 5-10)

It appears that all the objects in this sub-group were hammered from sheet bronze or brass. Like the objects of the first sub-group they, too, were assembled from several individual pieces. However, while the hammered ewers of the first sub-group were often assembled quite crudely, with the joints more often than not clearly visible, the workmanship of the objects in the second sub-group is much more refined. Apparently, every effort was made to conceal the joints carefully, and today, most of them are virtually indiscernible.¹⁴

Intrigued by this successful concealment of the body's individual components, Allan was the first scholar to examine the exact procedure according to which the vessels were manufactured, and in this context his considerations are worth summarizing. According to him, the body proper was probably hammered into shape first, and then soldered down the side. Then the foot would be soldered onto the lower body and the base plate folded over the foot's outer edge to close it. Above, the shoulder plate, pierced in the centre, with the neck base worked from the excess metal thus produced, most probably joined the upper body somewhere above the recessed transitional zone. The neck itself was probably fashioned on its own, generally hammered into a cylinder from a rectangular metal sheet and then, like the body, soldered down the back.¹⁵ Subsequently, it would be inserted into the low collar worked from the centre of the shoulder.

¹³ Ewer 7 has actually been described as cast; cf. Berlin 1986, p. 54 no. 28. Melikian-Chirvani describes ewer 13 as being of cast bronze or brass; cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 137, p. 152 note 7.

¹⁴ This fact was already observed by Allan; cf. Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-7.

¹⁵ This particular joint is in fact the only one which remains visible on most objects today.

As for the spout section, Allan considered it as technically feasible that it, too, was actually worked separately and then joined to the front of the neck. Finally, the spout cover, filter and lip were laid over the mouth and spout aperture.¹⁶

Interestingly enough, it appears that the neck and spout sections, just like in the first sub-group, were not always hammered. At least in the case of ewer V.1/1, following a peculiarity in manufacture already encountered on ewers 1 and 21 of the first sub-group, it appears that the neck and spout section were actually cast rather than hammered and then joined to the hammered body below.

As for the handle, it was generally formed from a narrow metal strip and soldered together down the inside. A tiny aperture in its upper side was then used to fill the inside with lead or sand. This procedure enabled the craftsman to bend it into shape subsequently without running the risk of jeopardizing its coherence by causing the metal to bend or split.¹⁷ On occasions, the handle appears to have been cast rather than hammered, a fact implied in this sub-group by the solid handle profile of ewer 9.

2.3-4. Sub-Groups 3 & 4 (cat. nos. V.2/1-14; V.3/1-15; figs. 31-41, pls.11-25)

All the vessels in the third and fourth sub-groups were worked according to the very same technical procedure outlined above. Cast vessels or those with cast elements do not seem to occur in these varieties.¹⁸

¹⁶ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 227.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Allan had nos. V.2/6 and V.2/13 analysed to establish their alloy. They turned out to be both brasses with ca. 19% and 25% zinc respectively, and virtually no lead. He assumed that most of the remaining objects of this ewer type as a whole were probably made from similar alloys; cf. Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 226, Vol. 2, pp. 640-1 nos. C/3/c/2 and C/3/c/5.

3. Decoration

The remarkable diversity which characterizes the profile of the ewers assembled in this group is equalled by the array of decorative techniques (repoussé, inlay [of copper, silver and a bituminous black substance], incising) and in particular by the astounding variety of iconographical elements employed to enhance the vessels' surface.¹⁹

3.1. Sub-group 1 (cat. nos. 1-31; figs. 1-21, pls. 1-4)

Among the pieces in the first sub-group only the bodies of ewers 7, 16 and 17 appear to be completely void of decoration, while on ewers 28 and 30 the only decorative feature on the body is the raised star on the shoulder plate. All the remaining pieces have their shoulder and body proper as well as their neck and spout enhanced to a varying degree by repoussé, incising and in some cases inlay.

On the most modestly decorated pieces it seems to be the shoulder which receives prime attention, generally displaying a Kufic, cursive or pseudo-inscription (cat. nos. 1, 15, 18, 25), sometimes set against a punched background (cat. no. 18). Only in one case does the shoulder receive scrolling instead of the epigraphic panel (cat. no. 6). In the case of ewers 6 and 25 additional minor decorative details occur on the body. Thus, in the case of ewer 6, the body receives a scrolling design,²⁰ while on ewer 25 a braided band occupies the transitional zone below the shoulder plate.

¹⁹ Again the ewers of this category will be dealt with according to the typological sub-groups introduced above in order to keep the discussion accessible for the reader. However, it has to be emphasised here that this sub-division is based on structural differences. As far as the decoration is concerned there are several decorative conventions that occur across the board and are not confined to one or the other typological variety in particular.

²⁰ Unfortunately, it was impossible to identify the exact location or extent of the body decoration from the photograph available to me. Information about the latter is based on the catalogue entry accompanying the piece.

On the remaining ewers in this sub-group the decorative schemes complementing the consistently epigraphic treatment of the shoulder are more extensive and fall into various categories.

Starting with the enhancement of the **body**, the first variety of decorative layout can be observed on ewers 13, 14 and 26. Here, the central upper body receives an epigraphic panel, generally flanked by decorative roundels, which often names the artist who executed the vessel. Thus, Sa'd b. 'Ata signs ewer 13 in this frieze and Tahir 'Ali ewer 14. Below this inscription band a large cusped medallion, filled with interlaced scrollwork or intertwined birds (cat. no. 14), occupies the body's façade.²¹

On ewers 10-12 the preceding decorative scheme has been extended, in that the central cartouche has been linked by a narrow guilloche or a crudely executed scrolling band (cat. no. 11) to newly added, lateral roundels or, in the case of ewer 10, crescent motifs. The panel above the cartouche, again containing mainly epigraphy, but scrollwork in the case of ewer 10, has been extended to cover, as it were, the entire succession of motifs below.

Finally, on most of the remaining ewers in this group, a third version of decorative layout can be observed, which, however, is ultimately related closely to those encountered on the preceding vessels. Thus, on ewers 2, 3, and 9 an epigraphic band again runs around the upper body (sometimes stopping on the sides) and is terminated by small roundels (cat. nos. 2, 9), while a narrow geometric interlacing band has been added to enhance the lower body. The central zone of the body enclosed within these two friezes again receives a large cartouche in front as well as interlaced roundels on the sides.

A stylistically more refined version of the same layout can be observed on ewers 21-24. Here, the rather more carefully executed epigraphic panel running across the front of the upper body actually consists of two sections, the inner cusped

²¹ This decorative layout with an epigraphic panel surmounting an ornamental medallion or cartouche can also be observed on several ewers of another early Islamic ewer type (cf. ICAW 4, chapter 14).

sides of which meet in the centre to form a kind of arch complementing the outlines of the cartouche below. On both sides of the body the epigraphic friezes terminate half-way and are bordered by small, heart-shaped or rounded vegetal medallions. The all-enclosing guilloche on the lower body has become very slim and can on occasion surmount a valance of inverted arcading (cat. nos. 21, 23).

The façade of the body has again a cartouche, generally arched, which can contain either addorsed birds (cat. no. 24) or a sphinx on a scrolling ground (cat. no. 22).²² In the case of ewer 21, however, two superposed elements, a small diamond-shaped medallion below and a large almond-shaped cartouche on a triangular base above, were chosen to occupy the central body, the latter containing a bird. In all four cases the central design on the body façade is flanked by an elaborate vase motif, sometimes separated from the former by vertical guilloche or stylized scrolling bands, which join the epigraphic bands above to the narrow horizontal guilloche band below (cat. nos. 23, 24).

A yet more sophisticated version of the layout discussed here can be observed on ewer 4, with a clearly intensified tendency to utilize vegetal and zoomorphic elements. Here, the band around the upper body has been subdivided into panels separated by floral roundels. The central section contains an inscription interrupted by a knot motif, while the lateral panels each show two quadrupeds again separated by a geometric knot. The frieze is completed by another epigraphic panel identical to the first one, which runs across the area where the handle is attached. The narrow band around the lower body in this case receives a succession of elongated quadrupeds separated by small vegetal roundels. The elements occupying the central zone of the body are also of a mainly floral character: a large medallion with scrollwork on the front and additional floral cartouches as well as geometric interlace motifs with central palmettes on the sides.

²² Unfortunately, the appearance of the central motif applied on ewer 23 is not visible on the photograph available.

Finally, mention has to be made of three ewers which stand out clearly from the remaining pieces because of the unique decorative scheme applied to each one of them. Thus, on ewer 5 a broad panel of horizontally orientated heart-shaped scrolls above and a narrow band of fleshy scrollwork below enclose three (?) vertical bands with foliated designs in the central zone, each perhaps intended to evoke pseudo-epigraphy. The heart-scroll band of the upper body is repeated on the shoulder.

On ewer 8 the body is entirely covered by a net of cusped, interlacing bands which form medallion-like spaces. Contained within are scenes, now badly worn, of revelling and royal entertainment as well as quadrupeds and mythical animals. The shoulder plate, rather than carrying the usual epigraphic frieze or scrollwork, is here occupied, as mentioned before, by a succession of repoussé birds or ducks. A cursive inscription, does, however, occur on the transitional zone below.

Ewer 20, finally, displays a unique combination of several of the decorative elements encountered on the previously discussed pieces, laid out in two zones enclosing the upper and lower body. In both areas, basically a combination of epigraphy, guilloche bands and inverted arcading has been applied, while the transitional zone below the epigraphic shoulder panel carries a type of interlaced scroll unparalleled in this category.

As for the decorative schemes of ewers 27, 29 and 31, the brief catalogue entries at my disposal did not provide enough information to add them to either of the varieties discussed and their detailed analysis will therefore have to be left to future research.

The neck collar of the ewers in this sub-group appears to have been left plain in all cases. The neck itself, however, does receive various different decorative treatments. On several of the ewers in this category it has purely incised decoration. Thus, ewer 1 reveals a subtly incised band below the neck collar and a narrow guilloche intertwined on the front of the neck below the spout.²³ Ewers 2, 3 and 9 carry geometric designs on the neck, in the case of ewer 2 enclosing the name of the

²³ Scerrato 1959, p. 104.

artist Abu Sa'id al-(?). The decoration encountered on the neck and spout of ewer 4 is almost exclusively floral, apart from the cable pattern on the lip and the geometric guilloche on the outer sides of the spout.²⁴

On ewer 5 the neck decoration echoes that of the body: a simplified scrolling band similar to that on the lower body appears below the mouth. On ewers 10 and 12, small floral roundels occupy the sides of the neck, and in the case of no. 10 a small crescent motif can be observed in addition below the spout, while the spout itself has two scrolling panels on its underside. The neck decoration on ewer 11 is indiscernible from the available photograph, but Allan, when dealing with this piece, apparently made out a cursive inscription on it.²⁵

On ewer 14 an inscription frieze runs from the lateral ring protrusions downwards and across the central body, enclosing a heart-shaped knot motif below the spout. The latter receives a palm-leaf design on its underside. In the case of ewer 15 a very simple scrolling design enhances the neck below the mouth and alongside the spout. On ewer 17 a fleshy scroll occupies the area below the mouth, while a linear, perhaps vegetal motif is placed on its sides. On ewer 20 the neck echoes the decorative details of the body, displaying an inscription panel below the mouth and a floral roundel with a guilloche frame on the sides.

The typologically unusual neck of ewer 21 displays an array of abstract geometric, floral and zoomorphic motifs, including a rather enigmatic, dragon-headed band on the spout. Stylistically, these decorative elements appear strangely unrelated in their rather primitive visual appeal to the much more refined decoration encountered on the ewer's body. This fact is worth noting already at this point, and will have to be commented on again later in this chapter.

On other vessels the application of repoussé animals, mainly seated lions, is the most prominent feature of the neck decoration, and can sometimes also be

²⁴ The decoration on this piece will need closer investigation, as, to my mind, a certain amount of re-engraving has taken place. This may also involve the addition of chronologically later ornamentation.

²⁵ Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 638 no. C/3/a/4.

observed on the spout cover. In the case of ewers 22 - 24, 28 and 30 seated repoussé lions present the only enhancement of the neck. On the neck of ewer 8, finally, repoussé lions and birds appear, and here they are surrounded above and alongside the spout by a cursive inscription.

Finally, the **handle** can sometimes bear rather moderate decorative enhancement as well. In some cases this is restricted to pseudo-beading (cat. no. 2) or grooves applied to various parts of the handle back (cat. nos. 3, 5, 16). Ewer 7 displays a polygonal ring which encloses the upper handle. Occasionally, incising is used to decorate the sides of the handle. Thus, superposed wavy lines appear on the handle sides of ewer 4 and plaited bands on those of ewer 21.²⁶

Thumbpieces can sometimes be observed as well, rendered either as a pomegranate (cat. no. 2), a rounded and sometimes faceted knob with semicircular finial (cat. nos. 3, 11, 14) or a bird (cat. no. 6).

3.2. Sub-Group 2 (cat. nos. V.1/1-15; figs. 22-30, pls. 5-10)

In comparison to the considerable array of decorative treatments encountered on vessels belonging to the first sub-group, the ewers of this sub-group are characterized by a rather greater consistency of decorative schemes and individual elements.

Both the vertical ribs and the individual sections of the transitional zone above bear decorative enhancement. Usually two different decorative elements are utilized to highlight the rounded and triangular facets respectively. On ewer V.1/1 the rounded **body ribs** display animal friezes, in each one of which the animals run towards the shoulder or foot alternately. The triangular facets on this ewer have been left plain. On ewers V.1/2 and V.1/3 the animal panels on the rounded facets,

²⁶ It is quite possible that the handle back also received similar treatment but I was unable to examine this possibility from the photographs available to me.

here only directed towards the shoulder, were retained. Their triangular ribs, however, additionally receive narrow scrolling panels on either side.

On ewers V.1/4-7 the triangular facets also display scrollwork, but the rounded ribs, rather than displaying animal friezes, here bear naskhi or Kufic (cat. no. V.1/7) inscriptions, which are sometimes interrupted by rosettes half-way down (cat. no. V.1/7). Curiously, ewer V.1/6 features one Kufic panel reading al-bir between the otherwise naskhi inscriptions which all repeat al-'izz al-da'im. On ewer V.1/14, finally, the decorative treatment of the body ribs has become extended in that here the rounded ribs alternately carry animal friezes and naskhi panels with central floral roundels, while retaining the scrolling bands on the triangular facets.

On ewers V.1/8-11 all the facets of the body receive inscription bands, those on the rounded ribs usually executed in cursive or naskhi style, the sides of the triangular ones in Kufic. In the case of ewer V.1/11 the visual contrast between both facet types has been additionally emphasised by the fact that the inscriptions on the rounded sections are set against a spiral scrolling background, while those on the triangular ones appear on a perfectly plain background. On ewer V.1/10, finally, all ribs have the same style of sketchy Kufic.

On ewers V.1/12 and V.1/13 motifs not met with on the preceding pieces are combined with several of the decorative elements common to the other objects. Both vessels display on their rounded facets a vertical succession of elongated cusped medallions filled with either arabesques (cat. no. V.1/12) or spiral scrolls (cat. no. V.1/13), alternating with six-petalled rosettes. Their triangular ribs, on the other hand, are filled with either a Kufic inscription (cat. no. V.1/12) or scrollwork (V.1/13).

Above the facets, the recessed **transitional zone** which introduces the shoulder, is composed, as was mentioned before, of alternately rounded and triangular sections, each one corresponding to one of the body facets below. As for their decoration, the rounded sections usually receive various types of rosettes (cat. nos. V.1/7, V.1/12, V.1/13). Knotted roundels and crescent motifs also occur, both

details being filled either with split palmettes (cat. nos. V.1/1-3, V.1/5-6, V.1/10) or birds (cat. nos. V.1/4, V.1/8). The sides of the triangular sections are generally filled by small floral or scrolling designs (cat. nos. V.1/2-3, V.1/6-7, V.1/10), but they can also be occupied by tiny inscription panels (cat. nos. V.1/5, V.1/8-9), knot motifs (cat. no. V.1/4) or simple vase motifs (cat. nos. V.1/12-13).

On ewers V.1/11 and V.1/14 the transitional zone is occupied by repoussé creatures: individual birds, one corresponding to each facet below, walk clockwise in the case of V.1/11, while in the case of V.1/14 pairs of addorsed lions occupy the area above each rounded facet only.

Before we complete the analysis of the body decoration encountered on ewers in the second sub-group, special attention has to be drawn to ewer V.1/15, which is clearly in a class of its own as far as the superior craftsmanship of its execution and the extensive variety of decorative elements are concerned, the latter being thus far unparalleled on other pieces in this sub-group. On the body, each rounded rib displays a unique design with two anthropomorphic naskhi panels above and below enclosing a central zodiacal medallion with animal scroll extensions. Above, these ribs are surmounted by pairs of addorsed repoussé harpies. The triangular ribs, on the other hand, which in this case continue upwards beyond the repoussé harpies to meet the shoulder plate, feature dense animal friezes on either side.

The **shoulder** invariably features a central repoussé star around the neck base, which in several cases receives further incised and inlaid detailing (cat. nos. 7, 11, 13). The remaining space is always occupied by a benedictory inscription panel. This epigraphic frieze is executed either in naskhi, anthropomorphic in the case of ewers V.1/11 and V.1/15, or Kufic (cat. no. V.1/10) and is either continuous (cat. nos. V.1/3-5, V.1/7-(?)9, V.1/12-14) or interrupted at regular intervals by either floral roundels (cat. no. V.1/2) or crescent-shaped motifs (cat. no. V.1/6).

The **neck collar** is mostly left plain, but on occasions it receives either a guilloche band (cat. nos. V.1/1, V.1/2) or, in the case of ewer V.1/11, a Kufic inscription.

Above this area, most of the objects in this group have their necks, and generally their spout covers, decorated with seated and reclining repoussé lions, respectively. The remaining surface areas are left plain on most occasions (cat. nos. V.1/2, 5, 6, 8-10, 12). If they are decorated, those of the spout always show scrolls on the outer sides and either additional scrollwork (cat. nos. V.1/7, V.1/14), a Kufic inscription (cat. no. V.1/11) or a succession of various individual motifs (cat. nos. V.1/13) on the underside.

On the **neck**, the repoussé lions can be surrounded by scrolling panels and/or inscription bands (cat. nos. V.1/7, 11, 14). In all these cases, individual interlacing scroll motifs and animals additionally fill the spaces towards the handle. On ewer 13, on the other hand, several separate motifs (a guilloche band, a vase motif and several bud-shaped elements of varying size) are disposed around the repoussé lions on the sides of the neck.

Finally, the most complex neck design can again be found on ewer 15, where an anthropomorphic naskhi frieze above and a figural, perhaps hunting, panel below enclose a mounted falconer magnificently executed in repoussé, and where the remaining surface is covered in zoomorphic scrollwork, which encloses a medallion with an enthroned figure below the handle. The spout cover on this piece, finally, displays a most delicately executed reclining quadruped.²⁷

As mentioned before, the neck and spout section of ewer V.1/1 stands clearly apart typologically from those encountered on the other pieces, and interestingly, its ornamentation (a small scrolling panel on the neck below the spout, a split palmette roundel on the underside of the spout and a guilloche along its outer edges) reflects this dissimilarity. In fact, many of these elements seem to be more or

²⁷ The elaborate lid encountered on this piece is perhaps not original.

less typical for this particular neck design, as they can be found again in very similar fashion on the necks and spouts of ewers 9 and V.2/1.²⁸

Finally, several ewers in this sub-group also have their feet and handles decorated in some way. The feet usually receive a central Kufic inscription band, anthropomorphic in the case of ewer V.1/15, which is occasionally interrupted by decorative roundels (cat. nos. V.1/4-5, V.1/9-10, V.1/12-13). Sometimes, however, the foot can be enhanced by a plaited band instead (cat. nos. V.1/7, V.1/14).²⁹

As for the few decorated **handles**, their ornamentation differs virtually on every single vessel. Thus, on the handles of ewers V.1/6 and V.1/13 guilloche or rope patterns are displayed. In the case of ewer V.1/11 the decorative elements include a rib pattern followed by scrollwork on its back, animal friezes and epigraphy on its side, a pair of birds on its lower attachment and a zoomorphic termination below. The handle back of ewer V.1/12 displays below a human figure, followed by a bird looking back. Above, a long panel of four running gazelles introduces a system of intertwined scrolls. The sides are occupied by palmette scrolls and double strapwork. On ewer V.1/15, finally, the handle back displays a plaited band, and the sides are occupied by zoomorphic scrollwork.

3.3. Sub-Group 3 (cat. nos. V.2/1-14; figs. 31-38, pls. 11-15)

The ewers of the third sub-group display several different decorative schemes on their **bodies**, some of which show close links with those encountered on many of the preceding pieces as well as with the decorative layouts of certain other early Islamic ewers (cf. ewer type ICAW 4). Thus, the decorative scheme on ewer V.2/1 comes closest in concept to those applied to ewers 2, 3 and 9 of the first sub-group

²⁸ Ewer 9 displays a guilloche along the outer edges of the spout, while a roundel virtually identical to that on the spout underside of the ewer under discussion can also be found on ewer V.2/1 in the same place.

²⁹ The foot of ewer V.1/11 is not original and neither is the lower foot of V.1/7.

and to others found for example on vessels belonging to ewer types ICAW 3 and 4: a cusped interlace cartouche occupies the body's façade, enclosed above and below by a tripartite Kufic panel with intermediate roundels (containing the artist's name "Muhammad al-Haravi" in the centre) and a cursive inscription. The fact that this decorative layout should have been applied to a faceted body is interesting, as it clearly counteracts the structural realities of the latter. This observation is significant, as we will be able to note the same contrast between body structure and decoration on several other ewers discussed at a later point in this section.

The decoration of ewers V.2/2-3 and V.2/6-7, on the other hand, shows close links to that found on certain pieces of the second sub-group. Thus, ewer no V.2/2 shows a decorative concept which is in fact identical to that of V.1/1, with animal friezes, surmounted by floral roundels in the corresponding sections of the transitional zone, enhancing the wide facets while leaving the narrow ones plain. The alternating inscriptions and types of scrollwork encountered on the facets of ewers V.2/3, V.2/6 and V.2/7, on the other hand, are paralleled on ewers V.1/4-7 of the second sub-group.

Ewer V.2/4 recalls to some extent the decorative layout met with on ewers V.1/12 and V.1/13 of the second sub-group, particularly in the way in which the motifs are disposed on the wide facets: here, floral crescent medallions alternate with small inscription panels in vertical succession, as do the medallions and rosettes on the other two vessels. Apart from this observation, the over-all decorative layout of ewer V.2/4 is additionally noteworthy for the fact that the various ornamental elements enhancing the facets are displayed in two visually contradictory ways, which invite the onlooker to "read" the decoration not only vertically, as was the case with the faceted pieces in sub-group 2, but horizontally as well.

Thus the wide body panels can be read vertically, in which case each facet, seen as an autonomous unit, displays a vertical succession of short inscription panels and floral medallions. At the same time, however, the recurrence of this identical

decorative scheme on each of the wide facets simultaneously invites the onlooker to perceive the inscription panels above, in the centre and below as continuous horizontal friezes, which, as it were, enclose two horizontal successions of medallions.³⁰

Interestingly enough, the visual fluency of this suggested horizontality is consciously interrupted by the vertical inscription bands on the narrow ribs of the body. At the same time, however, their decoration in turn also displays a clearly tangible visual conflict between horizontality and verticality: an upright, tear-shaped medallion on a triangular base interrupts the inscription half-way up each narrow facet, a position which incidentally corresponds exactly to the central inscription panels on the wide ribs to either side. This small medallion completely counteracts the visual impact of the inscription friezes, but at the same time seems to blend in well with the central inscription panels, linking them, as it were, on a horizontal level.

A similar, though much less tangible, contradiction in decorative orientation affects the ornament of the ewer's transitional zone. The latter, with its short but wide panels alternating with nearly square narrow ones, structurally forms a horizontally orientated section of the body - further emphasised by the recessed ridges above and below - which is designed to link successfully the vertical facets of the body with the horizontal shoulder plate above.

The visual impression of horizontality exerted by the structural design of this area means that one could have expected the artist to choose decorative elements which would enhance the visual signals of the area's shape. In fact, however, the motifs chosen (rosettes on the wide sections and short, vertically orientated inscription panels) invite the onlooker to follow the rosettes along an imaginary horizontal line, while at the same time forcing him to acknowledge the vertical

³⁰ Unfortunately, I was unable to decipher the inscription panels from the photographs available to me, and it was therefore impossible to establish whether the contents of the individual panels could actually make continuous reading and thus support the observations made above from a purely visual point of view.

orientation of the tiny Kufic friezes, which furthermore point towards the likewise disposed inscription bands on the narrow body facets below.

All in all, the interaction of horizontality and verticality in the decoration of ewer V.2/4 certainly gives the piece an increased visual vibrancy in comparison to the three preceding pieces in this sub-group, where the decoration is apparently meant merely to embellish the vessels' structural features. In fact, the increased complexity of the decorative scheme encountered on ewer V.2/4 starts to draw the onlooker's attention away from the vessel's profile to its ornamentation, and thus the object starts to become a carrier for decoration rather than an artistically embellished functional object - just like the canvas of a painting is a mere carrier of ornamentation, not an embellished object in its own right.

Similar observations can be made with regard to ewer V.2/5, although here the overall visual impact is less heterogeneous in comparison and altogether more "orderly". On this piece, the visual impression of superposed horizontal zones in the decoration counteracting the structural requirements of the vessel, i. e. the vertical facets, is even stronger than on the preceding piece.

This more tangible contrast is achieved by the fact that the short naskhi panels placed above and below on the wide facets, and in this case clearly legible as a continuous inscription, are set against a spiral scrolling background, while the background of the central zone on each wide rib, filled with a cusped medallion with central heart-knot scroll and knot extensions, is left plain. The narrow facets carry vertical Kufic inscriptions set against a delicate scrolling ground and again, of necessity, they interrupt the visual impact evoked by the decoration of the wide ribs.

Nevertheless, looking at the object as a whole, the plain background of the wide facets' central section suffices to make these panels recede visually in the eyes of the onlooker to such a degree that he can actually perceive the designs on the wide ribs as an entity in his mind. In other words the artist has succeeded in establishing a clear visual hierarchy among the decorative elements chosen by him,

and each of them exerts a carefully calculated degree of visual impact on the onlooker. Thus, the central medallions with knot extensions clearly attract the eye first and foremost. The inscription panels above and below are then perceived in conjunction with the former, thereby providing a frame-work for the main decorative zone in between. The vertical inscription panels, finally, come last in visual importance. The transitional zone of ewer V.2/5, on the other hand, is decorated perfectly in accordance with its structural requirements, displaying knotted and cusped floral medallions on the wide sections and knot motifs on the narrow ones.

No comments can be made with regard to the appearance of the body of ewer V.2/6, as I had no photograph at my disposal to examine its decorative features in detail.

On ewers V.2/8-13 the tendency to counteract visually the verticality of the body structure by a horizontally orientated decorative layout reaches new heights as far as this sub-group is concerned. This development might have been aided originally by a structural modification of the body's faceting, during which the narrow facets have been abandoned. Now, all body facets are of the same width and a slightly more rounded shape. The decorative scheme applied to the modified body shape echoes that already observed on the wide body facets of ewer V.2/5, i. e. inscription panels above and below flanking a central medallion. On ewers V.2/8 and V.2/9 they are rendered in Kufic and naskhi respectively, while on ewer V.2/10 both are filled with naskhi script. In all these cases the contents of all the individual cartouches, which are rendered slightly broader on the upper body than on the lower one, are to be read continuously.

The central area of each facet receives a roundel or medallion filled either with birds (cat. nos. V.2/8, V.2/10) or astrological scenes (cat. no. V.2/9). The remaining background of this zone is left entirely plain, and accordingly, the central sections of each rib are perceived as one continuous decorative band, enhanced with a horizontal succession of medallions. We thus have on the bodies of these ewers

three horizontal decorative planes, which clearly counteract the verticality of the body facets.

The **transitional zone** of these pieces, on the other hand, again receives ornamentation in line with the horizontality of its structure, generally a succession of small identical motifs such as knotted floral roundels (cat. V.2/8), knot motifs (V.2/9) or crescent roundels (cat. no. V.2/10).

Ewers V.2/11 and V.2/12 basically follow the same decorative principles as the six preceding pieces, but the execution of their body decoration is much more elaborate and detailed. Thus, the upper and lower inscription friezes - executed in naskhi in the case of ewer V.2/11 and knotted Kufic and naskhi respectively in the case of V.2/12 - have received human and animal heads and are set against a background of animated scrollwork. Moreover, in the case of ewer V.2/12 two continuous animal friezes have been inserted additionally to separate the inscription bands from the broad decorative zone which encloses the central body.

Again, the centre of each facet receives a medallion, which on both vessels, as in the case of V.2/9, is filled with a sign of the zodiac. The remaining background, however, is no longer plain, but densely covered with profuse fleshy scrollwork. In the case of ewer V.2/11 the tendrils are clearly confined to each rib, but on ewer V.2/12 they unfold across the structural boundaries of the facets and interlace with those developing on the ribs on either side. Obviously, these dense and continuously interlacing scrolls diminish the visual superiority of the central medallions, and thus (particularly in the case of ewer V.2/12) the central zone as a whole is now more than ever perceived as one decorative entity, which, together with the other decorative friezes above and below, visually counteracts the structure of the ewers' body to a thus far unprecedented degree. In both cases the transitional zone again emphasises this visual impact of the decoration's horizontality by displaying a succession of cusped medallions on a scrolling ground with central enthroned figures in the case of V.2/11 and pairs of addorsed birds in the case of V.2/12.

Finally, the decoration of ewer V.2/13 marks the culminating point in the artistic efforts to disguise and actively to counteract the structural features of the body. Its decorative treatment is undoubtedly related to that of the preceding two pieces, but yet again, certain significant modifications have taken place. Thus, the band of cusped zodiacal medallions was placed on a plane just above the central body, and a thus far unprecedented succession of frontally rendered repoussé birds encloses the lower body. Both these bands are embedded within a tightly woven framework of geometrical scrolls with animal-head terminations.

As a result of this decorative layout, the entire faceted area of the body below the addorsed pairs of repoussé harpies which occupy the transitional zone is now visualized as one ornamental entity, rather like a textile, which visually leads the onlooker around the body in an exclusively horizontal direction. Any attempt to "read" the body decoration according to the requirements of its structure is now impossible.

Interestingly enough, the decorative treatment of ewer V.2/14 seems to represent a clear regression in comparison with the challenging decorative schemes discussed above. On this piece, the decorative elements applied to the facets, i. e. alternately stylized, symmetrically disposed scrolls with remnants of animal heads and roundels with horsemen or enthroned figures, are disposed strictly in accordance with the ribs' verticality, a decorative principle reminiscent of those encountered on ewers of the second sub-group and ewers V.2/3 and V.2/7 in this sub-group. The transitional zone displays a succession of individual and rather stylized horsemen, again well in line with its horizontal structure.

On all or at least most of the ewers in this sub-group the lower terminations of the facets are also enhanced, probably mainly by scrollwork or individual motifs such as knots and rosettes. Unfortunately, however, the photographic material at my disposal does not allow a more detailed description of these decorative features.

The remarkable versatility of the body decoration is in clear contrast with the surprising conservatism expressed in the type of embellishment chosen for the

shoulder plate. In fact, in all cases but one (cat. no. V.2/7) this area receives an inlaid naskhi inscription of good wishes generally executed in silver, and this can in some cases be further enhanced by anthropomorphic features (cat. nos. V.2/11-14). Only the shoulder plate of ewer V.2/7 displays an entirely different decoration, i. e. twelve zodiacal medallions set against a network of dense geometric interlace. Often, the spaces between the inscription band and the edges of the central repoussé star, which generally encloses the neck base in the centre of the shoulder, also bear tiny decorative motifs such as knots issuing from the panel's inner border (cat. no. V.2/3), small tendrils (cat. no. V.2/5), rosettes (cat. no. V.2/7), heart-shaped scroll motifs (cat. no. V.2/11) or fishes (cat. nos. V.2/12-13), in the latter case accompanied by tiny duck heads.

If decorated, the **neck collar** may receive a band of interlacing circles (cat. no. V.2/9) or, more commonly, a benedictory Kufic inscription (cat. nos. V.2/7,11-13).³¹

The **neck** proper also receives various types of ornament in addition to the repoussé lions generally applied to its sides. On the neck of ewer V.2/1, which alone features lateral pendants rather than repoussé lions, the decoration comprises a cursive inscription panel running across the lower front and flanked on either side by two superposed squares with inscribed lozenges. Below the spout, a copper-inlaid rectangular panel displays a looped, heart-shaped design and two lateral buds. Several of these elements can already be observed on ewer V.1/1 and are also common on the necks of several other early Islamic bronze ewers (cf. ewer type ICAW 4).

On the remaining ewers in this sub-group the lateral repoussé lions can be accompanied by a knot motif (cat. no. V.2/3), an animal (cat. nos. V.2/7, V.2/9) or Kufic and - sometimes anthropomorphic - naskhi friezes (cat. nos. V.2/9, V.2/11-12, V.2/14). In other cases they are actually enclosed by decorative panels,

³¹ I was unable to determine the decoration of the neck collar on ewer V.2/14 from the photograph available to me.

such as either a narrow guilloche band (cat. no. V.2/4) or again epigraphic friezes (cat. nos. V.2/5, V.2/7). In the case of ewers V.2/11 and V.2/14 an animated frieze of fantastic animals and human figures, respectively, runs around the lower neck.

In addition to the decorative enhancement of the neck's main areas several ewers also display a mainly floral motif on the neck area below the handle attachment. This decorative detail is generally enclosed in a panel or medallion of varying appearance (cat. nos. V.2/5, V.2/9, V.2/11, neck fragment 1).

The neck design of ewer V.2/8 stands clearly apart from that of the other pieces in that here a repoussé rosette occupies the sides, accompanied by individual rosette and star motifs, while below, a pseudo-naskhi inscription completes the decorative layout. Finally, the neck decoration of ewer V.2/12 is again unique with regard to the decorative treatment chosen in that the lower neck has repoussé birds and the entire surface surrounding these figures is filled with dense scrollwork which recalls that encountered on the body facets below.

The **spout** may also be embellished with ornamentation. Thus, in the case of ewer V.2/1, a simple, copper-inlaid roundel similar to that on the spout of ewer V.1/1 occurs on its underside. More commonly, however, the outer and inner sides of the mainly four-sided spout receive more lavish decoration. The outer areas can attest a scale pattern (cat. no. V.2/8) or, more commonly, various types of scrollwork (cat. nos. V.2/3-5; in the case of V.2/7 with central rosette; V.2/9, V.2/11-14). The inner sides or undersides, on the other hand, show an elaborate knot pattern (cat. no. V.2/5), animal friezes (cat. nos. V.11-13) or again scrollwork (cat.no. V.2/14).

Among the original **handles** that survive today, some are also decorated, either by guilloche bands (cat. nos. V.2/5, V.2/8), animal friezes (cat. no. V.2/12) or scrolls (cat. no. V.2/13) on the sides and similar or more diversified (cat. no. V.2/12) elements on the back. Finally, the ewers' **feet**, if decorated, can bear a geometric guilloche band (cat. no. V.2/4), a Kufic inscription (cat. no. V.2/5), an

animal frieze (cat. no. V.2/13) or stylized scrollwork creating heart designs (cat. no. V.2/14).

In considering the analysis of the decorative features applied to the ewers of the third sub-group, it appears that there is a gradual artistic tendency away from merely enhancing the given realities of the ewer body's structure with its vertical faceting towards a more and more horizontally orientated ornamentation, which aims to neutralize completely the visual impact of the vessels' structural features. This development was already noticeable to a minor extent in the second sub-group and can again be observed on ewers of the fourth sub-group, which will be discussed next.

3.4. Sub-Group 4 (cat. nos. V.3/1-15; figs. 39-41, pls. 16-25)

As on several vessels belonging to the third sub-group (cat. nos V.2/8-13) the decorative layout observed on the **body** of the ewers discussed in this section is again to a large extent characterized by an ever-increasing disregard for the vessels' structural features. Most typically, three or more superposed decorative zones enclose the body horizontally and thus again aim to conceal the latter's vertical facets.

On many of the pieces, as on several objects in the preceding sub-group (cat. nos. V.2/8-13), the upper and lower decorative zones are made up of small individual epigraphic cartouches, each containing a portion of a continuous benedictory formula. Mostly, the upper epigraphic band is rendered in Kufic (cat. nos. V.3/1-3), which can also be knotted (cat. no. V.3/4), anthropomorphic (cat. no. V.3/9) or executed in a pseudo-version (cat. no. V.3/13), and the lower frieze displays a plain or anthropomorphic naskhi inscription (cat. nos. V.3/1, V.3/3-4, V.3/9, V.3/13). On other ewers, however, both friezes feature the same epigraphic

style - Kufic in the case of ewer V.3/2 and mainly anthropomorphic naskhi in the case of ewers V.3/5 (?), V.3/10 and V.3/11. On the fragmented ewers V.2/6 and V.2/7 the remaining lower parts are both enhanced with naskhi friezes, but unfortunately we have no knowledge of which epigraphic style would have corresponded to these on the upper body.

The wide decorative zone around the central body most typically receives a succession of medallions or cartouches, again a decorative convention already familiar from ewers V.2/8-13 of the second sub-group. Thus on ewer V.3/1, cartouches, which display alternately enthroned figures between dragon-headed staffs and intricate interlace designs, alternate with lavish vase motifs.

On ewers V.3/2-5 and V.3/13 the centre of each facet contains various types of identical medallions, mainly with the same type of floral filling, two floral designs in alternation (cat. no. V.3/4) or, in the case of V.3/13, with a central sphinx on a spiral scrolling background.³² On occasion these can be flanked above and below by small rosettes (cat. no. V.3/2) or by rosettes and knotted heart-scrolls respectively (cat. no. V.3/4), which are mostly positioned across the edges of the individual facets.

Ewer V.3/6 apparently also featured the same layout originally, but in this case the medallions are filled with figural (perhaps zodiacal) scenes and are flanked above and below by geometric knots, which are again positioned across the facets' edges.

On ewer V.3/8 the cusped central medallions do certainly depict the signs of the zodiac. Here, however, in contrast to the plain background underlying the central motifs on ewers V.3/1-6, the remaining space of the facets has become densely covered with geometric scrollwork. It is interesting to note that both this enrichment of the central zone, as such, and the style of the scrolls employed are closely related to the ornamentation on the body of ewer V.2/13.

³² Unfortunately, I am unable to identify the body decoration of ewer V.3/5 in any detail from the published image available to me.

On ewer V.3/9 the basic layout of the preceding pieces has been employed again: two narrow bands flank a wide central zone containing a succession of cartouches. However, in this case those zones, which usually contain epigraphic friezes, are filled with scrolls terminating in lozenge-shaped leaves. Tendrils with similar terminations grow out of the cusped medallions in the centre, each of which contains a knotted heart-scroll supporting a crescent shape. The latter design, though more stylized, recalls those filling the medallions on ewers V.3/3 and V.3/5.

On ewers V.3/10 and V.3/11 the main decorative zones of the body have been increased to four in number, with two very narrow panels inserted between the inscription panels, which enclose the upper and lower body, and the main decorative frieze around the central body, a treatment already encountered in identical fashion on ewer V.2/12. In the case of ewer V.3/10 the decorative layout is basically the same as on ewer V.3/8, i. e. a frieze of zodiacal medallions flanked by anthropomorphic inscriptions. However, here the background of the central zone is again left plain and its size has been reduced considerably by the insertion of two narrow animal friezes. On ewer V.3/11 the central zodiacal medallions are flanked by inward-facing harpies above and outward-facing ones below, while the newly introduced small bands which enclose the central zone display seated revellers.

In addition to the main decorative zones which enclose the body, further enhancement can often be found on the lower edges of the facets. The decorative motifs employed mainly occur in the form of individual rosettes (cat. nos. V.3/1, V.3/3, V.3/7), roundels filled with geometric interlace or intertwined scrolls (cat. no. V.3/4) or similar motifs (cat. nos. V.3/6, V.3/8, V.3/10-11, V.3/13).

The decorative scheme encountered on the curtailed body of the now reworked ewer fragment V.3/12 is unique in this category as a whole, in that it displays three superposed decorative zones of equal size beneath what presumably once formed the transitional zone. The upper and lower body friezes each contain a succession of cusped roundels with planetary and zodiacal representations, while the central panel displays an animated assortment of dancers and musicians.

Ewers V.3/14 and V.3/15, finally, also stand somewhat apart from the other pieces as far as their decorative layout is concerned. Ewer V.3/14 again utilizes the basic decorative scheme encountered on most of the preceding pieces: two narrow friezes flank the wide central zone which contains a succession of individual medallions. The elaboration of this scheme is obviously different. Thus, the narrow zones each contain pairs of revellers, dancers and musicians. Each pair is clearly confined within the space available on one facet and separated from the next one on either side by large crescent motifs set across the facet edges. The main zone is separated from the latter two by narrow geometric borders which seem to have no parallel in this category of ewers. This zone contains a likewise innovative succession of tall ogival arches set against an arabesque background and containing mounted hunters as well as genre-like hunting scenes in alternation. The lower body, finally, has an interlaced valance, again separated from the zone above by a geometric border.

On ewer V.3/15, finally, the three zones around the major part of the body are treated in a unique way. For the first time the central zone, containing an inscription of knotted pseudo-Kufic, is actually narrower than the zones above and below. The latter two each contain a succession of medallions, linked by small geometric roundels or loops, and set against a background of scrolls above and one filled with small knotted scroll motifs below. In both cases each medallion is filled with either a seated figure holding a crescent or a symmetrically disposed animal scroll springing from a central mask. All zones are terminated on the lower body by an interlaced valance virtually identical to that on ewer V.3/14 and are framed by meandering borders. On the latter vessel, the artist's ability to disguise the object's structural features undoubtedly reaches its peak. The facets are completely concealed by the decoration applied to them and there is no way that the onlooker can even sense them in any conscious manner. In fact, a complete trompe l'oeil has been achieved, which is due particularly to the definite horizontality of the central

zone (which attracts the attention first with its dense knotted design), as well as to the other zones and their borders.

As on the objects in the preceding sub-group, the **transitional zone** forms - so to speak - an additional horizontal zone in the decoration. In this case, however, the latter is well in line with the structural requirements of that area. On occasion the sections of the transitional zone display two alternate motifs, such as rosettes and confronted bird pairs in the case of ewer V.3/1, rosettes and knot designs set across the facets' edges in the case of V.3/2, individual horsemen riding to left or right on ewer V.3/11 and addorsed and confronted pairs of sphinxes in the case of ewer V.3/14.

Other ewers display a succession of identical motifs in this area: knot designs with scrolling extensions in the case of ewer V.3/3, abstracted scrolling panels in the case of ewer V.3/9, horsemen on ewer V.3/10 and elongated quadrupeds on ewer fragment V.3/12 and ewer V.3/13 - winged in the latter case. In the case of ewer V.3/8 this scheme is somewhat altered in that all sections but one contain horsemen directed towards the front of the vessel. Here, the central section immediately below the spout is occupied by the scene of an enthroned ruler flanked by two attendants. This arrangement is interesting as it subtly emphasises the ewer's façade and suggests an iconographical hierarchy within the transitional zone, in which the central panel marks the culminating point, towards which all the motifs in the other sections are directed. One could even speculate whether it might not in fact form the heart of the decoration as a whole, but it would lead us too far astray in this context to examine this suggestion in detail.

The decoration on the transitional zone of ewer V.3/15 is as unparalleled in this category as is the embellishment of this vessel as a whole. Here, a continuous Kufic frieze is applied to the lower part of the zone, thus yet again disregarding the faceted character of the body structure. The rounded panels above have individual crescent motifs. Two vessels, finally, again resort to repoussé decoration to adorn their transitional zone: ewer V.3/4 displays addorsed pairs of birds with their tails

overlapping, while ewer V.3/5 shows a succession of individual birds walking clockwise.

In contrast to the various decorative schemes encountered on the ewers' body, the **shoulder plate** is again treated with remarkable conservatism and displays mostly epigraphic friezes executed in Kufic or, sometimes anthropomorphic, naskhi (cat. nos. V.3/1-5, V.3/10, V.3/13, V.3/15). On ewer V.3/15 this panel is interrupted by decorative roundels enclosing individual musicians and on ewer V.3/2 small knot motifs extend from its inner border into the spaces reserved between the rays of the repoussé star positioned around the neck base. Only in the case of ewer V.3/9 is the shoulder plate occupied by a scrolling band, which in style echoes the decoration on the rest of the body.

The **neck collar** may also receive decorative enhancement on some occasions: either a guilloche (cat. no. V.3/4), an animal frieze (cat. no. V.3/11), sometimes introduced by a herring-bone pattern below (cat. no. V.3/8), heart-scrolls (cat. no. V.3/10), ray-like motifs (cat. no. V.3/13) or epigraphy (cat. nos. V.3/14-15).

As for the decoration of the **neck** proper, it shows very similar treatments to those already encountered on vessels of the preceding sub-group: mainly epigraphy and/ or scrollwork as well as guilloche friezes enclosing or accompanying the seated repoussé lions (cat. nos. V.3/1-5, V.3/8, V.3/15). Sometimes, individual rosettes are also positioned close to the lion (cat. nos. V.3/2, V.3/5), and on one occasion a large, probably floral, medallion can be observed below the handle attachment area (cat. no. V.3/8). Again, the neck decoration of ewer V.3/9 does not follow the usual layout but displays the same type of scrollwork already encountered on its body.

Scrollwork certainly presents the most popular decorative treatment for the sides of the **spout** (cat. nos. V.3/1, V.3/3-5, V.3/8-9, V.3/13-14). In some cases, however, the undersides receive a different ornament, such as a guilloche pattern in

the case of V.3/2, animal friezes in the case of V.3/11 and a herring-bone pattern on ewers V.3/14-15.

The **foot**, if decorated, receives mainly an epigraphic band of Kufic or one of anthropomorphic or other types of naskhi (cat. nos. V.3/3, V.3/10-11, V.3/13-15), which is sometimes further enhanced by beaded (cat. no. V.3/14) or ray-like borders (cat. no. V.3/11) and in one case by intermediate rosettes (cat. no. V.3/14). Other decorative schemes for the central foot include a plaited band in the case of V.3/4, scrollwork on ewers V.3/6 and V.3/9 and an animal frieze, again with a ray-like border above, in the case of ewer V.3/8. On rare occasions, even the outer edge of the foot receives decoration such as oblique hatching (cat. no. V.3/14).

Not many detailed comments can be made with regard to the **handle** decoration. However, it appears that guilloche bands (cat. no. V.3/2) and scrolls (cat. no. V.3/11, V.3/13 (?)) were among the motifs used. On ewers V.3/14-15 several motifs are combined, including on the former scrollwork, epigraphy, meandering borders, a herring-bone pattern on the back and a knot motif on the attachment plate. On the latter a long linear stalk with curving leaves is joined by a double-banded guilloche, a scroll and a knot motif on the attachment plate. In the case of ewer V.3/1 a small lion mask marks the lower attachment area of the handle, which is moreover surmounted by a bird thumbpiece. The latter detail can also be observed on ewer V.3/15. The handle of ewer V.3/14 originally featured a thumbpiece as well, but today only the base remains.

It becomes clear from the decorative analysis of the ewers in this category that the artists responsible for their embellishment had an astonishing pool of decorative schemes and individual motifs at their disposal. However, despite the obvious array of ornamental features there seems at the same time to have been a predilection for certain elements, layouts and artistic conventions which recur irrespective of the typological sub-group.

Thus the repoussé lions on neck and spout were elements that were applied to all varieties, and so were the raised star-shaped shoulder plate and, perhaps to a slightly lesser extent, the repoussé creatures on the shoulder edge. Among the decorative layouts the scheme of two bands of epigraphy enclosing a central zone of floral or figural medallions for the ewer body appears to have been favoured and applied irrespective of the structural realities characterizing the faceted varieties of this type.³³ As for the shoulder treatment it is even more standardized in that it virtually always displays some form of epigraphy, and the same is true with regard to the decoration of the foot.

4. Provenance and Date

4.1. Sub-group 1 (cat. nos. 1-31; figs. 1-21, pls. 1-4)

Of all the ewers assembled in this sub-group not a single vessel bears a date and only very few have a known provenance. In the face of such scarce evidence it is necessary to use other methods in order to place the vessels as a whole into a preliminary geographical and chronological framework, and the most promising procedure at present seems to be a closer analysis of their structural features and decorative characteristics.

To start with ewer 1 (fig. 1), its appearance is unparalleled at present with regard to its profile as a whole and its spout treatment in particular. It has, however, been likened by Scerrato to certain utilitarian vessels excavated at Maimāna in modern Afghānistān, datable to the 12th century or thereabouts. Thus, the profile of the hammered body (assembled from at least three sheet metal pieces)

³³ It seems interesting in this context to question the interplay of Kufic and naskhi in this layout and ask whether a hierarchy between the two might have been intended. However, it appears that both were interchangeable and could both occupy either the upper or the lower body.

as well as the artistic convention of giving decorative preference to the shoulder can both be paralleled on a group of simple ewers with cylindrical body and neck from that find (fig. 42), and the spout type of the former is related to some extent to that encountered on a likewise hammered ovoid-bodied ewer unearthed in the same spot (fig. 43).³⁴ As for the unusual beak-spout on ewer 1 (fig. 1), a similar spout with its tip terminating in a lion's head appears on another bronze ewer with fluted globular body attributed to Persia or Central Asia and datable to the 12th or 13th century (fig. 44).³⁵ The same spout concept, i. e. rendering the tip as a more or less realistically executed animal head, can also be observed on certain other early Islamic bronze ewers with ovoid bodies from Eastern Iran and Central Asia, some of which can be dated back to as early as the 10th/11th century (cf. ewer type ICAW 4/2, V.2/1).

Despite such comparative material it is still difficult to date or attribute the vessel accurately. Scerrato suggested the 12th century³⁶, but judging by the ewer's rather archaic overall appearance a slightly earlier dating to perhaps the late 11th century should not be discounted. As for its provenance, the Italian scholar reported that a provenance from Ghazna had been suggested, but in fact there is no solid evidence for this.³⁷ Considering, however, the vessel's generic links with ewers generally attributed to eastern Iran, the regions of modern Afghānistān and Central Asia, one may suggest that it, too, may have originated somewhere in that general area.

Ewers 2, 3 and 9 (figs. 2, 3, 8) are closely related in their overall profile as well as their decorative layout and the style of the individual motifs employed. Thus, the lateral rosette on the body of ewer 2 (fig. 2) for example is identical to that on ewer 9 (fig. 8). Such similarities might lead one to assume a similar dating

³⁴ Scerrato 1959, pp. 104-5; Scerrato 1964, pp. 696-9 no. 9, figs. 25-9 (ewer ICAW 4/V.1/1).

³⁵ Fehérvári and Safadi 1981, p. 92 no. 37.

³⁶ Scerrato 1959, pp. 104-5.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 104.

for all three vessels, perhaps, as has been suggested before, the 12th century or thereabouts.³⁸

The fact that the decoration on ewer 9 (fig. 8) is inlaid with copper may indicate a slightly later date, but it should not be forgotten that it might just as well merely represent a contemporary, yet slightly more sophisticated, version of this layout. As for the pieces' provenance it is interesting to note that a ewer in sub-group 3 (cat. no. V.2/1; pl.11), which features a spout identical to that on ewer 9 (fig. 8), carries the signature of one "Muhammad al-Haravī", and perhaps it is to the area of Herat or its vicinity that these ewers belong.³⁹

The decorative layout encountered on ewer 8 (pl. 1) - an all-enclosing network of broad interlacing and cusped borders which form medallions that contain figural scenes - is unique to this ewer category as a whole and more importantly, atypical, to my knowledge, of early Islamic metalwork from Iran in general. This observation is relevant in view of the fact that most of the remaining ewers in this category, though not all, can undoubtedly be assigned to that country on the basis of their decoration.

At the same time, however, the same concept of placing individual motifs or scenes within a network created by interlacing and cusped bands can already be observed on an 11th-century Qur'an page from Baghdad (fig. 45) and later in a miniature painting with author portraits belonging to the Mukhtār al-hikam wa mahāsin al-kalim, painted probably in Syria during the first half of the 13th century (fig. 46).⁴⁰ In metalwork the closest parallel I have been able to find so far can be observed on a lidded cup from Barsov-Gorodok near Surgut, most recently

³⁸ Sotheby's 9.10.79, lot. 178.

³⁹ Oddly enough, ewer 9 (fig. 8) has been dated to the 13th/14th century and attributed to either Iran or Egypt by its museum's curators. Apart from the fact that the date is most certainly too late, the Egyptian connection posited is, at least at present, without any foundation and can probably be all but excluded as both the piece's profile and its decorative elements can be compared to other objects with undeniably Iranian connections. (For an identical neck and spout treatment, see for example ewer V.1/1 (pl. 5) of the second sub-group, attributable most probably to 12th-century Iran).

⁴⁰ Ettinghausen 1979, pp. 75, 171.

attributed to a 12th/13th-century workshop located near the eastern borders of the Byzantine empire (fig. 47).⁴¹

Such observations suggest that this ewer, despite its undoubtedly eastern associations with regard to the body profile as well as the convention of applying repoussé animals on its neck and shoulder, may in fact have been decorated, if not even worked as a whole, in lands situated further to the west.⁴² Sarre attributed the ewer to the early 13th century, a date which is probably correct, and to northern Iran.⁴³ However, it seems more likely, considering the geographical attribution of the comparative material cited above, that the vessel actually originates from even further west, i. e. from Mesopotamia or regions adjacent to it. It is to be hoped that a detailed study of the ewer's decorative elements and their iconography in the future may help to consolidate the preliminary evidence put forward here for such an attribution.

Ewer 10 (pl. 2), which was found in Khurāsān, has been dated to the 12th century by Maslenitsyna, an attribution which is probably correct to judge by the piece's decorative layout and style.⁴⁴ A similar dating may be appropriate with regard to ewer 11 (fig. 9). The bad quality of the published image prevents a more detailed analysis of its decorative features, but it seems to display a decorative layout which is in principle identical to that on the preceding piece. As for its geographical origin, on the other hand, its somewhat unusual profile suggests a workshop different from the latter, and the fact that it was allegedly found near Ani in Armenia should at any rate be noted in this context.⁴⁵ The decoration on ewer 12 (fig. 10) seems again to justify a 12th-century dating and an eastern Iranian

⁴¹ Marshak 1986, fig 150, p. 435 no. 150.

⁴² The phenomenon of ewers which, though belonging to an eastern type, have most probably been executed in western Islamic lands can also be observed with regard to ewers V.3/14 and V.3/15 (pls. 24-25) of the fourth sub-group.

⁴³ Sarre 1906, pp. 10-11 no. 16, fig. 10.

⁴⁴ Maslenitsyna 1975, pp. 58, 193.

⁴⁵ Arakelyan 1956, p. 123, pl. 4.

attribution: its layout comes close to that on ewer 10 (pl. 2) and the individual motifs can be paralleled on other contemporary objects from that area.⁴⁶

Ewer 13 (fig. 11) was dealt with recently by Melikian-Chirvani. He related its shape and the du'ā' on its shoulder to 12th-century Khurāsānian artistic traditions. At the same time, however, he pointed out that the flowing cursive script on the body's façade, which is broadly inlaid with copper, was unusual and named a previously unknown artisan: Ṣā'id b. 'Atā. The cartouche below was, in his view, sui generis.

It was particularly the latter feature which induced Melikian-Chirvani to consider whether the fact that the piece was acquired in Mazanderān was relevant to its original provenance, i. e. whether it may actually have been executed in this Caspian province.⁴⁷ In fact there is at present hardly any concrete evidence for a school of metalworkers in that particular area and Melikian-Chirvani himself concedes that the piece is more likely to have been an import from the east, i. e. probably Khurāsān.⁴⁸ Such an assumption may be borne out by the fact that a very similar cartouche, again surmounted by a copper-inlaid inscription panel flanked by concentric roundels, can be observed on the aforementioned ewer in the third subgroup (cat. no. V.2/1; pl. 11), signed by Muḥammad al-Haravī, an artist most probably connected with the metalworking centre of Herat in some way.

A 12th-century dating and a provenance from Iran or Afghānistān has also been suggested for ewer 14 (fig. 12)⁴⁹, and it is interesting in this context that here, as on Muḥammad's ewer, a looped panel with lateral buds occupies the neck area below the spout, while its cartouche closely resembles that on ewer 13 (fig. 11). The late 12th-century Persian attribution put forward by the British Museum's curators for ewer 15 (fig. 13) was probably based on the rather unsophisticated scrolling design on the neck and the crude and somewhat peculiar style of cursive

⁴⁶ This dating was already suggested for ewer 12 (fig. 30) by Allan in 1976; cf. Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 226.

⁴⁷ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 137.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Riyadh 1985, p. 107 no. 86.

script applied to the shoulder. However, this piece will require further research to categorize it more precisely, both chronologically and geographically.

Ewer 16 (fig. 14) was excavated in a castle at Kawat Kala in Khwārazm which was deserted in the early 1220s. The piece was found together with a hoard of coins minted under the rule of the last Khwārazmshah 'Alā' al-Dīn Muhammad, who ruled from 1200 to 1220.⁵⁰ These find circumstances provide a terminus ante quem for the vessel, and accordingly, it might have been produced either during the very early years of the 13th century or, if it had been in use for some time before being interred, some time during the 12th century. Its crude manner of manufacture does not in itself contradict such a dating, as we know several instances of highly elegant and intricately decorated ewers and much more modest pieces (technically and decoratively speaking) being executed at the same time and in the same geographical area.⁵¹

The decorative features on ewer 17 (fig. 15) are so modest and summary in execution that they are difficult to date accurately. However, it has been suggested that the style of scrollwork on the neck and the abstract three-tier motif on its side both suggest an 11th-century dating.⁵² Ewer 18 (fig. 16) was probably executed in late 12th-century Iran, to judge in particular by its repoussé animals on neck and spout, which are more commonly encountered on the more precious, variously faceted ewers executed in that area around the same time.

As for ewer 19 (fig. 17), no detailed comments are possible at present because of the bad quality of the published photograph. It should be noted in this context, however, that Arne in dealing with this vessel reports the existence of at

⁵⁰ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 226.

⁵¹ Cf. ewer type ICAW3 for example. It may be worth mentioning in this context that a probably 12th/13th-century pottery ewer with moulded dancing figures and covered by a turquoise glaze, which was allegedly found in the Gurgān area to the south-east of the Caspian Sea, features a virtually identical spout design to that on ewer 16; cf. Fehérvári 1976a, p. 13 no. 11.

⁵² Montgomery-Wyauux 1978, p. 5 no. 3.

least five similar vessels of this type in the archaeological museums of Tashkent, Samarkand and, less significantly in this context, Moscow.⁵³

As for ewer 20 (pl. 3), its decorative layout is slightly unusual, as has been pointed out already. However, all the individual decorative elements employed, i. e. the lancet-leaf arcading, the guilloche bands and the two types of script with large background scrolls containing elongated trefoils with curled tip, are part of the standard repertoire of motifs encountered on later 12th/early 13th-century metalwork from eastern Iran.⁵⁴

Ewer 21 (pl. 4) is a most peculiar object. Its neck and spout section and the decoration enhancing it relate the vessel closely to a group of mainly cast, ovoid-bodied ewers with obliquely rising beak-spouts current in eastern Iran and Afghānistān mainly during the 10th to 12th centuries (fig. 48).⁵⁵ The decoration encountered on the body, on the other hand, includes motifs which are rather more typical of late 12th/early 13th-century Iranian metalwork. Such an apparent discrepancy can at present be tackled only by the suggestion that the ewer, rather than being an integral entity, has actually been reassembled from two typologically different ewers at some point in time. If, however, the vessel turns out to be original in its present shape, then perhaps the body decoration was added later than that on the neck. Be it as it may, more detailed research is undoubtedly needed to deal with the decorative inconsistencies encountered on this particular object.

Ewer 22 (fig. 18), with a decorative layout identical to that applied to the body of ewer 21 (pl. 4), allegedly comes from Ghazna and was dated to the 12th century by Rowland.⁵⁶ If this attribution is correct, ewers 23 and 24 (figs. 19-20) most probably deserve a very similar one, as both vessels correspond to the former as regards the body profile and, more importantly, display an identical decorative layout and style.

⁵³ Arne 1932, p. 105.

⁵⁴ For the type of scrolling background encountered on this ewer see for example a 12th-century tray published in Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 99 fig. 27C.

⁵⁵ Cf. ewer type ICAW 4, chapter 4.

⁵⁶ Rowland 1971, p. 140 no. 109.

The attribution of ewer 25 (fig. 21), finally, proves more problematic and will need further investigation in the future. On the one hand, its body profile and particular manufacturing technique, revealed by the crenellations still visible in certain places, fit in well with preceding pieces (cat. nos. 22-24; figs. 18-20). Its decoration, on the other hand, reveals certain details which do not seem to be in line with 12th- or even early 13th-century ornamentation. Thus, the floral background of the shoulder inscription reveals simple lotus-like buds, and large lotus medallions - as well as fleshy scrolls - are also to be found on the neck, which incidentally seems strangely unrelated to the virtually plain body because of the overall decoration being executed in slight relief (*repoussé*?).

To my knowledge the lotus motif does not occur on Islamic metalwork before the late 13th century and may thus be a preliminary indicator for the vessel's chronological setting. However, this ewer will need further examination in the future, as it may well be composite and shows enigmatically heterogeneous and, from a chronological point of view, seemingly inconsistent decorative elements.

The dating and attribution of the remaining pieces in this sub-group to late 12-/early 13th-century Iran (cat. nos. 26-31) will have to be taken at face value for the time being, as there were no photographs at my disposal to examine their validity.

To sum up, it appears that hammered as well as cast cylindrical ewers with various types of obliquely rising beak-spouts started to appear on the eastern fringes of the Islamic empire sometime in the 10th or 11th centuries. Subsequently, they remain popular until at least the 13th century in the areas of Khwārazm, Central Asia and Khurāsān as well as various regions of modern Afghānistān, and there may indeed be indications that they may also have been produced further west in areas such as Armenia, north-western Iran or even Mesopotamia.⁵⁷ During the time of

⁵⁷ There are indications that ewers of this type were still produced as late as the 15th century, probably in the Turkoman empire which comprised Iraq, western Iran and eastern Anatolia at the time; cf. Louisiana 1987, p. 105 no. 189 (C.L.David Collection 51/1968). Another ewer with a body profile very similar to that of ewer 1 (fig. 1) in this sub-group was published by Christie's as coming from 15th-century Khurāsān. The archaic body

their existence quite plain and purely utilitarian vessels were produced alongside pieces with varying degrees and sophistication of incised and inlaid decoration.

More research into this ewer type is undoubtedly necessary, particularly to pinpoint more precisely the various production centres where it might have been produced. One approach may be to consult the evidence provided by the vast quantities of surviving pottery versions of this type⁵⁸ and examine whether there could be a link between their manufacturing centres, as far as they are known, and areas where the metal ewers were produced.⁵⁹

2. Sub-Group 2 (cat. nos. V.1/1-V.1/15; figs. 22-30, pls. 5-10)

It has been shown above that the ewer profiles in the second sub-group are, on the whole, much more uniform, and apart from ewer V.1/1 all vessels feature virtually identical neck and spout sections. A similar consistency controls the choice of decorative layout and individual motifs, which in the majority of cases are subordinated to the requirements of the ewers' structure. Owing to the far-reaching similarities between the objects as a whole there are, at first sight, fewer immediate clues to be drawn from the individual pieces as to their date and provenance.

Most probably ewer V.1/1 (pl. 5) is one of the earliest vessels in this group, if one is to judge by the archaic neck and spout section, which it shares with ewers

profile and the modest decoration, which is restricted to the shoulder and neck, seem to contradict such an attribution. However, as the image available to me did not suffice to permit any specific comments I merely mention the ewer in this context to draw attention to it and invite further discussion regarding its true date and provenance; cf. Christie's 2.7.80, p. 8 lot 13.

⁵⁸ Cf. London 1969, no. 74; Fehérvári 1976a, p. 13 no. 11, p. 16 no. 2; Louisiana 1987, p. 92 no. 126.

⁵⁹ Such pottery ewers can also help to establish whether yet other varieties of plain cylindrical-bodied ewers with obliquely rising beak-spout existed at the time. Thus, a ewer in the Victoria and Albert Museum for example, which features ring chains on the neck and a peculiar tubular beak-spout, is most certainly based on an apparently no longer extant metal prototype; cf. London 1969, no. 79. For similar examples probably from the Gurgān area see Fehérvári 1976a, p. 20 no. 12 and Berlin 1986, p. 84 no. 117. In this context see also Tabbāa 1987 for a preliminary discussion of ceramics imitating metal objects, including the ewers under discussion, in 12th/13th-century Iran.

9 and V.2/1 (fig. 8, pl. 11), the latter signed by Muḥammad al-Haravī. The comparatively restrained decoration may support this assumption. A date some time during the 12th century may be suggested for its production and a provenance in eastern Iran. Ewers V.1/2-6 (figs. 22-26) may all have been executed at a slightly later date, perhaps towards the end of the 12th or during the early years of the 13th century, as their decorative features all correspond well to artistic conventions current in eastern Iran during that particular period. The fact that some of these pieces are merely incised, while others carry more or less extensive copper and/or precious metal inlay should be mentioned in this context, as it could indicate an evolutionary development from the former towards the latter. However, at the same time, it has to be borne in mind that both groups might merely represent different levels in the qualitative hierarchy discernible in Iranian metalwork at the time.

Ewer V.1/7 (pl. 6) has been attributed to 13th-century northern Persia by Sarre who, however, did not give any justification for that attribution. In fact the ewer's structural and iconographic similarities with the preceding pieces in this group, both of which are more or less consistent with his proposed dating, seem to suggest again an eastern provenance, and more concrete evidence would have to emerge in order to consolidate the Sarre's suggestion.⁶⁰ Ewers V.1/8-10 (figs. 27-29) also display motifs which are consistent with a late 12th/early 13th-century dating, but while ewers V.1/9 (fig. 28) and V.1/10 (fig. 29) were probably produced in the same area as the preceding pieces, the unusual, strongly tapering body profile of ewer V.1/8 (fig. 27) may suggest that it was executed in a workshop or, more generally speaking, in an area different from those responsible for the aforementioned objects.

The lavish decorative scheme encountered on ewer V.1/11 (pl. 7) indisputably represents a considerably higher artistic achievement than those on the ewers previously discussed in this and the preceding sections. Nevertheless it again utilizes decorative motifs current in late 12th-century/early 13th-century eastern

⁶⁰ Sarre 1906, pp. 9-10, no. 15.

Iran. This attribution is further consolidated by the fact that a row of repoussé birds very similar to that on the ewer and with the same characteristic superposed grooving on their bodies can also be observed on a Khurāsānian brass candlestick with silver and copper inlay, now preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This piece was recently attributed by Melikian-Chirvani to the late 12th or early 13th century.⁶¹

Around the same time and in the same geographical ambience, so it appears, artists working on the ewers discussed here also started to experiment with decorative layouts which led away from the rather dense visual effect created on the preceding pieces. Thus, on ewers V.1/12 (fig. 30) and V.1/13 (pl. 8) the round facets are no longer covered as densely as the triangular ones, and the motifs chosen for the former, a vertical succession of alternating rosettes and arabesque medallions set against a plain background, create an impression of space that in fact leads to the illusion that the round ribs are wider than the triangular ones.

It is very interesting to speculate whether it was such artistic efforts that gradually led to a modification of the structural elements encountered on the ewers in the second sub-group with the round ribs actually being worked wider than the triangular ones during the shaping process of the body. The latter body treatment can for example be observed on ewer V.1/14 (pl. 9), which also, in addition to the elaborately decorated panels on body, shoulder and neck, displays a succession of addorsed pairs of lions positioned around the transitional zone below the shoulder. Lions of very similar appearance can again be found on the aforementioned 12th/13th-century candlestick from Khurāsān.

The culminating development of the decoration encountered on ewers with wide rounded and narrow triangular ribs is undoubtedly represented by the spectacular ewer in the Galleria Estense in Modena (cat. no. V.1/15; pl. 10). Its profusion of copper- and silver-inlaid details which cover the body with remarkable density, the extreme visual tension between horizontally and vertically orientated

⁶¹ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 111-2 no. 43, figs. 43, 43A, 43B.

sections of the decorative layout and the magnificent repoussé figures (paired harpies on the shoulder and mounted falconers on the neck) are all unparalleled not only in this sub-group but in this typological category as a whole. Most of the ornamental elements can be found on precious metal objects executed in late 12th/early 13th-century eastern Iran.

Thus, the main decorative panels on the body facets which display astrological medallions containing the zodiacal signs in their domicilia and extending into all-enclosing, geometrical animal scrolls, can be paralleled on ewers V.2/13 (pl. 15) and V.3/8 (pl. 19) in this very category. Similar astrological medallions also occur on ewer V.3/11 (pl. 22), the famous, probably early 13th-century Vaso Vescovali and a silver-inlaid bronze vase of approximately the same date (fig. 49).⁶²

As for the remarkable style of scrollwork, a similar, though slightly less rigid, rendering can be observed on a famous brass pence, which was executed by Shādhī in either Merv or Herat in 1210 (fig. 50).⁶³ This particular object also displays a similar type of anthropomorphic naskhi, here with additional zoomorphic elements, set against a background of thin scrollwork with animal head terminations. The animated panels on the neck collar and lower neck of ewer V.1/15 (pl. 10) both recall some of the figural scenes already known from the so-called Bobrinsky bucket, executed in Herat in 1163, and, even more closely, those adorning the rim of the Vaso Vescovali probably worked in the early years of the 13th century (fig. 51).⁶⁴

A unique aspect of this ewer is the choice of repoussé figures below the shoulder and on the sides of the neck. The motif of a pair of addorsed harpies as such is not unusual and appears on many artefacts manufactured both in Iran and in

⁶² For a discussion of the Vaso Vescovali see Hartner 1973/4, pp. 99-130; the bronze vase is published in London 1976, p. 176 no. 189.

⁶³ Scerrato 1966, p. 54 no. 23, pl. 23; Harari 1964-5, p. 2521 figs. 841a & b.

⁶⁴ For a detailed discussion of the Bobrinsky bucket see Ettinghausen 1943, pp. 193-208.

the west.⁶⁵ In fact the same motif also occurs on another ewer in this typological category, namely ewer V.2/13 (pl. 15) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. However, the harpies on the Modena ewer are somewhat atypical stylistically and stand out in particular owing to their peculiar, three-tiered head-gear. Harpies with very similar "caps" can, however, be observed on the temple of Shiva in Prambanan, datable to the 9th century A.D. (fig. 52).⁶⁶

The mounted falconers on the neck, who incidentally wear head-gear identical to that of the harpies, are undoubtedly among the most technically skilled and artistically magnificent repoussé figures in early Islamic metalwork. Again, the motif as such is quite popular as a royal symbol in all media of Islamic art in the late 12th/early 13th century.⁶⁷ However, the fact that the artist applied this motif to an area reserved for repoussé lions in the majority of cases is noteworthy in this context, as it might indicate that the ewer was not executed as a conventionalized product for an anonymous luxury market but perhaps with a particular high-ranking or even royal customer in mind.

This suggestion might be supported further by the fact that the mounted falconers and the harpies below, both executed in repoussé and connected further by their identical head-gear, are undoubtedly meant to be viewed in conjunction. This configuration is to show the princely figure elevated into a supernatural context, emphasising his quasi-divine status by the fact that he is guarded, so to speak, by

⁶⁵ For a close-up photograph of the pairs of harpies on the Modena ewer see Baer 1965, pl. XV fig. 25. For pairs of harpies on early Islamic artefacts, see for example a Fātimīd lustre bowl in Baer 1965, pl. III fig. 6 and a pair of human-headed birds, representing the zodiacal sign of Gemini, found on a Persian bronze bowl; cf. Baer 1965, pl. LIII fig. 94.

⁶⁶ *Op.cit.*, pl. XXXII fig. 59.

⁶⁷ Islamic rulers delighted in falconry, and an extensive body of literature existed on this sport. The popularity of the falcon in the royal hunt and the bird's warrior-like attributes led to its use as a symbol of the king and the nobility. The literature of medieval Islam proves this king-falcon identification beyond doubt: both kings and nobles were often referred to as white falcons; cf. Daneshvari 1986a, pp. 73-78. Islamic art at the time reflected this predilection for falconry and mounted falconers are depicted on numerous occasions on contemporary pottery, in metalwork and in miniature painting; cf. Daneshvari 1986a, figs. 43-45 and Hassan 1956, p. 13 fig. 43 for examples in pottery and metal; Ettinghausen 1979, p. 91 for the depiction of a mounted falconer in royal context in a miniature belonging to a probably mid 13th-century copy of the *Kitāb al-Diryāq* executed in all likelihood in northern Iraq.

solar beings - a type of imagery doubtlessly intended to flatter a customer of high rank or social status.

As for the ewer's dating, its sophisticated technical execution and its unprecedentedly complex decorative scheme (with its far-reaching visual impact of tension between horizontality and verticality) both suggest an early to mid-13th-century dating. The location of its workshop is much more difficult to determine, but the tiny detail of the harpies' and the falconers' head-gear, which can be paralleled in 9th-century Hindu architecture, may indicate that it was situated in an area not too far from potential Indian influences, perhaps eastern Afghānistān or Sīstān.

To summarize the discussion above, it appears that bronze and brass ewers with cylindrical bodies subdivided into alternately triangular and rounded facets became popular some time in the 12th century and persisted until at least the first half of the 13th century.⁶⁸ During that period these vessels underwent certain structural modifications during which the rounded ribs gradually became wider than the triangular ones. As for the development of their decoration, it appears that the earlier pieces were decorated in rather modest fashion, being mainly incised and only sparingly inlaid, and in line with the body's structural requirements. Slightly later ewers tend to display more metal inlay and a decorative layout which to an increasing degree contradicts the body structure.⁶⁹

This development culminates in ewer V.1/15 (pl. 10), where the sumptuous ornamentation of the body can be "read", to an unprecedented degree, vertically and horizontally at the same time, and the complexity of this layout forces the onlooker's attention away from the ewer's physical realities. In other words the

⁶⁸ A brass ewer of this type in the Metropolitan Museum of art carries probably 14th-century decoration. (MMA 08.138.1)

⁶⁹ It has to be stressed again in this context that although the aforementioned development seems to have taken place in very general terms, very simple vessels and much more lavish examples of this type were probably also executed simultaneously and directed at different sets of customers, the former catering for ordinary people frequenting the bazaar, the latter for a more luxury-orientated clientele.

visual impact of the vessel's profile and structural details becomes completely neutralized.

The ewers in this sub-group, like those in the preceding one, can be paralleled in contemporary pottery, and interestingly enough there are ceramic copies which even repeat the decorative concept of alternating two designs on the two types of ribs encountered on metal ewers.⁷⁰

4.3. Sub-Group 3 (Cat. nos. V.2/1-14; figs. 31-38; pls. 11-15)

The first object assigned to this sub-group has already been repeatedly mentioned in connection with ewers 9 (fig. 8) and V.1/1 (pl. 5), both of which seem to represent archaic versions of the type we are concerned with here. In order to attribute ewer V.2/1 (pl. 11) more precisely, a closer look at its decorative layout will be helpful. Thus, the artistic convention of applying the maker's signature panel to the upper front of the body, and terminating it on either side by concentric roundels, can already be observed on a group of ovoid-bodied ewers with large beak-spouts generally attributed to Transoxiana and Afghānistān and dated to between the 10th and 12th centuries.⁷¹

The closest parallels, however, are to be found on ewers 13 and 14 (figs. 11-12) of the first sub-group, both tentatively dated to the 12th century. These not only display the maker's signature in an identical manner, but also feature stylistically related medallions underneath. Ewer 14 (fig. 12) additionally displays an identical looped panel on the front of the neck, just below the spout. Another group of mainly 12th-century ewers also shows similarities to the ewer under discussion, in that on several of them, as on the latter, two inscription panels on the upper and lower body enclose, among other motifs, a central medallion on the façade.⁷² Such

⁷⁰ Cf. Fehérvári 1976a, p. 15 no. 33, p. 33 no. 67 as examples.

⁷¹ Cf. ewer type ICAW 4, chapter 4.

⁷² Cf. for example ewer type ICAW 3, chapter 13.

observations make it feasible to date ewer V.2/1 (pl. 11) to the 12th century as well.

As for its geographical attribution, the Herati *nisba* of the artist responsible for its execution may suggest a provenance from that particular metalworking centre, which had already been famous for "fine copper ware" since the early 11th century.⁷³ If, on the other hand, one chooses to be more cautious about the significance of the *nisba*, a provenance from the eastern fringes of the Islamic empire and perhaps modern Afghānistān still seems most probable, considering the piece's similarities with other vessels from that general area.

The decorative layout of ewer V.2/2 (fig. 31), i. e. plain panels alternating with animal friezes on the body and an epigraphic frieze on the shoulder, is identical to that on ewer V.1/1 (pl. 5) in the second sub-group, and accordingly a similar attribution, i. e. to 12th-century eastern Iran, may be suggested.

Ewer V.2/3 (fig. 32) has recently been discussed by Melikian-Chirvani, who suggested an origin from the Nīshāpūr-Merv-Herat triangle and a dating around the first decade of the 13th century for the piece.⁷⁴ Considering the perfect vertical orientation of the decorative layout of this ewer, which recalls that of ewers in the second sub-group and seems to precede the increasingly horizontal layout of other pieces in this sub-group, I feel that ewer V.2/3 (fig. 32) may in fact be dated slightly earlier, i. e. to the late 12th century. However, as there are no concrete clues as yet regarding the exact chronological interconnection between the variously faceted and decorated ewers in this category, such an assumption must await further confirmation in the future.

Ewer V.2/4 (fig. 33), on the other hand, may well have been executed in eastern Iran during the early 13th century, to judge not only by its more heterogeneously orientated decoration, but also by the use of copper and silver inlay. Ewer V.2/5 (fig. 34) also underwent extensive analysis by Melikian-

⁷³ Bosworth 1968, pp. 18, 135.

⁷⁴ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 118.

Chirvani, who attributed the ewer - probably correctly, to judge by the choice of decorative layout and individual motifs - to early 13th-century Khurāsān.⁷⁵ No comments can be made regarding the attribution of ewer V.2/6 as I had no photograph at my disposal.

Ewer V.2/7 (pl. 12), on the other hand, can be placed chronologically and geographically beyond any doubt, as it carries an inscription revealing that it was executed in Herat in 577 A.H., i. e. between the 19th of September 1181 and the 17th of January 1182.⁷⁶ Ewer V.2/8 (fig. 35), which is said to have been found in the ruins of Rayy, shows a decorative layout virtually identical to that on ewers V.2/9 (pl. 13) and V.2/10 (fig. 36) - the latter allegedly from Ghazna - and similar to that on ewers V.3/2-5 (pls. 16-18) of the fourth sub-group. The bird medallions encountered on ewers V.2/8 (fig. 35) and V.2/10 (fig. 36) can be paralleled on some early Islamic ewers distinguished by an "oil-lamp" spout, generally datable to around the 12th century, and so can the artistic convention of decorating the upper and lower body with inscription bands (fig. 53).⁷⁷

The fact that ewers V.2/8-10 (fig. 35, pl. 13, fig. 36) were originally inlaid with silver may, however, push the dating towards the later years of that century. As for their geographic provenance, the eastern fringes of Iran seem again the most likely region that can be suggested on the basis of shape and decorative motifs.

Ewer V.2/11 (fig. 37) has recently been the subject of a detailed study by Allan.⁷⁸ He dated the ewer to the late 12th or early 13th century and assumed that it could be attributed with certainty to Herat. In fact, strictly speaking, there is no evidence for such a provenance at present and further investigation would be necessary to consolidate such claims.⁷⁹ The quality of this piece suggests that it was certainly

⁷⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 114-118 no. 45.

⁷⁶ Giuzalian 1938, pp. 227-236.

⁷⁷ Cf. ewer type ICAW 3, chapter 13. Of course, both the bird medallions and the convention of inscription bands for the enhancement of the upper and lower body can also be observed on various other contemporary metal objects; cf. Fehérvári 1976, pl. 30 nos. 90-1 as examples.

⁷⁸ Allan 1982a, pp. 46-53 no. 5.

⁷⁹ The attribution to Herat is based on the existence of ewer V.2/7 (pl. 12), which carries an inscription clearly assigning the piece to that particular metalworking town. However,

executed in one of the major metalworking centres active in Iran at the time, but which one of them must remain uncertain as there are as yet no clear stylistic clues according to which one might distinguish clearly between the objects coming from one or the other centre.⁸⁰

The same can be said with regard to ewer V.2/12 (pl. 14), which is even more lavishly decorated than the preceding piece. Again, its high technical quality, its extensive precious metal inlay, its complex decorative layout as well as iconography and the degree of contradiction between the horizontality of the ornament on the one hand and the verticality of the body structure on the other all suggest an early 13th-century dating and a provenance from one of the foremost metalworking centres in Khurāsān.

Ewer V.2/13 (pl. 15), to judge by the disposition of its decorative layout in comparison with the preceding pieces, seems to represent the culmination of the

although this ewer is typologically undoubtedly related closely to the other pieces in this category, it differs notably from them in various aspects of shape and decoration, and this to an extent that makes it quite unique. To start with, the body appears wider and somewhat squatter than those of the other pieces; and, more importantly, it features 22 narrow concave facets, a subdivision unparalleled on any of the other vessels. With regard to the decoration, the alternating cursive inscriptions interrupted by knots and the plaited scroll panels are certainly related to the decorative elements encountered on ewers of the second sub-group, but again, stylistically these motifs are treated in a different and unique fashion. Finally, the shoulder decoration, consisting of astrological roundels set against a network of geometric interlacing, is again unparalleled on any of the other ewers, which almost exclusively carry epigraphic friezes. If one takes all these discrepancies between ewer V.2/7 (pl. 12) and the other vessels in this category into consideration, it becomes obvious that, strictly speaking, the latter apparently belong to different workshops. Certainly, it could be argued that several ewers of different body profile and decoration may have been produced in the same place and that some of the more splendid examples simply represent a later development of the Herat ewer. However, all such arguments need further examination and concrete evidence, before a Herati attribution can be justified.

⁸⁰ For contemporary high-quality objects with similar motifs; cf. Fehérvári 1976, pl. 27a no. 85. This is a 12th/13th-century silver-inlaid brass casket from Iran, which depicts an enthroned figure identical to that shown repeatedly on the ewer's transitional zone; the profuse type of scrollwork which encloses the main decorative elements on the ewer can be paralleled on a 12th/13th-century silver-inlaid tray from Iran in the Louvre; cf. Pope 1938, pl. 1315A. It also occurs on a contemporary candlestick attributed to Khurāsān and dated to around 1200 A.D. This piece is particularly interesting in this context, as it displays a decorative layout identical to that on ewers V.2/11 (fig. 37) and V.2/12 (pl. 14), which totally ignores the structural realities of the body and employs a succession of horizontal decorative zones which completely counteract the verticality of the facets; cf. Qaddumi 1987, p. 142 no. LNS 81 M. Finally, a similar type of scroll can also be observed on the minaret base of the Medrese İnçe Minareli, built by the Armenian Kaluk at Konya in 1251; cf. Sakisian 1939, fig. 1.

decorative development of the ewers with convex body facets and may therefore have been executed well into the 13th century. Indeed, its geometric animal scrolls occur in identical fashion on the Modena ewer (cat. no. V.1/15; pl. 10), which in its turn apparently represents the final decorative stage in its own typological sub-group.⁸¹

Interestingly, it appears that only a few decades after the production of splendid pieces like those mentioned above, the artistic vibrancy and intricate complexity of the ornamentation could no longer be matched. Thus, ewer V.2/14 (fig. 38), though still retaining many of the traditional motifs such as zoomorphic arabesques, enthroned figures holding dragon-headed staffs and anthropomorphic inscriptions, shows a clear decline in excellence.

Not only have the elements become much more stylized, as Allan has observed, and show a dry conventionalized rigidity, but there is also a clearly noticeable regression with regard to the decorative layout as a whole. Once again, the decoration is applied strictly according to the vertical requirements of the facets which are filled with alternating designs - a treatment clearly harking back to artistic conventions observed on older ewers of the second sub-group. Allan, noting the considerable extent of the motifs' stylization and the application of peculiar diamond-shaped leaves on the foot, attributed this piece to late 13th-century Herat and pointed out that this attribution stressed the continuity of metalworking in Khurāsān even during a period when Iran was subject to the political and economic upheavals of the Mongol invasion.⁸²

⁸¹ A similar type of scrollwork, though without animal heads, also occurs on ewer V.3/9 (pl. 20) and indeed, at a slightly earlier date, on a wooden panel from the *mihrab* of the Sayyida Ruqayya mosque in Cairo, datable to 1154-60 A.D.; cf. Sakisian 1939, pp. 76-7, fig. 15.

⁸² Louisiana 1987, p. 90 no. 113. Again, the attribution of the ewer to Herat should be treated with caution. Ewers with convex facets were also copied in pottery, such as for example a turquoise-glazed piece in the Victoria and Albert Museum; cf. London 1969, p. 80 no. 77.

4.4. Sub-Group 4 (Cat. nos. V.3/1-15; figs. 39-41, pls. 16-25)

Ewer V.3/1 (fig. 39) shows certain similarities to ewers V.2/8-10 (fig. 35, p. 13, fig. 36) with regard to its decorative layout, i. e. the concept of inscription friezes flanking a broad central zone with individual motifs displayed in the centre of each facet. However, in this case the latter are more heterogeneous, as the medallions which alternate with the vase motifs in their turn contain two different interlace designs. The seated figure with dragon-headed staffs can be paralleled stylistically on a late 12th/early 13th-century inkwell and also on the more or less contemporary Vaso Vescovali in the British Museum (fig. 54).⁸³

The vase motifs, on the other hand, already occurred on several plain cylindrical pieces in the first sub-group and can also be found repeatedly on other, mainly 12th-century, metal objects from eastern Iran, including certain ewers with "oil-lamp" spouts (fig. 55).⁸⁴ A later 12th-century dating for ewer V.3/1 (fig. 39) may therefore be suggested. Its origin may probably be sought again in eastern Iran, although the auctioneers for reasons unknown to me quoted Hamadān as the place of origin.

Ewers V.3/2-5 (pls. 16-18) all basically share the decorative layout of ewers V.2/8-10 (fig. 35, pl. 13, fig. 36), which we dated tentatively to the late 12th century. Ewer V.3/2 (pl. 16), however, stands out with regard to the style of epigraphy employed on the body and shoulder. Thus, the hastae of the Kufic are split at the top to form small leaves, while the naskhi on the shoulder is characterized by unusually thin and elongated hastae. The former treatment can be observed already, though apparently restricted to the alif alone, on a tombstone from the mosque of Tha'bād in Yemen, dated to 1146 A.D.(fig. 56).⁸⁵ A similar style of foliated Kufic as well as closely related crescent medallions filled with

⁸³ Baer 1965, pl. LIV fig. 96; Baer 1983, p. 261.

⁸⁴ Ewer type ICAW 3, chapter 13.

⁸⁵ Grohmann 1957, p. 186, Diagram A fig. 38, p. 191.

scrollwork can be observed on a 12th/13th-century copper-inlaid octagonal mortar from Khurāsān preserved in the Herat museum (fig. 57).⁸⁶

An eastern Iranian 12th/13th-century dating is also appropriate for ewers V.3/3 and V.3/4 (pls. 17-18). The latter is the most elaborate ewer among the four, with its intricate medallions and intermediate filler motifs which rely undoubtedly on similar designs in contemporary book illumination, its knotted Kufic which seems to anticipate that on the upper body of ewer V.2/12 (pl. 14), there with anthropomorphic hastae, and finally its addorsed repoussé birds, which according to Pope can be paralleled in contemporary Seljuq textile design.⁸⁷

Little can be said about ewers V.3/5 and V.3/6 owing to their fragmented state and, on a practical note, the bad quality of the only published photographs available. However, the repoussé birds on ewer V.3/5 seem to show close stylistic similarities to the birds on the aforementioned late 12th/early 13th-century candlestick in the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁸⁸ Ewer fragment V.3/7 (fig. 40) was dated by Pope to the very end of the 12th century on the basis of the epigraphic naskhi style displayed in the twelve cartouches.⁸⁹

Ewer V.3/8 (pl. 19) undoubtedly comes from the same highly sophisticated artistic environment as ewers V.1/15 (pl. 10) and V.2/13 (pl. 15), with which it not only shares the astrological medallions and other iconographical details but also the characteristic type of geometric scrollwork, which fills the entire background of the central decorative zone. Accordingly, an attribution to early 13th-century Khurāsān may come closest to the truth, a suggestion also endorsed by Melikian-Chirvani's observation that the ewer's anthropomorphic naskhi is directly comparable to that

⁸⁶ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 68 fig. 38.

⁸⁷ Pope 1935, p. 63 caption.

⁸⁸ Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 112 fig. 43.

⁸⁹ Rice 1958, p. 253. It should be noted here that Rice was not aware of the fact that the reused fragment that made up the body of the casket originally belonged to a ewer. He therefore assumed that "the oddly shaped cartouches as they are turned head downwards, were probably intended to be more decorative than edifying".

on the pencease in the Freer Gallery of Art, which was executed by Shādhī in 1210 (fig. 50).⁹⁰

Ewer V.3/9 (pl. 20) shows a very unusual, purely vegetal, type of ornamentation which remains as yet unparalleled on other ewers in this group and indeed, to my knowledge, most other metal objects executed at the time. However, parts of the design can be paralleled on one particular bronze tray probably of the late 12th/early 13th-century.⁹¹ Similar lozenge leaves set against an identical background can also be observed on the apparently 10th-century lid of an otherwise late 12th-century inkwell from Iran preserved in the Nuhad al-Said collection (fig. 58).⁹² Despite this comparative material I cannot help feeling that this vessel may actually be of a later date than the former suggests. However, in order to clarify this point, the style of the ewer's decoration will need further investigation in the future.

The decoration of ewer V.3/10 (pl. 21) is closely related to that on ewer V.2/12 (pl. 14) and can most probably be attributed along the same lines, i. e. to early 13th-century eastern Iran. On ewer V.3/11 (pl. 22) the typical combination of epigraphic friezes above and below and a wide central decorative zone with zodiacal medallions is altered in that narrow bands with animated groups of revellers have been inserted in between the two.

These figural friezes can be paralleled on several other Iranian metal objects executed in the late 12th/early 13th century. Thus, a similar, though more diversified and animated, band with scenes of pleasurable entertainment can be found on the famous Bobrinsky bucket, executed in Herat in 1163.⁹³ Other related friezes occur on a probably 12th-century cover belonging to a circular casket (fig. 59), on an early 13th-century inkwell attributed to Herat and now in the Nuhad al-

⁹⁰ Paris 1971, pp. 96/7 no. 130. Pope attributed this ewer to north-western Persia, but there are at present no indications that would substantiate such a claim. The iconography and style seem certainly coherent with the Iranian attribution put forward above. On the other hand, it may be recalled as an interesting detail in this context that a very similar type of geometric scroll can be observed on a late Fāṭimīd (1154-60) wood panel preserved in the Arab Museum in Cairo; cf. footnote 80.

⁹¹ Khozhageldtsev 1990, pl. 37.

⁹² Allan 1982a, pp. 32-5 no. 1.

⁹³ Ward 1993, p. 74 fig. 54.

Said collection (fig. 60), and finally, on the probably early 13th-century Vaso Vescovali in the British Museum (fig. 61). In the latter case, however, the figures are rendered in a more conventionalized and less animated fashion. In view of comparative objects such as the ones mentioned above, it appears feasible that ewer V.3/11 (pl. 22) was executed in eastern Iran sometime between the later decades of the 12th century and the very early years of the 13th century.

Ewer fragment V.3/12 (pl. 23) is highly unusual in that it displays three horizontal friezes of approximately equal width, all invariably filled with figural scenes, zodiacal above and below and others depicting entertainment and revelling in the centre. According to Sarre, who bought the piece in Persia in 1902, it came allegedly from Herat, but unfortunately he did not put forward any concrete evidence to consolidate that claim.

In fact its true origin is somewhat difficult to establish as there do not seem to be any immediately comparable objects with a known chronological and geographical background. The animated panel with dancers and musicians is certainly reminiscent of similar figurations on other metal objects from 12th/13th-century Iran, such as for example the aforementioned Bobrinsky bucket (fig. 62).

On the other hand, the tiny and densely wound spiral scrolls which provide the background for the zodiacal scenes appear on contemporary pottery from Kāshān as well as between the letters of the shoulder inscription applied to an early 13th-century brass ewer executed in Mosul for Abū'l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn Sanjar Shāh.⁹⁴ Interestingly in this context, Eva Baer considers such tiny spirals as one of the hallmarks of Mesopotamian-style metal objects.⁹⁵

The artistic concept of superposing three figural panels on a vertically faceted vessel, finally, occurs again on a tall silver-inlaid vase, attributed to Syria or Egypt and dated to the second half of the 13th century (pl. 26).⁹⁶ In view of

⁹⁴ Allan 1982a, pp. 54-7 no. 6.

⁹⁵ Baer 1983, p. 295.

⁹⁶ Paris 1977, pp. 158-9 no. 329, fig. 329.

such contradictory evidence it is hoped that future research might uncover more decisive evidence as to the piece's true date and provenance.

A similar uncertainty, as regards its attribution, surrounds ewer V.3/13 (fig. 41). Formerly, its body was attributed to 12th/13th-century Iran, while its neck and handle were believed to be additions of the 14th century.⁹⁷ While there can be no doubt that the body does not belong with the neck and handle chronologically, I feel that the former, to judge by the rather repetitive and uninspired style of its decoration, may itself be somewhat removed in time from those ewers typical of late 12th/early 13th-century Khurāsānian metalwork with their much more vibrant decorative schemes.

Ewer V.3/14 (pl. 24), though like the other pieces in this category of undeniably eastern type, was most certainly executed in the west, probably in early 13th-century northern Mesopotamia or Syria. The clinching detail justifying such an attribution is the decorative treatment of the central zone.

The ogival medallions which enclose the individual scenes are atypical of contemporary Iranian metalwork, but do occur repeatedly on Mesopotamian and Syrian metalwork of the period.⁹⁸ The hunting scenes contained within the arches are also of a western rather than eastern style, as they are much more animated and genre-like than the more "official" and static versions encountered on Iranian metalwork. Similar scenes can be observed again on early 13th-century metal objects from Mesopotamia and Syria. Thus, an array of stylistically related hunting scenes is displayed around the splendid basin executed for al-Malik al-'Ādil in Syria between 1238-40 (pl. 27).⁹⁹

Ewer V.3/15 (pl. 25), finally, has been dealt with extensively by Melikian-Chirvani in 1982. He attributed the vessel to western Iran and dated it to the second fifth of the 13th century. While the dating may well be correct, the attribution was

⁹⁷ Hollis 1946, p. 40 note 4.

⁹⁸ For a virtually identical succession of ogival medallions see a candlestick executed in northern Mesopotamia, perhaps Āmid, by Abū Bakr ibn Hājji Jaldak, the *ghulam* of Ahmad al-Dhakī al-Mawṣilī in 1225; cf. Baer 1983, p. 27, p. 32 fig. 22.

⁹⁹ Paris 1977, pp. 189-190 no. 416.

not justified in detail, and in fact there may be indications that the ewer was actually produced even further to the west, i. e. in Mesopotamia, Syria or even Egypt.

Thus, a similar decorative style with identical geometric roundels and mask-bird-scroll designs appear on an early 14th-century pencase attributed to Syria by Allan, and the latter can also be found in Syrian stone carving.¹⁰⁰ The striking meander bands which separate the main decorative zones, on the other hand, can be paralleled for example on a late 13th-century brass ewer from Syria or Egypt.¹⁰¹ The knotted pseudo-Kufic inscription displayed around the central body, finally, appears in very similar fashion on a probably Syrian candlestick preserved in the British Museum.¹⁰²

Such evidence suggests that a provenance from Syria or Egypt should be given at least as much consideration as the western Iranian one put forward by Melikian-Chirvani, when dealing with this piece in the future.

5. Origin and Evolution of Ewer Type

In the discussion above it has emerged that, among the **plain cylindrical ewers** of the type considered here, a small number of pieces seems to go back to as early as the late 10th or early 11th century, whereas the dating of the other, variously faceted vessels seems to be concentrated in the 12th and early 13th centuries A.D. Accordingly, the observation, already put forward by Allan in 1976 regarding the evolution of ewers in this category, that the pure cylinder most probably preceded the other shapes is likely to be correct,¹⁰³ and it is to the origin of the former therefore that our attention has to turn first.

¹⁰⁰ Allan 1982a, pp. 90-92 no. 16; Otto-Dorn 1963, p. 157, p. 160 fig. 25.

¹⁰¹ Scerrato 1966, p. 120 no. 53, p. 121 fig. 53, p. 122 fig. 54.

¹⁰² Barrett 1949, pl. 24.

¹⁰³ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 228.

If one examines the extant early and pre-Islamic ewer types that have come down to us, it soon becomes evident that before the first occurrence of the ewer type, perhaps some time in the late 10th or early 11th century, no typological predecessors featuring a cylindrical body and the characteristic, obliquely rising beak-spout can be put forward at present. It has, however, been suggested by Arne and again more recently by Allan that the hammered examples of this type probably evolved from a group of purely utilitarian, early Islamic sheet metal ewers with cylindrical bodies, sloping shoulder and base and a cylindrical neck with everted lip, current in Iran between the 8th and probably 12th centuries (cf. ewer type ICAW 1, chapter 11; fig. 42).¹⁰⁴ Indeed, both vessel types share a virtually identical body profile, and in addition several other similarities can be pointed out further to consolidate that initial theory.

Firstly, the manufacturing technique - the ewers are assembled from several sheets of metal and joined by means of overlapping metal fillets - is strikingly similar in both cases, and the characteristic castellated joints so frequently observed on ewers of the first type occur again on several of the ewers belonging to the first sub-group of the category discussed here (cat. nos. 5, 16, 23-5; figs. 5, 14, 19-21).¹⁰⁵ Moreover, it appears that in both groups the same structural elements were worked separately and joined later, i. e. the base, the body, the shoulder plate, the neck and the handle.¹⁰⁶ Finally, the concave centre of the base and the repoussé star sometimes encountered on vessels of ewer type ICAW 1 can also be met with occasionally on the ewers in the first sub-group discussed here (cf. ewers 1, 20; fig. 1, pl. 3).

In view of such observations, the theory regarding a dependency of the hammered, plain cylindrical ewers in this category on the aforementioned simple sheet metal vessels can most probably be accepted. However, in doing so, one

¹⁰⁴ Arne 1932, p. 105; Allan 1982, pp. 41-2.

¹⁰⁵ It is interesting to note in this context that the same manufacturing technique was still being used by metalworkers in Bukhāra when Arne visited the area in the early 1930s; cf. Arne 1932, p. 105.

¹⁰⁶ Allan 1982, p. 41.

structural element encountered on the ewers dealt with here remains unexplained, i. e. the obliquely rising beak-spout. This detail seems to appear suddenly and cannot be accounted for instantaneously, as it was not, to my knowledge, utilized in Iran before the 10th century A.D. At that point the concept of an obliquely rising beak-spout can be observed for the first time on a group of mainly cast bronze ewers which seem to emerge with the rise of Islamic Turkish dynasties in the east (cf. ewer type ICAW 4, chapter 14; figs. 43, 44, 48).¹⁰⁷

In researching this apparent phenomenon it became apparent that Turkic people settled in Central Asia probably utilized ewers with these spouts long before their Islamization and influx into the eastern Iranian world. They in their turn might have adopted such vessels perhaps as a result of Hellenistic influence, as numerous varieties of beak-spouted ewers had been common in Greece, as well as in other Mediterranean countries, since pre-historic times.¹⁰⁸ Within the pre-Islamic Turkic culture in Central Asia ewers with obliquely rising beak-spouts seem to have had a considerable degree of significance within the context of local rituals and particularly cup rites. When the first Turkic tribes subsequently infiltrated the eastern fringes of the Islamic empire and gradually became islamized, these rites were not abandoned but simply integrated into the customs of the newly adopted Islamic culture, and so, most probably, were their traditional ritual vessels, like the beak-spouted ewers we are concerned with here.

This theory makes it likely that the obliquely rising beak-spout was carried into the Islamic world on mainly cast ritual vessels belonging to Turkic tribes who first entered eastern Iran and the adjacent regions some time in the 10th century A.D. Once such vessels had become known and widely distributed in those regions, the thus far unknown, but undoubtedly practical concept of the obliquely rising beak-spout could then easily have been transferred onto other ewer forms just like

¹⁰⁷ For a detailed discussion concerning the introduction of the obliquely rising beak-spout into Islamic lands see also Al-Khamis 1990-2.

¹⁰⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 65.

the cylindrical sheet metal ewers which we assume to have been the ultimate predecessors of the vessels discussed in this chapter.

How such a transfer would have been undertaken in practical terms, is impossible to establish at present. Perhaps the very first attempts involved simply joining the neck and spout section of a "Turkic" ewer to the cylindrical body of the traditional sheet metal vessels. This practice could have resulted in ewers such as ewer 21 (pl. 4) in the first sub-group. Here, the cast neck and spout section is not only identical in design to those encountered on "Turkic" ewers, but carries a closely related style of ornamentation. The body, on the other hand, may be hammered and displays motifs of purely Iranian derivation.¹⁰⁹

It is also feasible that the spout concept encountered on the earlier cast vessels may at an early stage have been adapted to the technique of hammering the various components of a pouring vessel rather than casting them. Such an adaptation may have been ultimately responsible for the smaller, pelican-like spout design and other related varieties encountered on the cylindrical-bodied and beak-spouted ewers discussed here, which could easily be slotted into the previously worked neck section.

Be that as it may, it seems likely that the structural design of the ewers in the first sub-group represents a typological synthesis, perhaps undertaken in the later 10th century, of two different and originally unrelated ewer types: a group of mainly cast, ovoid-bodied ewers with large obliquely rising beak-spouts, and a group of sheet-metal vessels with cylindrical bodies and necks.

The purpose of such a synthesis is obvious: it could increase the functional practicality and in particular the pouring quality of a well-tried and widely distributed type of ewer, which had long been popular as domestic utensil in many Iranian households. Once developed, this newly created type of pouring vessel was

¹⁰⁹ It has already been pointed out that this ewer needs further investigation with regard to its peculiar composite appearance with apparently chronologically heterogeneous decorative elements, but it serves well here to illustrate in principle the suggestion made above. There are other instances where a hammered body is surmounted by a cast neck and spout section; cf. ewer 1 in the first sub-group.

not only executed in sheet bronze or brass, but also in silver, and in fact at least one example of such a precious metal version, attributed to 12th-century Khurāsān, survives today (fig. 63).¹¹⁰ It comes from a church treasure in Kutaīs to the east of the Black Sea, and is currently housed in the Hermitage in Leningrad.¹¹¹

Alongside the hammered vessels in the first sub-group there exists an array of apparently cast ewers with varying body profile and several distinct types of obliquely rising beak-spout which, though undoubtedly related to this typological category, are clearly set apart from the, on the whole, more uniform appearance of the hammered examples. In some cases it may certainly be argued, as Allan has done, that such vessels may represent copies of the hammered examples.¹¹² However, more commonly the vessels' appearance on the whole is too different to suggest direct typological links with the latter.¹¹³

Perhaps they in their turn illustrate typological varieties which were already in use among Turkic people before their establishment in the eastern Iranian world and which continued to be produced in more remote metalworking centres at the same time as the newly developed, hammered vessels. At the same time, it is not

¹¹⁰ Smirnov 1909, pl. LXXIII no. 130; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 72. Allan, in discussing this ewer type, seems to consider the silver version as prototype for the bronze and brass vessels. I believe, however, that the type originated in base metal and was then also executed in more precious metals. This does not, however, contradict his undoubtedly correct observation that silver vessels of this type and in particular the decorative techniques, such as repoussé, employed on them provided the inspiration for the more preciously adorned bronze and brass vessels which started to emerge around 1100 A.D., when a far-reaching silver shortage in Islamic lands forced silversmiths to transfer their field of activity to sheet bronze and brass. For a detailed discussion concerning the transfer of shapes and decoration from silver to bronze and brass objects around 1100 A.D. cf. Allan 1976/7. For an example of a repoussé motif originally executed in silver being transferred onto a sheet brass vessel, compare the birds displayed around the lower body of ewer V.2/13 (pl. 15) in the second sub-group of this category with those shown on a probably 10th-century Khurāsānian silver jug; cf. Marshak 1986, fig. 127, p. 434 no. 127.

¹¹¹ Smirnov 1909, Pl. LXXIII no. 130; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 72-3, Vol. 2, p. 561 no. C/1, fig. 6. The ewer is 37 cm high and carries elaborate ornamentation, including decorative oval medallions on the body, a row of animals of the hunt executed in repoussé around the shoulder edge, a naskhi inscription and a central repoussé star on the shoulder and naskhi as well as oval medallions on the neck.

¹¹² Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 226.

¹¹³ Allan already acknowledged that the unusual profile of many of the cast pieces might suggest that they were worthy of a separate typological identity, in particular as pottery examples can be cited which differ in profile from the typical, slightly elongated body encountered on the hammered metal ewers; cf. ibid.; London 1969, no. 95.

impossible that several versions of the discussed type, cast and hammered, were executed in the same metalworking centres. Although there is no concrete evidence for this assumption to be found among the plain cylindrical vessels themselves, an interesting clue in this context is provided by the inscription panel so boldly displayed on the upper façade of a probably early to mid-12th-century ewer (cat. no. V.2/1; pl. 11) in the third sub-group of this category.

It gives the name of the maker Muḥammad al-Haravī. Could he be the father of Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad al-Haravī who towards the end of the same century (1181/2 A.D.) signed himself as responsible for the inlay on the famous sheet brass ewer in the Tiflis Museum (cat. no. V.2/7; pl. 12)? The theory is most tempting and, if correct, would indicate that in metalworking centres such as Herat different versions of the ewer type under discussion here could be produced, perhaps for different sets of customers. At the same time such a hypothesis could also show how within one generation or so members of one metalworking family could move from working on cast objects to the manufacture and/or ornamentation of hammered sheet metal objects.

This observation is in its turn relevant with regard to the aforementioned silver shortage which started to affect Iran and other areas of the Islamic empire around 1100 A.D. The process certainly not only had a grave effect on the local silversmiths but must also have affected, though probably in a more positive way, craftsmen of other related industries such as inlayers like Maḥmūd, who may have been called upon to decorate the hammered Tiflis ewer after perhaps having worked with cast objects before.

Be that as it may, no concrete answer regarding the cast ewers' true typological identity and the geographical location of the workshops that developed and produced them can at present be put forward and further research will be needed to tackle this problem more comprehensively in the future.

Leaving the plain cylindrical-bodied ewers of this category to one side, some considerations are now in order regarding the **evolution of the various faceted**

versions belonging to this type. Allan, in dealing with this group of vessels, assumed a development from a pure cylinder to one with slightly concave facets, then one with convex facets and finally one with alternating convex and triangular facets.¹¹⁴

There is no conclusive evidence at present to dismiss such an assumption. However, if one relies merely on the decorative analysis of the pieces attempted above, and in particular on the observation of an increasing tendency away from a decorative layout subordinated to the body structure to one which completely counteracts it, it rather appears that the pure cylinder was joined first by one subdivided into alternating triangular and convex facets, followed by those with convex and concave ribs. At all events, by the end of the 12th century, as Allan has pointed out quite rightly, all varieties of the ewer type discussed here existed side by side.¹¹⁵

With regard to the origin of the various schemes of facetting employed, several theories have been put forward in the past. In 1943 Aga-Oglu, in dealing with the ewers discussed here, suggested that the various faceted forms were derived from contemporary architectural models, in particular certain tomb towers erected by the Seljuqs across Iran, among which all four treatments of the cylinder - i.e. the plain cylinder, the one with convex or concave facets and the one with alternating convex and triangular facets - occur in strikingly similar fashion.¹¹⁶

Allan, on the other hand, disputed the validity of this theory in his thesis in 1976. He believed it to be unlikely that metalworkers could have studied a wide variety of buildings before setting to work and preferred to regard the faceted versions of the ewer type under discussion simply as a logical development of the plain cylindrical shape.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 228.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Aga-Oglu 1943, pp. 94, 97.

¹¹⁷ Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 228.

In my opinion the latter suggestion is too simplistic and does not in itself explain convincingly the occurrence of the various, quite specific types of facetting such as in particular the combinations of wide and narrow rounded, or rounded and triangular, ribs. Regarding the former hypothesis put forward by Aga-Oglu, I do believe that the suggested connection between the faceted ewers in this category and certain models of contemporary architecture cannot be brushed aside as easily as Allan attempted. After all, the structural resemblance between at least some of the 12th/13th-century vessels on the one hand and individual Islamic edifices erected either slightly earlier or at the same time is indeed striking.

Thus, for example the faceted surface of the Qutb Minār, a victory tower erected near Delhi in 1192 (pl. 28) and that of the 13th-century Minār-i Kishmar situated near the city of Turshiz in Khurasan both display alternating rounded and triangular ribs in a manner that immediately calls to mind the likewise faceted ewers of the second sub-group.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, on a more general note, there are numerous other instances in the history of Islamic metalwork, where objects undoubtedly copy architectural structures or at least display structural elements clearly borrowed from architecture.

Thus, Eva Baer for example, in discussing various types of early Islamic incense burners, pointed out that certain funerary structures and mosque designs known from Central Asia seem to have a direct formal relationship with several such pieces.¹¹⁹ Dealing with a very similar subject Allan himself, in considering an important 13th-century incense burner in the Aron collection, hints at the possibility that certain early Islamic incense burners from Egypt may also have been copied from an architectural form introduced into Egypt at an earlier date by the Sasanians. Referring to the aforementioned piece in particular, he does not hesitate to relate its columns and arches to Sasanian architectural traditions.¹²⁰ In view of such

¹¹⁸ Aga-Oglu 1943, p. 94; Safadi 1978, fig. 55. For a plain cylindrical tomb tower erected in 1022-23 as a mausoleum for Abū'l-Fawāris Shāhriyār see Aga-Oglu 1943, p. 97.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Baer 1983, pp. 46-9, figs. 32-3.

¹²⁰ Allan 1986, pp. 26, 29.

comments, a potential generic link between the variously faceted architectural structures current in Iran during the late 12th and 13th centuries and the more or less contemporary, faceted varieties of the ewer type discussed here should not be dismissed outright.

However, if one accepts that there might be a link between the two, the question must arise as to why the artists who worked the faceted ewers should have turned to such monuments for their inspiration. After all, the predilection for dividing the surface of an object into sections or proper facets, some of them virtually identical to those on the ewers discussed here, and an inclination towards the discontinuity of form and strong geometrism had a long history in early Islamic metalwork executed in Iran and can in fact even be traced back to pre-Islamic metal objects executed in Central Asia.¹²¹

Taking into account this wide-spread fashion for faceted objects within the early medieval Iranian metalworking industry, the alleged links between 12th/13th-century Iranian architecture and the ewers considered in this chapter appear more difficult to justify; and, if they do exist, a mere fancy for polygonal structures on the part of the artist would certainly not suffice to explain them. Perhaps, however, he had very concrete reasons to create a likeness of the faceted tomb towers that were being erected all over his country at the time, because he meant to express the same symbolism, the same cosmological concepts and the same philosophy of life that underlay the design of such structures.¹²²

¹²¹ For a discussion of this phenomenon see Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 23-5. Interestingly, some of the ovoid-bodied ewers with large beak-spout, which we presume to have provided the inspiration for the development of the ewer type considered here, also occur with plain and variously faceted bodies; cf. ewer type ICAW 4, chapter 14. For a selection of faceted metal objects executed in early Islamic Iran see *op. cit.*, p. 28 fig. 3 (10th-century lobed cup from Khurāsān with wide convex sections), p. 31 fig. 6 (9th/10th-century rose-water sprinkler from Khurāsān with narrow convex facets closely recalling those applied to ewers V.2/1 [pl. 11] and V.2/7 [pl. 12] of the third sub-group), p. 35 fig. 10 (10th/11th-century shaft of a stand with alternately rounded and angular facets), pp. 45-6 no. 6 (10th/11th-century bronze ewer, possibly from Māvera al-Nahr, with wide and slightly concave facets not unlike those on the ewers belonging to the fourth sub-group in this chapter). For pre-Islamic faceted metal objects from Central Asia cf. Marshak 1986, figs. 35, 39/40, 42, 48-9, 52-4, 69, 108, 110-111, 113 as examples.

¹²² Such a kinship of symbolism between metalwork and architecture would not be unique. As early as 1979 Melikian-Chirvani showed that the decoration on the inside of certain

The plan of Seljuq tomb towers was ultimately based on ancient Inner-Asian tombs. These were built on a circular, octagonal or polygonal ground plan and imitated in turn the type of domed conical tent that had been inhabited by the nomads of the steppes of centuries. The latter did not only have practical significance but was also considered a symbol of the universe.¹²³

In addition, on Seljuq tomb towers extant in Anatolia the cosmological associations evoked by the Islamic tomb towers' structure are often reflected in their decoration, which on numerous occasions include harpies, pairs of lions or birds (all ancient symbols of life and light), elements of the Chinese animal cycle and probably even (though mainly abstracted) planet and zodiacal representations.¹²⁴ The latter are of additional significance, as ancient Central Asian beliefs considered the planets as representatives of the Universe.¹²⁵

If we now return to our ewers it becomes immediately apparent that all the aforementioned elements recur, either individually or indeed as a whole, on several of the more precisely executed vessels of the group, all of which incidentally belong to the variously faceted varieties of the type (cf. cat nos. V.1/15 (Pl.10), V.2/7 (pl. 12), V.2/11-13 (fig. 37, pls. 14-15), V.3/4-5 (pl. 18), V.3/8 (pl. 19), V.3/10-12 (pls. 21-23) as the most striking examples).

Iranian metal bowls and basins faithfully reproduced the architectural structure of a dome, projected onto a flat surface. In this instance the bowl is not only perceived as mirroring a dome, which in its turn was considered a symbol of the sky in contemporary thought, but the bowl itself shared the symbolism of the dome as a reference to the sky, i. e. the dome of heaven; cf. Melikian-Chirvani 1979, pp. 392-395.

¹²³ Esin 1980, *passim*; Otto-Dorn 1978/9, p. 115 note 31; Rice 1984, pp. 60-63; Azarpay 1981.

¹²⁴ Cf. Otto-Dorn 1978/9. Professor Hillenbrand informs me that the aforementioned iconographic elements occur only on Seljuq edifices in Turkey and not in Iran. This point is extremely interesting and makes one wonder whether some of the ewers in this category which share the structural particularities and the decorative motifs of the Anatolian tomb towers could not actually have been executed in the lands of the Seljuqs of Rūm rather than in the east. It may be relevant in this context to mention a small, typically Anatolian feature of the same period observable among the figural decoration of ewer V.2/11 (fig. 37) in the Nuhad al-Said collection: the dragon tail of Sagittarius is a detail which recurs for example on Çizre Bridge, built by the Ortokids in 1164, on Ortokid coins and on at least one Ortokid mirror; cf. Öney 1969a, pp. 202-3.

¹²⁵ Öney 1979, p. 406.

It would lead to far in this context to pursue this train of thought any further, but it seemed worthwhile to at least point out that there are indeed certain rather striking parallels between the ewers in this chapter and contemporary funerary architecture which go beyond their outer appearance and include certain important aspects of their decorative programme, as well. Both points may help future research to establish whether it truly was the metalworkers' intention to reflect the cosmological and universal symbolism of architectural structures when they started to apply the various systems of ribbing on their ewers and gradually decorated them with an ever increasing array of not merely decorative, but deeply symbolic, motifs.¹²⁶

To sum up, it appears that the earliest ewers of this type, characterized by a plain cylindrical body, were the result of a synthesis between two earlier ewer forms: a simple-sheet metal ewer type with cylindrical body and neck on the one hand and a mainly cast, ovoid-bodied vessel form with large beak-spout on the other. As for the faceted versions of this type, they may merely represent yet another manifestation of the widespread fashion in early Islamic Iran to subdivide the surface of metal objects into multiple sections or ribs.

On the other hand, the striking similarity (as regards their outer appearance as well as important aspects of their ornamentation) between the faceted ewers and certain types of contemporary funerary architecture is noteworthy and may be the result of common cosmological associations meant to be expressed by both groups.

¹²⁶ It would certainly be most useful in this context to examine in detail the iconographic programme of a given ewer of this group. However, as this project would go well beyond the scope of this thesis, it will have to be left to future research.

6. Function

At least one of the original functions of this ewer type is known today owing to a Persian poem inscribed on the famous Tiflis ewer which was executed in Herat in 1181/2 A.D. The verses relevant in this context read:

Glance at the ewer, it is spirited.
 It is living water which flows from it.
 Each stream which flows from it into the hand
 gives each hour new pleasure.
 Glance at the ewer which everyone praises,
 it is worthy to be of service to such
 an honoured person as you.
 Everyone seeing how moisture flows from it
 is able to say nothing which would not be appropriate to it.
 This ewer is for water and they make it in Herat.¹²⁷

From these lines it becomes obvious that ewers of this type were used at least partly for pouring water, i. e. ablution purposes.¹²⁸ Interestingly, the fact that this ewer type was apparently closely associated with ablutions and was, to judge by the considerable numbers that survive, the most important standard vessel form used for this particular function in 12th/13th-century Iran, is reflected indirectly in the iconographical rendering of the zodiacal sign of Aquarius encountered on some contemporary metal objects, i. e. ewer V.3/10 in the fourth sub-group (fig. 64), the 13th-century Vaso Vescovali in the British Museum and on ewer V.2/11 (fig. 65).

In these images Saturn, the planetary lord of the zodiacal sign of Aquarius, is depicted as a bearded old man and fused with the figure of the water carrier. In

¹²⁷ Translation taken from Allan 1980/1, p. 384; Ettinghausen 1970, pp. 123, 125, Giuzalian 1938, pp. 230-1.

¹²⁸ Allan 1980/1, p. 386; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 228.

front of him a well with a pulley is shown and behind him a jug with obliquely rising beak-spout (a horizontal beak-spout on ewer V.2/11) quite similar to the ewers discussed here is placed at the centre of a basin, the indispensable counterpart to the ewer in an ablution set. The assumption drawn from this tiny iconographical detail that the ewers in this group may in fact originally have formed part of a washing set and would thus have been associated with a basin is borne out indirectly by the narrations of Ibn Bībī (1192-1280 A.D.).

In detailing the responsibilities of the tashtdar or ibriqdar who was an important official at the Seljuq courts of Iran and Anatolia, he relates that the former's task was to keep the tasht, i. e. the washing basin, and the ewer (ibriq) belonging to it. When required, he had to present both utensils to his ruler. Moreover, the tashtdar supervised the so-called tashtkhāneh, i. e. the store rooms containing, among other vessels, all the washing basins, ewers and washing troughs used by the court. On journeys or during campaigns all these were packed up and accompanied the ruler to ensure his comfort away from home.¹²⁹

In view of such considerations, the question naturally arises as to what happened to the basins that would have matched the respective ewers. To my knowledge only one ewer (cat. no. V.2/7 in the third sub-group; pl. 12) is today displayed standing in (or in conjunction with) a shallow basin, which may or may not have originally belonged to it. As for the remaining ewers no corresponding receptacles can be cited at present.

However, when one looks through the corpus of early Islamic metalwork extant today, the existence of certain salvers or trays proves most interesting, as several of them feature various forms of faceted central recess which echo the outlines of the ribbing encountered on several of the ewers to a striking degree. Thus, a late 12th/early 13th-century salver in the Louvre, inlaid with silver,

¹²⁹ Duda 1959, p. 159. Ettinghausen suggested that ewers such as the Tiflis piece may have been used together with buckets or pails, but, to judge merely by the tiny depictions on the metal objects, basins seem to have been the more likely counterpart in a washing set at the time; cf. Ettinghausen 1943, p. 196.

presents an eight-sided recess with lobed sections, which seems to recall the wide convex facets encountered on the majority of ewers in the third sub-group. At the same time the fact that the lobes are alternatingly rounded and and slightly pointed also relates this tray indirectly to the ewers of the second sub-group with their alternating round and triangular ribs (fig. 66).¹³⁰

A contemporary tray inlaid with silver and copper, on the other hand, is characterized by a large central cavity with densely faceted edge (fig. 67). The succession of densely set and very narrow rounded indentations encountered here immediately reminds one of the ewers of the second sub-group with their dense and narrow, though alternating round and triangular, ribbing, and also again of the Tiflis ewer executed in Herat in 1181/2 (cat. no. V.2/7; pl. 12).¹³¹

Yet another, probably 12th-century tray from eastern Iran has an octagonal recess with straight sides, which could be compared in turn with the straight or slightly concave sides of ewers in the fourth sub-group.¹³² The only problem that arises if one was to accept a possible link between such salvers and the ewers of this group concerns the fact that the underside of the former is more often than not left completely unrefined. This suggests that these objects may actually have been inserted into some kind of stand or table rather than being used in their present form. If that was so, it would contradict the impression of every-ready portability of the washing set as a whole, implied by the narrations of Ibn Bībī. Undoubtedly, this issue will need further investigation, but it seemed worthwhile in this context to open this line of enquiry for future research.

Apart from the rather shallow salvers there seems to exist a number of proper basins which also reveal facetting similar to that on the ewers. Thus, a late 12th-century basin from Khurāsān, for example, features outer walls made up from

¹³⁰ Pope 1938, pl. 1315A.

¹³¹ *Op. cit.*, pl. 1315B.

¹³² Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 99 no. 28, fig. 28.

slightly concave sections and thus reminiscent of the slightly concave facets on several of the ewers in the fourth sub-group ~~(fig. 100)~~.¹³³

Apart from the ewers' obvious use as ablution vessels, the fact that several pieces of this group have filters inserted into their spout tips may indicate that such vessels might also have been utilized for serving a beverage, perhaps again water or indeed wine.¹³⁴ Unfortunately, the iconographical details applied to the majority of ewers do not seem to give any clues that would particularly favour one or the other hypothesis regarding the ewers' original purpose.

The overwhelming message conveyed by the imagery is an apotropaic one which would be appropriate both on ablution and drinking vessels. Thus, the repoussé lions displayed on most of the vessels' necks, and occasionally on their shoulders, have strong astrological associations as animals of the sun, the giver of light and life, and this solar connection incidentally is further emphasised by the small rosette motifs which often accompany the figures on the ewers' neck.¹³⁵

The apotropaic significance of the lion may have been further enforced by certain Shamanistic beliefs still latent in Seljuq Iran and Anatolia. According to one such religious tradition, upheld particularly in Anatolia and particularly relevant in this context, pre-prayer washing should be made with water from "the lion's mouth", and drinking such water was considered healthy.¹³⁶ Considering the fact that many of the ewers in this category not only display repoussé lions on the neck but also, in reclining fashion, on the spout cover close to the tip, such beliefs may well still be reflected here. Indeed, this may be even more so in the case of some of the vessels in this category which actually display a spout tip rendered as a feline head. Here, just as the traditional beliefs require, the water for washing or drinking would truly emerge through "the lion's mouth".¹³⁷

¹³³ *Op. cit.*, p. 63 F.26.

¹³⁴ Allan 1980/1, p. 386.

¹³⁵ Otto-Dorn 1978/9, pp. 110-1; Öney 1969, p. 65.

¹³⁶ Öney 1969, p. 66.

¹³⁷ It may be worthwhile in this context to recall Ettinghausen's study on Dionysiac motifs in Islamic art, in which he considers the motif of a panther or other feline biting, as it were,

All the other repoussé figures - birds, harpies, sphinxes - also have solar and cosmological connections and are thus again of a highly auspicious and apotropaic nature.¹³⁸ The same can be said for many of the incised and inlaid motifs, such as the central cartouches with birds or sphinxes and in particular zodiacal cycles, and indeed for the various benedictory inscriptions. The latter, far from just being conventionalized blessings without deeper meaning, may well have been intended to exert a nearly hypnotic effect with their repetitive syntax.

The onlooker when reading the epigraphic panels, not unlike when praying the *tasbīḥ*, was not meant to ponder upon each individual word but to perceive the whole as a conjuring, virtually magic formula intended to secure divine protection. If this hypothesis proves to be correct, the anthropomorphic versions of the benedictory inscription would also take on a new meaning, because it could be argued that in these cases the artist attempted to make visual the spirit of the written word, its soul and magical character, by adding human and zoomorphic features to the script. Pseudo-inscriptions, which also occasionally occur on some of the ewers, can be seen in the same light. Their symbolic and undoubtedly talismanic value was apparently accepted to such a degree that the intelligibility of individual words was of no consequence.¹³⁹

the lip of a pouring vessel as originally belonging to Dionysiac symbolism; cf. Ettinghausen 1972, pp. 3-10.

¹³⁸ For the significance of birds in Seljuq art see Esin 1980, pp. 39, 100-1, 104; Otto-Dorn 1978/9, pp. 115-6. For the significance of the harpy in this context see Otto-Dorn 1978/9, p. 135 note 99, pp. 136-7; Baer 1965, *passim*. For the solar significance of the sphinx see Baer 1965, pp. 56-66.

¹³⁹ The complex iconography encountered on ewers in this category needs a much more detailed analysis, which unfortunately lies beyond the scope of this thesis and has therefore to be left to future research. The contemporary attitudes that must have led to the profusion of solar and apotropaic motifs on vessels destined for ablution and drinking purposes are well represented by words written by the famous poet Nizami at the time. He compared the source of life to the source of the sun and argued that it is the rays of the sun that make the water drinkable. Obviously the owner of a ewer such as the most precious ones in this category must have considered it as the source of life from which water flows and therefore by analogy as the source of the sun - referred to repeatedly by the iconography of the vessel; cf. Ward 1993, p. 77.

7. Summary

It appears that ewers of the type discussed in this category were produced along the eastern fringes of Iran from perhaps the late 10th or 11th century onwards. The most splendid examples with complex decorative layouts and extensive precious metal inlay seem to become popular around the late 12th/early 13th-century, but it should be stressed that simpler versions undoubtedly continued to be produced simultaneously. As for the location of their workshops, there is virtually no evidence at present.

Only Herat can be cited as one metalworking centre undoubtedly responsible for these ewers, not only on the basis of the inscription found on ewer V.2/7 (pl. 12), but also in view of literary sources such as Tha'ālibī and Qazwīnī.¹⁴⁰ Apart from this there is no way of telling at present whether, and, if so, which, other cities in Khurāsān produced this ewer type. However, cities like Merv, Nīshāpūr and Tus are referred to in the *nishas* of several metalworkers known today and perhaps it is in these locations that we have to look for other high-quality metalwork production.¹⁴¹ The form of the ewer type discussed here was briefly copied in Mesopotamia in the early 13th century, but does not seem to have proved popular for long.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Bosworth 1968, p. 135; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 228-9.

¹⁴¹ Ward 1993, p. 77.

¹⁴² Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 229.

Catalogue

Sub-group 1

1. Kandahar, Antiquarian trade; Ghazna (?); cast and hammered bronze: body and handle hammered, neck cast; sections soldered together; incised; h. 32.5 cm, h. of body 17.5 cm.

Tall cylindrical body slightly tapering towards recessed, high convex base with concave centre; shoulder plate flat and stepped back from main body; in centre of shoulder, low cylindrical collar, receiving tall cylindrical neck with projecting ridge around its lower part; neck widens towards the mouth and then develops into an steeply rising, funnel-like spout with zoomorphic or ornithomorphic tip; mouth area surrounded by thick projecting lip; on sides of neck, two ring projections; arched handle of angular section, soldered to back of neck and upper body by means of flat, lozenge-shaped attachments. Kufic inscription around shoulder; two guilloche bands forming central loop on spout underside (fig. 1).

Lit.: Scerrato 1959, pp. 104-5, figs. 14, 15.

2. Sotheby's 9.10.79, lot 178; n. p.; bronze, incised, copper inlay; h. 33 cm.

Tall cylindrical body tapering very slightly towards flat, slightly rounded (?) base; flat round shoulder plate stepped back from main body; in its centre, a low collar with projecting flat ridges above and below introduces the tall cylindrical neck; from upper neck rises a flattened, up- and outwards-curving spout, with cover over upper part (?); flat projecting lip around mouth area; flattened, slightly S-shaped handle with central indentations evoking beads adjoined to upper neck and body by narrow flat attachment plaques; thumbpiece, pomegranate. Around lower body, broad guilloche pattern; on sides of central body, interlace rosettes with axial diamond-like extensions; on front, pointed lobed medallion containing a stylized plant design; around upper body, Kufic inscription terminated by concentric roundels near the handle; around outer edge of shoulder plate, naskhi inscription consisting of complimentary titles; around lower front of neck, naskhi inscription with artist's signature: ʿamala Abū Saʿīd al-(?), flanked by superposed lozenge-filled compartments on the sides and floral motifs below the spout (fig. 2).

Lit.: Sotheby's 9.10.79, lot 178.

3. Sotheby's 10.10.78, lot 295; n. p.; bronze, incised; dimensions unavailable.

Form similar to 2, but more elongated body, tapering more strongly towards a higher, rounded base stepped back from the body; broad projecting ridge around lower neck; spout longer; mouth lidded; large rings suspended on sides of neck; very flat, arched handle with few indentations just above the shoulder level; thumbpiece, globular knob with round terminal, set on low rounded base. On lower body, broad guilloche; on central body, medallion (?); around upper body, Kufic inscription frieze; around outer shoulder plate, inscription (?); around lower neck and up the sides, band of squares, filled with crosses (?) (fig. 3).

Lit.: Sotheby's 10.10.78, lot 295 (wrong caption underneath photograph).

4. Khalili Collection MTW 464; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 44.5 cm.

Form as 2, but wider body and spout; ring projections on neck; recessed flat base; arched handle flattened and of angular section. On lower body, frieze of elongated quadrupeds separated by roundels with leaf motifs; on front of body, large cusped medallion with scrolls; above, inscription panel with central knot; on the sides, medallion is flanked by pyramidal cartouches, each containing three leafy scrolls; on sides of body, large geometric interlace medallions with central palmette motif; above, panels with quadrupeds and central knot, each flanked by roundels; near handle, Kufic frieze; on shoulder, cursive inscription; on neck façade, pyramidal scroll panel; on sides of neck, heart-shaped scroll motif; on sides of spout,

guilloche; on spout underside, scroll; on spout cover, palmette scroll; on lip, cable pattern; on handle, wavy lines (fig. 4).
Lit.: Unpublished.

5. Christie's 21.11.86, lot 296; n. p.; hammered bronze, incised; h. 33.5 cm.
Form similar to 3, but taller body with straight, very slightly waisted sides, set on slightly higher, rounded base with traces of tripod feet; shoulder area sloping, with central shoulder plate raised higher from main body; indentations around outer edge of shoulder reveal technique of manufacture; in centre of shoulder, surrounded by repoussé star, very low collar receives short cylindrical neck with very long open spout, which bends up- and outwards from lip level; sturdy arched handle with groovings and indentations above and below. On lower body, band of fleshy scrolls, set against a ring-matted background; on upper body, broader register with succession of horizontally-orientated, heart-shaped palmettes on ring-matted ground; on central body, three(?) vertical lines with various individual leaf and palmette motifs extending horizontally (perhaps with the intention of creating pseudo-epigraphic designs ?); on shoulder plate, another palmette design on ring-matted ground, similar in style to that around upper body; around upper edge of neck, band of fleshy scrollwork similar to that around lower body, stopping short near the spout; on underside of spout, spaced-out succession of double lines (fig. 5).
Lit.: Christie's 21.11.86, lot 296.

6. Sotheby's New York 30.6.80, lot 284; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 36.2 cm.
Form similar to 2, but here a rounded and slightly recessed, transitional zone was introduced between the slightly sloping shoulder plate and the main body; steeply rising, straight spout; flat projecting lip; flattened arched handle with bird-shaped thumbpiece. On body and shoulder, scrollwork (fig. 6).
Lit.: Sold at Sotheby's New York, 30.6.80, lot 284
(information about this piece came directly from the auctioneers).

7. West Berlin, Islamic Museum I. 5377; n. p.; cast bronze; h. 31 cm.
Form similar to 6, but body with recessed, low and angular base, more rounded transitional zone and flatter shoulder plate; curved beak-spout of triangular section, rising from lower neck; round mouth with thin projecting lip and domical lid, the latter attached to a tiny polygonal thumbpiece by means of a thin chain issuing from the lid's pyramidal finial. Undecorated (fig. 7).
Lit.: Berlin 1986, p. 54 no. 28.

8. West Berlin, Islamic Museum I. 3567; n. p.; hammered (?) bronze, repoussé work, incised, remains of copper and silver inlay; base and foot later additions, neck and spout sections trimmed off; h. 30 cm.
Form similar to 7, but shoulder with succession of repoussé birds; on sides of neck, fragmented animals with repoussé heads (damaged); spout originally like the one on 6 (?); flattened, widely arched handle. Body covered entirely by medallions, created by broad and cusped, interlacing bands; each medallion contains figural scene, including revellers, musicians and zoomorphic motifs (decoration very worn, inlay largely lost); on transitional zone, remains of cursive inscription; on sides of neck, incised detailing of repoussé animals; on upper neck, remains of epigraphic frieze; on spout, indiscernible incisions (pl. 1).
Lit.: Sarre 1906, pp. 10-11 no. 16, fig. 10; Sarre and Martin 1912, p. 141 no. 3045.

9. C.L. David Collection, Copenhagen; n. p.; bronze, incised, inlaid with copper (?); h. 34 cm.
Squat cylindrical body on low angular foot-ring; very slightly recessed, transitional zone between body and shoulder plate; low cylindrical collar in centre of shoulder introduces tall cylindrical neck with small lateral ring projections; obliquely rising beak-spout with curved profile rises from upper neck; whole length of spout

covered with pierced filter, excepting small aperture near tip; broad arched handle of angular section with recessed flat attachment plates. On lower body, guilloche; on sides of body, interlace rosettes; on upper body and shoulder, benedictory (?) Kufic (fig. 8).

Lit.: Unpublished.

10. Moscow, Museum of Oriental Art no. 4462 II; excavated in Khurāsān (exact location not stated in literature); bronze, incised; h. 33 cm, diam. 16 cm.

Form similar to 9, but body tapering slightly towards waisted foot-ring; lower neck collar higher up; neck without lateral ring projections; five-sided, narrow beak spout with open upper side and tip, projecting from upper neck; mouth originally lidded (hinge remains); handle missing. On body, central ogival cartouche with four scrolls, interconnected by narrow guilloche band with lateral crescent motifs filled with scrollwork; around upper body, floral frieze terminated by palmette roundels near handle; on shoulder, cursive inscription; on front of neck, crescent motif; on sides of neck, floral roundels with knotted extensions; on spout, scrollwork (pl. 2).

Lit.: Maslenitsyna 1975, p. 193, no. 58.

11. Ani Museum (?); n. p.; bronze, incised; dimensions unavailable.

Form as 10, but squatter, wider body with more sloping shoulder edge; spout more curved, of triangular section, with rounded upper edges; flat arched handle with globular thumbpiece on pointed base. On body, roundels connected by crude vegetal band; on shoulder and neck, cursive inscriptions (no further details discernible from available photograph) (fig. 9).

Lit.: Arakelyan 1956, p. 123 pl. 4; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 225-6, Vol. 2, p. 638 no. C/3/a/4.

12. Cairo, Islamic Museum; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 28 cm.

Form similar to 10, but more elongated body on flat base; spout profile broader; spout starts lower down the neck; flattened arched handle. On shoulder, naskhi; on upper body, Kufic inscription; below, on side of body, floral roundel and narrow guilloche springing from it, probably to adjoin central medallion on façade and corresponding roundel on other side (not visible on available photograph); on side(s) of neck floral roundel (fig. 10).

Lit.: Pope 1938, pl. 1282A; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 225-6, Vol. 2, no. C/3/a/3.

13. Private Collection, Tehran; acquired in Mazanderan; cast bronze (brass?), incised, copper inlay; neck missing; h. 22.2 cm, max. diam. 18.6 cm.

Form probably originally like 10. On central body, trilobed medallion with intertwining floral motifs; around upper body, cursive inscription panel flanked by roundels, the former containing the maker's name: 'amala Ṣa'd ibn 'Atā; on shoulder, benedictory cursive inscription (fig. 11).

Lit.: Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 137, fig. 45.

14. King Feisal Research Centre, Riyadh (?); n. p.; cast (?) brass, incised, copper inlay; h. 35.5 cm.

Form as 10, but body straight; flat arched handle surmounted by rounded polygonal knob with tiny globular finial, set on conical base. On central body, trilobed cartouche with two affronted birds on intertwining floral ground; above, Kufic inscription flanked by roundels, the former giving the name of the maker: 'amala Tāhir 'Alī; on shoulder and neck, benedictory Kufic; underneath spout, decorative panel with central loops; on spout underside, superposed floral motifs (fig. 12).

Lit.: Riyadh 1985, p. 107 no. 86.

15. British Museum 1956,7-26,5; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 29.5 cm.

Squat cylindrical body with rounded shoulder edge; cylindrical neck with narrow pelican-like beak spout rising from its lower part; rounded projecting lip encloses mouth and upper spout; broad arched handle of angular section, rivetted onto neck

and upper body by means of very flat, recessed attachment plates. On shoulder, cursive inscription; on upper neck and in the areas flanking spout, crude scrollwork (fig. 13).

Lit.: Unpublished.

16. Location unknown; Kawat Kala (Khwarazm); hammered bronze: vessel assembled from several pieces (castellated joints visible on shoulder, near handle and on lower body); handle probably cast and rivetted on; h. 34 cm, diam. 18 cm, diam. base 15.5 cm.

Tall cylindrical body with rounded shoulder area; tall cylindrical neck rises from indented collar; steeply rising, straight beak spout; mouth and upper spout with projecting flat lip. Undecorated (fig. 14).

Lit.: Tolstov 1959-68, Vol. 1, p. 158 fig. 7; Vol. IV, pp. 193-7, fig. 1; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 226, Vol. 2, p. 637 no. C/3/a/1.

17. Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire 8756; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 34 cm.

Squat cylindrical body on flat base, with flat shoulder and rounded shoulder edge; low neck collar receives tall cylindrical neck with narrow, steeply rising beak-spout; rounded protruding lip encloses mouth, upper edges and tip of spout; arched handle of angular section (upper termination now no longer connected to neck). On sides of neck, three tiered abstract motif of perhaps vegetal origin; around upper neck, band of simple scrollwork (fig. 15).

Lit.: Montgomery-Wyaux 1978, p. 5 no. 3.

18. Sotheby's 26.4.82, lot 15; n. p.; hammered bronze, repoussé work, incised; h. 32 cm.

Form as 15, but slightly more elongated body; low neck collar; narrow, angular spout profile resembling pelican-beak, upper side covered; arched angular handle with flat attachment plates, rivetted on. On sides of neck, seated repoussé lions; on spout cover, reclining repoussé quadruped (lion?); on shoulder, benedictory Kufic on pounced ground (fig. 16).

Lit.: Sotheby's 26.4.82, p. 13 lot 15.

19. location unknown; n. p.; hammered bronze, incised; dimensions unknown.

Form like 18, but with body tapering towards flat base; broader neck with now fragmented spout; originally lidded mouth area (hinge remains); broad arched handle of angular section. Incised decorative panels on body and neck (details not discernible on available photograph) (fig. 17).

Lit.: Arne 1932, p. 104 fig. 75, p. 105.

20. Christie's 21.11.86, lot 279; n. p.; hammered copper and brass(?), repoussé work, incised; h. 33 cm.

Form as 17, but rounded transitional zone recessed from body and shoulder plate. On base, repoussé rosette; on lower body, inverted arcading; above, flanked by narrow guilloche bands, naskhi inscription on floral ground; on upper body, similar succession of decorative friezes, but with Kufic inscription, interrupted by floral roundels; on shoulder edge, intertwined scrollwork; on shoulder, naskhi on floral ground; on sides of neck, rectangular panel, outlined by guilloche, with central floral roundel with knotted extensions; below mouth, benedictory naskhi inscription (pl. 3).

Lit.: Christie's 21.11.86, p. 143 lot 279.

21. Los Angeles County Museum, Nasli Heeramanek Collection M.73.5.161; n. p.; cast (?) bronze (hammered body, cast neck and spout section?), incised; h. 40 cm.

Body form similar to 20, but without recessed shoulder plate; deep groove separates main body from shoulder edge; broad cylindrical neck rises from very low, profiled

collar; on sides of neck, large annular pendants; very broad, curved beak-spout with curved edges and annular pendant on underside rises from an oblique ridge, which projects towards the front of the neck; mouth lidded; arched angular handle. Around lower body, arcading; above, narrow guilloche band; springing from the latter on the façade of the body, a cusped decorative cartouche points at a large medallion above, which is set onto a triangular base, is terminated by a trefoil finial and contains a bird set against a scrolling ground (?); the upper part of the medallion is flanked by Kufic panels, which in their turn are terminated by horizontally disposed, spade-like motifs containing a split palmette; below, on the sides of the body, large vase motifs; on shoulder, naskhi; on neck, geometric and vegetal motifs disposed below spout ridge; on spout ridge, wavy line with intermediate circles; on underside of spout, similar motif ending in inward-curving dragon heads up the sides (pl. 4).

Lit.: Pal 1973, no. 304; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 634 no. C/1/b/1, fig. 31; Sotheby's 16./17.4.85, lot 42.

22. Kabul Museum 58.2.18; Ghazna (?); beaten bronze, repoussé work, incised; h. 31 cm.

Body shape as 21, but with transitional zone slightly recessed from shoulder area and main body; neck and spout section like on 18, but upper spout much flatter and without repoussé cover. Repoussé star on shoulder; repoussé lions on sides of neck; on lower body, narrow guilloche frieze; on body façade, arched medallion with sphinx on spiral scrolling ground; upper finial of medallion flanked by Kufic inscription panels, terminated by floral roundels; on sides of body, large vase motifs; on shoulder, benedictory Kufic (fig. 18).

Lit.: Rowland 1966, p. 136 pl. 109, p. 140 no. 109; Mortimer-Rice and Rowland 1971, p. 90 no. 183, p. 91 no. 184, pls. 183/4; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 225-6, Vol. 2, p. 637 no. C/3/a/2.

23. Sotheby's New York 9.12.80, lot 266; n. p.; beaten bronze, repoussé work, incised; h. 33 cm.

Form as 22, but spout broken; castellated joints visible on shoulder edge and lower body. On lower body, arcading and narrow guilloche band above; on body façade, cartouche (?), flanked by Kufic inscription and several panels of ornamental abstract design above; on sides of body, separated from central cartouche by vertical scrolling panels, vase motifs and crescent-shaped medallions; on shoulder, stylized epigraphy (fig. 19).

Lit.: Sold at Sotheby's New York 9.12.80, lot 266

(information about this piece came directly from the auctioneers).

24. Sotheby's 19. 10. 83, lot 29; n. p.; hammered bronze, repoussé work, incised; h. 35.2 cm.

Form as 22, but with castellated joints visible on lower body, near handle and on shoulder edge. Decoration virtually identical to that on 22, but with vertical guilloche bands separating the individual motifs on the body; central cartouche with two addorsed birds; on shoulder, naskhi (fig. 20).

Lit.: Sotheby's Parke Bernet and Co. 12./13.10.82, lot 163; Sotheby's Parke Bernet and Co. 19.10.83, p. 16 no. 26.

25. Khalili Collection MTW 591; n. p.; hammered bronze, incised; h. 38.5 cm.

Form as 24, but with slightly more elongated body with visible castellated joints; neck perhaps not belonging (?). On shoulder edge, plaited band; on shoulder, naskhi; (on neck chased floral roundels and scrolls) (fig. 21).

Lit.: Unpublished.

26. Christie's 11. 4. 89, lot 476; n. p.; bronze, incised, copper inlay; h. 28 cm.

Form probably like 24, but without repoussé lions on neck; arched handle with ball thumbpiece. On central body, arabesque roundel with naskhi signature (?) panel

above, the latter set between two similar roundels; on shoulder, naskhi; on neck and mouth, arabesque panels within roundel borders (no photograph available).

Lit.: Christie's 11.4.89, lot 476.

27. Sotheby's 18.4.84, lot 125; n. p.; brass, incised, repoussé work; h. 37 cm. Cylindrical body and neck; flat shoulder; slanting spout; arched handle of square section. Epigraphic bands and roundels around shoulder; body with trilobed medallion containing sphinx; below, band of roundels with animals; neck with two repoussé lions (no photograph available).

Lit.: Sotheby's 18.4.84, lot 125.

28. Sotheby's 15.10.86, lot 117; n. p.; brass, repoussé work, incised; h. 34.8 cm. Cylindrical body; sloping shoulder; cylindrical neck with upward pointing spout, covered at top with sheet metal pierced at end; strap handle. Repoussé lions on sides of neck and spout cover; star-shaped repoussé shoulder collar. Undecorated (no photograph available).

Lit.: Sotheby's 15.10.86, lot 117.

29. Sotheby's 26.4.82, lot 1; n. p.; said to be copper, incised, silver inlay; h. 23.5 cm (body cut down).

Barrel-shaped body with flat shoulder; cylindrical neck; upward-pointing spout with pierced nozzle; arched handle. Small arabesque medallions and Kufic inscription on neck, shoulder and handle; rim with simple incised scroll (no photograph available).

Lit.: Sotheby's 26.4.82, lot 1.

30. Sotheby's 26.4.82, lot 2; n. p.; bronze, repoussé work; h. 31.7 cm.

Barrel-shaped body with wide, flat shoulder; cylindrical neck; narrow, upward-slanting spout; arched handle. On neck, repoussé lions; on shoulder, repoussé star (no photograph available).

Lit.: Sotheby's 26.4.82, lot 2.

31. Sotheby's 18.4.84, lot 128; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 25.4 cm.

Barrel-shaped body and cylindrical neck; flat shoulder; slanting spout; arched handle. On shoulder, pseudo-Kufic (no photograph available).

Lit.: Sotheby's 18.4.84, p. 47 lot 128.

Sub-group 2

V.1/1. Khalili Collection MTW 167; n. p.; hammered bronze, incised; h. 38 cm.

Tall cylindrical body, subdivided into twenty alternatively rounded and triangular ribs; body tapers slightly towards waisted foot-ring with base-plate bent over outer edge; upper facet terminations demarcated by deep horizontal groove which forms a transitional zone below shoulder edge; round recessed shoulder plate with central repoussé star and low cylindrical collar; the latter receives tall cylindrical neck with laterally suspended, triangular pendants (not belonging ?) and steeply rising beak spout, which springs from upper neck; spout closed apart from pouring aperture near tip; handle does not belong to this piece. On rounded body facets, friezes with quadrupeds running towards the shoulder or foot, alternatively; triangular ribs plain; rounded sections of transitional zone with split palmette roundels; on shoulder, pseudo(?)-naskhi on spiral scroll ground; on lower neck, guilloche stopping on sides; underneath spout, triangular scroll panels; on central lower spout, split palmette roundel; along its outer edges, guilloche bands (pl. 5).

Lit.: Unpublished.

V.1/2. Christie's 24.4.90, lot 496; n. p.; hammered brass, repoussé work, incised, copper and silver inlay; h. 41 cm.

Form as V.1/1, but with straighter sides and a more angular, pelican-like beak spout rising from lower neck; on sides of neck, remains of seated repoussé lions; remains of repoussé animal on spout cover; arched angular handle. On rounded body facets, animal frieze; on triangular ribs, stylized scrolls; on rounded sections of transitional zone, crescents; on triangular sections, drop-shaped medallions; on shoulder, naskhi interrupted by floral roundels; around neck base, guilloche (fig. 22).

Lit.: Christie's 11.4.89, lot 480; Christie's 24.4.90, lot 496.

V.1/3. Kabul Museum 58.2.16; Ghazni (?); hammered bronze, incised (only body remains); h. 26.5 cm.

Body form as V.1/2, but with very slightly waisted sides and taller, less waisted foot; base plate missing. Decoration on ribs identical to that on V.1/2, but of more intricate execution; in transitional zone, rounded sections with split palmette roundels, the triangular ones with rectangular scrolling panels; on shoulder, benedictory naskhi (fig. 23).

Lit.: Turin 1961, no. 156, pl. LXII; Rowland 1966, p. 136 pl. 108, p. 139 no. 108; Mortimer-Rice and Rowland 1971, p. 90 nos. 177/8, pls. 177/8; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2, p. 643 no. C/3/d/4; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 80 note 28, p. 430.

V.1/4. Christie's 11.10.88, lot 356; n. p.; hammered brass, incised, copper and silver inlay (only body remains); h. 22 cm.

Form as V.1/3, but with straight sides. On foot, Kufic; on rounded body facets, naskhi; on triangular ribs, leafy scrollwork; in transitional zone, bird roundels on rounded sections, knot patterns on triangular ones; on shoulder, benedictory naskhi (fig. 24).

Lit.: Christie's 11.10.88, lot 356.

V.1/5. Sotheby's 11.10.89, lot 97; n. p.; hammered brass (bronze?), repoussé work, incised; h. 38 cm.

Form as V.1/2, but more slender body. Repoussé lions on neck and spout cover; on foot, Kufic; on body ribs, decoration identical to that on V.1/4; in transitional zone, split palmette roundels on round sections, rectangular vegetal panels on triangular ones; benedictory naskhi on shoulder (fig. 25).

Lit.: Christie's 11.10.88, lot 355; Sotheby's 11.10.89, lot 97.

V.1/6. Ex-Khalili Gallery; n. p.; hammered bronze, repoussé work, incised, copper inlay; h. 38.5 cm, diam. top 5.5 cm, diam. base 11 cm.

Form as V.1/5, but body with twenty-four facets. Rib decoration as on V.1/4, but one inscription panel with Kufic rather than naskhi; in transitional zone, crescent motifs on rounded sections, tear-shaped vegetal panels on triangular ones; on shoulder, benedictory naskhi, interrupted by four moon-shaped motifs; on handle, rope pattern (fig. 26).

Lit.: Fehérvári and Safadi 1981, p. 94 no. 38.

V.1/7. West Berlin, Islamic Museum I. 3566; n. p.; hammered bronze (top of neck and spout trimmed off), repoussé work, silver and copper inlay, incised; h. 32 cm, diam. 13 cm.

Form as V.1/6, but squatter body with lower foot; handle later addition. On foot, rope pattern; on round ribs, Kufic interrupted by central rosette; on triangular ribs, palmette scrolls; in transitional zone, rosette roundels on rounded sections, palmette motifs on triangular ones; on shoulder, Kufic (?); on neck, benedictory Kufic inscription surrounding repoussé lions; on spout, scrollwork (pl. 6).

Lit.: Sarre 1906, pp. 9-10 no. 15, figs. 7-9; Sarre and Martin 1912, no. 3047, pl. 142; Aga-Oglu 1943, p. 94 fig. 3; Berlin 1967, p. 56 no. 182; Berlin 1971, p. 93 no. 351; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2 p. 643 no. C/3/d/3.

V.1/8. Christie's 24.11.87, lot 154; n. p.; hammered bronze, repoussé work, incised, remains of inlay (?); h. 33 cm.

Strongly tapering cylindrical body with rounded and triangular ribs, resting on a high waisted foot (later addition?; neck and spout section as on preceding pieces; arched handle of angular section. On ribs, Kufic; on one rounded rib, naskhi; in transitional zone, bird roundels on rounded sections; Kufic panels on triangular ones; on shoulder, benedictory Kufic (fig. 27).

Lit.: Christie's 21.11.86, lot 287; Christie's 24.11.87, lot 154.

V.1/9. C. L. David Collection 15/1969; n. p.; hammered bronze, repoussé work, incised; h. 38 cm.

Form as V.1/5, but with S-shaped handle of angular section.

On foot, Kufic; on rounded ribs, naskhi; on triangular ribs, Kufic; in transitional zone, on rounded sections floral (?) roundels, on triangular ones Kufic panels; on shoulder, inscription (fig. 28).

Lit.: Unpublished.

V.1/10. Sotheby's 12.10.81, lot 55; n. p.; hammered brass, repoussé work, incised; h. 36.5 cm.

Form as V.1/9, but slightly squatter body, widely arched handle of angular section. On foot and on body facets, Kufic; in transitional zone, on rounded sections floral roundels, on triangular ones tear-shaped vegetal medallions; on shoulder, benedictory Kufic (fig. 29).

Lit.: Sotheby's 12.10.81, lot 55.

V.1/11. British Museum 48.8-5.1; n. p.; beaten bronze, repoussé work, incised, silver and copper inlay; h. 43 cm.

Form as V.1/10, but squatter and wider body with twenty-four facets resting on higher foot (later addition); arched angular handle. Repoussé lions on spout cover and sides of neck; transitional zone occupied by twenty-four repoussé birds; on rounded body ribs, naskhi, on triangular ones Kufic; on shoulder, anthropomorphic naskhi; on neck base, Kufic; on lower neck, naskhi; repoussé lions on sides of neck enclosed by scrolling friezes and accompanied by fox-like animal beneath their lower back; vase motif underneath upper handle attachment plaque; on spout underside, Kufic; on outer sides, scrollwork; on sides of handle, walking animals and - in lower part - Kufic; on handle back, herring-bone pattern, scrollwork, interlace and birds. Inscriptions are benedictory (pl. 7).

Lit.: Migeon 1927, Vol. 2, p. 45 fig. 234; Pope 1938, pl. 1326; Dimand 1941, p. 209; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2, p. 642 no. C/3/d/1; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 152 note 1, 173 note 3, 430.

V.1/12. Keir Collection; n. p.; hammered bronze, repoussé work, incised, silver inlay; h. 38.5 cm, diam. base 10.5 cm, diam. mouth 5.5 cm.

Form as V.1/11, but plain transitional zone; low waisted foot with base plate folded over outer edge. Seated repoussé lions on neck and spout cover (the latter fragmented). On foot, Kufic interrupted by crescent motifs; on round body ribs, alternating rosettes and elongated arabesque medallions; on triangular ribs, vase motifs; on shoulder, naskhi; on neck base, drop motifs; on handle sides, strapwork and palmettes; on handle back from below: human figure, bird facing backwards, running gazelles, intertwined scrolls. Inscriptions are benedictory (fig. 30).

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2, p. 643 no. C/3/d/5; Fehérvári 1976, pp. 62-3 no. 53, pl. 16.

V.1/13. Khalili Collection MTW 462; n. p.; hammered brass (bronze?), repoussé work, silver and copper inlay, incised; h. 39.8 cm.

Form as V.1/12. On foot Kufic, interrupted by rosettes; on round body ribs, succession of elongated spiral scroll cartouches and rosettes; on triangular ribs, scrollwork; in transitional zone, rosettes on rounded sections, vase motifs on triangular ones; on shoulder, naskhi; across centre of lower neck, guilloche; repoussé lions on neck flanked by vase motifs on spout side and drop-shaped floral medallions above; on spout, scrollwork; on all handle sides, guilloche bands. Inscriptions are benedictory (pl. 8).

Lit.: Sotheby's 16.4.86, pp. 54-5 lot 127.

V.1/14. West Berlin, Islamic Museum I 3568; n. p.; beaten bronze, repoussé work, silver inlay, incised; h. 37.4 cm, diam. 20 cm.

Form as V.1/14, but with addorsed repoussé lions around shoulder edge. On foot, plaited band; on rounded body ribs, either naskhi interrupted by large circles enclosing floral roundels, or animal frieze; on triangular ribs, scrollwork; on shoulder, naskhi; on neck and spout, scrollwork. Inscriptions are benedictory (pl. 9).

Lit.: Sarre 1906, pp. 11-2 no. 17, pl. V, fig. 11; Sarre and Martin 1912, no. 3046, pl. 141; Erdmann 1967, no. 24;

Berlin 1971, p. 22 no. 27, pl. 7; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2, p. 642 no. C/3/d/2; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 78 note 1.

V.1/15. Modena, Galleria Estense 6921; n. p.; beaten brass, repoussé work, copper and silver inlay, incised; h. 44.8 cm, diam. 19 cm.

Form as V.1/14, but narrower body on higher splayed foot. Addorsed repoussé harpies on top of rounded ribs; mounted falconer in repoussé on sides of neck; domical lid (probably not original) surmounted by repoussé lion (or hippopotamus?) with its young on spout cover. On foot, anthropomorphic Kufic; on round body ribs, in centre cusped zodiacal medallions surrounded by zoomorphic scrollwork and flanked above and below by cartouches of anthropomorphic naskhi; on shoulder, inscription (?); on neck base, frieze of musicians and revellers; on lower neck, hunting frieze (?); repoussé figures on neck surrounded by zoomorphic scrollwork and bordered above by anthropomorphic naskhi; underneath upper handle attachment, medallion with enthroned figure; on spout, scrollwork and running animals; on handle, zoomorphic scrollwork and - on back - braided band (pl. 10).

Lit.: Scerrato 1966, pp. 54-7, 69, pls. 24-6; London 1976, p. 177 no. 191.

Sub-Group 3

V.2/1. Khalili Collection MTW 90; n. p.; bronze (cast?), copper inlay, incised; h. 36.3 cm.

Squat cylindrical body with 36 narrow, very slightly rounded facets, separated vertically by narrow ridges and interrupted horizontally by flat horizontal panels; low straight foot; slightly raised, circular shoulder plate; tall cylindrical neck with lateral hinged pendants and steeply rising beak-spout issuing from upper neck; spout tip closed: pouring aperture cut into upper end of spout cover; widely arched handle of angular section, with flat drop-shaped attachment plaques terminating in small round hinges; skittle-shaped thumbpiece. On lower body, cursive inscription on simple floral ground; on upper body, Kufic frieze, terminated towards vessel façade by small roundels; across upper centre of body, epigraphic panel with name of maker: "'amala Muhammad al-Harawī"; in centre of vessel façade, large cusped medallion with interlacing floral branches; on shoulder edge, large cursive inscription on simple floral ground; on lower neck, similar inscription flanked on either side by two superposed squares enclosing lozenges; underneath spout on

central neck, rectangular panel with central heart-shaped design and lateral buds; on lower underside of spout, large copper-inlaid circle (pl. 11).

Lit.: Unpublished.

V.2/2. Ashkhabad Museum (?); Turkmenistān; hammered bronze, incised; fragmentary: only body and foot remain; dimensions unknown. On alternate body facets, vertical panels with running animals on abstracted spiral scrolling ground; corresponding to these facets above, small panels in the transitional zone with vegetal roundels; on shoulder, inscription (fig. 31).

Lit.: Khozhageldtsev 1990, p. 30, pl. 12.

V.2/3. Kabul Museum; n. p.; hammered brass, repoussé work, silver and copper inlay, incised; h. 32.7 cm, max. diam. 17.5 cm.

Form as V.1/12, but with alternatively wide and narrow rounded body ribs. On wide ribs Kufic, on narrow ones scrollwork; in transitional zone, knotted rosette roundels with scrolling extensions on wide sections and scrollwork on narrow ones; on shoulder, naskhi; on upper neck above repoussé lions, knot motif and rosette; on spout, knotted scrollwork (fig. 32).

Lit.: Mortimer-Rice and Rowland 1971, p. 139 no. 108; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 118 no. 45a, p. 61.

V.2/4. Christie's 10.10.89, lot 530; n. p.; beaten brass (bronze?), repoussé work, silver inlay, incised; h. 38 cm.

Form as V.2/3, but with original arched handle of angular section. On foot, guilloche; on wide ribs, Kufic panels alternate with cusped floral medallions; on narrow ribs, Kufic interrupted by tear-shaped floral medallion on triangular base; in transitional zone, on wide sections rosettes, on narrow ones Kufic; on shoulder, naskhi; on sides of neck, guilloche bands frame repoussé lions; on spout sides, scrollwork and guilloche; on spout cover, remains of repoussé animal (fig. 33).

Lit.: Christie's 11.4.89, p. 199 lot 479; Christie's 10.10.89 lot 530.

V.2/5. Victoria & Albert Museum 592-1898; n. p.; beaten brass, repoussé work, silver, copper and black compound inlay, incised; h. 38 cm, max diam. body 17.55 cm, diam. foot 11.2 cm.

Form as V.2/4. On foot, Kufic; on wide ribs, in centre cusped medallion with knotted scroll motif and knotted extensions above and below, all flanked by naskhi cartouches; on narrow ribs, Kufic; in transitional zone on wide sections, cusped floral medallions; on narrow ribs, knots; on shoulder, tall naskhi; on lower neck, naskhi; underneath seated repoussé lions, heart-shaped knot motif, above them Kufic frieze; underneath upper handle attachment, cartouche with split palmettes and floral motifs; on spout sides, scrollwork; below, knots and crescent motifs; crouching repoussé lion on spout cover; on handle, guilloche bands and - below - scrollwork (fig. 34).

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2, pp. 641-2 no. C/3/d/6; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 114-8.

V.2/6. Louvre AA 176/AA 59; Sīstān (?); beaten brass, repoussé work, incised; body and neck now wrongly mounted with other objects; handle missing; dimensions unknown.

Body with 24 alternatively wide and narrow ribs. On ribs, alternatively inscriptions or scrollwork; on sections of transitional zone, either inscriptions or pear-shaped medallions; on shoulder, inscription with roundels (no photograph available).

Lit.: Marchal 1974, fig. 10 (neck only); Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2, p. 641 no. C/3/c/5, table 21 no 19 (Analysis).

V.2/7. Tiflis, Georgia, State Museum MC 135; Herat, made in 577 A.H./ 1181-2 A.D. by Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad al-Harawī; sheet brass (bronze?), repoussé work, copper and silver inlay, incised; h. ca. 39 cm, diam. shoulder 18 cm.

Broad cylindrical body with 24 narrow and slightly convex facets, tapering towards a low waisted foot (outer edge later addition); clearly demarcated transitional zone with rounded sections corresponding in width to facets below; in centre of circular shoulder plate, repoussé star introduces neck base; tall cylindrical neck with obliquely rising, covered beak-spout and two seated repoussé lions on sides; reclining repoussé lion on spout cover; flat, widely arched handle (not original). On foot, benedictory inscription; on body facets, either Persian naskhi (praising the object and naming its inlayer) or intricate strapwork; on small sections of transitional zone, vase motifs alternating with arched medallions containing seated figure (?); on shoulder, zodiacal roundels on geometric interlace ground; between rays of repoussé star, rosettes; on neck base and neck proper, surrounding the repoussé lions, benedictory Kufic; beneath lions' feet, walking quadruped; on spout sides, central rosette and adjoining scrolls; on underside, knot and crescent motifs (pl. 12).

Lit.: Uvarov 1902, pp. 199-200, no. 135, pl. XV; Giuzalian 1938, pp. 227-36, pls. 29-30; Dimand 1941, p. 208; Aga-Oglu 1943, pp. 92-3; Mayer 1959, p. 59; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2, p. 642 no. C/3/c/7; Allan 1980/1, pp. 384-6; Allan 1982a, pp. 49-50; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 72, 83 note 64; Baer 1983, pp. 101-2; Atil 1985, p. 17, fig. 6.

V.2/8. Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Museum 1889-70; Rhages (Rayy); hammered bronze, repoussé work, remains of silver inlay, incised; h. 33.7 cm, diam. mouth 5.5 cm, diam. base 11.5 cm, diam. body ca. 19 cm.

Elongated 14-sided, cylindrical body (damaged) with convex facets, slightly tapering towards a low waisted foot (base plate missing); transitional zone stepped back from main body and lobed shoulder plate with central repoussé star; tall cylindrical neck with lateral, strongly projecting repoussé rosettes (one broken off) and obliquely rising beak-spout (tip broken off, spout cover with fragmented repoussé rosette); arched angular handle soldered on. On body facets - flanked by naskhi cartouches below and proportionally wider Kufic panels above - central pointed medallions with birds alternatively facing the left or right; on sections of transitional zone, knotted floral roundels; on shoulder, tall naskhi; on neck base, (pseudo?-)naskhi; on neck, star and rosette designs adjoin repoussé rosettes; on spout, scale patterns; on handle, intertwining band; on lower handle attachment, intertwined palmette design. Inscriptions are benedictory and pseudo-epigraphic (fig. 35).

Lit.: Baer 1987, p. 13 note 23.

V.2/9. Hermitage; n. p.; beaten bronze, repoussé work, silver inlay (now lost), incised; h. 37 cm.

Squat cylindrical body with 12 convex facets on fairly high, splayed foot with base plate bent over outer edge; transitional zone with 12 bulbous sections; recessed lobed shoulder plate with central repoussé star; neck as on preceding pieces, but with proportionally larger repoussé lions; handle replacement. On foot, Kufic; on body facets - flanked by Kufic and naskhi cartouches above and below - medallions with probably figural and/or vegetal motifs; on sections of transitional zone, central knot patterns and intermediate, obliquely set leaf motifs; shoulder decoration not identifiable on available photograph; on neck base, cable pattern; on neck, scrolls encloses lions; above the latter, cursive inscription; on spout, scrollwork (pl. 13).

Lit.: Sarre and Martin 1912, no. 3051, pl. 142; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2, p. 641 no. C/3/c/3.

V.2/10. Kabul Museum KM 58.2.17; Ghazna(?); beaten bronze, incised; only body remains; h. 21 cm.

Wide twelve-sided body on low waisted foot. On body facets, central bird medallion with naskhi panels above and below; shoulder decoration unknown (fig. 36).

Lit.: Turin 1961, p. 156, pl. 62; Rowland 1966, p. 139 no. 106, pl. 106; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2, p. 641 no. C/3/c/4; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 80 note 28, p. 430.

V.2/11. Nuhad al-Said Collection; n. p.; beaten brass, repoussé work, inlay of silver, copper and black compound, incised; h. 44.5 cm.

Form as V.2/10, but more elongated body and less bulbous transitional zone; neck and spout section as on V.2/7; arched angular handle. On foot, Kufic flanked by silver fillet bands above and below; on body ribs above and below, cartouches with anthropomorphic naskhi and zoomorphic scrollwork; in between, cusped zodiacal medallions enclosed by intertwining tendrils; in sections of transitional zone, cusped medallions with enthroned figure alternating with knotted tendrils; on shoulder plate, anthropomorphic naskhi; on neck base, Kufic; around lower neck, frieze of winged animals; repoussé lions on central neck flanked by naskhi and scrollwork; below upper handle attachment, large crescent motif with knotted motifs inside and below; on outer spout sides, leafy scrolls; on inner sides, winged animals walking towards the tip. Inscriptions are benedictory (fig. 37).

Lit.: Sotheby's 14.10.80, lot 52; Allan 1980/1, pp. 384-6; Allan 1982a, pp. 49-53.

V.2/12. British Museum 48.8-5,2; n. p.; beaten brass, repoussé work, silver and copper inlay, incised; h. 40 cm.

Form as V.2/11, but slightly more elongated body. Addorsed repoussé bird pairs on shoulder edge, row of individual repoussé birds around lower neck. On foot, Kufic; on body ribs from above: interlocking cartouches with knotted anthropomorphic Kufic, narrow continuous animal frieze, wide zone with central cusped medallions containing signs of the zodiac and flanked by scrollwork, interlocking cartouches with anthropomorphic naskhi, alternating bird roundels and heart scrolls; knotted scrolls between repoussé birds on shoulder edge; on shoulder plate, anthropomorphic naskhi; on neck base, Kufic; on neck - enclosing repoussé lions and birds - scrollwork; on outer spout sides, scrollwork; on inner sides, winged quadrupeds walking towards the tip; on sides of handle, walking animals; on handle back, superposed birds above and geometric interlacing below, the latter flanked by knot motifs. Inscriptions are benedictory (pl. 14).

Lit.: Pope 1938, pl. 1325; Barrett 1949, p. X, pls. 6-7; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 227, Vol. 2, pp. 640-1 no. C/3/c/2, Analysis Table 21 no. 8, fig. 32; London 1976, p. 175 no. 188; Ward 1993, pp. 70-1, fig. 52, p. 78 fig. 56.

V.2/13. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 44.15; n. p.; raised brass (bronze?), repoussé work, silver inlay, incised; h. 39.4 cm.

Twelve-sided body, with pairs of addorsed repoussé harpies around shoulder edge and frontally disposed, individual repoussé birds on lower body ribs; other structural features like on V.2./12. On foot, animal frieze flanked by silver fillet bands; hatching on outer edge of foot; in upper halves of body ribs, cusped zodiacal medallions, set within a system of abstract zoomorphic scrollwork; scrolling details in between repoussé harpies on shoulder edge; on shoulder plate, anthropomorphic naskhi; on neck base, Kufic; on neck, anthropomorphic naskhi and zoomorphic scrollwork flank repoussé lions; on spout sides, zoomorphic scrollwork; on handle, stylized scrollwork. Inscriptions are benedictory (pl. 15).

Lit.: Pope 1938, pl. 1322; Aga-Oglu 1943, p. 93, fig. 1; Dimand 1945, pp. 87-9, 2 figs.; Pope 1960, p. 97, pl. 61; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 226-9, Vol. 2, p. 640 no. C/3/c/1; Baer 1983, pp. 97, 100, fig. 74; Tabbaa 1987, p. 103 fig. 12.

V.2/14. Kuwait, Private Collection I/356; n. p.; hammered brass, repoussé work, copper and silver inlay, incised; h. 39.9 cm, diam. 18 cm.

Form as V.2/13, but no repoussé figures apart from seated lions on neck. On inside and outside of foot, diamond-shaped leaves within meandering band; on body ribs, alternatively abstract zoomorphic scrollwork or four superposed roundels with horsemen and enthroned figures; on sections of transitional zone, hunters and

horsemen(?); on shoulder plate, anthropomorphic naskhi; on neck base (?); on lower neck, figural frieze; repoussé lions on neck enclosed by anthropomorphic naskhi; on spout, scrollwork as on body ribs; on handle (?); near handle base, three-leaved motif. Inscriptions are benedictory (fig. 38).

Lit.: Louisiana 1987, p. 90 no. 113.

Neck Fragment 1

Khalili Collection MTW 482; n. p.; beaten bronze (brass?), repoussé work, silver inlay, incised.

Decoration similar to that on neck of V.2/13: friezes of anthropomorphic naskhi enclose repoussé lions on three sides; remaining space filled with scrolls; on back of neck, cusped medallion with interlaced scrollwork; on outer spout sides, scrollwork; on inner ones, crescent motifs alternating with interconnected knots; below spout on central lower neck, crescent motif; on spout cover, reclining repoussé lion flanked by guilloches; below, heart-shaped knot with central leaf and leafy scroll extensions (no image available).

Lit.: Unpublished.

Sub-Group 4

V.3/1. Sotheby's 8.6.64, lot 149; n. p.; hammered bronze, repoussé work, silver inlay, incised; h. 37.5 cm.

Twelve-sided cylindrical body, slightly tapering towards a fairly high, waisted foot with base plate folded over outer edge; slightly recessed shoulder edge with twelve rounded panels; flat twelve-sided shoulder plate with central repoussé star around base of neck; annular ridge introduces cylindrical neck with seated repoussé lions on either side and narrow beak spout rising from its lower part; spout covered by plaque with reclining repoussé animal; very flat arched handle with lower attachment rendered as lion mask; bird as thumbpiece (handle not belonging?). Foot plain (?); on body facets above, cartouches with Kufic on spiral scrolling ground and below, cartouches with naskhi on same ground; below the latter, rosettes; in centre of each facet, either vase motif or tall cusped medallion with knot motif below base, containing an intricate interlace design or an enthroned figure alternatively; panels of shoulder edge with rosettes and confronted bird pairs alternating; on shoulder plate, naskhi (?); on neck, guilloche below and Kufic panel enclosing repoussé lions; on spout, scrollwork. Inscriptions are benedictory (fig. 39).

Lit.: Sold at Sotheby's on June 6th, 1964 as lot 149 (information regarding this ewer came directly from the auctioneers).

V.3/2. Khalili Collection MTW 1240; n. p.; hammered bronze (brass?), repoussé work, silver and copper inlay, incised; h. 38.8 cm.

Form as V.3/1, but broader arched handle of quadrangular section. Foot plain; on body facets, cartouches of simple Kufic above, of floriated Kufic below; in centre of each facet, large crescent motif flanked by rosettes above and below, each positioned across the edge where the facets meet; on panels of shoulder edge, central rosettes alternating with knot motifs placed across the panel edges; on shoulder plate, naskhi; neck collar plain; on lower neck, guilloche and rosette below lions' feet; above lions, scrollwork; on outer spout sides, scrollwork; on inner ones, guilloche bands; on handle, cable patterns. Inscriptions are benedictory (pl. 16).

Lit.: Unpublished.

V.3/3. Hermitage; n. p.; hammered bronze, repoussé work, silver inlay, incised; h. 37 cm.

Form similar to V.3/1, but wider and squatter body on low splayed foot; slightly concave body facets; narrow arched handle (probably replacement). On foot, Kufic;

on body facets above, cartouches with Kufic; below, naskhi cartouches; beneath the latter, rosettes; in centre of facets, interconnected cusped medallions with five-petalled extensions above and below, filled with central knotted scroll motif below and small crescent above; on panels of shoulder edge, knot designs; on shoulder plate, naskhi; neck base plain; on lower and upper neck, naskhi; scrollwork below lions and flanking the spout; on spout sides, scrollwork. Inscriptions are benedictory (pl. 17).

Lit.: Sarre and Martin 1912, no. 3048, pl. 142; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 639 no. C/3/b/4.

V.3/4. Hermitage; n. p.; beaten brass (bronze?), repoussé work, silver and copper inlay, incised; h. 37 cm.

Form as V.3/1, but body facets very slightly concave; lower, waisted and slightly splayed, foot; flat arched handle (probably replacement). Adorsed repoussé birds on shoulder edge; crouching repoussé animal on spout cover. On foot, interlace band; on body facets above, cartouches with knotted Kufic, below cartouches with naskhi; underneath the latter, roundels filled either with simple interlaced tendrils or geometric interlace; in centre of body facets, large pear-shaped medallions filled with interlacing tendrils, each flanked above by small rosettes and below by heart-shaped knot motifs positioned across facet edge; between repoussé bird pairs on shoulder edge, knot motifs; on shoulder plate, inscription frieze; on neck base, cable pattern; on neck, Kufic above and below repoussé lions; scrollwork flanking spout; on spout sides, scrollwork. Inscriptions are benedictory (pl. 18).

Lit.: Sarre and Martin 1912, no. 3050, pl. 141; Pope 1935, p. 63; Pope 1938, pl. 1323; Aga-Oglu 1943, p. 94, fig. 5; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 639 no. C/3/b/5.

V.3/5. Museum Stieglitz, Petrograd (?); n. p.; hammered bronze (brass?), repoussé work, inlay, incised; dimensions unknown.

Form originally like V.3/4, but body now trimmed with base plate rivetted on; trimmed neck and thin arched handle, both perhaps from other objects. Around shoulder edge, succession of repoussé birds walking towards the left; seated repoussé lions on neck. On body facets, large naskhi cartouches above and Kufic (?) cartouches below; in centre of each facet, rounded medallions with floral interlace motifs; on shoulder plate, inscription; around lower neck, inscription (?); below mouth and on spout, scrollwork; between onset of spout and repoussé lions, star motif (no reproduceable image available).

Lit.: Migeon 1927, Vol. 2, p. 45, fig. 235.

V.3/6. Ex-Homberg collection; n. p.; hammered bronze, inlay, incised; h. 13 cm.

Form originally like V.3/4, but now only lower half of body and foot remain. On foot, scrollwork; on body facets below, cartouches with anthropomorphic (?) naskhi; in centre, large roundels with pointed leafy finial, knotted base and central figures on scrolling ground; each roundel flanked above and below by knot motifs positioned across facet edge (no reproduceable image available).

Lit.: Homberg 1908, pp. 52-53, no. 373.

V.3/7. Chicago, Institute of Fine Arts 34.504; n. p.; beaten bronze, silver inlay, incised; h. 20.3 cm, diam. base 17 cm.

Form perhaps originally like V.3/4, but today only the lower body remains, turned upside down and reworked as a casket. The remaining original decoration comprises naskhi cartouches on each facet, with individual rosettes above and below (fig. 40).

Lit.: Rice 1958, pp. 252-3, pl. 16; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 640 no. C/3/b/8.

V.3/8. Louvre 5548; n. p.; beaten bronze, repoussé work, silver inlay, incised; h. 39 cm.

Form like V.3/3, but more elongated body on higher waisted foot, with base plate folded over outer edge; longer neck and spout; handle missing. Repoussé lions on neck; strongly projecting, couchant repoussé animal on spout cover. On foot,

animal frieze surmounted by band of silver fillets; on body facets from above: cartouches with anthropomorphic Kufic; wide zone with central, interconnected zodiacal medallions, each with geometric spiral scroll extensions above and below; cartouches with anthropomorphic naskhi; knotted crescent motifs and obliquely set petals emphasising facet edges; on panels of shoulder edge, horsemen and enthroned figures; on shoulder plate, inscription (?); on neck base, herring bone pattern and above, animal frieze; around lower neck and behind repoussé lions, scrollwork; below mouth and alongside spout, naskhi; on spout sides, scrollwork. Inscriptions are benedictory (pl. 19).

Lit.: Migeon 1922, Vol. 1, p. 21, no. 70, pl. XXIII; Pope 1930, p. 181, fig. 84; Paris 1938, p. 193 no. 201; Pope 1938, pl. 1328; Dimand 1941, p. 209; Scerrato 1966, pp. 69-70; Paris 1971, pp. 96-7 no. 130; Strasbourg 1972, no. 266; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 638 no. C/3/b/1; Paris 1977, pp. 211-2 no. 474; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 152 note 1, pp. 166, 168, 173 notes 1 & 3, p. 430.

V.3/9. Frankfurt, Museum für Kunsthandwerk H.St. 16/5035; n. p.; hammered bronze, repoussé work, silver inlay, incised; h. 31.5 cm.

Form as V.3/3, but higher, waisted foot with base plate folded over outer edge; neck base trimmed away; handle missing. Reclining repoussé animal on spout cover. On foot, scrollwork; on body facets above and below, cartouches with lancet leaf scrollwork, the lower ones with scrolling extensions developing towards the foot; in centre of each facet, quatrefoil medallion with central heart-shaped, knotted scroll below crescent motif and scrolling extensions above and below; on shoulder edge and plate, lancet-leaf scrollwork; the same on lower neck and areas surrounding repoussé lions (pl. 20).

Lit.: Unpublished.

V.3/10. Tehran, Gulistan Palace; n. p.; beaten bronze, silver inlay, incised; h. 22 cm.

Form originally like V.3/9, but now fragmented: neck and spout section as well as handle missing. On foot, anthropomorphic naskhi on scrolling ground with zoomorphic detailing; on body facets from above: wide, continuous anthropomorphic naskhi frieze with zoomorphic detailing; continuous narrow animal frieze; very wide central area with interconnected zodiacal roundels on plain ground; narrow continuous animal frieze; wider anthropomorphic naskhi panel with zoomorphic detailing (decoration on lowest part of facets not visible on available photographs); on panels of shoulder edge, individual horsemen separated by vertical designs of obliquely set, juxtaposed silver leaves highlighting the facet edges; on shoulder plate, anthropomorphic naskhi; on fragmented neck base, heart scrolls. Inscriptions are benedictory (pl. 21).

Lit.: Pope 1938, pl. 1314; Dimand 1941, p. 209; Allan 1976, Vol. 2 p. 638 no. C/3/b/2; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 138, 152 note 1, p. 153 note 26, pp. 169, 173 note 2, p. 430.

V.3/11. Hermitage; n. p.; hammered bronze, repoussé work, silver inlay, incised; h. 40 cm.

Shape as V.3/9, but lower foot replacement, crudely secured with nails; original neck collar remains; neck section accidentally bent forward; original arched handle of angular section. On original part of foot, remains of anthropomorphic (?) naskhi, framed by a band of small drop-shaped motifs above; on body facets from above, continuous horizontal friezes of varying width: anthropomorphic naskhi; succession of seated revellers; large zodiacal medallions flanked by harpies above and below; frieze with seated revellers; anthropomorphic naskhi; decoration on lowest part of body not visible on available photograph; on facets of shoulder edge, individual horsemen; on shoulder, inscription (?); on neck base, running animals; below repoussé lions and flanking spout, anthropomorphic naskhi; below mouth and on spout, scrollwork; on handle sides, scrollwork (pl. 22).

Lit.: Sarre and Martin 1912, no. 3049, pl. 143; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 639 no. C/3/b/3.

V.3/12. West Berlin, Islamic Museum I 3569; allegedly from Herat, bought in Persia in 1902; beaten bronze, silver inlay, incised; h. 14.5 cm, diam. 19.5 cm. Form perhaps originally like V.3/11, but only body remains, today remounted as a bucket.

On facets of original shoulder edge, running animals; on facets of main body, three horizontal zones, the upper and lower ones with cusped medallions containing zodiacal scenes, the central one with pairs of dancers and musicians (pl. 23).

Lit.: Sarre 1906, p. 12 no. 18, pl. 3; Allan 1976, Vol. 2, p. 639 no. C/3/b/6.

V.3/13 Cleveland Museum of Art 45.27; n. p.; beaten bronze, repoussé work, silver inlay, incised; h. 29.2 cm.

Shape as V.3/8, but with original arched handle of angular section; neck and spout section not belonging (?). On central foot, foliated Kufic; on body from above: horizontal frieze with (pseudo?)-Kufic; wide central zone with interlocking roundels containing sphinxes; anthropomorphic naskhi; decoration on lower body not visible on available photograph; on facets of shoulder edge, individual and very elongated winged quadrupeds; on shoulder plate, anthropomorphic naskhi; on neck base, lancet leaves; on lower neck, anthropomorphic naskhi on leafy ground; repoussé lions surrounded by large leaves and buds on dotted ground; similar motifs on spout. Inscriptions are benedictory (fig. 41).

Lit.: Anon 1913, p. 249; Aga-Oglu 1940, p. 10; Dimand 1941, p. 209; Ettinghausen 1943a, no. 44; Hollis 1946, pp. 39-40, plate on p. 42; Pope 1960, p. 64, pl. 60; Allan 1976, Vol. 2 p. 640 no. C/3/b/7.

V.3/14. ex. Homberg Collection; n. p.; beaten bronze (brass?), repoussé work, silver inlay, incised; h. 43 cm.

Form as V.3/8, but higher foot with rounded outer edge; very prominent ring separating neck base and main neck; very thick, rounded lip; mouth and spout lidded; broad and rounded arched handle with projecting lower part of square section; broad leaf-shaped attachment plates with small ring projections; original bird thumb-piece now wanting. On outer edge of foot, oblique hatching; around central foot, naskhi, interrupted by small rosettes and with pearly borders; on body from above: narrow panel with pairs of revellers, dancers and musicians, each pair separated from the other by a crescent motif; very narrow geometric interlace band; succession of large arched medallions set against a scrolling ground, each one filled either by a mounted princely hunter or a thematically related hunting scene; very narrow, geometric interlace band; pairs of revellers, dancers and musicians, again separated by crescents; very narrow geometric interlace band; delicate valance. On facets of shoulder edge, alternatively addorsed or confronted pairs of sphinxes, separated by obliquely set leaves along facet edges; decoration on shoulder plate not discernible on available photographs; on neck base, naskhi; on neck collar, animal frieze (?) in repoussé; repoussé lions on central neck enclosed by zoomorphic scrollwork, the latter bordered by naskhi above and a pearl border below; on outer sides of spout, scrollwork; on inner ones, herring bone motif; on handle: scrollwork, geometric interlace and herring bone; on angular lower part of handle, scrolls and naskhi inscriptions (pl. 24).

Lit.: Migeon 1904, p. 43 for the plate, p. 48; Pope 1938, pl. 1324; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 141-2, 153 notes 34 and 35, p. 154 note 37, p. 168 fig 74a, p. 174.

V.3/15. Victoria and Albert Museum 381-1897; n. p.; hammered and welded brass, inlaid with silver and black substance, engraved; h. 43.7 cm (40.2 cm to mouth only), diam. 20.5 cm, diam. foot 15.2 cm.

Form similar to V.3/14, but wider and squatter body, tapering towards a lower foot; more pronounced, star-shaped shoulder plate; virtually identical handle and

bird thumb-piece. On foot, naskhi; on body, four horizontal friezes of varying width, separated by narrow meander borders and containing from above: cusped medallions interconnected by geometric roundels and set against a leafy scrolling ground, each containing either a frontally seated figure holding a crescent or an animated scroll design with central mask and zoomorphic as well as anthropomorphic elements; succession of pseudo-epigraphic knot designs; succession of interconnected cusped medallions similar to those above, but here the intermediate spaces are filled with crescent-shaped, knotted scroll motifs; each medallion with a seated figure below corresponds to one with a scroll design above and vice versa; interlacing valance with lancet terminations; on facets of shoulder edge below, continuous horizontal frieze of Kufic, and above, individual crescent motifs corresponding to each facet; on shoulder plate, anthropomorphic naskhi, interrupted by roundels with individual seated musicians; between inscription frieze and repoussé star around neck base, small fish motifs; on neck base, Kufic; on neck, repoussé lions (one now wanting) enclosed by scrollwork; on outer sides of spout, scrollwork; on inner ones, herring bone motif; on handle, scrollwork and - on projecting lower part - braided band (pl. 25).

Lit.: Pope 1938, pl. 1327; Kühnel 1939, p. 15 fig. 12; Dimand 1941, p. 209; Robinson 1951, pp. 88-9 no. 43; Scerrato 1966, p. 102, p. 104 no. 45; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 107, 141-2, 166, 169-173 no. 75, 174, 192, 364, pls. 75-75E.



Plate 1
ICAW 6/8. Hammered (?) Bronze Ewer, h. 30 cm
(West Berlin, Islamic Museum, inv. no. I.3567).

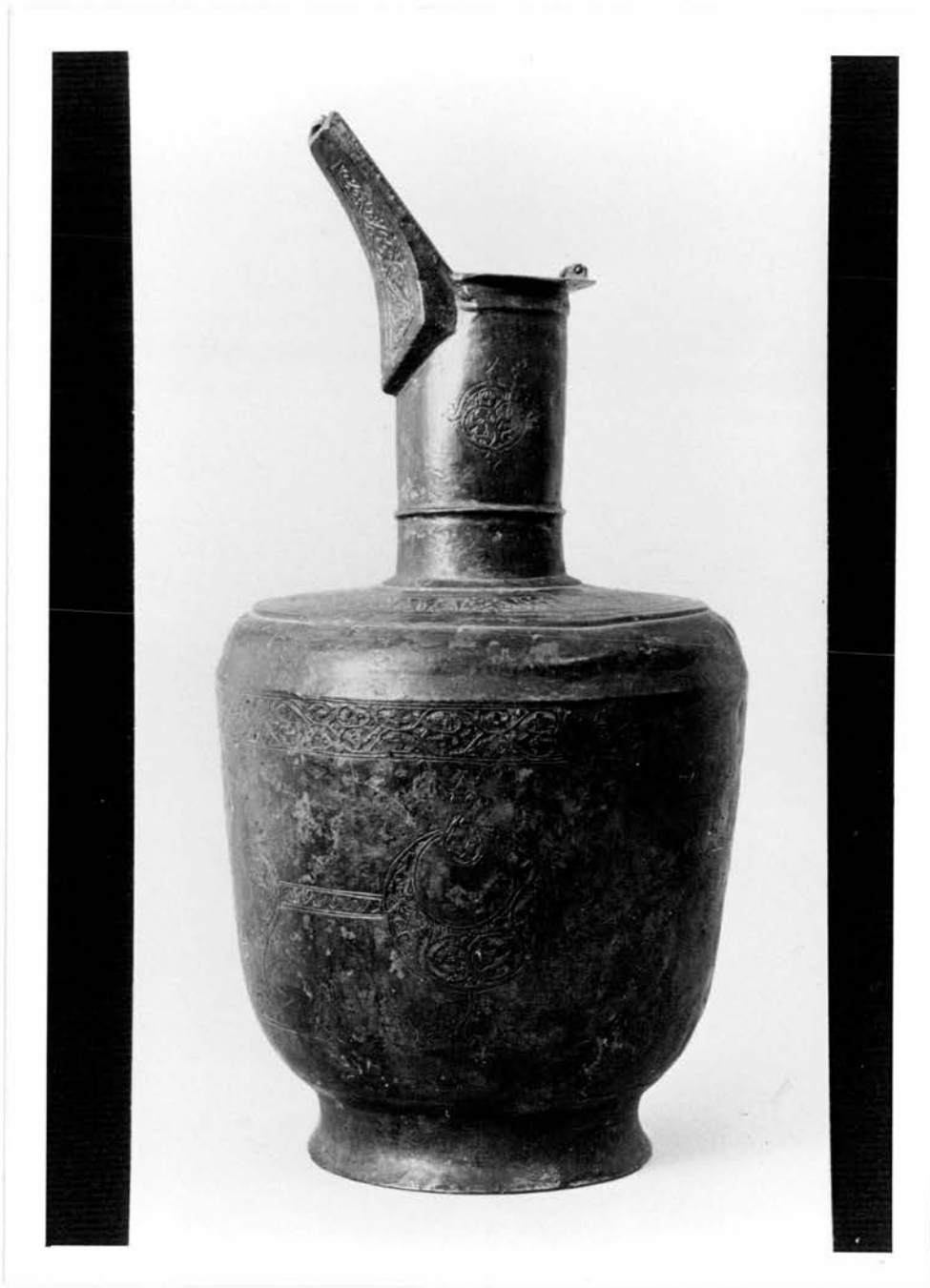


Plate 2
ICAW 6/10. Bronze Ewer allegedly excavated in Khurāsān.
H. 33 cm (Moscow, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. no. 4462 II).

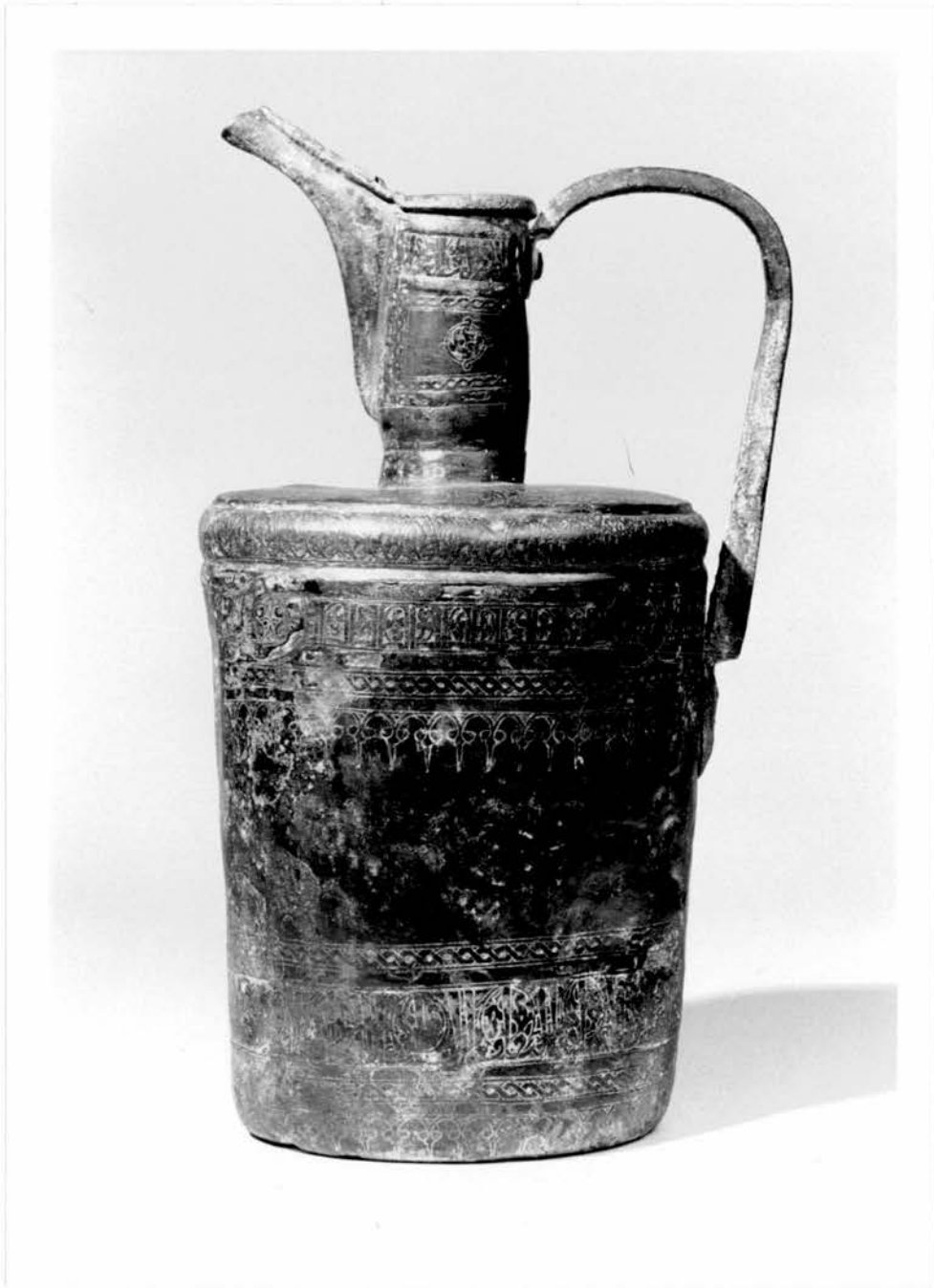


Plate 3

ICAW 6/20. Hammered Copper and Brass (?) Ewer.
H. 33 cm (Christie's 21.11.86, lot 279).

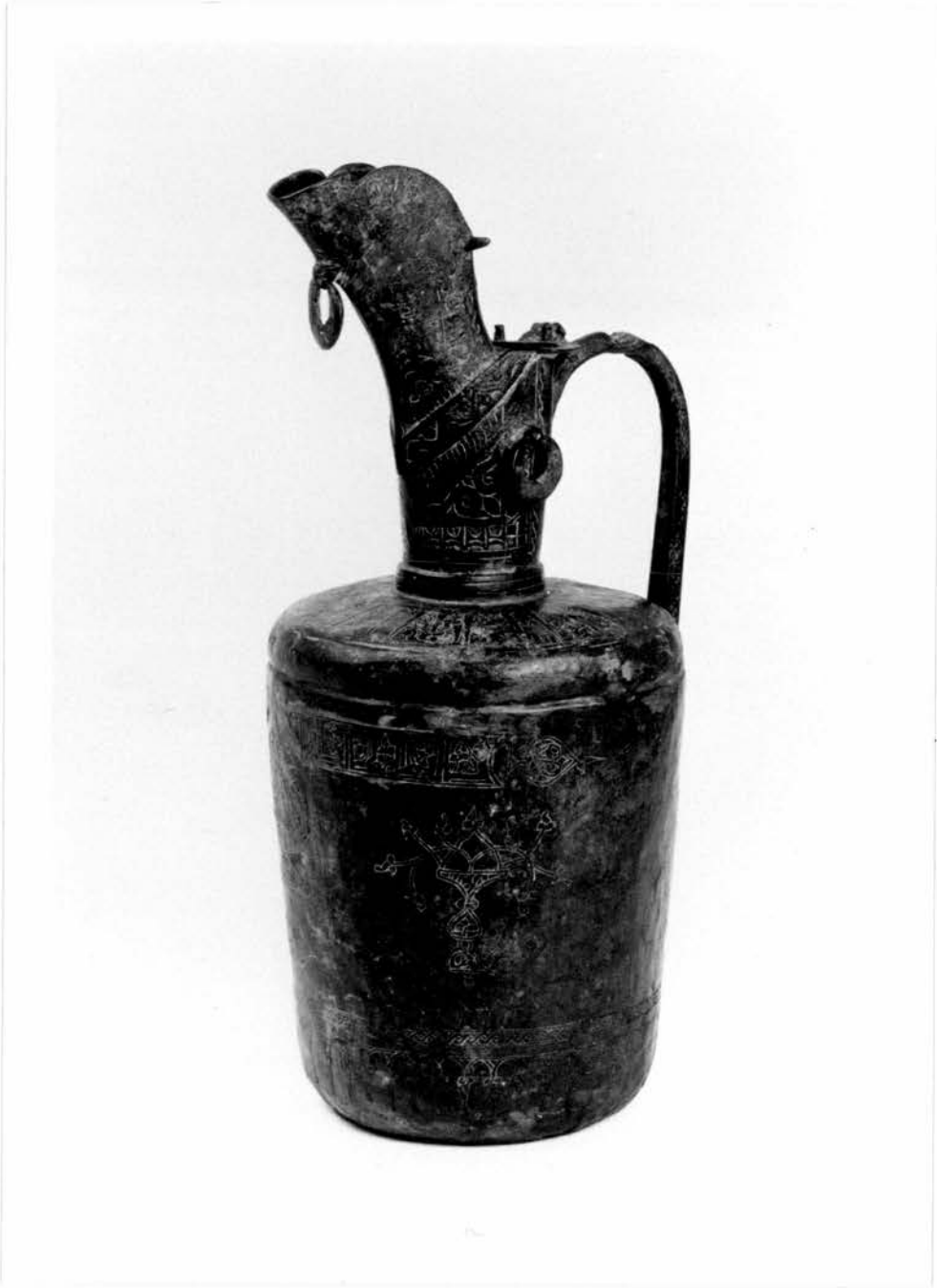


Plate 4

ICAW 6/21. Bronze Ewer, h. 40 cm
(Los Angeles, County Museum, Nasli
Heeramaneck Coll., inv. no. M.73.5.161).



Plate 5

ICAW 6/V.1/1. Hammered Bronze Ewer, h. 38 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 167).



Plate 6

ICAW 6/V.1/7. Hammered Bronze Ewer, h. 32 cm
(West Berlin, Islamic Museum, inv. no. I. 3566).

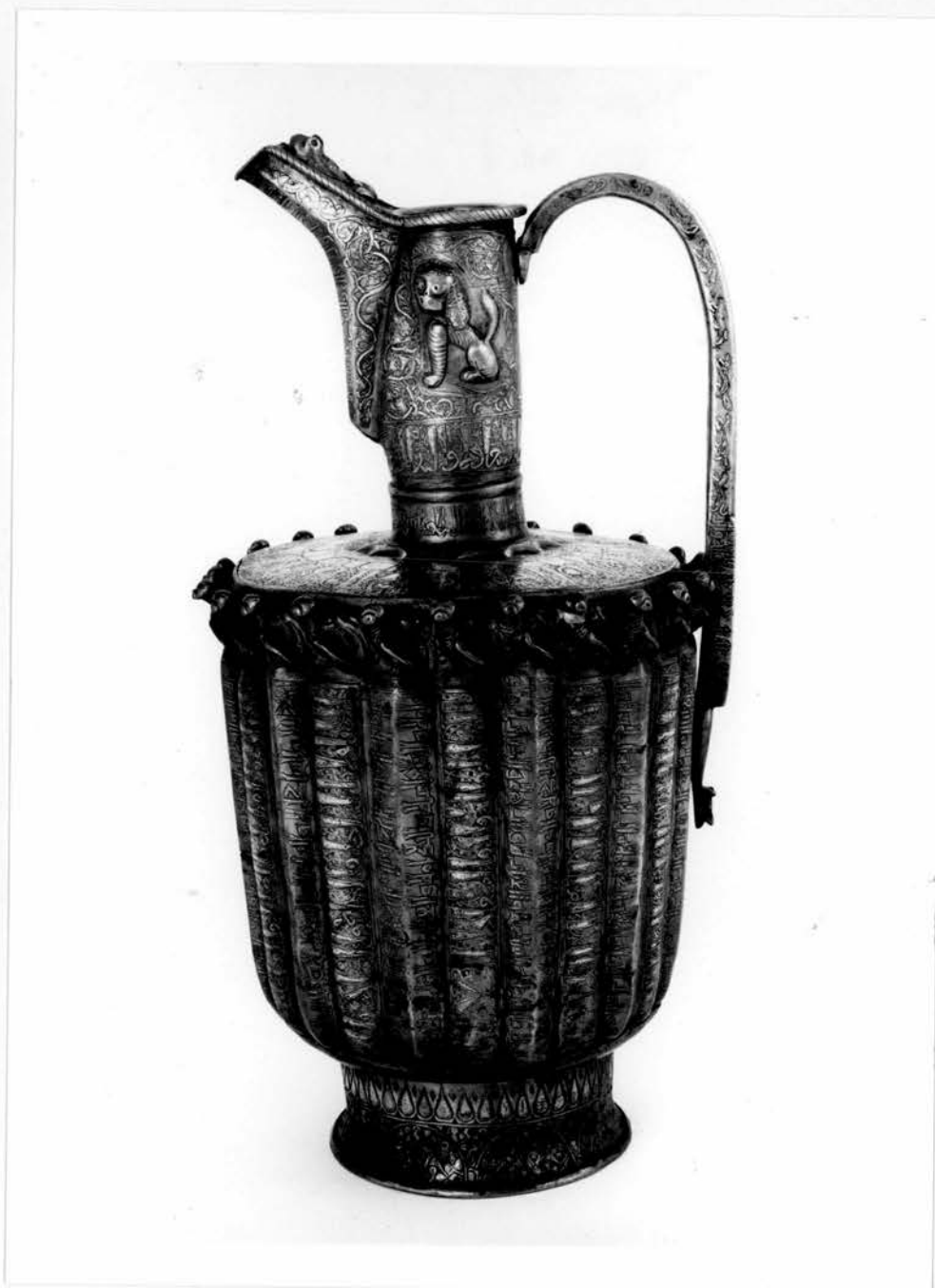


Plate 7

ICAW 6/V.1/11. Beaten Bronze Ewer, h. 43 cm
(London, British Museum, inv. no. 48.8-5.1).



Plate 8

ICAW 6/V.1/13. Hammered Brass Ewer, h. 39.8 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 462).



Plate 9

ICAW 6/V.1/14. Beaten Bronze Ewer, h. 37.4 cm
(West Berlin, Islamic Museum, inv. no. I.3568).



Plate 10

ICAW 6/V.1/15. Beaten Brass Ewer, h. 44.8 cm
(Modena, Galleria Estense, inv. no. 6921).

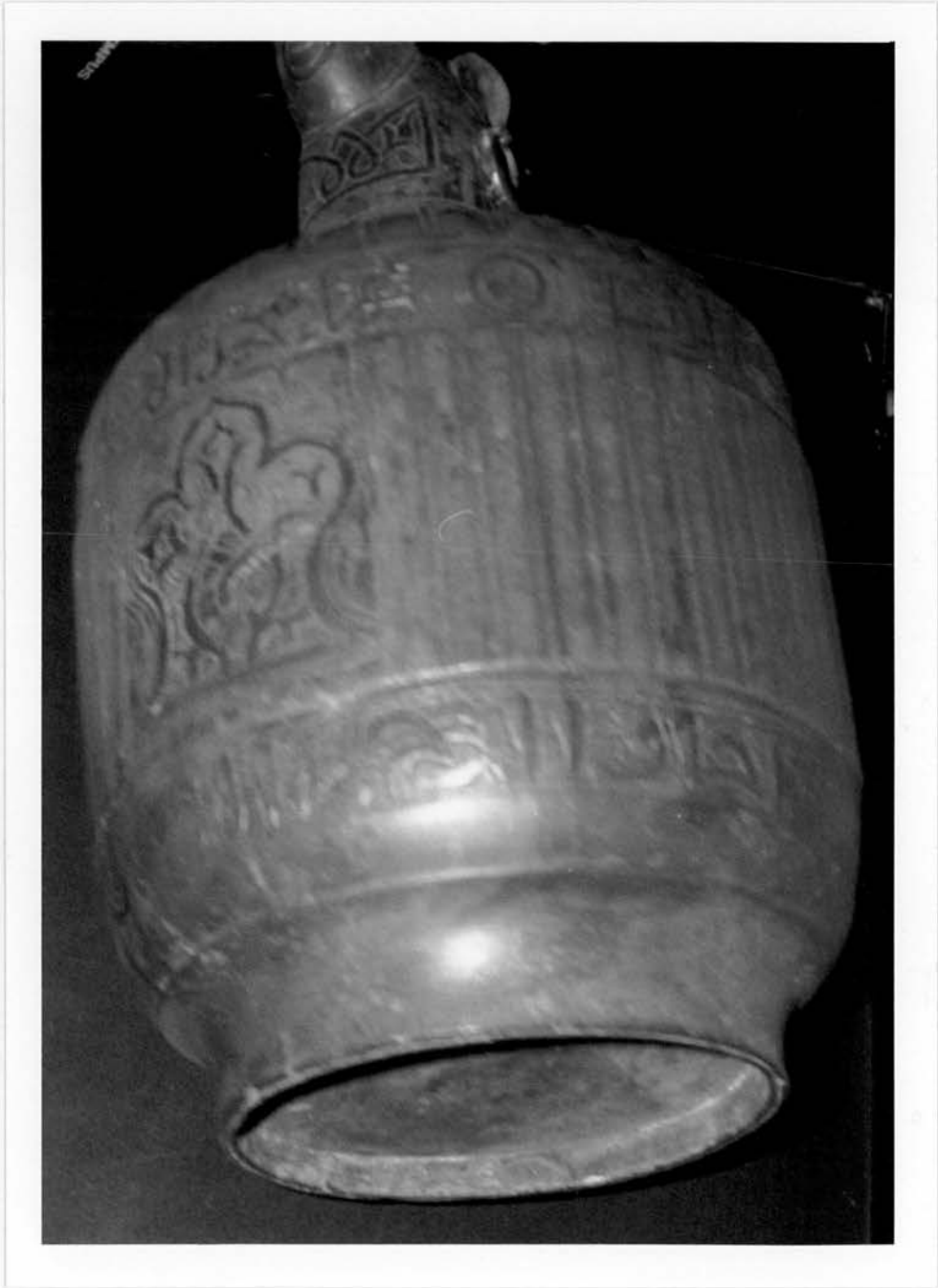


Plate 11

ICAW 6/V.2/1. Cast (?) Bronze Ewer, h. 36.3 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 90).



Plate 12

ICAW 6/V.2/7. Hammered Brass Ewer, made in Herat by
Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad al-Harawī in 1181-1182 A.D.
(Tiflis, Georgia, State Museum, inv. no. MC 135).



Plate 13
ICAW 6/V.2/9. Beaten Bronze Ewer,
h. 37 cm (Leningrad, Hermitage).

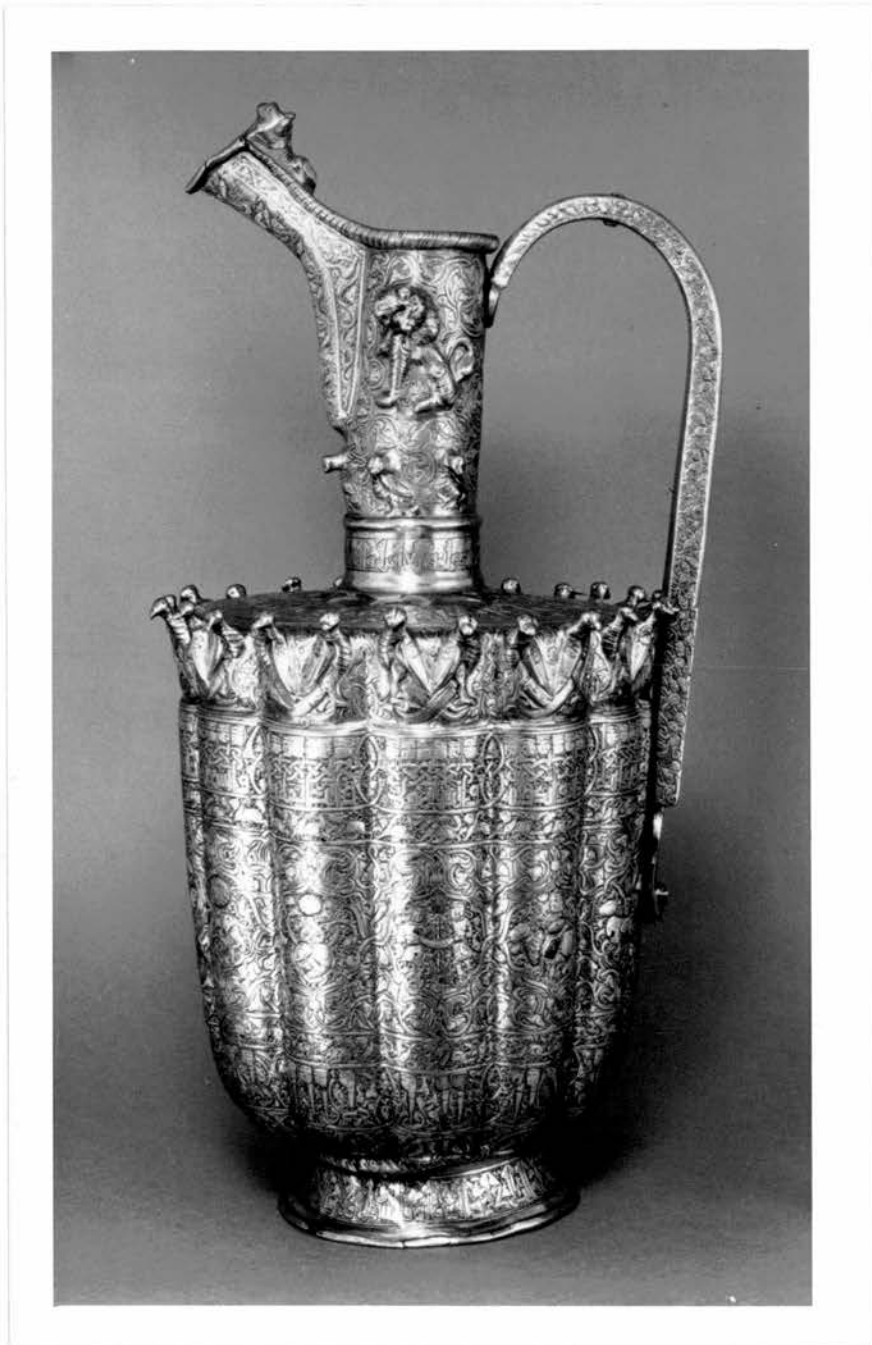


Plate 14
ICAW 6/V.2/12. Beaten Brass Ewer, h. 40 cm
(London, British Museum, inv. no. 48,8-5,2).



Plate 15

ICAW 6/V.2/13. Raised Brass Ewer, h. 39.4 cm
(New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 44.15).

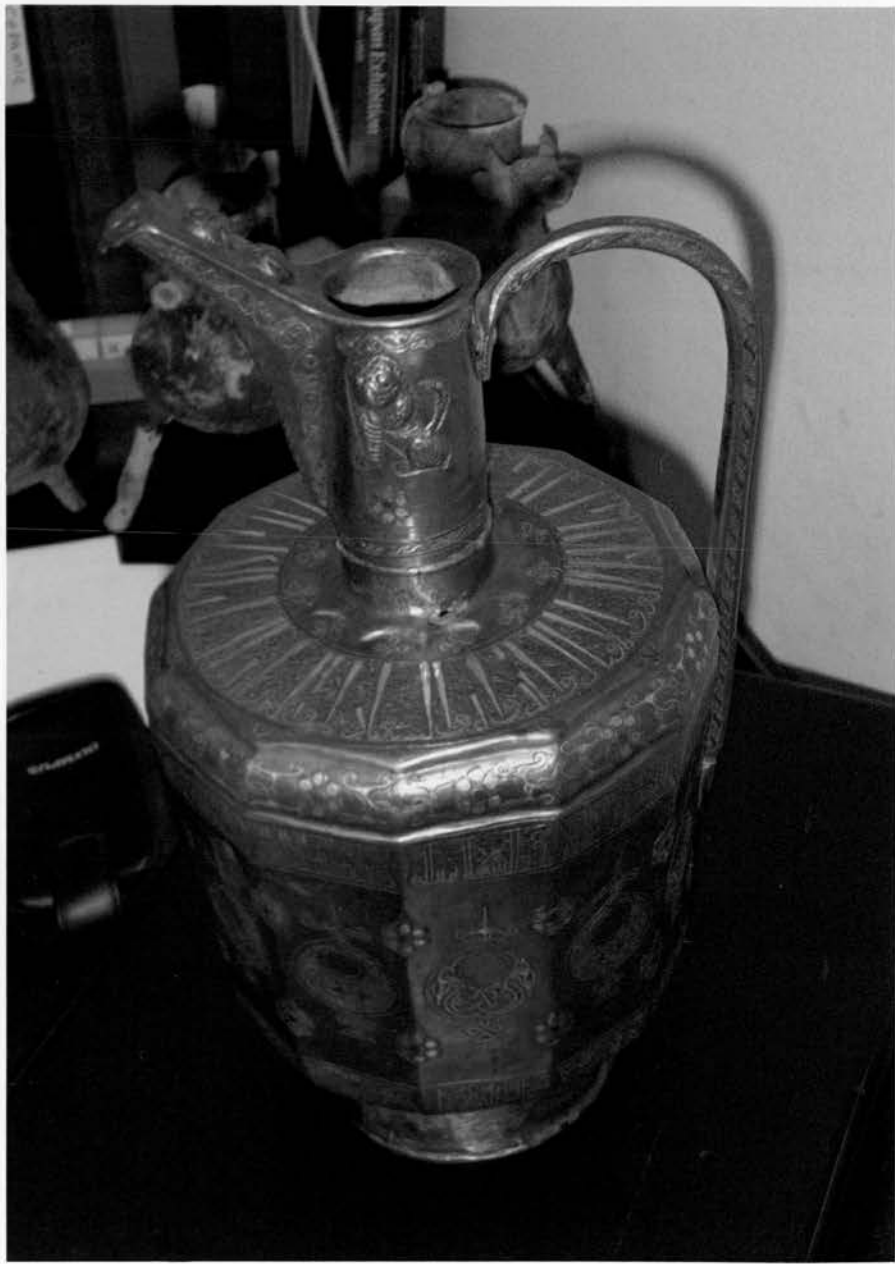


Plate 16

ICAW 6/V.3/2. Hammered Bronze Ewer, h. 38.8 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 1240).



Plate 17
ICAW 6/V.3/3. Hammered Bronze Ewer,
h. 37 cm (Leningrad, Hermitage).



Plate 18
ICAW 6/V.3/4. Beaten Brass Ewer,
h. 37 cm (Leningrad, Hermitage).



Plate 19

ICAW 6/V.3/8. Beaten Bronze Ewer,
h. 39 cm (Paris, Louvre, inv. no. 5548).



Plate 20

ICAW 6/V.3/9. Hammered Bronze Ewer, h. 31.5 cm
(Frankfurt, Museum für Kunsthandwerk, inv. no.
H.St. 16/5035).



Plate 21

ICAW 6/V.3/10. Beaten Bronze Ewer Body.
H. 22 cm (Tehran, Gulistan Palace).



Plate 22
ICAW 6/V.3/11. Hammered Bronze Ewer,
h. 40 cm (Leningrad, Hermitage).



Plate 23
ICAW 6/V.3/12. Hammered Bronze
Bucket worked from a Ewer.
(Berlin, Islamic Museum)



Plate 24
ICAW 6/V.3/14. Beaten Bronze Ewer,
h. 43 cm (ex Homberg Collection).

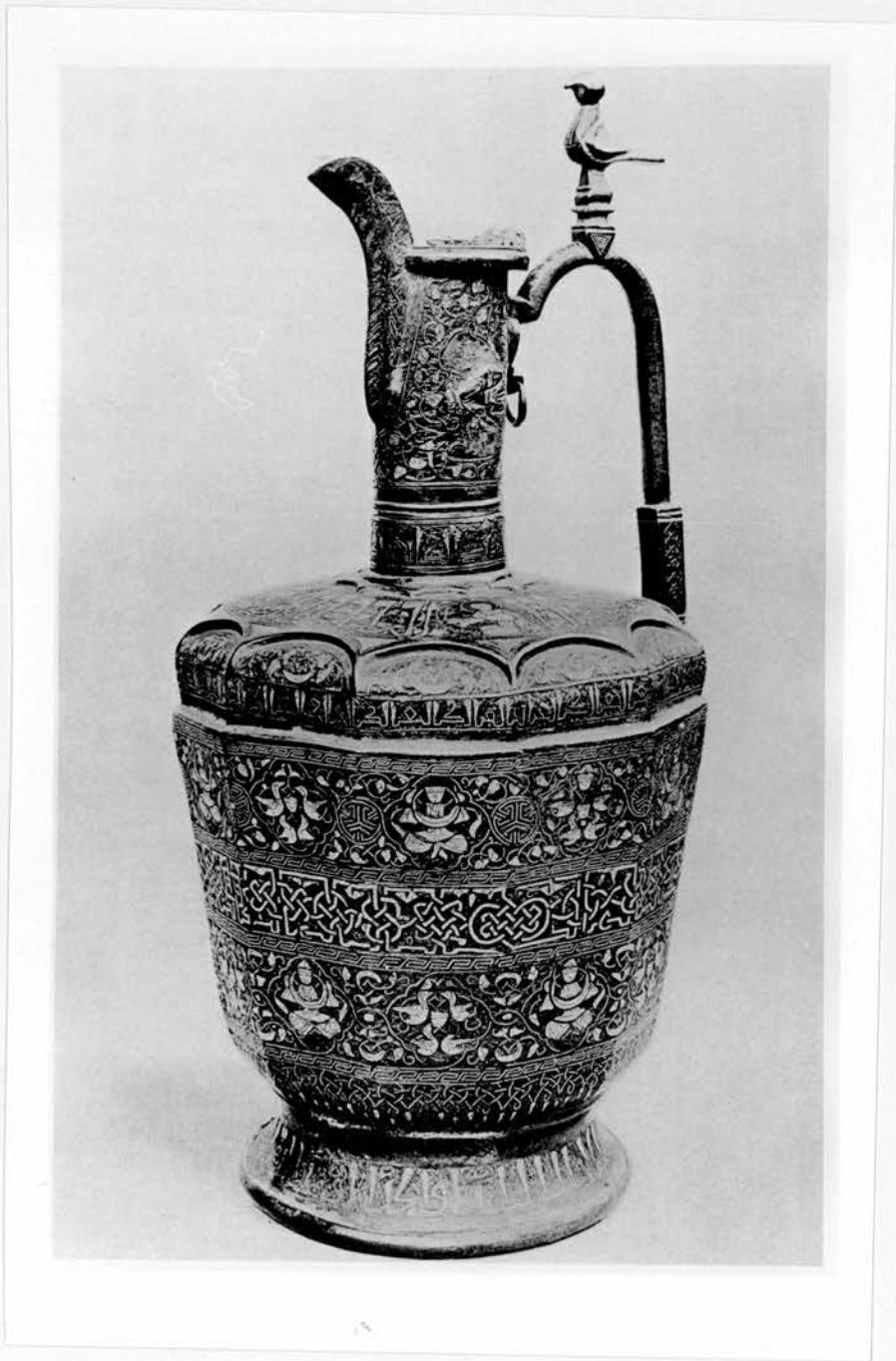


Plate 25

ICAW 6/V.3/15. Beaten Brass Ewer,
h. 43.7 cm (London, V & A, inv. no. 381-1897).



Plate 26
Silver-Inlaid Vase from Syria or Egypt.
Second Half of the 13th Century A.D.



Plate 27
Basin executed for al-Malik al-'Ādil
in Syria between 1238-40 A.D.



Plate 28
Detail of the Qutb Minār, a Victory
Tower near Delhi erected in 1192 A.D.

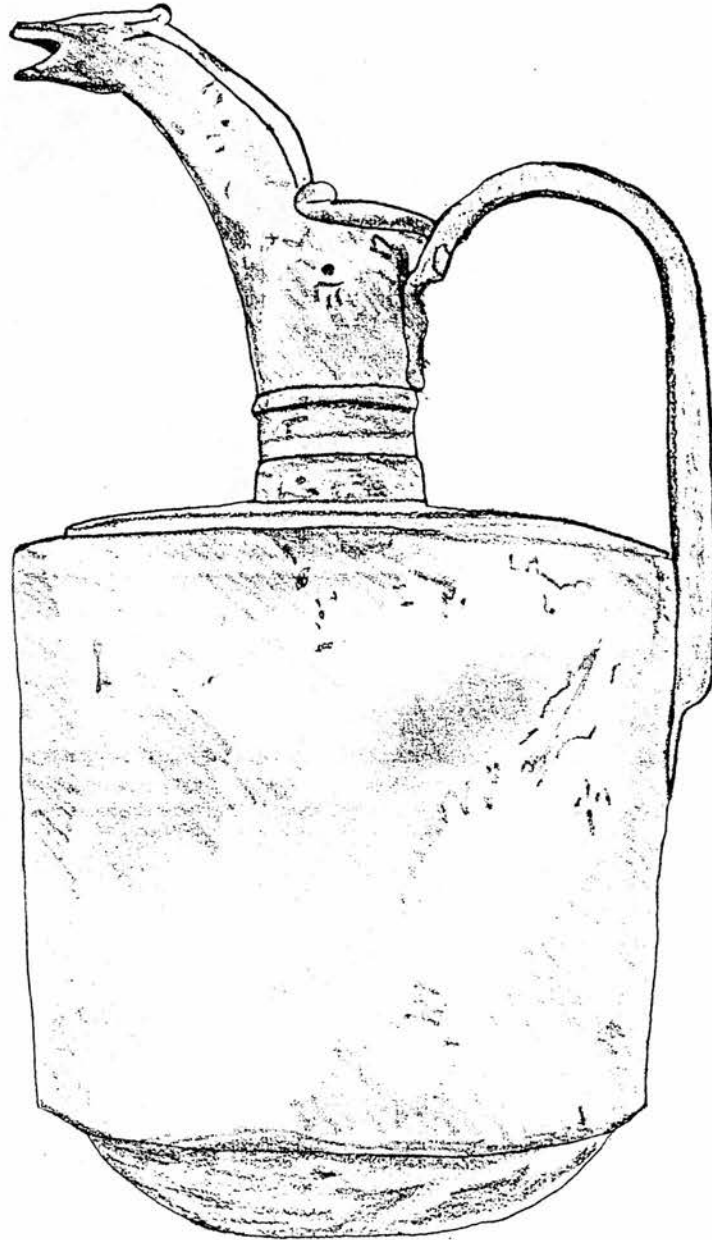


FIG. 1

ICAW 6/1. Bronze Ewer allegedly from Ghazna.
H. 32.5 cm (Kandahar, Antiquarian Trade).



FIG. 2

ICAW 6/2. Bronze Ewer, h. 33 cm
(Sotheby's 9.10.79, lot 178).

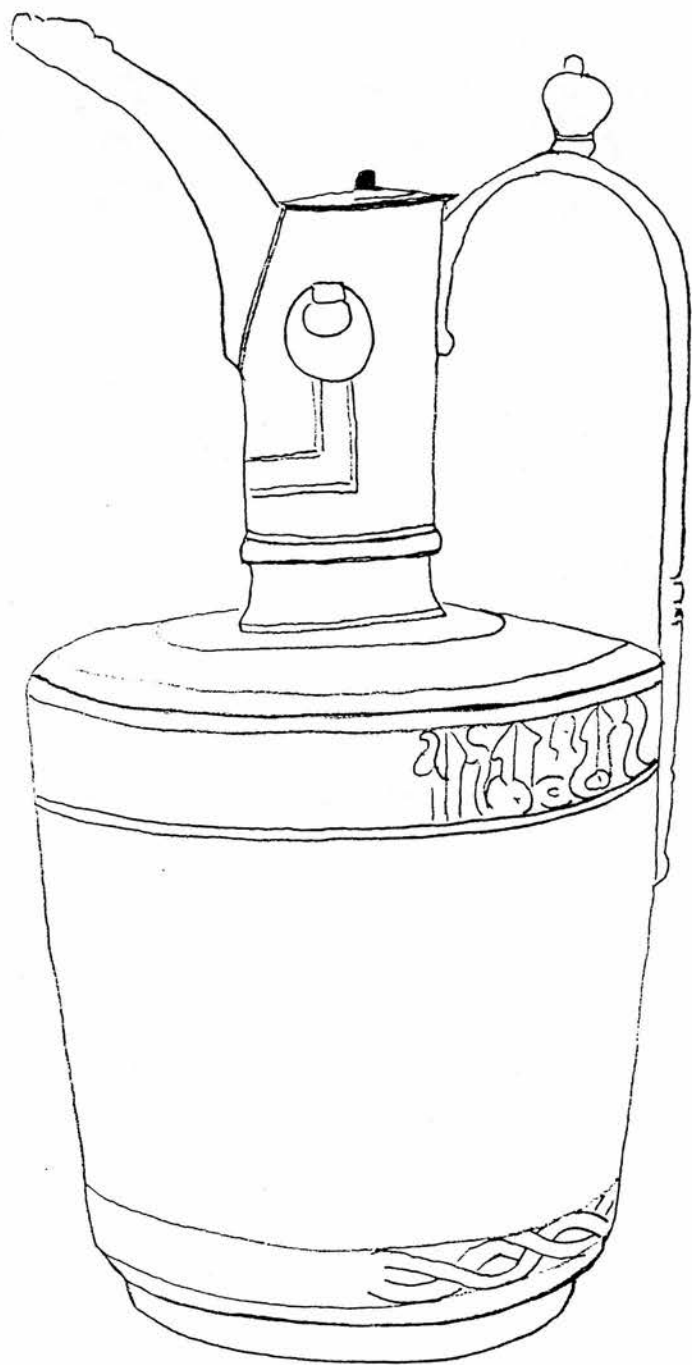


FIG. 3

ICAW 6/3. Bronze Ewer. Dimensions unavailable
(Sotheby's 10.10.78, lot 295).



FIG. 4

ICAW 6/4. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 44.5 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 464).



FIG. 5

ICAW 6/5. Hammered Bronze Ewer, h. 33.5 cm
(Christie's 21.11.86, lot 296).



FIG. 6
ICAW 6/6. Bronze Ewer, h. 36.2 cm
(Sotheby's New York 30.6.80, lot 284).

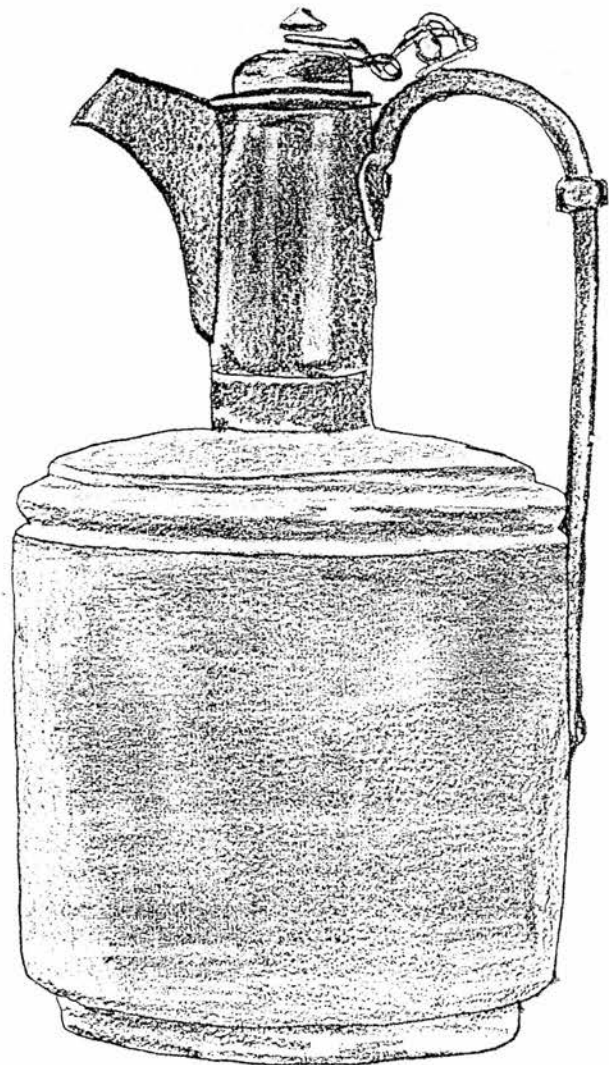


FIG. 7
ICAW 6/7. Cast Bronze ewer, h. 31 cm
(West Berlin, Islamic Museum, inv. no. I. 5377).



FIG. 8

ICAW 6/9. Bronze Ewer, h. 34 cm
(Copenhagen, C.L. David Collection).

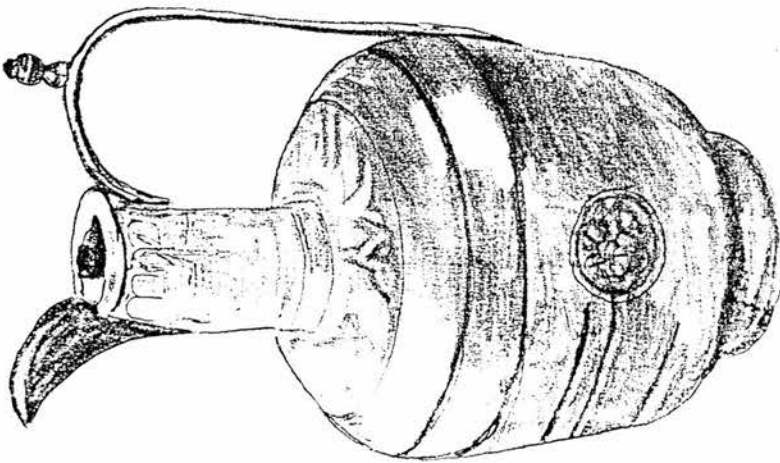


FIG. 9
ICAW 6/11. Bronze Ewer. Dimensions unavailable
(Ani Museum ?).

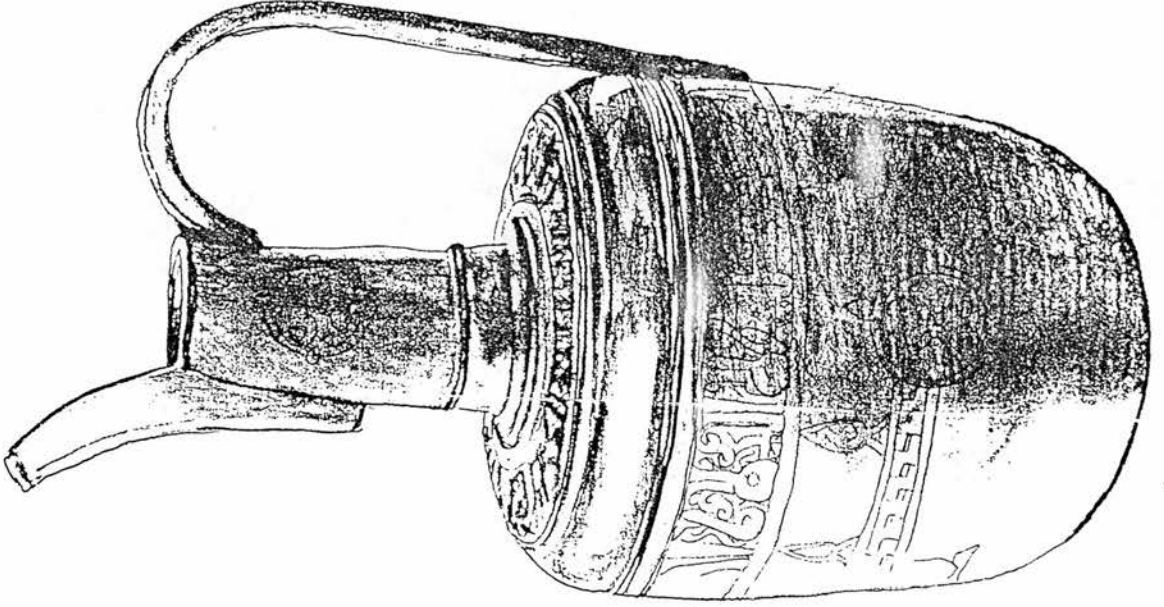


FIG. 10
ICAW 6/12. Bronze Ewer, h. 28 cm
(Cairo, Islamic Museum).



FIG. 11

ICAW 6/13. Detail of a Cast Bronze Ewer Body.
H. 22.2 cm (Tehran, Private Collection).



FIG. 12

ICAW 6/14. Cast Bronze Ewer, h. 35.5 cm
(Riyadh, King Feisal Research Centre ?).



FIG. 13
ICAW 6/15. Bronze Ewer, h. 29.5 cm
(London, British Museum, inv. no. 1956,7-26,5).

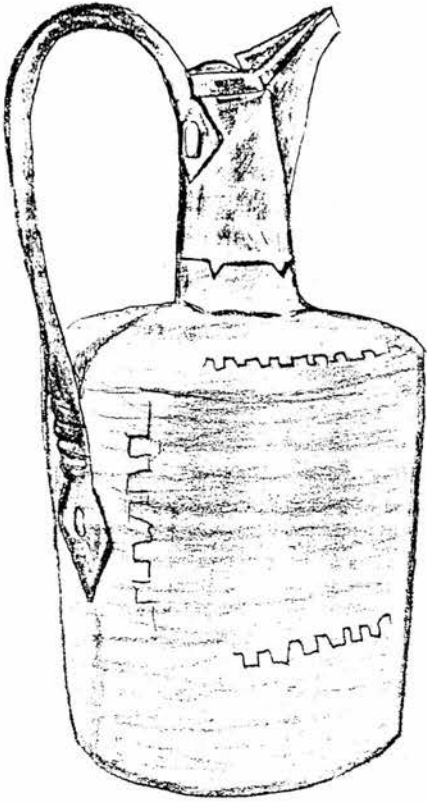


FIG. 14

ICAW 6/16. Hammered Bronze Ewer from Kawat Kala, Khwārazm (Present Location unknown).

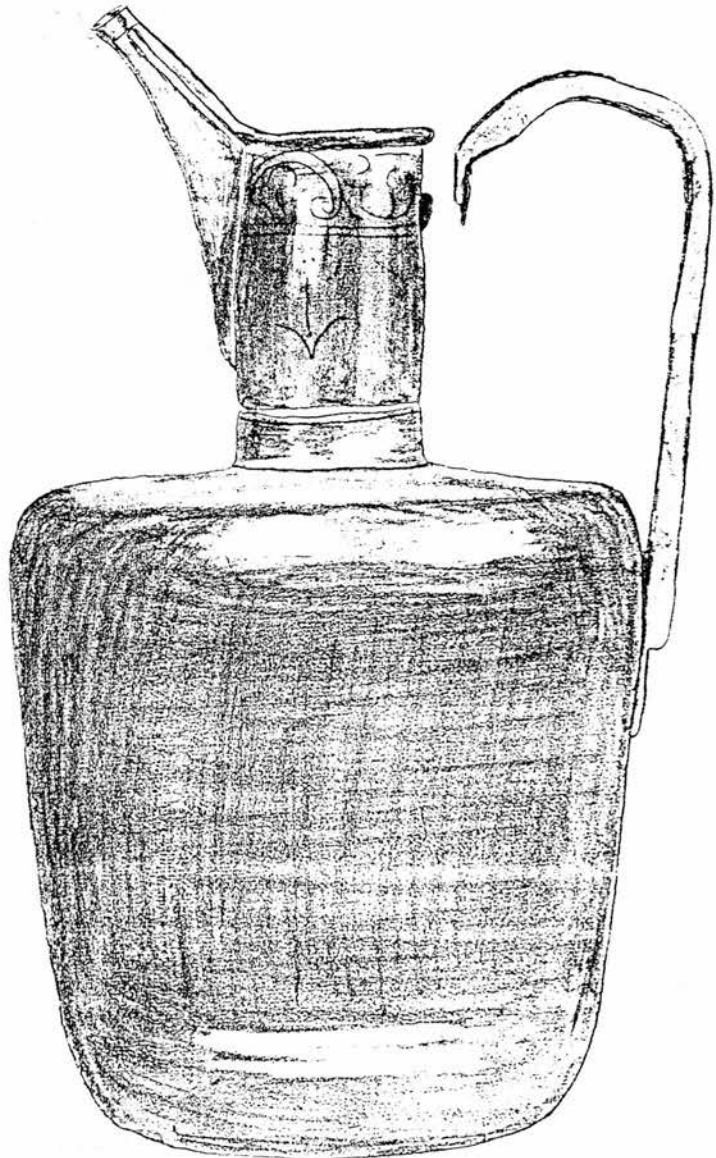


FIG. 15

ICAW 6/17. Bronze Ewer, h. 34 cm
(Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, inv. no. 8756).

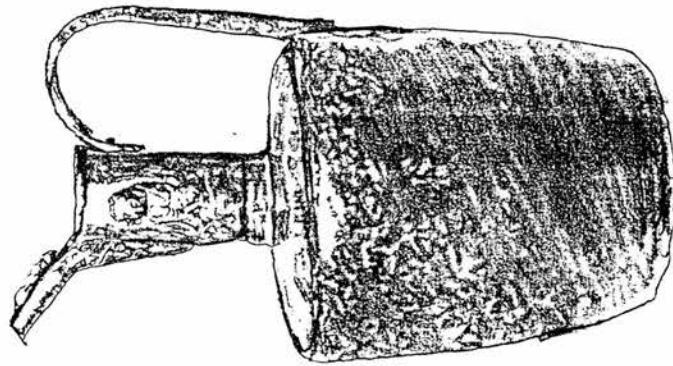


FIG. 16
ICAW 6/18. Hammered Bronze Ewer, h. 32 cm
(Sotheby's 26.4.82, lot 15).

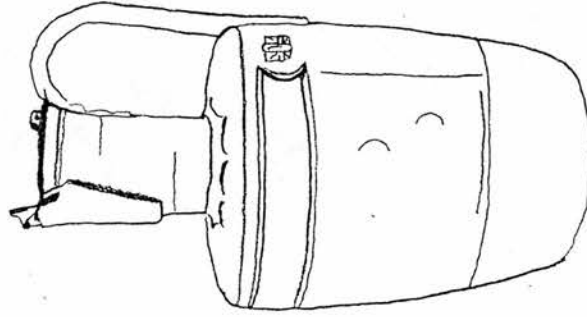


FIG. 17
ICAW 6/19. Hammered Bronze Ewer. Dimensions unknown
(Present Location unknown).

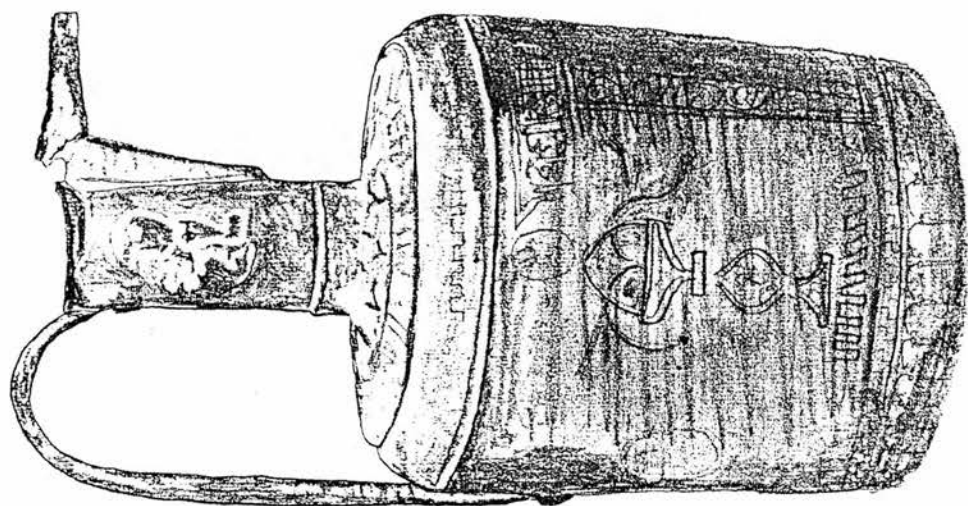


FIG. 19

ICAW 6/23. Beaten Bronze Ewer, h. 33 cm
(Sotheby's New York 9.12.80, lot 266).

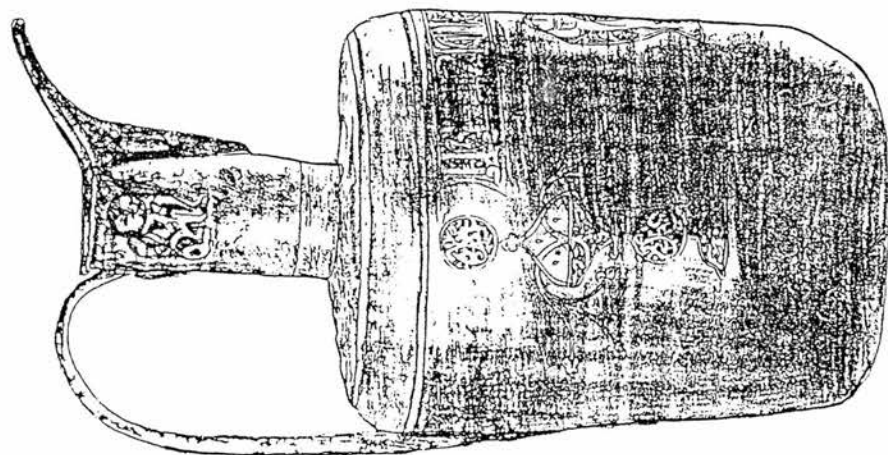


FIG. 18

ICAW 6/22. Beaten Bronze Ewer allegedly from Ghazna.
H. 31 cm (Kabul Museum, inv. no. 58.2.18).

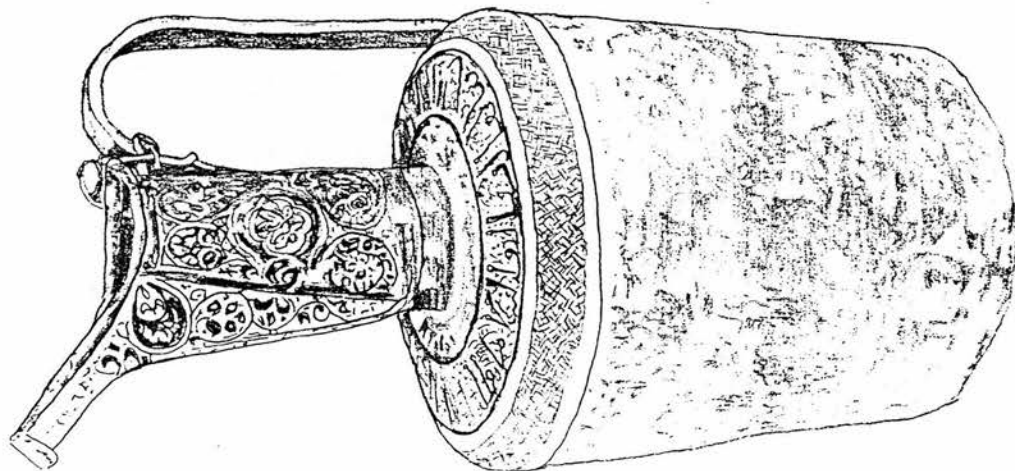


FIG. 21
ICAW 6/25. Hammered Bronze Ewer, h. 38.5 cm
(London, Khalili Collection, inv. no. MTW 591).

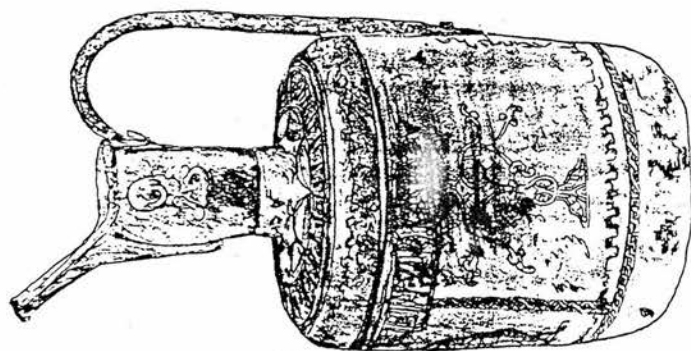


FIG. 20
ICAW 6/24. Hammered Bronze Ewer, h. 35.2 cm
(Sotheby's 19.10.83, lot 29).

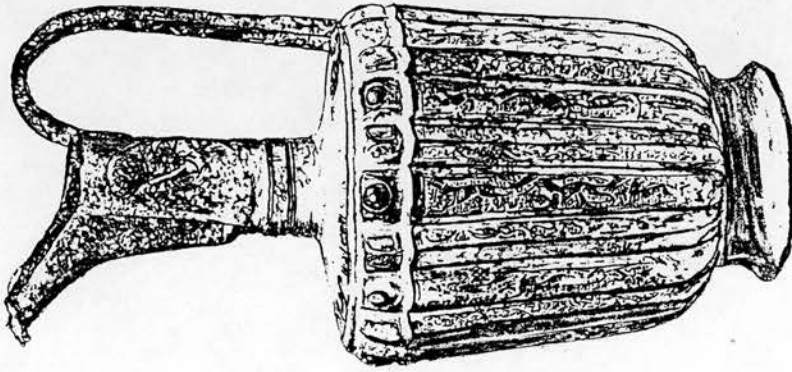


FIG. 22
ICAW 6/V.1/2. Hammered Bronze Ewer, h. 41 cm
(Christie's 24.4.90, lot 496).

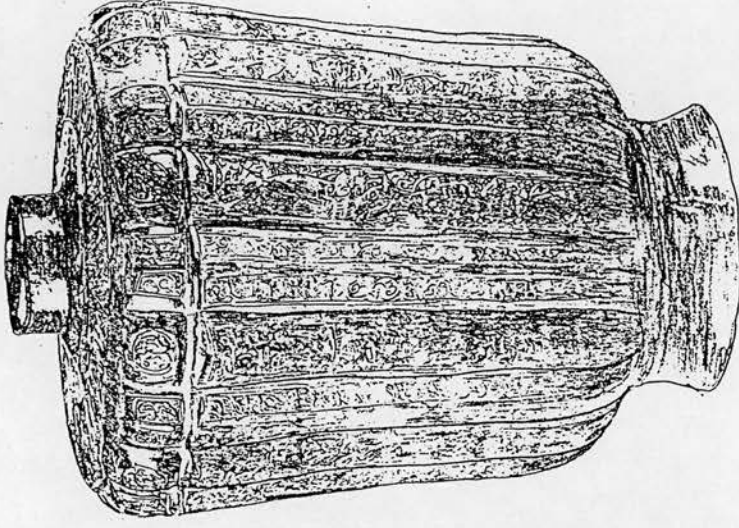


FIG. 23
ICAW 6/V.1/3. Hammered Bronze Ewer Body allegedly from
Ghazna. H. 26.5 cm (Kabul Museum, inv. no. 58.2.16).

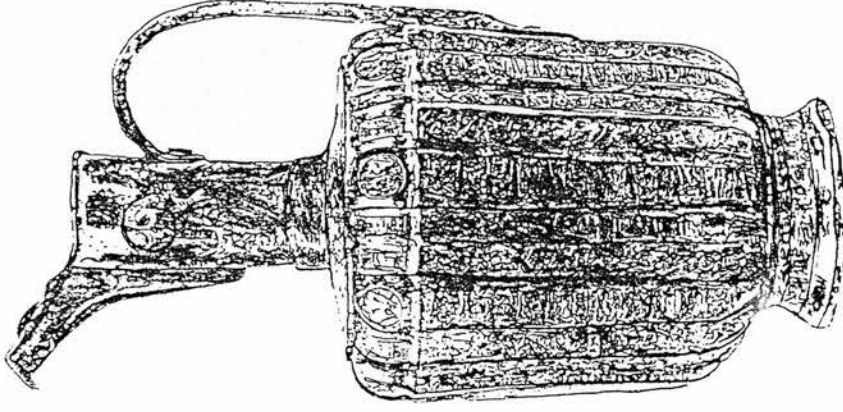


FIG. 25
ICAW 6/V.1/5. Hammered Brass Ewer, h. 38 cm
(Sotheby's 11.10.89, lot 97).



FIG. 24
ICAW 6/V.1/4. Hammered Bronze Ewer Body,
h. 22 cm (Christie's 11.10.88, lot 356).



FIG. 27
ICAW 6/V.1/8. Hammered Bronze Ewer,
h. 33 cm (Christie's 24.11.87, lot 154).

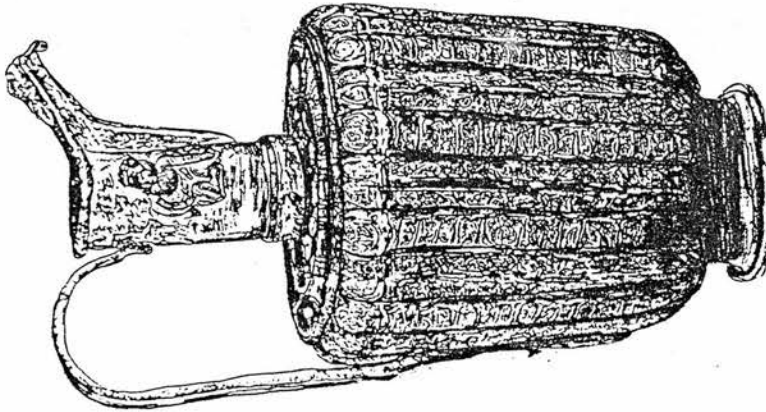


FIG. 26
ICAW 6/V.1/6. Hammered Bronze Ewer,
h. 38.5 cm (ex Khalili Gallery).

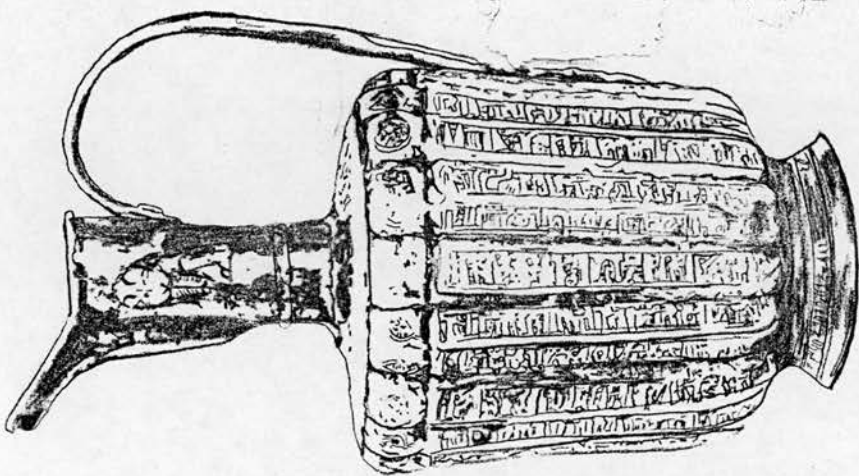


FIG. 29
ICAW 6/V.1/10. Hammered Brass Ewer,
h. 36.5 cm (Sotheby's 12.10.81, lot 55).

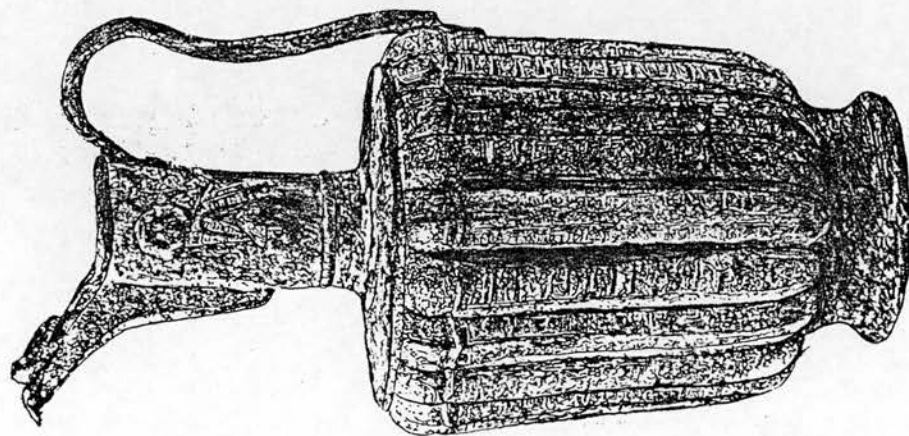


FIG. 28
ICAW 6/V.1/9. Hammered Bronze Ewer, h. 38 cm
(Copenhagen, C.L. David Collection, inv. no. 15/1969).

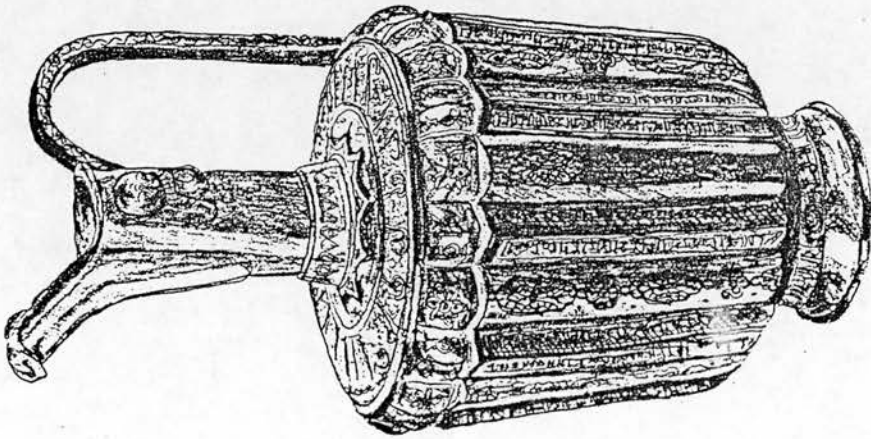


FIG. 30
ICAW 6/V.1/12. Hammered Bronze Ewer,
h. 38.5 cm (London, Keir Collection).

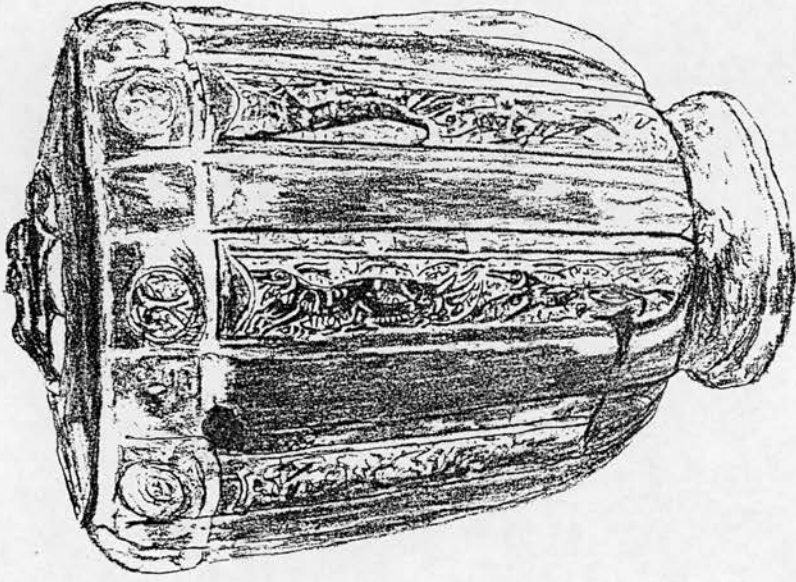


FIG. 31
ICAW 6/V.2/2. Hammered Bronze Ewer Body.
Dimensions unknown (Ashkhabad Museum?).

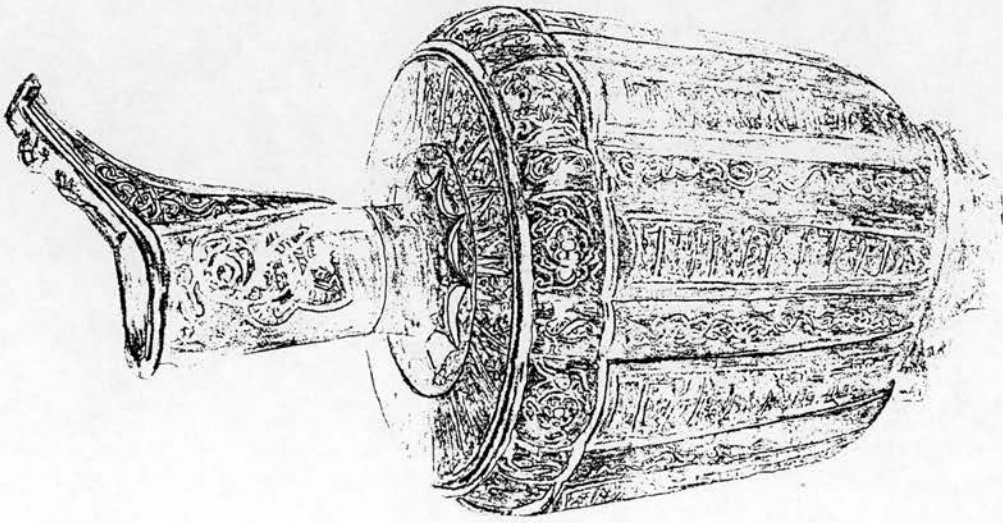


FIG. 32
ICAW 6/V.2/3. Hammered Brass Ewer,
h. 32.7 cm (Kabul Museum).

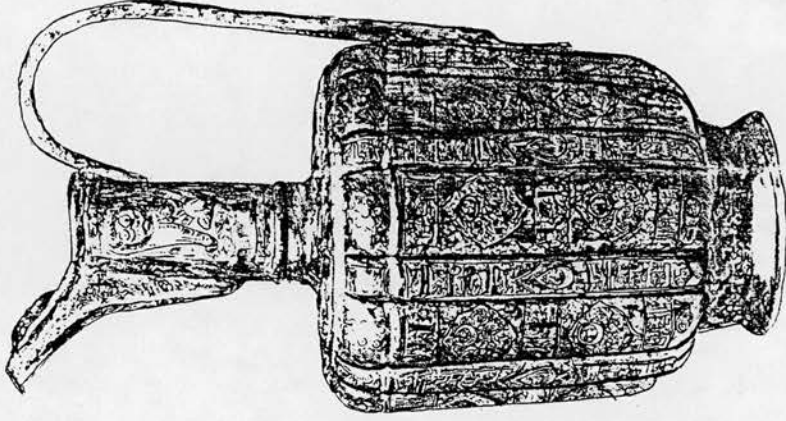


FIG. 33
ICAW 6/V.2/4. Beaten Brass Ewer, h. 38 cm
(Christie's 10.10.89, lot 530).



FIG. 34

ICAW 6/V.2/5. Beaten Brass Ewer, h. 38 cm
(London, V & A, inv. no. 592-1898).

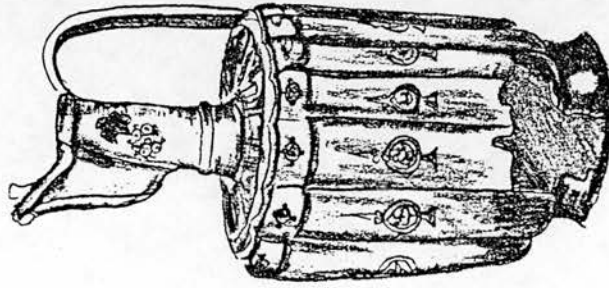


FIG. 35
ICAW 6/V.2/8. Hammered Bronze Ewer allegedly from Rayy.
H. 33.7 cm (Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Museum, inv. no. 1889-70).

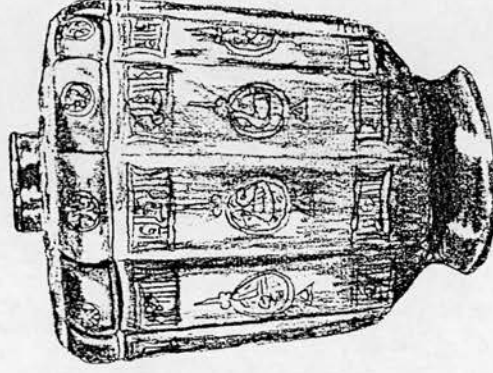


FIG. 36
ICAW 6/V.2/10. Beaten Bronze Ewer Body allegedly from
Ghazna. H. 21 cm (Kabul Museum, inv. no. KM 58.2.17).



FIG. 37

ICAW 6/V.2/11. Beaten Brass Ewer, h. 44.5 cm
(Nuhad al-Said Collection).



FIG. 38

ICAW 6/V.2/14. Hammered Brass Ewer, h. 39.9 cm
(Kuwait, Private Collection, inv. no. 1/356).



FIG. 39

ICAW 6/V.3/1. Hammered Bronze Ewer,
h. 37.5 cm (Sotheby's 8.6.64, lot 149).

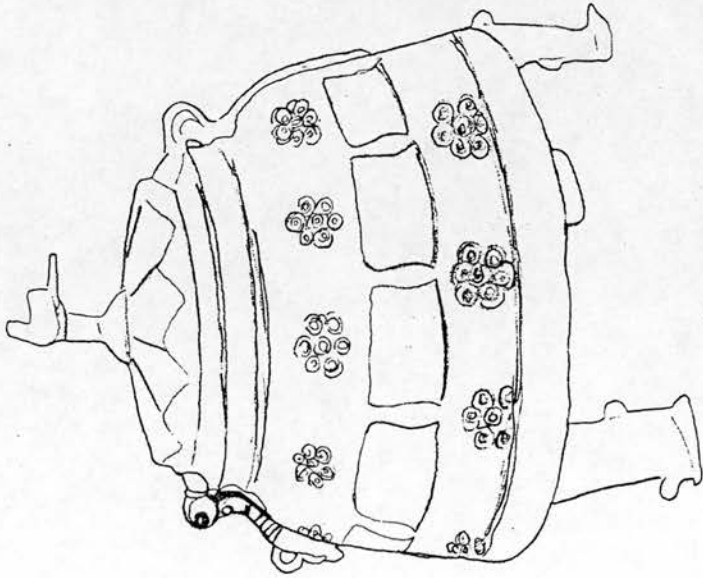


FIG. 40
 ICAW 6/V.3/7. Beaten Bronze Casket worked from an Ewer
 (Chicago, Institute of Fine Arts, inv. no. 34.504).

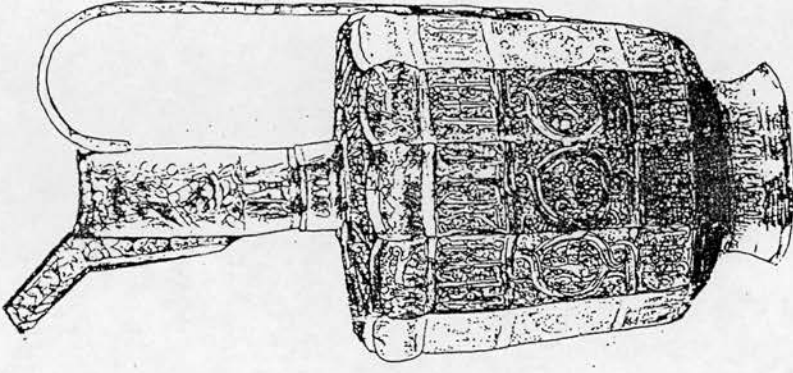


FIG. 41
 ICAW 6/V.3/13. Beaten Bronze Ewer, h. 29.2 cm
 (Cleveland, Museum of Art, inv. no. 45.27).

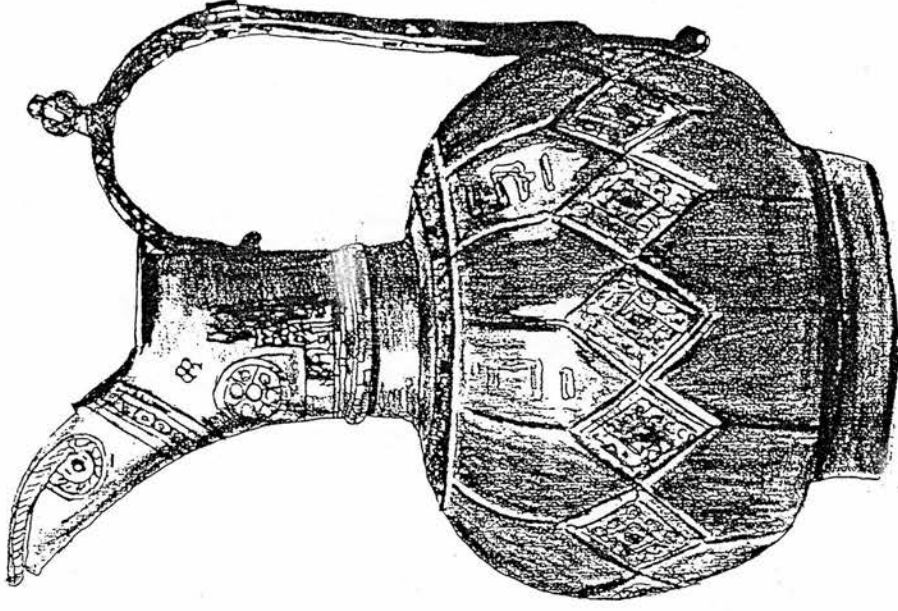


FIG. 43
Hammered Bronze Ewer from
Maimāna, Afghānistān (ICAW 4/1).

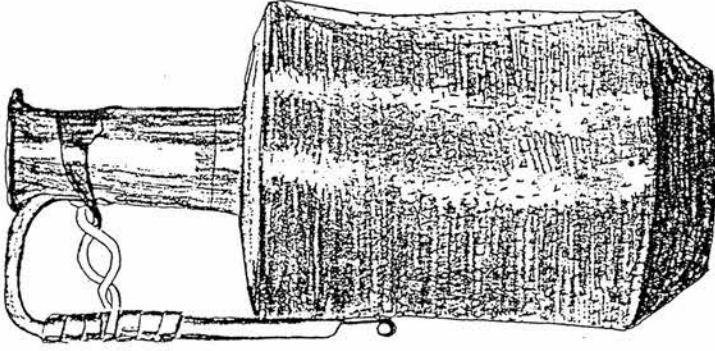
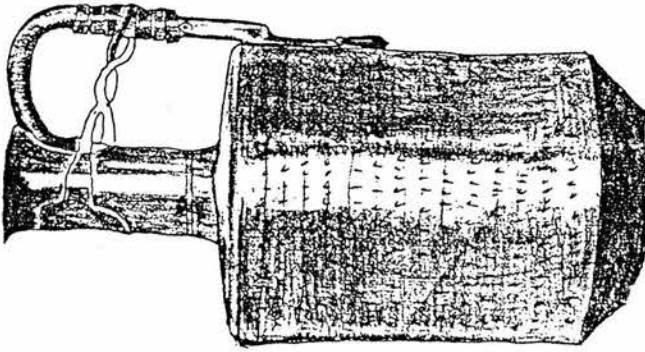


FIG. 42
Hammered Bronze Ewers from
Maimāna, Afghānistān (ICAW 1/8-9).



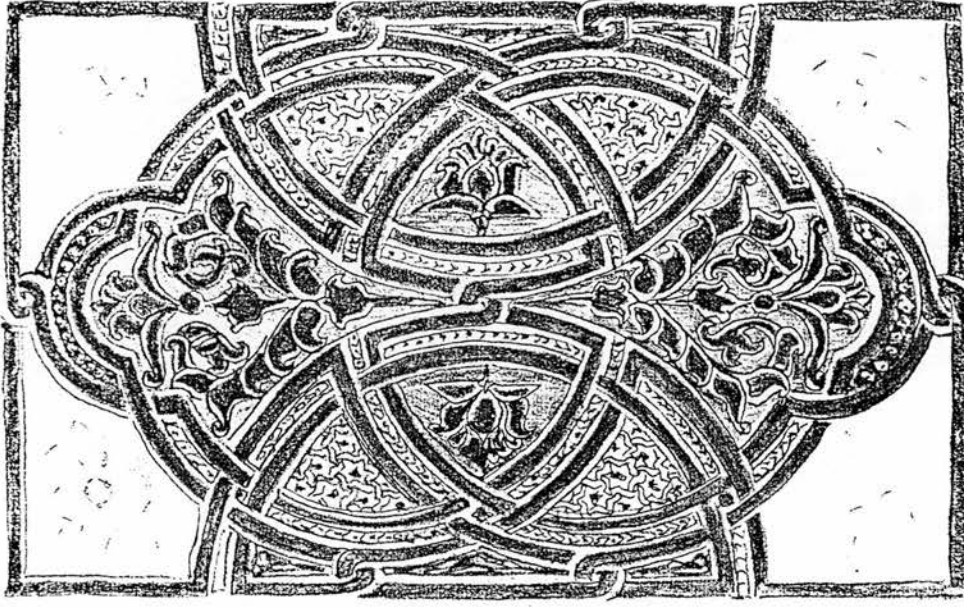


FIG. 45
11th-Century Qur'an Page from Baghdad.

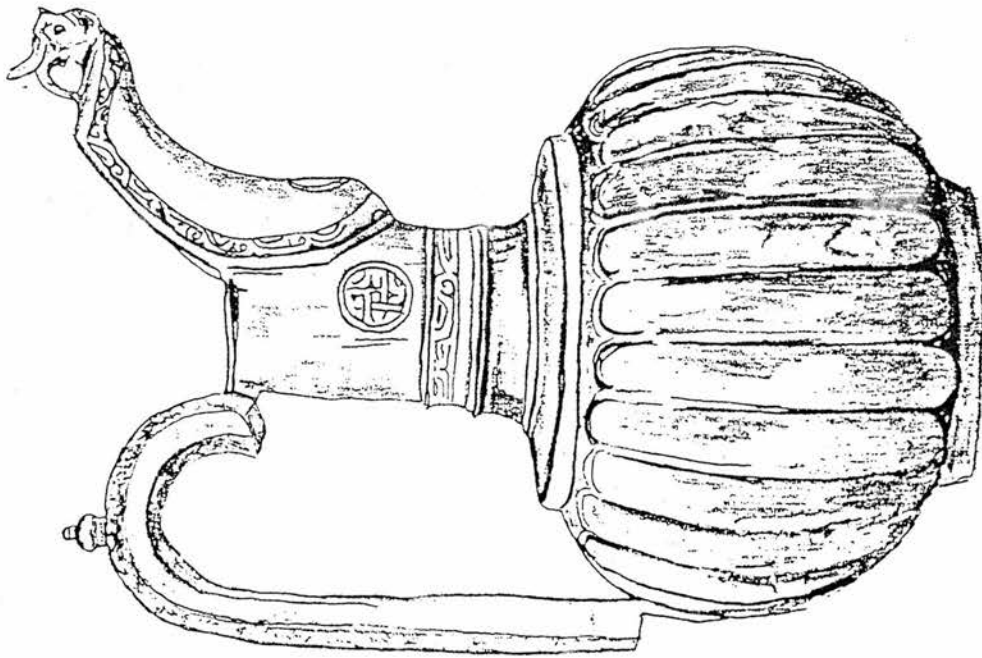


FIG. 44
12th/13th-Century Bronze Ewer from
Persia or Central Asia (ICAW 4/V.2/1/1).



FIG. 46

Miniature with Author Portraits belonging to the *Mukhtār al-hikam wa maḥāsin al-kalim*. Syria(?), Early 13th Century A.D.



FIG. 47
12th/13th-Century Lidded Cup
from Barsov-Gorodok near Surgut.
Probably from a Workshop on the
eastern Borders of the Byzantine Empire.



FIG. 48
Ovoid-Bodied Bronze Ewer From Eastern Iran or
Afghānistān. Ca. 12th Century A.D. (ICAW 4/V.2/3).



FIG. 49

Silver-Inlaid Bronze Vase. Iran,
Late 12th/Early 13th Century A.D.

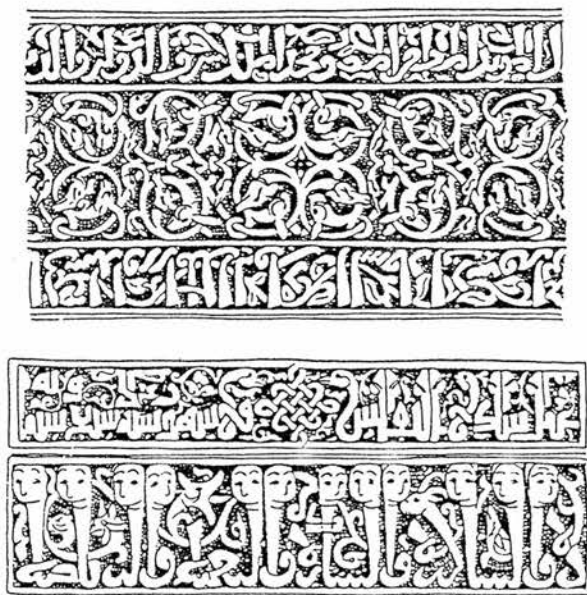


FIG. 50

Details from a Pencease executed by
Shādhi in Merv or Herat in 1210 A.D.
(after Harari 1964-5, figs. 841a & b).



FIG. 51

Scene of Animated Revellers on the Vaso Vescovali.
Iran, Late 12th/Early 13th Century A.D.



FIG. 52

Harpies from the Temple of Shiva in Prambanan, India.
9th Century A.D. (after Baer 1965, pl. XXXII fig. 59).



FIG. 53
12th-Century Bronze Ewer with
"Oil-Lamp" Spout (ICAW 3/14).

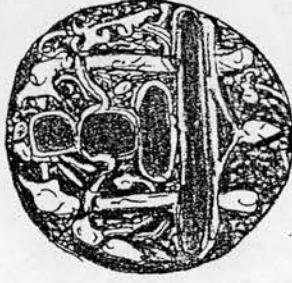


FIG. 54
Seated Figure with Dragon-Headed Staff on
a 12th/13th-Century Inkwell from Iran.



FIG. 55
Probably 12th-Century Bronze Ewer with
"Oil-Lamp" Spout (ICAW 3/18).

FIG. 56
The Letter *Alif* as found on a Tombstone from the Mosque of Tha'bad
in Yemen. 1146 A.D.(after Grohmann 1957, p. 191, Diagram a fig. 38).



FIG. 57
12th/13th-Century Bronze Mortar from Khurasan.

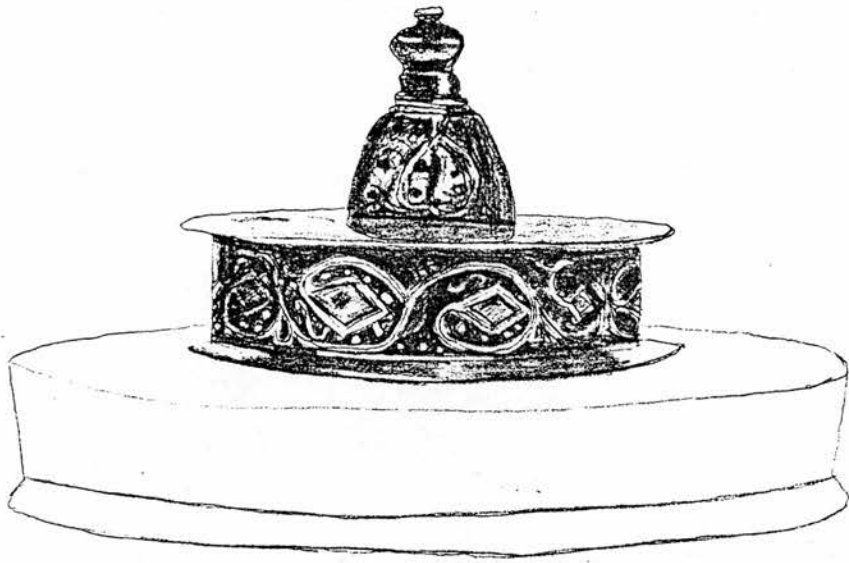


FIG. 58
 10th-Century Lid now placed on a
 late 12th-Century Inkwell from Iran.

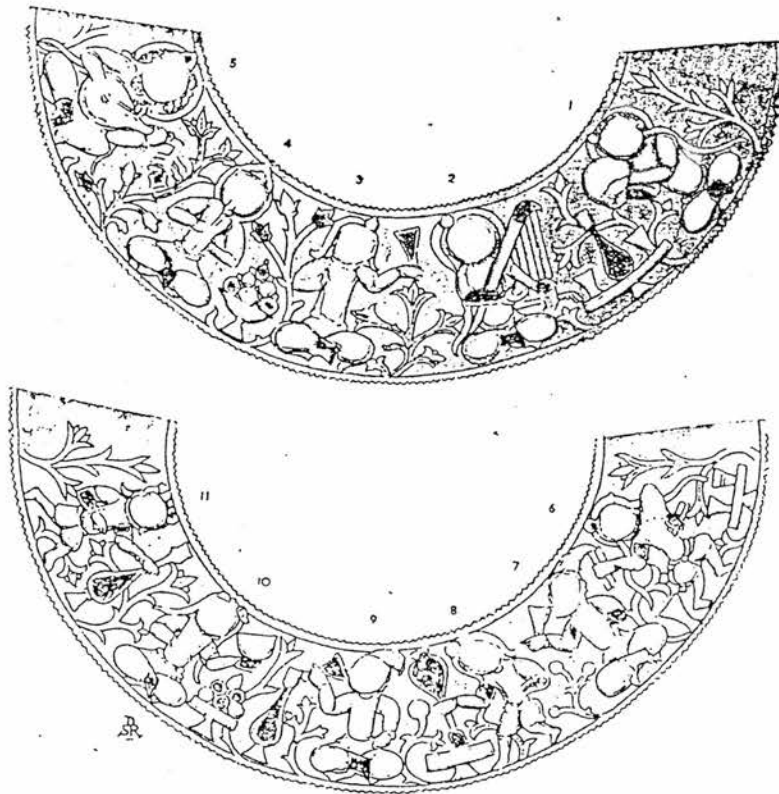


FIG. 59
 Revelling Scene on the Cover of a probably 12th-Century
 Circular Casket from Iran (after Baer 1983, p. 144 fig. 121).

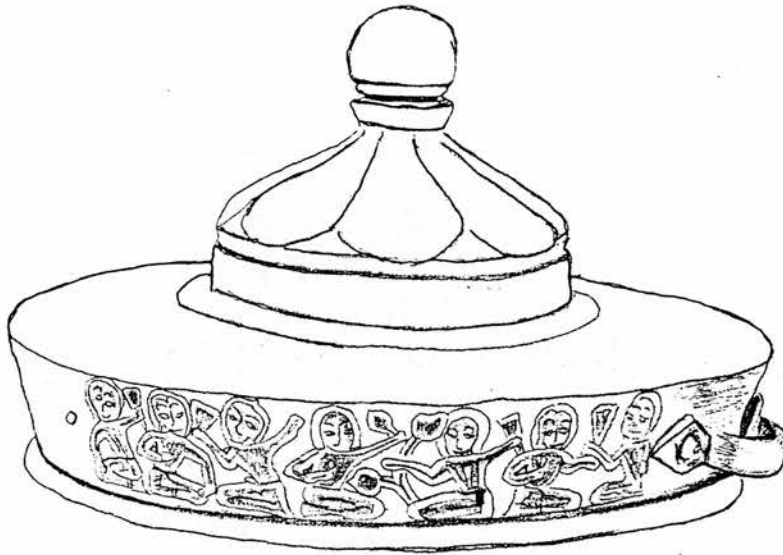


FIG. 60
Revelling Scene on the Cover of an early
13th-Century Inkwell attributed to Herat.



FIG. 61
Revelling Scene on the Vaso Vescovali.
Iran(?), late 12th/early 13th Century A.D.



FIG. 62
Scene of Entertainment on the
Bobrinsky Bucket, Herat 1163 A.D.

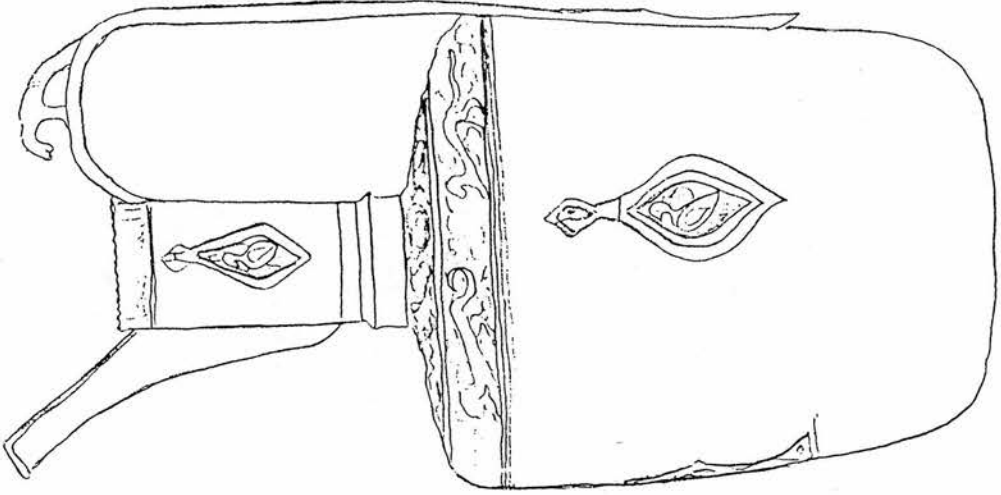


FIG. 63
Cylindrical-Bodied Silver Ewer
with Obliquely Rising Beak-Spout.

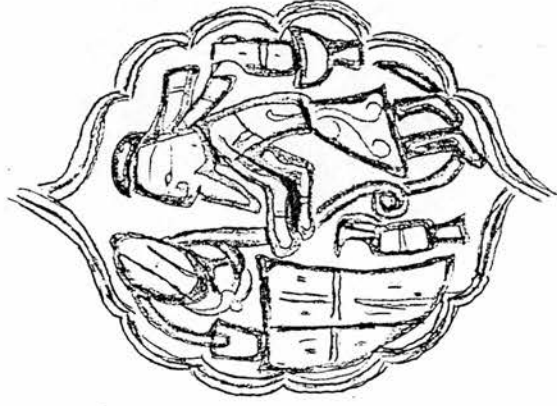


FIG. 65
The Zodiacal Sign of Aquarius on ewer V.2/11.

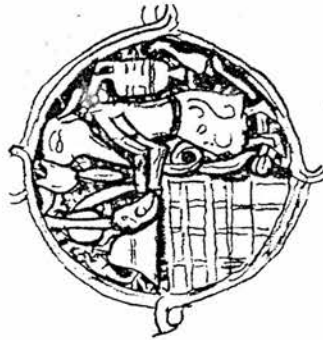


FIG. 64
The Zodiacal Sign of Aquarius on ewer V.3/10.

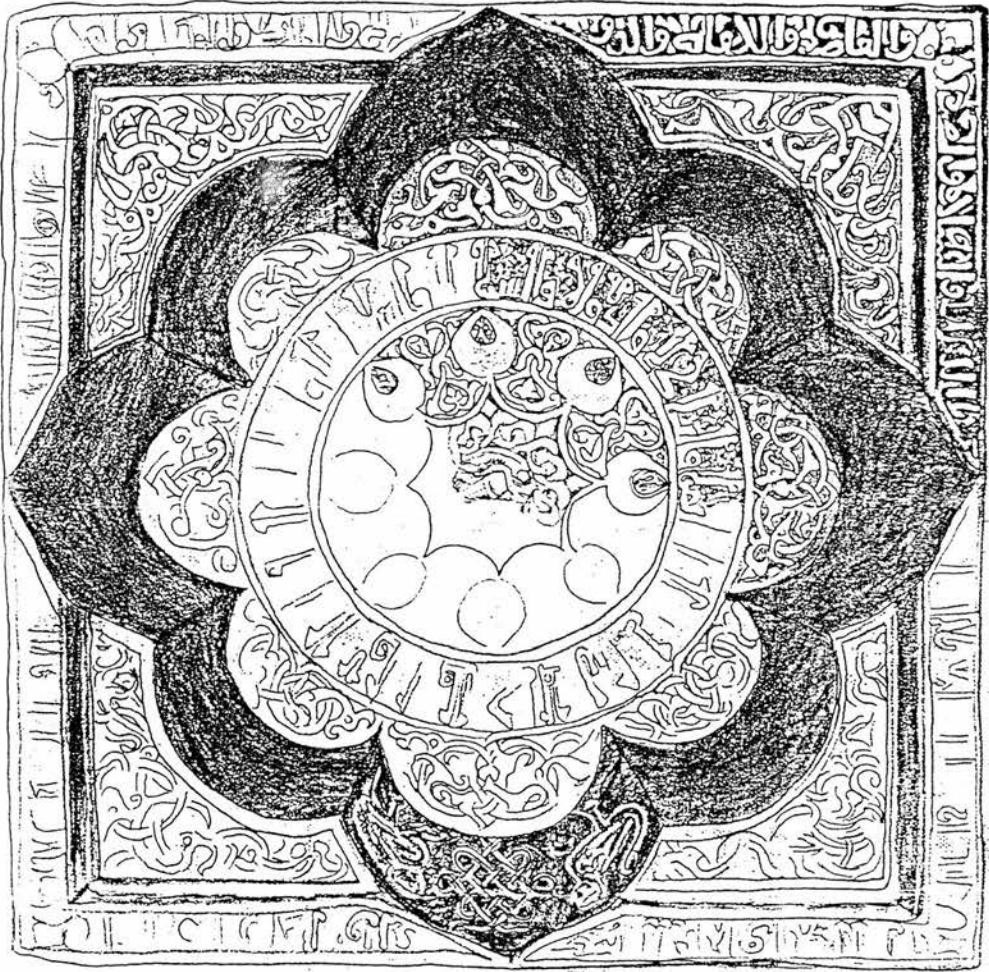


FIG. 66

Silver-Inlaid Bronze Tray. Iran,
late 12th/early 13th Century A.D.

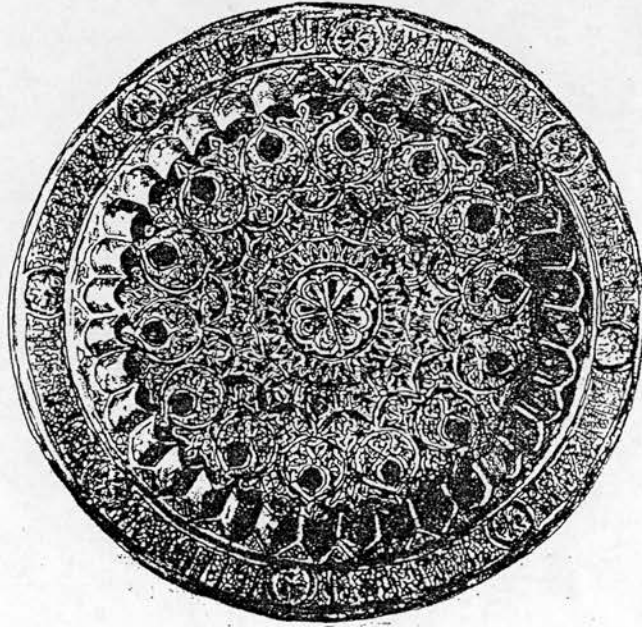


FIG. 67
Silver-Inlaid Bronze Tray. Iran,
late 12th/early 13th Century A.D.



FIG. 68
Late 12th-Century Bronze Basin from Khurāsān.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH MATERIAL

Appendix 1

The ewers assembled in this appendix could not be assigned to any of the main types discussed in the thesis. They are introduced here in the hope that future research might reveal more about their geographical and chronological setting within the Islamic world.

1. Ewers attributed to the eastern Islamic world

A. Museo Sacro, Vatican, Rome; n. p.; bronze; dimensions unknown. Globular body on low splayed foot-ring; projecting shoulder plate culminates in rounded moulding above; neck cylindrical and faceted, tapering towards the mouth; thick faceted handle, slightly S-shaped; central part demarcated; diametrically opposite handle, curved body spout with zoomorphic tip. Undecorated. Lit.: Gabrieli and Scerrato 1979, fig. 496.

This ewer, which is said to have come from the church of San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, has been attributed to 11th/12th-century Iran. However, this seems highly unlikely given the fact that there do not appear to have been any Iranian base metal ewers with body spouts before the 14th century A.D.(cf. Allan 1985, p. 133).

B. Louvre A.O. 7484; n. p.; bronze; repoussé work, incised; h. 33 cm, diam. 20 cm.

Inverted pear-shaped body with low stepped foot; around body, raised arcading; slightly raised shoulder plate introduces faceted neck base; above, faceted neck collar; neck cylindrical and faceted (today fragmented). On lower body, stylized scrollwork; on raised arches, sun motifs and bird roundels alternate; above, cursive inscription; on neck base, guilloche band; on upper neck, bird medallions and crescent medallions with scrollwork alternate.

Lit.: Migeon 1927, Vol. 2, p. 31; Pope 1938, pl. 1282b; Paris 1971, p. 97 no. 133; Paris 1977, p. 158 no. 325.

This ewer has been attributed to 12th-century Khurāsān by Melikian-Chirvani in Paris 1971. He describes it as "the only known Iranian example of a form later to be taken up by the metalworkers of Mosul". According to him, the style of the naskhi inscription invites a dating to the 12th century. In my opinion the body shape may in fact be an adaptation of a western vessel form, but more research is necessary to consolidate such a hypothesis (for a discussion of the origin of inverted pear-shaped ewers cf. chapter 10).

C.1. Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe 1959.22; n. p.; cast bronze; h. 13 cm, diam. base 4.2 cm, diam. mouth 2.5 cm, diam. with spout 5.5 cm.

Squat cylindrical body with broad facetting around the centre, set on rounded base; shoulder plate stepped back; low neck collar introduces cylindrical (and faceted?) neck with lateral ring projections (?); in its upper part, neck widens into an obliquely rising, tubular spout with pointed extension around the tip; upper side of spout open; thin projecting lip around small mouth; arched angular handle with skittle-shaped thumbpiece. Undecorated.

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 223; Vol. 2, p. 634 no. C/1/a/2.

C.2. West Berlin, Islamic Museum I. 86/63; n. p.; cast bronze; h. 13.4 cm, diam. 6.5 cm.

Shape similar to C.1, but with oblique facetting on body; on either side of neck, projecting knob; around tip of spout, pair of ornamental birds; no thumbpiece. Undecorated.

Lit.: Berlin 1971, no. 362; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 223; Vol. 2, pp. 633-4, no. C/1/a/1.

C.3. London, Keir Collection; n. p.; cast bronze (handle replacement); h. 15.5 cm, diam. base 5 cm, allover diam. 8.2 cm.

Shape as C.2 with oblique hatching below shoulder plate; lobed plaque around spout tip; pierced cover on lower mouth. Ropework pattern ridge on shoulder.

Lit.: Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 223; Vol. 2, p. 634 no. C/1/a/3, fig. 31; Fehérvári 1976, p. 62 no. 52, pl. 14b.

Allan, in dealing with these vessels, related them, probably correctly, to ewer types ICAW 4 and ICAW 6 on the basis of their obliquely rising spout and their cylindrical body. Fehérvári, in dealing with ewer C.3, attributed it to 11th/12th-century Iran.

D.1. Kabul Museum 58.2.20; Ghazna(?): bronze, incised; handle missing; h. 24 cm.

Spherical body on flat base (foot missing?): wide neck with ridge at base; wide flaring mouth with domical hinged lid. On lid, neck and lower body, Kufic inscription in cartouches with roundels containing vegetal motifs; on shoulder, wide band of naskhi inscription interrupted by roundels below band of interlace; around centre of body, roundels with interlaced star and central bird as well as vase motifs.

Lit.: Mortimer Rice and Rowland 1971, pl. 198; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 233; Vol. 2, p. 633 no. B/2, fig. 30.

D.2. Khalili Collection MTW 154; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 17.3 cm; diam. mouth 7.5 cm.

Shape virtually as D.1., but with its lid missing; handle missing; on front of body, attachment area for spout (aperture closed up); on base three almond-shaped marks indicate the position for three original feet. Around outer base, guilloche; on body, three cusped medallions: the one below the spout area contains a lion-bull fight, the lateral ones a bird-antelope fight; on shoulder, benedictory naskhi.

Lit.: Unpublished.

D.3. Khalili Collection MTW 1103; n. p.; cast bronze, incised, copper inlay.

Shape as D.1. and D.2., but with original feet, faceted tubular body spout and flat, slightly S-shaped handle with skittle-shaped thumbpiece; lid missing. On base, copper-inlaid polygonal star with three central palmette scrolls; star surrounded by circle and guilloche; in between feet, heart scroll with central trefoil on punched background; around feet, double incised lines; around lower body, guilloche with copper-inlaid borders; underneath spout, large roundel with guilloche border, containing an interlace star; above, crudely incised inscription: 'amala Mahmūd

'Abd al-Rahmān al-...awī; around central body, similar roundels alternate with vase motifs; on shoulder, Kufic inscription bands on punched background with crude scrollwork; two bird roundels near handle; around neck base, small Kufic inscription; on neck inscription panels alternate with palmette roundels; on lower handle, Kufic inscription (unread); on faceted spout, guilloche bands in alternate facets.

Lit.: Unpublished.

According to Allan, ewer D.1 was found at Ghazna and its decoration suggests an origin from a 12th/13th-century, provincial workshop in Afghānistān. When this piece was discussed in 1976, no comparable object was available and consequently, Allan suggested that it may represent a conglomeration from a variety of different sources. In view of the newly found objects in the Khalili collection, however, it can now be said that these ewers belong to an independent ewer type the origin of which will need further investigation.

E. Metropolitan Museum of Art; n. p.; bronze, incised; neck and handle later replacements; h. 61 cm.

Tall and slender body tapering towards a flat base with rounded moulding around the edge; in centre of flattened shoulder, raised star-shaped collar. Shoulder decorated with two bands of animals and band of Kufic against a background of scrolling stems; below, simple arcading with trefoil extensions.

Lit.: Pope 1938, pl. 1293; Allan 1976, Vol. 1, p. 211; Vol. 2, p. 624 no. A/1/e/1, fig. 28.

Nothing new can be added to the comments Allan put forward in his thesis in 1976. He related the vessel's profile to that of ewer type MW 4. Furthermore he pointed out that a similar body profile can be observed on two pottery ewer styles of the 12th and 13th centuries. In particular he speculated whether ewer E may have had a similar profile to that of a specific mina'i vessel with a very similar tall body, a wide cylindrical mouth and a short handle.

F. Keir Collection; n. p.; bronze; h. 22.5 cm, diam. mouth 5.5 cm, diam. base 8 cm.

Bulbous pear-shaped body on low foot; broad cylindrical neck with projecting mouth section; arched and curved handle attached to back of neck and lower body. Undecorated.

Lit.: Fehérvári 1976, p. 36 no. 10, pl. 3d.

Fehérvári attributed this ewer to 9th/10th-century Iran.

G. Keir Collection; n. p.; tinned copper; incised; h. 31.3 cm, diam. mouth 10 cm, diam. 15.7 cm.

Bulbous pear-shaped body on low splayed foot-ring; broad cylindrical neck; above, projecting mouth section with indented protrusions allround; flat arched handle with leaf-like thumbpiece bent backwards; diametrically opposite handle, obliquely rising, tubular body-spout which narrows down considerably towards the tip; spout tip surrounded by polylobed plaque. Cable-like, pearled bands divide the surface of the ewer into eight vertical facets; facet underneath spout decorated with a crab-like design in repoussé followed by seven horizontal lines; below the handle, three crescent-like patterns; above, chevron patterns and triangles in relief.

Lit.: Fehérvári 1976, p. 29, p. 34 no. 4, pl. 2b.

Fehérvári attributed this vessel to 8th/9th-century Khurāsān or Central Asia. He suggested that it might derive its profile from a leather vessel of similar form. Apparently, a similar ewer is housed in the Hermitage. As for the indented lines that divide the ewer's surface, Fehérvári points out that they appear in virtually identical form on a large, probably 9th-century, pottery jar excavated at Sirāf.

2. Ewers attributed to the western Islamic world

A.1. C.L. David Collection 5/1990; n. p.; cast bronze, incised; h. 22 cm. Bulbous pear-shaped body on low splayed foot; broad profiled moulding introduces tall waisted neck with round mouth; flat, strongly S-shaped handle with abstracted floral attachments above and very stylized zoomorphic attachment below; flat and strongly backward-curving, leaf-shaped thumbpiece on upper handle; diametrically opposite handle, slightly S-shaped, tubular body spout with abstracted cock head as tip. On foot, palmette scrollwork; on sides of body, roundels with lion; around upper body, Kufic inscription; near handle, vertical scrolling panel; all motifs set against a punch-dotted background.

Lit.: Sotheby's 25.4.90, lot 104; New York 1992, pp. 214-5 no. 14.

A.2. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. ca. 30 cm. Shape similar to A.1, but body more elongated; foot higher; handle without thumbpiece; spout strongly angled below; spout tip rendered as a feline head. Decoration very similar to that of A.1 as regards layout, choice of motifs and style. Lit.: Stabel-Hansen 1993, pp. 125-6, p. 136 fig. 7f.

Both ewers have been discussed most recently and are at present considered to belong to the Taifa period of Muslim Spain, i. e. the 10th-11th century A.D. A depiction of a somewhat similar vessel, with bulbous pear-shaped body on splayed foot, flaring mouth (here lidded) and a curved body spout with a dragon-headed tip can be found in a miniature belonging to an early 14th-century Syrian copy of the *Automata* by al-Jazārī (cf. Atil 1975, no. 51).

B. Khalili Collection MTW 497; n. p.; hammered bronze (two hemispherical halves apparently joined in the centre of the body); h. 32.5 cm.

Squat and bulbous, globular body on low foot; in centre of flattened shoulder, low neck base surmounted by rounded moulding; above, cylindrical neck widening towards a deep groove which introduces the mouth area; lip and flat arched handle hammered in one piece; diametrically opposite handle, obliquely rising, tubular body spout with small moulding around tip. Upper and lower body with wide facets highlighted by raised edges; around central body, superposed horizontal grooves.

Lit.: Unpublished.

This piece is very intriguing, indeed. On the one hand, its body spout immediately suggests that it may originate from the Near East or the eastern Mediterranean lands. However, its profile as a whole is closely related to certain pottery vessels found among the famous Kāshān wares which were produced in 13th-century Iran. If this vessel can be shown to have originated in Iran, the theory which suggests that metal ewers with body spouts were not used in Iran before the 14th century has to be evaluated afresh.

Appendix 2

The ewers assembled in this appendix belong to several of the ewer types discussed in the main part of this thesis. Unfortunately, however, they have come to my notice too late to be included or discussed in the chapters dealing with the other examples of their type. Consequently, for the sake of completeness, I have decided to list the pieces concerned here under the appropriate heading and provide any references and additional pieces of information known to me at present.

MW 3

No location; Lyagman, Tokharistan; bronze, incised (fragmentary: only upper section remains); dimensions unavailable.

Originally probably slender pear-shaped body; rounded moulding introduces waisted cylindrical neck; round mouth with slightly rounded lip; strongly curved, S-shaped handle with seven half-beads in the centre; lower handle curves outwards and ends in small pyramidal knob; handle attached to body by means of small rectangular bridge; thumbpiece rendered as pomegranate. On upper body, Kufic inscription frieze.

Lit.: Litvinsky 1985, pl. 20.2.

This piece is extremely interesting on account of its peculiar handle type. In the thesis pieces with this type of handle have generally been associated with the western fringe areas of Iran rather than with its eastern areas. In the light of the fact that this ewer was excavated there, it may be necessary to evaluate that suggestion afresh. At the least it has to be conceded at this point that this handle type was known in eastern Iran and Central Asia, too. The ewer, together with some 70 other pieces from the same findspot, has been attributed to a period between the 11th-early 13th centuries.

MW 4

A. No location; Lyagman, Tokharistan; bronze; incised; dimensions unavailable.

Squat ovoid body on low foot; slightly projecting neck collar introduces tall cylindrical neck, which tapers towards mouth; flat projecting lip; slightly curved, flattened handle with four half-beads in the centre. On body, inscription panels and roundels; on upper and lower neck, inscription panels; in between, vertical bands with indiscernible decoration.

Lit.: Litvinsky 1985, pl. 20.1.

B. No location; Lyagman, Tokharistan; bronze, dimensions unavailable.

Inverted pear-shaped body on low, slightly splayed foot; above, broad rounded moulding introduces tall cylindrical neck, which tapers towards mouth; indented projecting lip (damaged?); arched flattened handle with six beads in the centre; thumbpiece rendered as a pomegranate. Undecorated (?).

Lit.: Litvinsky 1985, pl. 20.3.

These two pieces have been found together with some 70 other bronze items, all of which have been assigned to between the 11th and early 13th centuries.

C. Paris, P. Mallon Collection (?); n. p.; bronze; dimensions unavailable. Ovoid body on low, slightly splayed foot; flattened and projecting moulding introduces tall cylindrical neck with central facetting; flat projecting lip; slightly curved, angular handle with six beads in the centre; lower handle attachment rendered as a leaf in relief; thumbpiece rendered as a pomegranate. Undecorated (?).

Lit.: Erginsoy 1978, pl. 28.

D. No location; n. p.; cast bronze; h. 32 cm, diam. 13.5 cm. Squat, inverted pear-shaped body on tall splayed foot; flattened shoulder receives a broad, sloping moulding in the centre; tall, very slightly waisted neck flaring near the mouth; arched angular handle with little thorn-like projection near the lower attachment; skittle-shaped thumbpiece. Undecorated.

Lit.: Hamburg 1993, pp. 154-5, no. 96 (Cf. ewer MW4/V.II for an identical (the same??) piece).

The high foot, the shoulder profile and the handle have been associated with ewers of the "Başra" group on the one hand (ewer type MW 3) and the Central Asian examples of ewer type MW 4 on the other one. The ewer has been dated to the 9th or 10th century and attributed, most interestingly, to the Near East. Unfortunately, no justification for this attribution is given.

ICAW 1

A. Location unknown (UW K22/18); Umm al-Walīd, Jordan; hammered copper-alloy, iron handle; punched and incised; h. (?), weight 1900 g.

Squat cylindrical body on flat base; base with concave centre; sloping shoulder introduces broad cylindrical neck with protruding ridge around its upper part. On moulding, oblique hatching; on shoulder and body, punched and incised decoration.

Lit.: Geneva 1992/3, p. 13, p. 17 fig. 11.5, pp. 23-30, p. 30 fig. 20.

B. Location unknown (UW K16/3); Umm al-Walīd, Jordan; hammered copper-alloy, iron handle; incised; h. ?, weight 585 g.

Very squat cylindrical body on flat base with concave centre; slightly sloping shoulder introduces broad cylindrical neck which tapers towards a protruding moulding; above, the upper neck is squat and cylindrical. Incised decoration on the shoulder.

Lit.: Geneva 1992/3, p. 13, p. 17 fig. 11.6, pp. 23-30.

Both the preceding pieces have been excavated in the qasr of Umm al-Walīd in Jordan, which was destroyed in the first half of the 9th century.

C. Location unknown; n. p.; hammered copper; incised; h. 30 cm.

Tall and very slightly waisted cylindrical body on low conical base; virtually flat shoulder; tall cylindrical neck with strongly projecting lip; arched handle rivetted to back of neck and upper body; handle additionally secured to neck by metal plaque with two metal wires issuing from its side, intertwining underneath the handle and winding around the handle body. On body, large roundels with symmetrically disposed, floral compositions, set between two Kufic friezes.

Lit.: Hotel Drouot 16./17.11.1978, lot 281, fig. 281.

D. Location unknown; n. p.; hammered copper; incised; h. 34.5 cm.

Tall and slightly waisted cylindrical body on a low conical base; shoulder virtually flat; tall cylindrical neck with strongly protruding lip around the mouth; arched handle attached to the back of the neck and upper body; the handle is additionally secured to the neck by a metal plaque across the front of the neck, from which issue narrow metal wires. These intertwine underneath the arched section of the handle and are then wound around the handle body; small loop termination on lower handle attachment plate. On the body, large cartouche bordered by two vertical bands with floral designs; palmette and other floral designs on neck.

Lit. : Hotel Drouot 16.11.1978, lot 283, fig. 283.

Both these ewers come very close to the pieces from Maimāna, as far as their body profile is concerned. Their decoration, on the other hand, seems to suggest a somewhat later date, perhaps, as has been suggested by the auctioneers, the 11th-12th centuries A.D. The ewers have been classed as exponents of Ghaznavid art, but this point will need further consideration, as there is at present little metalwork that can definitively related to the cultural sphere of the Ghaznavid court.

E. Location unknown; n. p.; hammered copper; incised; h. 32.5 cm.

Cylindrical and slightly waisted body; flat shoulder. Body with a decoration of lozenges framed by guilloche bands (?); on the shoulder floriated Kufic.

Lit.: Hotel Drouot 16./17.11.1978, lot 284 (no image).

ICAW 2

A. Frankfurt/Main, Museum für Kunsthandwerk 12947/5611; n. p.; cast bronze, relief decoration; h. 16 cm.

Shape related to ewer ICAW 2/V.4, but with rounded pear-shaped body on low splayed foot. Vertically disposed gazelle-head spout, the horns, bending backwards to join a vertically hatched neck collar, serving as handles. On body, three obliquely set rows of tear-drop motifs in relief.

Lit.: Frankfurt/Main 1974, p. 73 no 189, fig. 125.

This piece was kindly brought to my attention by my colleague Avinoam Shalem. The rendition of its spout section in particular relates this piece to ewer ICAW 2/V.4. The "tear-drop" motifs on its body, on the other hand, are a typical feature on a group of early Islamic metalwork objects generally attributed to 9th/10th-century eastern Iran.

B. Bumiller Collection BC 038; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 18.8 cm, diam. 10.9 cm.

Slender pear-shaped body on low foot; upper body with six elongated, raised petals stopping short of the lower body; rounded knob around the neck introduces bull-headed spout section; tip of spout appears as if inserted into the snout of the animal head; handle rendered as abstracted feline with its head bending outwards above, thus serving as thumbpiece. On petals of body, decorative medallions.

Lit.: Hamburg 1993, p. 160 no. 104.

This ewer, as yet unparalleled in its appearance, has been attributed to 12th/13th-century eastern Iran. In my opinion, this dating may be slightly too late, but further research is necessary.

ICAW 3

A. New York, University of Notre Dame, Art Gallery; n. p.; bronze, h. 28 cm. Bulbous pear-shaped body on high splayed foot; slightly projecting, profiled moulding introduces conical neck with waisted sides; spout rendered in the shape of an oil-lamp; lid in the shape of a bull-head(?) covers aperture; slender S-shaped handle with extremely tall and thin thumbpiece. Undecorated.
Lit.: New York 1975, no. 26, fig. 26.

It is highly interesting to note that this piece was published as a "lamp with oil reservoir in shape of a ewer". This interpretation matches exactly the hypothesis aired in the chapter dealing with this "ewer" type (chapter 13).

ICAW 4

A. Habib Anavian Collection; n. p.; bronze, incised; h. 38 cm. Bulbous and squat globular body on fairly high, waisted foot-ring; slightly raised, polygonal shoulder plate introduces tall cylindrical neck with projecting collar around its lower part; large and curved beak-spout, introduced by oblique ridge, rises from upper neck; on underside of spout and on sides of neck, ring projections; mouth with flat projecting lip; flat arched handle with ring projections near lower termination; small globular thumbpiece with rounded finial on profiled base. Raised bands around central body and across façade of upper body; around central body, geometric diamond pattern with incised detailing; upper panel with epigraphy.
Lit.: New York 1975, no. 27, fig. 27.

In the short discussion of this piece its similarity to a ewer of identical type in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is pointed out (ICAW 4/3). In fact those similarities are only of a general nature. A closer parallel is ewer ICAW 4/2, as it shows a very similar kind of decorative band around the central body. As for the vessel's function it is suggested that it served as a water container.

B. Bumiller Collection BC 1216; n. p.; bronze and copper; incised; h. 33.8 cm, diam. 21.1 cm. Squat globular body on low foot; in centre of upper body, raised shoulder plate introduces low neck base surmounted by profiled moulding; above, cylindrical neck with large, obliquely rising beak-spout; flat arched handle with knob thumbpiece. Around central body, inscription frieze interrupted by roundels with interlace star; above the lateral roundels, vase motif; across front of upper body, inscription panel with artist's signature: "'amala Abū'l Jandar (or Haidar)"; panel flanked by small roundels; on shoulder plate, two bands with geometric designs; on neck, various abstract motifs set within a rectangular panel beneath the spout ridge; on lower spout, abstract band curling inwards up the sides; a corresponding band across the underside of the upper spout; incised Kufic inscription near outer edge on the spout's left side (as seen from handle).
Lit.: Hamburg 1993, p. 160 no. 103.

This ewer has been attributed, probably correctly, to 12th-century eastern Iran or Afghanistan. Its decorative layout can be paralleled on several vessels belonging to ewer type ICAW 4.

ICAW 6

A. Bumiller Collection BC 1501; n. p.; bronze, incised (neck, spout and handle replaced ?); h. 31.2 cm, diam. 16.3 cm.

Tall cylindrical body on rounded base; grooved shoulder edge; large raised star on shoulder; low neck base; cylindrical neck with tubular spout rising obliquely from its upper part; arched angular handle rivetted to neck and body. On body, heart-scroll panels above and below are connected by identical bands disposed vertically at intervals; in between the vertical panels, large star-like roundels with identical motifs; similar motifs on shoulder and neck.

Lit.: Hamburg 1993, p. 156 no. 99.

This ewer shows certain similarities to ewer ICAW 6/5 in its appearance as well as in its decorative layout and style. The ewer in the Bumiller collection has been attributed to 9th/10th-century Iran.

CONCLUSION

It has been the aim of this thesis to provide a manual of early Islamic bronze and brass ewers from the 7th to the 13th century A.D. The study proposed firstly to assemble as many relevant pieces as possible, categorize them, describe them in detail with regard to their characteristic structural features and - where applicable - their decoration. Subsequently, the attempt was made to elucidate the ewers' typological origin, their provenance and date and, finally, their function.

In assessing the objectives set out in the introduction of this survey and again summarized above, it can be said that their pursuit was, in general terms, successful, and yielded much new information. This is true both with regard to individual pieces and the typological categories as a whole. The results will be outlined in detail below.

At the same time we cannot claim to have answered all the questions that arose with regard to the ewers assembled in this study. Thus, it proved impossible on several occasions to solve problems of origin, provenance, date and/or function. These remain as ambiguous as the identity of the craftsmen who executed the ewers and the location and structure of their workshops. In addition to these problems, new questions arose as a result of this study. All the enigmas which remained after the completion of this thesis will be highlighted below, and it is hoped that future research, on the basis of the information provided, will tackle such challenges afresh and provide answers to the questions raised here.

In preparing this thesis some 350 relevant ewers were assembled. This considerable group of objects, though undoubtedly still incomplete, provided an adequate pool of research material. At the same time such a large number of pieces was likely, from a statistical point of view, to embrace most major ewer types

current in the Islamic world during the period we were concerned with, i. e. the 7th to 13th century A.D.

Apart from the purely practical significance of so many extant pieces, their large quantity in itself already reveals certain noteworthy realities about the status of bronze and brass ewers in early Islamic times: it appears to reflect, generally speaking, the popularity and widespread use of such vessels in the Islamic world at the time. Immense numbers must have existed, as the 350 ewers assembled here undoubtedly represent only a tiny fraction of the original amount of similar vessels in existence.

The ewers assembled for this study revealed a much greater variety of **shapes** than had been known previously. Nevertheless, most of them could be grouped within one of 16 major typological categories distinguished by the vessels' profile. A grouping of the individual ewers according to other criteria proved impossible for lack of adequate information.

Within virtually every typological group not only examples of the main type were assembled, but also one or more variants. These differ from the main type sufficiently to be dealt with separately but at the same time display enough features to link them to it. Unfortunately, it could not be established whether such pieces are indeed merely variants of the main type or whether they may in fact be the unique survivals of a now lost, independent ewer type generically related to the one discussed. This question can only be answered when additional ewers or other relevant pieces of information come to light.

Incidentally, the very same problems surround the ewers assembled in Appendix 1. However, in this case it seems most likely that they are the only extant representatives of ewer types which do not survive today.

In describing the various ewer types several **structural features** occurred repeatedly irrespective of the type. These are, firstly, the pomegranate thumbpiece and the feline handle. The choice of a pomegranate to serve as the thumbpiece may

be connected with the fact that this fruit had always been regarded as life-giving and a symbol of fertility, paradise and eternal life.¹ As for the feline handles, Ettinghausen believed them to have had Dionysiac connotations originally, i. e. they were again connected with the eternal rejuvenation of nature, fertility and eternal life.² However, it is virtually impossible at present to establish in how far this symbolism was still understood when handles were applied to early Islamic ewers. It is certainly possible that they were still considered as having life-giving qualities to some extent, given the often similar content of the decorative motifs applied to many of the vessels with such handles.

Another striking aspect regarding the ewers' profile is the predilection for enhancing the pouring section with zoomorphic or ornithomorphic elements. Interestingly, felines and birds of prey seem to be most popular. It would lead us too far astray in this context to examine the iconographic significance of these animals in detail, but it can be said that both animal groups tend to be related again to early Islamic concepts of paradise and eternal life.

In view of such observations it may well be the case that ewers with any one of the aforementioned structural features or indeed all of them, were not merely meaningless utensils but were endowed with a certain talismanic and magic quality in addition to their functional significance. Often, the decorative elements on a particular ewer strengthen this impression. It would be interesting for future researchers to consider both the structural features and the decorative features of a ewer in conjunction in an attempt to understand comprehensively its significance within early Islamic society.

Regarding the ewers' **manufacturing technique** it is interesting to note that both hammered and cast ewers occur in the east, while Near Eastern vessels appear to be cast virtually throughout. Up to around the late 12th century, the hammered vessels from the East were utilitarian vessels of low quality and, on occasion, they

¹ For a highly interesting history of the pomegranate throughout antiquity and into the early Middle Ages cf. Muthmann 1982.

² Cf. Ettinghausen 1972, pp. 3-10.

copied more precious cast ewers. They represented the lowest level in the hierarchy of eastern metalwork with cast bronze objects and precious metal pieces at the other end of the scale.

Interestingly, a similar hierarchy cannot, as yet, be shown to exist in the Near East at the same time. Very mediocre vessels are lacking as much as vessels of the highest quality. Undoubtedly, their absence could be explained simply by the fact that they were destroyed or melted down in times of crisis. However, perhaps bronze vessels, for various reasons, were never used as extensively in the Near East as was the case in the East: raw materials for base metal production were much harder to come by in the Near East than in Iran and other materials such as pottery, glass and even leather for daily-life utensils and gold and silver for precious vessels were easier at hand.

Turning to the ewers' **decoration**, several points regarding the decorative techniques should be noted. Firstly, it appears that, generally speaking, a predilection for relief decoration on 8th/9th-century ewers (perhaps copying repoussé work on precious metal objects?) makes way increasingly for incised decorative schemes towards the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century. The most striking technical point, however, is the sudden appearance of high-quality precious-metal **inlay** on hammered brass ewers (and indeed other objects) from the late 12th century onwards.

It is true that the technique of metal-on-metal inlay can be observed already on the earliest Islamic bronze objects, probably under the influence of inlaid vessels worked in the late Roman world.³ However, at that time it is very modest indeed and unintrusive to the eye: small disks of copper fillets hammered into small

³ There are early Byzantine bronze doors from the 5th, 6th and 9th centuries which carry a comparable degree of metal inlay. It is most interesting in this context that the inlay is generally confined to small gold, silver and copper fillets, discs and other tiny shapes. Apart from the gold the latter appear similarly on the earliest inlaid pieces from the Islamic world; cf. Kleinbauer 1976, pp. 19-21; Underwood 1960, pp. 206, 210-213. There are also late antique bronze objects with modest metal inlay, such as for example a pair of 6th/7th-century bronze compasses with a silver-inlaid inscription in the Benaki Museum in Athens; cf. Kleinbauer 1976, p. 22.

cavities to enhance certain details of the design such as the eyes or feathers of a bird, or to accentuate a fruit or floral design.⁴ Silver wire can also occur on very early pieces. However, it is used even more sparingly than copper and usually reserved for minute linear and figurative detailing.⁵

The status of metal inlay remained at a comparatively modest level up to the 12th century. Then, suddenly, an unprecedented flowering of copper, silver and niello inlay, utilized to create complex decorative schemes with a stunning degree of coloristic effect, can be observed on beaten brass ewers and other objects, which until then had formed the lower stratum in the hierarchy of early Islamic metalwork.

Allan noted this striking and puzzling development in his thesis in 1976 and later discussed it again in an article published in 1976/7.⁶ He argued that this sudden preference for polychrome metal-on-metal inlay on hammered bronze and brass objects resulted from the necessity of creating sumptuous luxury objects, after a far-reaching silver famine in the Near and Middle East around 1100 A.D. had led to the decline of the silver-smithing industry previously responsible for satisfying a luxury market.

Allan believed that from ca. 1100 A.D. onwards silversmiths were forced to turn increasingly away from working sheet silver and started to work base metal sheeting such as bronze and brass instead. According to him, the latter objects were then enhanced, through inlay, with a decorative colour scheme which had been directly adopted from that applied to silver objects. The former interplay of silver, gilding and niello was now recreated and even developed further by the combination of the golden shine of the metal surface, by copper, silver and later even occasionally gold inlay as well as by the addition of niello or a black bituminous substance, applied to enhance traced lines and background areas.⁷

⁴ Baer 1983, p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Cf. Allan 1976, Vol. 1, pp. 394-8; Allan 1976/7.

⁷ Allan 1976/7, p. 5.

To highlight the two main points of Allan's argument, he suggests that a) around 1100 A.D. silversmiths started to recreate the hammered vessels familiar to them in brass sheet due to an extensive silver shortage, and b) that the sudden burst of precious-metal inlay was due to the craftsmen's attempt to recreate the polychrome effect of the silver vessels, then achieved by an interplay of the silver surface, gilding and niello.

The first part of Allan's argument is most probably correct. However, the sudden occurrence of the highly-skilled precious metal inlay on the brass ewers and other objects cannot be explained simply by the assumption that silversmiths adopted the polychrome colour schemes of the silver objects they had executed before. If we examine the decorative techniques responsible for the polychromy of early Islamic silver objects we find repoussé work, gilding and the application of niello. Turning to the brass ewers repoussé has been perpetuated. Interestingly enough, this technique is the only one which could be applied by the silversmiths during the actual making of the vessel. Consequently, it is not surprising that this technique should occur on the brasswares those craftsmen began to work in the 12th century.

As for the gilding and the niello inlay, on the other hand, we cannot automatically assume that they, too, were executed by one and the same craftsman. Both techniques require comparatively complicated fusion processes, which had to be executed apparently one at a time.⁸ It seems likely that these were undertaken by an expert familiar with every aspect of these decorative techniques. However, even if the silversmiths did apply these techniques themselves, it is striking that the brass vessels receive their sumptuous decoration in a completely different way, i. e. by means of extensive and high-quality metal inlay.

The technical and artistic quality of this inlay is not only altogether unprecedented in this context, but also with regard to early Islamic metalwork in general where, as we mentioned before, metal inlay up to this point in time had

⁸ Kitzinger 1967, p. 245 note 9.

been applied in a very limited and hardly artistic manner. Consequently, the unparalleled heights of technical expertise and intricacy with which the polychrome inlay decoration was suddenly applied, remain unexplained by Allan's theory regarding the transfer of colour schemes from silver to bronze or brass. In addition, the enormously complex decorative compositions encountered on the hammered base metal wares have little in common with those on earlier silver objects.

It seems highly unlikely that the former silversmiths themselves simply started to inlay their base metal vessels. The metal-working industries within the Islamic world were highly organised by the 12th century. Expert craftsmen specialized in casting, hammering, gilding and indeed inlaying metal objects. If, then, the newly emerging base metal vessels were decorated by craftsmen other than those who shaped them, the question arises as to where such experts might have come from.

It seems quite unlikely that they originated from within the Islamic world, as one would otherwise expect inlaid metal objects of some quality to survive from a period well before the 12th century. The answer to this enigma may lie in the West, i. e. in the lands of the Byzantine empire. Here, the end of the iconoclastic controversy in 843 had led gradually to a revival of all art forms, including literature, architecture and minor arts.

With the rise of the intellectually enlightened dynasty of the Macedonians (867-1059) and later under their successors, the Ducas (1059-78), the Comnenians (1081-1185) and finally the Angeli (1185-1204), the production of high-quality artefacts was stimulated. Many of these objects took their inspiration from classical and early Christian art following a conscious trend at the time to revive the pre-Iconoclastic period and earlier Graeco-Roman traditions.⁹

Among the sumptuous artefacts inspired by the past were also many high-quality metal objects including, most significantly in the context of this discussion,

⁹ Kleinbauer 1976, p. 17.

bronze (as well as precious metal) objects with precious-metal inlay.¹⁰ The first objects of this type, produced in the Middle Byzantine period, were probably mainly small and portable, such as reliquaries and crosses.¹¹ However, soon the technique of metal-on-metal was assimilated to the manufacture of much larger and imposing artefacts such as for example elaborate bronze doors.

These doors were produced mainly in Constantinople, but also in other centres such as Amalfi or other Italian cities, between the second half of the 11th and the first half of the 12th century A.D.¹² They were ordered by wealthy patrons such as for example the members of an influential merchant family from Amalfi, who alone bestowed six such portals on Latin cathedrals and monasteries.¹³ Today, extant bronze doors of this type can still be found on buildings *in situ* in the cities of Rome, Amalfi, Atrani, Salerno, Venice and Canossa as well as on Monte Cassino and Monte Gargano.¹⁴

All these doors are characterized by the application of between 24 - 54 separately worked bronze or brass plaques, which were secured onto the wooden core. These carry figural scenes, crosses, inscriptions, animals and/or foliate designs, sumptuously inlaid with mainly copper and/or silver. The immediate visual effect of these plaques with their polychromy and the density of the compositions seems to anticipate immediately that of the 12th/13th-century bronze and brass ewers with precious metal inlay we are concerned with here.

Technically, too, there seems to be a striking similarity. In order to prepare the metal plaque for the inlay, it was first roughened, and the areas of the designs which were to receive the copper, silver and gold fillets were prepared. After the

¹⁰ Frolov 1966, p. 48; for a small, perhaps 10th-/11th-century gold reliquary inlaid with silver and niello cf. *op. cit.*, p. 48 fig. 11; for another contemporary piece with precious metal and niello inlay, now part of a reliquary in the Abbey of Charroux cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 39-50. For late antique bronze objects with precious metal inlay, which are stylistically relevant to this study, see Kleinbauer 1976, pp. 22-24.

¹¹ Kleinbauer 1976, p. 29. For a small bronze pectoral cross with silver inlay probably datable to the early 11th century cf. Frolov 1966, p. 47 fig. 10.

¹² Frazer 1973, *passim*; Frolov 1966, p. 49.

¹³ Kleinbauer 1976, p. 17.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

latter had been applied, additional detailing was then incised and filled with niello powder.¹⁵

Such similarities in technique and coloristic effect between the 11th/12th-century Byzantine plaques and the polychrome decorative schemes on the 12th/13th-century ewers are indeed stunning, and it seems perfectly possible that one inspired the other. After all we have ample evidence for other instances in which Byzantine art and culture left its considerable imprint on the Islamic world at that time.¹⁶

Unfortunately, we do not know at present how exactly the know-how of such high-quality metal inlay may have been transmitted. Could Byzantine doors have also been sent to important Christian churches in Egypt, Syria or Mesopotamia and thus inspired local craftsmen? Did Byzantine craftsmen travel to Islamic lands? Were there Byzantine metal workshops in Anatolia and the Levant, which were subsequently incorporated into the Islamic empire but remained in contact artistically with the trends current in Byzantium itself? All these questions deserve further investigation. However, regarding the last question one interesting point is worth mentioning.

The inventor and writer al-Jazari, who served under the Artuqids Qutb al-Dīn Sukman II (1185-1200) and his successor Nāṣir al-Dīn (1200-1222), informs us that he executed a bronze door for the royal palace in Diyārbakr, a town formerly under Byzantine control, and inlaid it with silver and copper.¹⁷ Undoubtedly, the production of an imposing bronze door fit for a royal palace involved not only al-Jazari himself. On the contrary, it presupposes a highly skilled metal workshop with several specialized craftsmen, who must have been well established in the city for some time.

One final problem regarding the sudden appearance of high-quality inlay on 12th/13th-century bronze and brass ewers needs mentioning here. If we accept that artistic trends in 11th/early 12th-century Byzantium led to the introduction of

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁶ Vryonis 1971, p. 236; Grabar 1976, Ch. IV.

¹⁷ Wiedemann and Hauser 1921, pp. 215-232.

precious metal inlay in the Islamic world, then the question arises as to why, as is assumed at present, the former should have emerged first in eastern Iran and only subsequently been transmitted to the workshops of northern Mesopotamia.

I believe that this assumption may be false. Strictly speaking, the first high-quality vessels with precious metal inlay from eastern Iran and those from Mesopotamia are more or less contemporary. After all, the date of the first sumptuously inlaid vessel from Iran, the Bobrinsky bucket (1163 A.D.), and the earliest artistically comparable pieces from the Near East, a key in "Mawṣilī" style for the Ka'aba dated 1180 A.D.¹⁸ and a late 12th-century ewer signed by Ibrahīm ibn Mawāliya, lie too close together to readily justify the assumption that inlaid Iranian vessels clearly predate inlaid Mesopotamian objects.

It seems much more likely that Mesopotamia and indeed towns in Anatolia like Diyarbakr, both directly exposed to Byzantine trends owing to their geographical vicinity and the Christian communities in their midst, knew and executed precious metal inlay first and that the latter was then transmitted to the East. After that both centres may have thrived concurrently and drew their figural material from a common pool of imagery universally popular in the Islamic world at the time as well as from figural compositions favoured locally.

Turning to the **decorative layouts** and the **imagery** chosen for the ewers in this thesis several points deserve to be highlighted. First of all it appears, generally speaking, that a tendency to apply free-flowing all-over decoration found on several of the very early Islamic ewers makes way gradually for a more compartmentalized approach. This development can be observed best on "eastern" vessels as the majority of western pieces predating the 12th century remains undecorated.

As for the images chosen, vegetal, architectural and mythological motifs as well as animal and bird depictions occur on the earliest ewers. Later, inscription

¹⁸ Allan 1982a, pp. 17-8. It is interesting in this context to highlight a hypothesis already put forward by Allan regarding the aforementioned key. The very close artistic parallels between this object and the early 13th-century brasses from the Jazīra led him to suggest that there was already an inlaying industry in the Jazīra by 1180 A.D.

panels, geometric and floral motifs, vase motifs, cartouches with birds or sphinxes and, most importantly, courtly and astrological imagery broaden the decorative spectrum on eastern ewers and from the late 12th century onwards on western pieces as well.

It is curious that the majority of Near Eastern vessels from the first centuries of Islam and up to the 11th century appears to remain largely undecorated. This enigma will need further investigation.

A preliminary assessment of the **iconography** chosen for the ewers assembled in this thesis seems to indicate that the decorative schemes mostly do not seem to relate specifically to the object they have been applied to. Thus, drinking or banqueting scenes for example are comparatively rare. It is more common to encounter motifs which express or represent abstract concepts that were of importance to early Muslim society. Thus, we repeatedly find allusions to paradise, eternal life and light (Tree-of-Life motifs, vase motifs, sphinxes and other supernatural creatures, birds of prey, lions, pomegranates, zodiacal and planetary cycles etc).

Some of these may also have served, on a more mundane level, as apotropaic symbols. It is unlikely that any of the motifs chosen to enhance the ewers were applied for purely decorative reasons. This claim, however, cannot as yet be substantiated and needs further investigation.

It has also been shown that the iconography of several of the ewers may refer to the setting they were meant to be used in (ritual royal banquets for example) or indeed to their future owner (MW 5/6, MW 5/V.2/1). It is highly interesting to note in this context that the majority of ewers decorated with precious metals from late 12th/early 13th-century eastern Iran generally display a "neutral" type of decoration, i. e. motifs of general relevance which were not geared towards a specific patron or his position in society. On contemporary Mesopotamian ewers, on the other hand, there is a clear emphasis on ruler imagery. It could be speculated that this choice of iconography was a deliberate attempt to cater for the many petty

rulers in power in the Jazira in the 12th/13th centuries, each of whom tried to outdo the other with their displays of power and royal splendour.¹⁹

After the descriptive introduction of the pieces, the analytical part of this thesis was concerned with investigating the ewers' **typological origin**, their provenance, date and function. With regard to the first aspect, it proved almost always impossible to directly pinpoint pre-Islamic prototypes for the vessel forms discussed here. In fact, only in the case of ewer type EMW 1 could it be shown that the ewers were not only derived directly from Hellenistic, late Roman and Byzantine *oinochoe* forms, but they were in fact, at least in the very early years of Islam, a mere continuation of the latter. Only slightly later was the type apparently modified.

As for the remaining typological groups, the vessels' origin had to be reconstructed by attempting to match either the respective shape as a whole or to match individual structural elements with those encountered on attributable pre-Islamic or contemporary Islamic vessels. In pursuing this line of inquiry an interesting picture emerged.

It appears that the majority of early Islamic ewer types assembled in this thesis, whether associated with the western or with the eastern Islamic world, clearly derives from classical and Hellenistic vessel forms. In addition, they may reveal secondary influences absorbed from ancient Mesopotamia, the pre-Islamic cultures of the Near Eastern lands and Egypt. Only one ewer type (MW 2) has been clearly influenced by Sasanian and pre-Islamic Sogdian shapes, but again only in conjunction with impulses exerted by the classical world of the eastern Mediterranean.

Ewer type ICAW 4 seems to have been introduced into eastern Iran by Turkish tribes around the 10th century A.D. The origin of ewer type MW 1, finally, remains completely ambiguous. However, certain structural elements of its

¹⁹ This suggestion was made to me by Prof. Hillenbrand.

design seem to link it to some of those early Islamic ewer types which probably derived from Near Eastern prototypes.

Only three early Islamic ewer types seem to be genuinely innovatory. They were apparently newly developed in the fringe areas of eastern Iran some time in the latter part of the 10th century. One of the types, ICAW 3, may not in fact have been intended as a pouring vessel at all, but as a portable lamp. Ewer type ICAW 5, on the other hand, appears to have been developed as a regional speciality in 10th/11th-century Transoxiana. However, certain generic links with the beak-spouted vessels of ewer type ICAW 4 and their pre-Islamic prototypes make it feasible that this vessel form, too, may have been based on or at least inspired by a pre-Islamic vessel form from Central Asia.

Ewer type ICAW 6, finally, seems to be the result of a synthesis between two older vessel forms: a body profile derived from an undoubtedly Byzantine ewer type and a spout concept probably introduced into Iran by Turkish tribes some time in the 10th century A.D.

The aforementioned results are of considerable interest with regard to the typological origin of early Islamic ewer types. They help successfully to challenge the still widely accepted view that it was above all Iran and the ingenuity of her artists which were responsible for the varied appearance of early Islamic metal objects. This, at least as far as ewer production is concerned, is clearly not the case, and the considerable degree to which the majority of early Islamic Iranian ewers relied on older, pre-Islamic prototypes from the Hellenistic and ancient Mediterranean sphere, cannot be stressed enough.

Apart from this general observation, it can be said that a multi-faceted picture has emerged with regard to the typological sources from which the designers of early Islamic ewers drew their inspiration. The Graeco-Roman legacy is strongest, with secondary contributions made by the ancient cultures of

Mesopotamia, Egypt, Iran and Central Asia.²⁰ The reliance on older vessel forms is remarkable. Apparently, the makers of early Islamic ewers were content generally to perpetuate traditional shapes and only resorted to designing new ewer types when there was a concrete practical need.

Turning to the ewers' **provenance and date**, it appears that among the 16 typological categories five were current more or less exclusively in the eastern Mediterranean world, including cultural centres such as Egypt, Spain and Sicily. As for their date, they all seem to appear around the 7th or 8th centuries and survive up to the 11th century A.D. Ewer type EMW 1 appears to be the oldest among the five. It is so closely related to its Hellenistic predecessors that it is hardly possible to differentiate the first Islamic ewers from pre-Islamic vessels of the same type. Interestingly, this type does not seem to have survived the first two centuries of Islam, as no ewers with this shape can as yet be shown to postdate the 8th century.

Ewer type EMW 2 seems to appear in Near Eastern lands and possibly Egypt around the early 8th century. Subsequently vessels of this shape were transmitted, probably through trade, to Spain and Sicily. In Spain we have evidence that they were copied locally, and it is quite possible, though not conclusively proved, that copies were also manufactured in early Islamic Sicily. As for the date of ewers associated with these two areas, the period between the 9th and early 11th century has been suggested.

As for ewer type EMW 3, its rather diverse specimens seem to have been used mainly within the confines of the Near Eastern world between the 8th century and the early 11th century A.D. However, one piece of this type emerged in Afghanistan, executed in a metal typical for that region, i. e. high-tin bronze. This fact may indicate that the type was also known in the eastern Islamic world, but further investigations will be necessary to clarify this point.

²⁰ Allan, in reviewing the early Islamic metalworking industry of Iran as a whole, came to very similar results.

The very same attribution and date hold true for ewer type EMW 4. Again, its use may not have been restricted exclusively to eastern Mediterranean lands, as we have one example associated with 9th/10th-century Iran. Ewer type EMW 5, finally, probably emerged in 8th-century Egypt, and it remained popular in this area until the 11th century A.D.

Five ewer types appear to have been developed in 8th/9th-century Mesopotamia and the regions immediately adjacent to it. Subsequently, three of these (MW 2-4) were introduced into Iran and even further eastwards into Central Asia. They remain popular in these two regions until well into the 12th and perhaps even early 13th century. As for ewer type MW 1, its exclusive association with Mesopotamia and the surrounding areas is at present based entirely on circumstantial evidence, and further research into this type is necessary.

The earliest examples of ewer type MW 5 are at present dated to the late 12th century, but there are indications that the type, executed in metal as well as pottery, may well have been in use in the Near East well before that time. The first major metalworking centre which executed pieces of this type was located in northern Mesopotamia. Subsequently, however, the type was transmitted into Syria, Egypt and Iran. Here it remained popular, if often in slightly modified form, well into the 14th century A.D.

Six ewer types, finally, have been associated with Iran and its eastern fringe areas. With regard to ewer type ICAW 1 most extant pieces, datable between the 8th - 10th century and even later, are undoubtedly of Iranian manufacture, and this fact led me to include the type among the "eastern" categories. However, there is increasing evidence that this type, too, originated in the Near East, where it was inspired by Byzantine prototypes.

As for ewer type ICAW 2, the earliest pieces date from the 10th century, but the type is probably based on older prototypes of zoomorphic and particularly bull-shaped appearance current in ancient Iran and the ancient Near East. This type continues right into the 12th century.

Examples of ewer type ICAW 3 emerge for the first time around the 10th century and can be shown to exist right into the 13th century. The areas of its distribution were, as far as we know today, confined to eastern Iran and Transoxiana. Ewer type ICAW 3 is one of the only three apparently innovative ewer types.

Ewer type ICAW 4 appears to have been introduced into eastern Iran in the wake of increasing Turkicisation in the late 10th century. It remained in use until the 13th century.

Ewer type ICAW 5 is a most curious vessel form, which seems to emerge for the first time in 10th/11th-century Transoxiana. It remains confined to this region until its apparent disappearance in the 12th century or slightly later.

Ewer type ICAW 6, finally, appears to have been produced for the first time in eastern Iran towards the late 10th or early 11th century A.D., and it remained one of the most popular vessel forms in the area until well into the 13th and even 14th centuries. On this occasion, unlike with all the other ewer types, we know at least one manufacturing centre for certain. It was situated in Herat, one of the most important artistic focal points in eastern Iran in the 12th and 13th centuries. Other towns in Khurāsān and elsewhere in the region undoubtedly copied the type as well, to judge by the stunning diversity of the ewers' profile, manufacturing technique and decorative quality. This type was also known and briefly copied in 13th-century Mesopotamia, but does not seem to have caught on to be produced in large numbers.

If one assesses the individual results regarding the ewers' provenance and date in conjunction, several interesting questions arise. The most striking enigma concerns the attempted geographical sub-division of the pieces. First of all there is an astounding numerical discrepancy between ewers associated with eastern Mediterranean workshops, those from Mesopotamian workshops and those from Iran and Central Asia.

In the Near Eastern group there are 43 pieces at present. This number compares with 101 pieces belonging to ewer types originally produced in Mesopotamian workshops but largely executed in Iran and Central Asia, after the Mesopotamian type had been transmitted eastwards, and 176 ewers developed and produced exclusively on Iranian and/or Central Asian soil.

The fact that there should be so few ewers from the eastern Mediterranean sphere and indeed Mesopotamia on the one hand, and such an overwhelming amount of Iranian and Central Asian vessels on the other one, is puzzling. One explanation may lie with the attributions currently proposed for the individual ewers within each typological category.

Concrete evidence regarding the provenance (and indeed the date) is wanting in the majority of cases. Therefore, the attribution of most ewers has had to be based, of necessity, on as yet largely unchallenged conventions of attributing Islamic metalwork, which generally favour an association with Iran. This method is flawed, because the attribution of a ewer is based merely on a comparison with typologically or stylistically related artefacts, which in their turn are neither datable nor attributable with certainty. So the whole process is circular.

Consequently, there is a strong possibility that many individual ewers have been wrongly attributed and, although of an "eastern" type, were actually produced in areas far further west such as Syria, Egypt, Spain or even Sicily.

Such speculations appear particularly valid with regard to those ewer types which survive in large numbers and seem to have been distributed over large geographical expanses and to have survived over several centuries. There is no obvious reason why such popular ewer shapes should have been favoured in the eastern lands of the Islamic empire and not in the west. This is particularly true for those types which emerged in early Islamic Mesopotamia and the regions immediately adjacent to it. After all, we know that both early Islamic Mesopotamia and indeed Iran dominated the Near East and particularly Egypt politically,

economically and culturally until the advent of the Fāṭimīds,²¹ and even subsequently, ties between Iran and Egypt remained close. Indeed, throughout the thesis there are, if as yet meagre, indications that several ewer types were known outside the areas of their densest concentration. This is incidentally true for both "western" and "eastern" groups.

Thus, one example of ewer type EMW 3, for example, can be associated with eastern Iran or Afghānistān. Several of the chronologically later pieces of ewer types MW 3 - 4 may come from Near Eastern lands rather than Iran. The case of MW 2 is particularly interesting in this respect. It can be shown that this type is depicted on a probably Fatimid silver plate. This fact must indicate that pouring vessels of this particular shape were known in 10th - 12th-century Egypt and perhaps even used in a royal context. This assumption should not come as a surprise considering the strong political, religious and cultural links which the Fatimids maintained with Iran at the time. One vessel belonging to ewer type MW 5 was probably executed in Fars in Iran around the 14th century.

As we stated before, vessels of ewer type ICAW 1 are probably largely of Iranian manufacture, but there are increasing indications that the type was used in the Near East as well. Ewer type ICAW 6, finally, was certainly a speciality of cities like Herat in 12th-/13th-century eastern Iran, but at least two examples exist which were undoubtedly produced in 13th-century Mesopotamian or Syrian workshops. Both economic and political factors must have facilitated the dissemination of certain ewer types, especially those whose practical quality could be of use to anybody irrespective of the geographical and cultural sphere they lived in.

Trade was certainly a major factor in this respect. Throughout the early Middle Ages the Mediterranean lands were characterized by a spirit of free trade, and goods travelled virtually without restriction between Iran, Mesopotamia, Egypt,

²¹ Scanlon 1973, p. 266.

Byzantium and the lands situated on the European side of the Mediterranean.²² Interestingly in this context, we know that Iranian textiles from Tabaristān and silks from Khurāsān were among the wares transported to the west and their popularity led to their being copied in Egyptian workshops by local craftsmen.²³

Considering that alongside the local textile industries Iran had a highly productive metal working industry, it stands to reason that its products, including some of the ewers discussed here, were also transmitted to the west along the same trade routes and may in fact also have been copied locally on occasion.

As for goods going eastwards, it has been shown that Muslim merchants had established trading colonies as far away as China by the 9th century²⁴ and thus there must have been opportunities for western vessels to reach the east. Much later, in the 13th century, we have one very specific proof that vessels with precious metal inlay were transmitted to the east, when Ibn Bībī reports the intention of a merchant from Erzerum to take his inlaid metal objects to the Mongol ruler in Turkestan, because they were worthy only of the treasure houses of the Great Khān.²⁵

Apart from trade, historical events may have helped the distribution of certain ewer types, too. Thus, the advance of Islamic armies into Iran and Central Asia during the first centuries of Islam and the subsequent intermingling of Islamic and indigenous Iranian and Central Asian cultures may have been one factor affecting the transmission of ewer types MW 3 - 4 from their original homelands around Mesopotamia to the east.

Economic and historical factors also effected the movement of artisans. Such people often moved far from their original abode in times of political troubles or economic hardship and migrated in search of new markets and customers. This may

²² Goitein 1967, pp. 61, 66.

²³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 50, 60-1, 161.

²⁴ Labib 1965, p. 16.

²⁵ Duda 1959, p. 193.

also have led on occasion to the production of various objects - including perhaps ewer shapes - in areas other than those the craftsmen originally came from.²⁶

Whatever factors may have influenced a dissemination of the ewer types discussed in this thesis, it must be an urgent task for future scholars to review the present study and attempt to disentangle the typological and decorative criteria used until now to assign a provenance not only to early Islamic metal ewers but other metal objects from that era as well. Only then can the question of the vessels' attribution be tackled afresh (and perhaps more objectively than has generally been the case thus far).

Apart from the possibility of wrong attribution, there may also be other factors that led to the numerical discrepancy between the three geographical sub-groupings proposed in this thesis. This assumption is based on the curious fact that both the Near Eastern ewer types and the Mesopotamian examples of ewer types MW 2 - 4 do not appear to postdate the 10th/11th century. This situation is noteworthy and particularly so with regard to the latter types, as one would expect such widely popular ewer shapes to continue to be produced above all in the areas of their origin, i. e. Mesopotamia and the immediately adjacent regions. This, however, is not the case.

Only one possible explanation can be offered for this puzzling fact so far: for one reason or another there may have been a decline in the popularity of the ewers in the areas of their origin. Indeed, within Mesopotamia itself conditions during the 10th century must have discouraged local crafts, metalwork production included. Thus, al-Maqqisī informs us that in the 10th century the decline of Baghdād as an economic centre began, and Baṣra, too, lost its importance as a commercial centre.²⁷ Local merchants, disheartened by rebellions and increasing exploitation by the government, left Baghdād and went to Egypt in pursuit of their trade.²⁸

²⁶ Goitein 1967, pp. 49-51, 56-7.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 11, note 53.

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

Such conditions must have had a discouraging effect on local trades, especially if Ibn Khaldūn's observations in this respect are anything to go by. He noted that crafts like that of the coppersmith for example can only flourish in a civilized and refined urban culture. A low level of civilization restricts itself to basic and absolutely essential crafts.²⁹ Apart from the disruption of local metalwork production as a result of such upheavals existing metal vessels may also have been melted down during these hard times and replaced by cheaper wares made of pottery or other materials.

Yet another explanation for the apparent numerical imbalance between "eastern" and "western" ewers may be sought in the material and cultural realities of both the Near East and Iran in early Islamic times.

To start with, the availability of base metal for the production of domestic utensils in general may have influenced the number of bronze and brass ewers available in both areas. We know that Iran had within its borders ample sources of tin, copper, zinc and other natural substances indispensable for the production of base metal objects. Consequently, it is not surprising that these natural resources should have been exploited on a large scale for the production of durable and perhaps comparatively cheap objects for both utilitarian and more specific tasks. Early Islamic Mesopotamia, itself without significant metal resources, may well also have profited from this wealth of metal sources in the neighbouring regions to the east, until the growing independence and the political fragmentation of Iran as a result of declining 'Abbāsīd power in the 10th century³⁰ may have disrupted supplies.³¹

In the Near East and Egypt, on the other hand, base metal objects may have played a somewhat lesser role than in the East, because the area was poor in base metals and had to import ores like iron, copper, silver, lead and tin.³² Gold, on the

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 304-5.

³⁰ Labib 1965, p. 12.

³¹ Interestingly enough, Syrian brass was apparently also exported to Iraq; cf. Prendergast 1973, p. 94.

³² Labib 1965, pp. 8, 11, 34, 293, 327-332.

other hand, was comparatively easy at hand, coming from Upper Egypt and the Sudan.³³ As far as we know today, larger domestic vessels, particularly those used in the kitchen, were probably made of hammered copper, while iron, lead and - in this context most interestingly - bronze were used mainly for small items such as locks, horseshoes, spoons, hooks, razors and needles.³⁴

At the same time, Egypt in particular had a considerable and high-quality industry turning out glass and pottery products. It seems feasible therefore that pouring vessels, whenever practical, were made of such materials. A short comment by the 11th-century author Nāṣir-i Khusraw that merchants, chemists and grocers used glass and pottery vessels to dispense their wares may underline that assumption.³⁵ In addition leather bottles and other containers were readily available for liquids such as water, oil, wine among others.³⁶

If one keeps in mind the availability of high-quality glass and pottery vessels on the one hand and the comparative scarcity of base metals in the Near East on the other, the lack of base metal ewers from that area seems explicable. Interestingly, there are in addition indications that cast bronze vessels were possibly not produced locally but imported. Thus, in the Fāṭimīd period Jewish merchants dealing in base metals and objects sent damaged pieces and even fragments all the way from Egypt to the south-western coast of India to have them either repaired or remade. In the latter case detailed instructions were given as to the appearance of the desired vessel to be fashioned from the recycled material. The finished product was then returned to Egypt.³⁷

Another explanation as to why Near Eastern ewers do not seem to outlive the 11th century can again be found by examining the historical events which befell Egypt and the neighbouring lands to the east around that time. Towards the late 11th century Egypt was hit hard by wide-reaching famine, economic hardship and

³³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 17, 148, 312-3; Goitein 1967, p. 157.

³⁴ Goitein 1967, pp. 108-9.

³⁵ Labib 1965, p. 318.

³⁶ *Ibid.*; Goitein 1967, p. 111.

³⁷ Goitein 1973, pp. 194-5.

social unrest.³⁸ On the political stage the fall of the Fāṭimīds in 1171 finally marked the end of Egypt's most prosperous era since the advent of Islam. Their art treasures were destroyed, looted, melted down or sold. The material decline that followed the fall of the Fāṭimīds may well have led also to the melting down of many precious and base metal objects used in ordinary Egyptian households at the time, and knowledge about their appearance was thus lost forever. As for the craftsmen who executed them, they may well have fled the harsh and dangerous conditions in their homeland in search of a more secure existence elsewhere. Interestingly, this decision was apparently also taken by Egyptian potters, to judge by the sudden halt of the production of Egyptian lustre pottery in the second half of the 12th century and the as sudden start of lustre production in Syria and Iran shortly afterwards.³⁹

If a migration of metalworkers such as gold- and silversmiths, coppersmiths and perhaps bronze casters from late 12th-Egypt really took place, the question arises whether they might not have partly found new employment in the then thriving petty states of the Jazīra and whether they may not in fact have helped to man those workshops which began to produce high-quality brassware with precious inlay around the very same time.⁴⁰

The investigation into the **function** of the ewers, finally, has proved difficult. The concrete use of the majority of ewer types remains unknown. Only in the case of ewer types MW 5 and ICAW 6 has their use as part of a washing set been established. As for the remaining ewer types, speculations with regard to their function were based on their shape and/or their individual structural and decorative features. Thus, ewer type EMW 1, to judge by its immediate reliance on late antique oinochoe forms, may have served as a drinking vessel and/or as a utensil for

³⁸ Goitein 1967, p. 215; Watson 1985, p. 26.

³⁹ Watson 1985, pp. 26, 28, 30.

⁴⁰ It is interesting to note in this context that al-Mukaddasī notes as early as the late 10th century A.D. that Syria, then largely under Fāṭimīd rule, and particularly Damascus were famous for the export of brass vessels; cf. Le Strange 1886, pp. 70-71.

washing. Ewer type EMW 2 has on one occasion been identified, without proof, as a container for olive oil. Apart from that, the ewers' function remains completely elusive. The fact that the vessels are lidded may indicate, however, that the liquid they contained had to be protected from impurities.

In the case of EMW 3, the suggested functions include ablution or washing equipment and containers for precious liquids such as perfume. Nothing can be said about the function of ewer type EMW 4. Nevertheless, a curious similarity with Byzantine water heaters has been noted. These also feature three feet and a similar bi- or indeed multi-partite neck. As for ewer type EMW 5, it has been suggested that the vessels may have been used for ritual ablutions or for wine drinking.

Nothing at all can be said with regard to the function of ewer type MW 1, but in the case of MW 2, it may have been related again to the serving of wine, and in this instance at least partly, perhaps, in a ritual setting. Ewer types MW 3 and MW 4 may well have been vessels with a broader use, judging by their practical profile and the large number of objects that survive. Personal hygiene and religious ablutions may have been among their functions.

The same is probably true with regard to ewer type ICAW 1. However, interestingly enough, it could be shown that vessels of this shape also served as money containers. Ewer type ICAW 2, characterized by zoomorphic spouts, may have been used for ritual banquets, and the same has been suggested for ewer types ICAW 4 and 5. Vessels belonging to ewer type ICAW 3, on the other hand, may not have been ewers at all, but may have served as lamps.

Although it is obvious that the true functions of the large majority of vessels remain ultimately elusive, even the preliminary suggestions summarized above indicate that ewers were used in a wide range of contexts. These were not only of a practical kind, but also, and apparently to a considerable extent, in ritual settings. This point is interesting and deserves further investigation in the future.

As for the discrepancy mentioned earlier between ewers associated with the Near East and Iran, one point is worth mentioning in this context: the Near Eastern

ewers as a rule seem to display a more structurally complex and fanciful profile in comparison to their eastern counterparts. This observation is intriguing, and if one keeps in mind the comments made above regarding the availability of base metals in the area, it is challenging to ask whether the use of Near Eastern bronze ewers as a rule may have been restricted to limited and specific tasks. Firstly, their shapes must have been comparatively difficult to produce and probably did not lend themselves to mass production. Consequently, their availability may have been comparatively limited - particularly if, as has been suggested above, they were indeed imported.

Both aspects in their turn may have made them expensive in comparison to those domestic vessels that could be mass-produced.⁴¹ The comparatively high value of Near Eastern bronze vessels has already been alluded to above in connection with the ewers' provenance and date. However, more research is undoubtedly needed to assess the true status of bronze ewers in the early Islamic households of the Near East.

⁴¹ Another factor may have been the lack of a well-structured, large-scale metal industry in the area which could have coped with mass-produced cast objects, as was the case in Iran.

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APPENDIX 3: Published Articles (Off-Prints)

The following two articles were published during the preparation of this thesis:

1. "The Iconography of Early Islamic Lustreware from Mesopotamia: New Considerations", **Muqarnas** VII (1990): 109-118.
2. "The Origin of Iranian Beak-Spouted Metal Ewers: New Considerations", **Persica** XIV (1990-2): 37-65.

NOTE: After consultation with the Faculty Office, I have decided to include off-prints of the articles concerned, both for reasons of tidyness and space. These were supplied to me by the publishers of the relevant journals.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF EARLY ISLAMIC LUSTERWARE FROM MESOPOTAMIA: NEW CONSIDERATIONS

Among the enormous range of early Islamic ceramics the monochrome lusterwares from Mesopotamia have always presented an enigma with regard to the deeper significance of their iconography. They show seated or standing human figures, frequently depicted with peaked caps and long hair, or various animals. Their execution is naive. The image, broadly drawn in dark luster on a white ground and enhanced by innumerable luster dots, is surrounded by narrow white margins.¹

In recent years, some of these images have been explained as Central Asian or Indian motifs of Buddhist origin, which might have found their way into Islamic lands on portable wooden panels, paper manuscripts, or even textiles, carried on the numerous caravans commuting between Asia and the West.² However, such an influx of artifacts was not the only way in which Buddhist culture could have been transmitted to the West. Since the early years of the Islamic conquest in the East, Muslim encounters with Buddhism had been much more direct. During their advances in the seventh century, the first Muslim conquerors had met with several Buddhist dynasties in Central Asia and in the eastern regions of modern Iran and Afghanistan.³ Their capitals and urban centers, such as Merv, Bukhara, Nishapur, Balkh, and Ghazni stunned the invaders by the abundance of religious art and architecture, like the stupas and temples adorned with religious sculptures, images, and frescoes, and the richness of Buddhist monasteries.⁴

In the years to come, Islam started to establish itself gradually in these areas, but in a way that still tolerated the coexistence of Buddhism to a very large extent and respected the cultural and artistic heritage of that religion.⁵ Thus, mosques were built next to the old stupas and the new Muslim population did not hesitate to visit such religious monuments and even to attend Buddhist ceremonies.⁶

The knowledge of Buddhist monuments and religious practices was, moreover, not confined to the local Muslims of Central Asia and eastern Iran. Even in the West, interest in the culture and art of Buddhism grew

with the number of reports and narrations brought back by Muslim soldiers and travelers. Subsequently, geographers and historians were sent as envoys to collect concrete information about all aspects of that ancient and still powerful religion, and these people then transmitted even more details of Buddhist aesthetics and art to the other parts of the Islamic empire.⁷ In addition, Muslims became interested in Buddhist objects, and as late as the tenth century various artifacts, including gold and silver Buddhas, were recovered from Buddhist sites or even especially manufactured to be sent to prestigious "collectors" all over the Islamic world.⁸ This interest continued over many centuries. Even when the religion itself had been virtually replaced by Islam in all eastern regions of the empire in the course of the tenth century, the remaining Buddhist monuments were not obliterated and continued to impress their artistic influence on Islamic works of art for some time to come.⁹

While thus a Buddhist influence may be reflected in some of the luster images, another very detailed and far-reaching interpretation explained such figures on lusterware as depictions of star constellations, adapted to the ceramic medium by Islamic craftsmen who relied very closely on the imagery handed down to them in Arabic translations and copies of ancient Greek "star books" and astronomical treatises, or on surviving ancient astronomical instruments such as celestial globes.¹⁰ These globes had their surfaces covered with images of the constellations whose purpose was to demonstrate and solve problems regarding the position of individual stars.¹¹ The iconography of these astral images was widely adopted by early Islamic scientists, both for the construction of new globes commissioned by Islamic rulers, many of whom were intensely interested in astronomy and astrology, and for illustrating astronomical treatises, such as the *Book of the Fixed Stars* by Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi written in 964 and, according to his own testimony, illustrated by images traced directly from a celestial globe.¹² It was this book which was to become one of the most famous and influential astronomical manuscripts in Islamic times, and its im-

ages became widely known, since the book ran into many "editions" over the centuries and the images were frequently repeated on subsequent Islamic globes.¹³

In addition, Sasanian paintings with figural representation of planets and constellations might have been yet another inspiration for the decorators of early Islamic lusterwares. Such images were known to have enhanced the throne halls of Sasanian rulers to create the illusion of a perfect reflection of the universe, with the king as representative of the omnipotent sun seated in the center. Various sources give us vivid descriptions of the rich layout of the throne hall of Khusraw Parviz, known as Taq-i Taqdis. The room was surmounted by a dome symbolizing the upper hemisphere. In its center the ruler was depicted as though enthroned in heaven, surrounded by the sun, the moon, and all the stars. Fixed stars, the twelve signs of the zodiac, and the seven planets, each running through its phase, seem to have been assembled in a kind of artificial planetarium moving against a fixed background and revolving around the throne below. The throne itself likewise revolved according to the seasons and zodiacal signs. The knowledge of such splendid cosmic spectacles in the Sasanian palaces may well have inspired contemporary and early Islamic craftsmen alike.¹⁴

All these considerations stress more or less foreign influences, which, originating in very different media, entered the decoration of the group of lusterwares under discussion here. However, if one follows up the astrological significance with which these lusterwares have been credited, another, and very direct, iconographical influence of strikingly similar style may also be cited, and this influence has hitherto been seriously neglected in the study of these wares. It derives from the very land in which the wares originated, namely Mesopotamia, and it even uses the same medium — pottery. An examination of the local atmosphere in which the lusterwares were executed makes this very clear.

In early Islamic Iraq — as in many other parts of the Muslim empire — a far-reaching preoccupation with astrology characterized many aspects of daily life. To a greater or lesser degree it affected the various communities settled in Mesopotamia. Paganism contributed most directly to the survival and spread of ancient astrological superstitions and beliefs. Its followers, found among the urban population and the Bedouins alike, continued long into early Islamic times to venerate the ancient native deities, all of them personifications of planets. Thus, Shamash represented the sun, Sin the moon, Bel personified the planet Jupiter, Nandi

and Nergal stood for Mars or Saturn, and the old Babylonian goddess Ishtar was identified with Venus.¹⁵

Many Mesopotamian cities — Edessa, Hatra, Nippur, and even Baghdad — were urban centers of planetary worship.¹⁶ Hardly any of them maintained such a prominent and long-lived importance in the survival of astral paganism as Harran, however. In this town positioned on the banks of the Balikh, a tributary of the Euphrates in northwestern Mesopotamia,¹⁷ the sect of the Sabians had worshiped the seven planets since at least the nineteenth century B.C., when Sin, the moon god and head of the pantheon, was called upon to ratify treaties.¹⁸ This deity, acknowledged here as in many other parts of Mesopotamia as the elevated chief god and supreme being, was venerated alongside the Sun, Ishtar (Venus), and the other planetary deities Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury.¹⁹ To each of these deities a particular day of the week was allotted, and this was the day on which he was to be venerated.

The temples built to these planets conformed in their arrangement in the temple district and in their hierarchical order proportionally to the distance separating each planet from the earth, an ingenious system elaborated carefully by the astronomers. Each individual temple had its own peculiar shape and color, and the idols allotted to each were of a particular substance.²⁰ Such a well-organized cult and closely knit pagan community were thoroughly immune to any missionary attempts from the outside, and it is not surprising that neither Christianity nor Islam had any significant impact on the local beliefs and practices.²¹ Indeed, as late as the ninth century the pagans of Harran obtained official permission from the Muslim governor in the area to continue the practice of their rites in public, and such tolerance ensured a survival of astral paganism as practiced by the Sabians in Harran long into the eleventh century A.D., if not later.²²

In addition to the old Babylonian gods venerated all over Mesopotamia, several foreign gods of Greek or Roman origin were incorporated in pagan worship from the early days of Hellenistic and Roman influence on the region (fourth century B.C. and first century B.C. respectively), because of their correspondence with the local planetary gods.²³ Zeus was seen as being identical to the ancient Mesopotamian god Bel, both of them standing for the planet Jupiter. Kronos represented Saturn, and Hermes was worshiped alongside the native deities Tir and Nabu — all three as personifications of the planet Mercury. Other Greek gods that were venerated included Oceanus and Apollo.²⁴

The worship of these divinities was officially practiced in special temples with large numbers of idols, but their veneration also figures constantly in daily life, to ensure the permanent protection of the gods or, better still, to avert their demonic and evil influence, which resulted, according to popular belief, from the harmful constellations of these various planets.²⁵ Indeed, according to ancient Babylonian beliefs, which were still alive and current in the seventh century, the turning of the planets in conjunction with the zodiacal constellations was responsible for the fate of the world and for the destiny of every single individual.²⁶ Such convictions resulted in the creation of awe-inspiring and negative images of the planetary gods, who were in time downgraded to evil demons. These had to be kept at bay to avert harm.²⁷

The means to achieve this were manifold, and required great skill, which could only be gained by studying the art of magic thoroughly for many years. The ability to exorcise demons had been considered a science since Sumerian times,²⁸ and subsequently an extensive literature developed, dealing with the subject in various ways.²⁹ Many texts were concerned with practical occultism alone, introducing the reader to magic symbols such as curious letters, circles, squares, or even figures as aids against various evil spirits.³⁰ One such document from the thirteenth century in its frontispiece even calls upon Solomon, the ultimate master in dealing with evil spirits.³¹ His figure is framed by the names of the four planets, Zuhra (Venus), Mushtari (Jupiter), Zuhal (Saturn) and 'Utarid (Mercury). These were intended to increase still more the magic power of the image and to release the influence of the zodiacal signs. Other manuscripts were meant to be amulets in themselves, containing the image of one particular demon and a relevant invocatory formula.³²

A third category of book, like the others still popular long after the Muslim conquest, comprises medical manuscripts, the science of medicine being one of the most important aspects of magic in the lands of the Fertile Crescent.³³ In these the ancient magical images and symbols of astral paganism (to a large extent based on ancient Babylonian figurations like those preserved in Harran by the Sabian community) survived and were employed as therapeutic talismans against the evil spirits of disease.³⁴ Thus a medical treatise called the *Book of Antidotes* in an edition of 1199 has a frontispiece with clearly pagan astral connotations (fig. 1). The center of this miniature is occupied by a lady, seated cross-legged and holding a crescent. Her image is



1. Frontispiece miniature from the *Kitāb al-Diryāq* (*Book of Antidotes*) copied in northern Mesopotamia in 1199. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. arabe 2964.

framed by a round medallion formed by two dragon-headed snakes, whose bodies curve and intertwine in four round knots. According to one interpretation, this image represents the moon goddess Ningal, wife of the moon god Sin; her attribute was the crescent.³⁵ The framing, interlacing snake bodies likewise belong to the ancient symbolic repertoire of Sumer and Babylon, where snakes were held in high esteem for their outstanding healing powers (fig. 2).³⁶ Here they were believed to be attributed to Ningal in her function as patron or even protector of the book to intensify the healing virtues of the manuscript and to enforce the representations of exorcism throughout the text, which were all directed against the multiple demons tormenting the human body and inflicting diseases on it.³⁷

Another study of the image suggests an even more concrete astrological context. Guitty Azarpay has suggested that the juxtaposition of the entwined dragons and the lunar emblem identifies the theme as a reference to the pseudoplanetary nodes of the moon's orbit, which were seen since Babylonian times as fearful dragons, whose heads and tails effected solar and lunar eclipses and were therefore of the utmost astrological importance. Here they threaten the moon, but their effectiveness is hindered by the magical knots in their bodies.



2. Libation cup of Gudea of Lagash, 2144–24 B.C. Paris, Louvre.

Perhaps this frontispiece was indeed a talisman against the astrological threats imminent at the time of its very production, because the date of the completion of the manuscript corresponds with that of the occurrence of a partial solar eclipse in the Near East on January 28, 1199.³⁸

The practice of magic according to the guidelines set out in manuscripts like these and the practical task of exorcising divine planetary demons lay in the hands of the sorcerers who could be found in many Mesopotamian villages and towns,³⁹ either as individual practitioners or as members of entire local families of sorcerers, men and women alike.⁴⁰ Their authority to expel demons and the style of exorcism employed to do so had been established since Babylonian times, when their predecessors acted as the well-respected white-robed priests of the native gods.⁴¹ In late Sasanian and early Islamic times they were still held in high esteem, and their social position within the community was a vital one. Therefore, notwithstanding their own adherence to paganism, they would be consulted by a clientele consisting of pagans, Jews, Christians, and later Muslims to satisfy the deeply rooted superstitions of these customers by means of special charms and amulets.⁴² These magic objects were prepared in complicated rituals, during which the sorcerer would stretch out his arms or raise them at the elbows in an attitude of

invocation or exorcism and mumble magical spells or chant the liturgy of demons.⁴³

However, the activity of sorcerers was not restricted to this kind of exorcism alone. They would also be consulted to heal clients by casting out the demons of disease or by releasing the patients from curses laid on them by demons and their evil human allies.⁴⁴ Thus at the end of the eighth century people were still frequenting local sorcerers to cure illnesses in the family.⁴⁵ Often the sorcerer was asked to take a hand in the social affairs of his customers, such as assisting a suitor in obtaining the permission of a girl's family for marriage.⁴⁶ It will be clear from these comments that sorcerers were an important group in Mesopotamian society, and their presence was usually required if not welcomed. Knowing this, many sorcerers would travel to important and well-frequented marketplaces to offer their services, which were eagerly called upon, even if they often included activities with a touch of the charlatan about them, like fortune-telling and conjuring tricks.⁴⁷

Although pagan sorcerers were the most typical consultants for the superstitious population of Mesopotamia and on the grounds of their widespread popularity were long tolerated even by the new Muslim overlords, they were not the only ones.⁴⁸ Many sorcerers adhered to the Jewish faith, and thus practiced their art on the basis of their religion, utilizing charms and amulets with letters of the Holy Name, passages of Holy Writ, or the ancient symbol of Solomon's seal, and invoking angels to fight off evil spirits.⁴⁹ Sorcerers could also be found among the Christian community, and in the fifth century A.D. Christian priests and deacons were known to practice pagan magic and prognostications on the basis of astrology and the motion of the stars.⁵⁰ Finally, after the victory of Islam, many sorcerers continued their art as adherents to the new faith, or newly converted Muslims would make pagan sorcery their professional domain by issuing protective amulets or charms and utilizing many other ancient magical methods and practices.⁵¹

A very popular way of exercising protective magic was the production of special incantation bowls of coarse pottery, onto which the sorcerers themselves would write protective spells against the planetary demons in order to avert harm from their customers.⁵² The use of such magical epigraphy was considered of greatest importance, not only to satisfy the superstitions of humble individuals in the villages and towns, but also as protection for the community as a whole. In later Islamic times many city gates still carried prominent

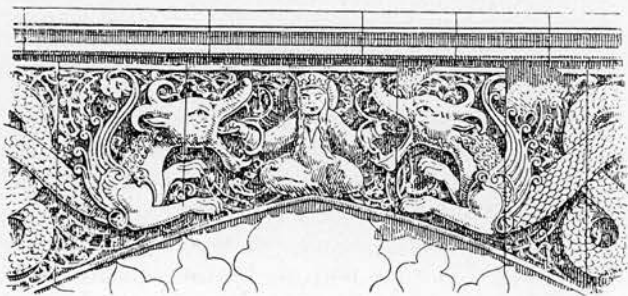
epigraphic panels, evoking good fortune and averting evil influences.⁵³

Often these protective written spells were completed or replaced by evidently magical images, as for example on the famous Talisman Gate in Baghdad, erected in 1221 (fig. 3).⁵⁴ Here, a crowned haloed figure is shown seated in crosslegged, frontal position, grasping the tongues of two dragons, which have entwined and knotted snake-like bodies, wings and feline forelegs. This image, known to the people of Mesopotamia since the times of Sumer and Akkad in many representations that were iconographically very similar, has most likely magical and astrological connotations.⁵⁵ The motif of the entwined ferocious dragons has been seen as a reference to the pseudoplanetary nodes of the moon's orbit, which were held responsible for the solar and lunar eclipse and were occurrences regarded with fearful awe.⁵⁶ The human figure, seemingly holding the two monsters at bay by grasping their tongues, lends itself to several interpretations. The crowned prince may represent the sun, trying to avert the ecliptic dragons or — if one takes the whole image as a single iconographic unit — he may be interpreted as a personification of the pseudo-planet Jawhar with the entwined dragons as attributes, again symbolizing the planetary nodes of the moon's orbit. Both iconographical subjects find numerous parallels in the decorative arts of the time, and they always appear in an astrological context.⁵⁷ Here, the effectiveness of these ecliptic forces has been curtailed by the knots in the dragons' bodies, enchaining, according to popular belief, any evil spirits and preventing the negative influences of the ecliptic demons from entering the city and its buildings.⁵⁸

Yet while in the thirteenth century and in later years such magical gate emblems may have been considered sufficient to avert evil forces and astral demons from the

whole community, in the early days of Islam, this task was effectively still a matter for the individual to undertake on his own behalf. He it was who took great care to ensure comprehensive protection against the negative influences of the planetary gods and their evil demons by commissioning magic charms and incantation bowls with exorcising spells from local sorcerers.

A large number of these incantation bowls have survived into modern time, most of them originating from the Mesopotamian town of Nippur. Their layout is very characteristic. In the center — often framed by a more or less accurately drawn circle — are depicted single figures representing either sorcerers or demons (fig. 4). Surrounding these images concentrically are the actual incantations, written in various dialects of Aramaic, the language of the large majority of people living in Mesopotamia in early Islamic times.⁵⁹ One such bowl, datable to the beginning of the seventh century A.D. (fig. 5), shows in its circular center the frontal figure of a demon, dressed in a long gown which is belted at the waist and expands to a characteristic triangular shape below. On his head he wears a black pointed cap. His feet are dressed in short, pointed boots, and his legs are chained together at the ankles. His arms are extended sideways and seem curiously bent at the elbows. The demon



3. The Talisman Gate in Baghdad, dated 1221. (From Friedrich Sarre, *Jahrbuch d. K. Preuss. Kunstsammlung*, 1905.)



4. Bowl from Tell Abu Sarifa with a figure of a sorcerer in the center. (From M. G. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*.)



5. Demon with ankles bound. On an incantation bowl from Nippur. Chicago, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, Nippur 10 NA, no. A33964. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

holds a torch-like device with a large flame or flag in his right hand, and a staff or spade in his left hand.

The exact significance of the objects is difficult to explain. Perhaps they are intended to symbolize the demon's or sorcerer's power over light and darkness, or, more concretely, they may represent attributes of one of the demonic planets such as Saturn, who even in later centuries is often depicted with various unidentified objects and in addition is shown wearing a pointed cap.⁶⁰ An identification of the image with this particular planet seems feasible, considering the special significance of Saturn in the superstitions of the period. From ancient times onwards, Saturn had often been identified as the planet of the Babylonian god Nirgal, who as Lord of the Underworld commanded the fear and resentment of the Mesopotamian population. The veneration of Saturn therefore sprang from the anxious desire to keep the influence of this maleficent planet at bay.⁶¹ Special magical ceremonies were held on Saturdays in pagan centers like Harran, and special orisons were murmured on these occasions. The one related by the fourteenth-century writer al-Dimashqi in his famous cosmographic treatise indicates quite clearly the devotees' attitude toward the venerated deity:

Be Thou sanctified, oh Lord
in whom evil is inherent,
who does no good,
since he represents misfortune and misery;
who, when he encounters the beautiful,
desecrates it;
who looks at the fortunate and by this look
devastates him.⁶²

In early Islamic times astrologers still considered Zuhā (the Arabic term for Saturn) as a star of great misfortune, whose malevolent influence was even greater than that of the equally feared planet Mars. Saturn was held responsible for ruin, grief, and devastation, and its conjunctions with Jupiter and other planets, or the second maleficent planet of misfortune, Mars, were observed carefully in order to be able to predict any imminent alarming alterations to the course of history.⁶³ Given the evil nature of this particular planetary deity, it seems obvious that the exorcism of its demonic aspects must have been of foremost importance to the superstitious population of Mesopotamia. Therefore its depiction on a magic incantation bowl like the one described here seems quite plausible.

A closer examination of the enigmatic objects held by the demon represented on the bowl seems to confirm their identification as attributes of the planetary deity Saturn. As already mentioned, the device in the figure's left hand seems to resemble a spade or shovel. Such a tool would correspond well to the planet's ancient association with the Mesopotamian god Nergal, the Lord of the Underworld, and, according to some sources, also the Master of the Fields in the earlier days of his existence in the contemporary pantheon.⁶⁴ But more than that, it seems that from early times a well-known iconographic formula might have associated the representation of the planet Saturn with a spade as one of his attributes.

Indirect proof for this can be found centuries later among the celestial illustrations of the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* by the thirteenth-century writer Zakariyya b. Muhammad b. Mahmud al-Qazwini, copied in the fifteenth century.⁶⁵ In this edition of the cosmographic treatise, which is undoubtedly based on much more ancient models in text and illustrations alike, Saturn is shown holding a shovel as his attribute (fig. 6).⁶⁶

Similarly, artifacts attributed to centuries far removed from the time that the incantation bowl was produced may also help to suggest an identification of the second object in the demon's right hand. Notwithstanding the device's obvious similarity to a flag or



6. The symbol of Saturn from a 15th-century manuscript of al-Qazwini's *Ajā'ib al-Makhlūqāt*. Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art 54.37R. Courtesy Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution.

torch, it may also symbolize a sickle — an attribute of Saturn still found, for example, on the interior of the lid of a pincase made by Mahmud b. Sunqur in 1281.⁶⁷

Whatever the deeper meaning of the image, the bowl that bears it, like many others, played a vital part in popular superstition among pagans and religious communities alike, and could be found in numerous households long into the early years of Islamic rule. It was placed upside down inside the walls or on the threshold to ensure the successful imprisonment of the harmful demon.⁶⁸ Even members of the new Muslim ruling class often safeguarded themselves against potential harm from evil spirits — not by trusting in their faith, but by adhering to certain pagan rites and the belief in the

power of magic. Even in the eighth century the Umayyad prince and later caliph Walid b. Yazid ensured the magical entrapment of any demons trying to enter the divan, or the throne hall, of his desert residence Khirbat al-Majjar by having specially designed mosaics with magical knot designs placed on the thresholds of both rooms.⁶⁹ Similar knot designs were employed in the churches of Syria and Palestine in those days, a clear indication that the magic residues of pagan times were eagerly incorporated into Christian worship as well.⁷⁰ With the gradual spread of Islam such pagan beliefs were certainly reduced to some extent, but nevertheless among large numbers of the population the old superstitions, and with them the constant resorting to magic, remained common even after their conversion.⁷¹

Given this state of mind among the people of early Islamic Iraq, it seems quite probable that ancient magic objects and images survived for a long time under the new faith, and moreover started to influence local arts and crafts produced under the new Islamic rulers. The medium most receptive to those influences must have been pottery, since it was indispensable in daily life and therefore produced in many workshops all over Mesopotamia for a large, predominantly local clientele. Evidence that such ancient magical features were adopted on the pottery of Mesopotamia in the early Islamic period can be found in the decorative schemes of many large watercoolers of porous, unglazed clay, adorned with molded, incised and barbotine ornament.

These vessels, known as *habb*, could commonly be found standing in the courtyards of ordinary Muslim houses or set upright in the ground underneath the houses to drain moisture from the surrounding soil.⁷² The earliest extant Islamic jars of this type — attributed to the ninth century — often carry friezes of several saucer-eyed female figures in long skirts and long-necked bird-headed monsters,⁷³ applied to the surface in wet clay by hand and, more characteristically, in the barbotine technique, i.e., by using a pipette.⁷⁴ These mysterious figures can be traced back directly to the pottery of Babylonian and Assyrian times, where they appear in very similar fashion and are likewise executed in barbotine. Their iconographical significance also remained unchanged throughout the centuries. The female figures represent the ancient goddess Ishtar and the mythical animal the long-necked beast Sīrūsh, depicted on the Ishtar Gate in Babylon.⁷⁵

The fact that Islamic potters up to the twelfth century perpetuated ancient pagan images on their wares shows once again that the old gods retained enough magical

and astrological significance to be considered indispensable in daily life. These storage jars, although probably manufactured for practical use in the first instance, might well have been used for magical purposes as well, not unlike the specially prepared incantation bowls.⁷⁶

Among the contemporary pottery of early Islamic times, the monochrome lusterwares certainly claimed a much more important position and may not have been intended for the wear and tear of daily use, considering their exquisite execution and their bold luster decoration. However, it is a piece from this category of Mesopotamian ceramics that may once again yield evidence for the survival of local pagan images of the type discussed above. It seems to show that incantation bowls and other objects were adapted to a new ceramic context with a now predominantly Islamic background.

The object in question (fig. 7) is a large luster bowl with a naively drawn figure, apparently a man who carries in both hands a large flowing banner, which covers most of the bowl's upper half. Three areas — two of them circular at the front and center of the banner, and one rectangular at the back — decorated the standard. The large circle contains an inscription to be read from the top. This may be read **الملك** (dominion). The figure, which is shown walking sideways to the left but



7. Early Islamic monochrome luster bowl. Paris, Louvre, MAO 23.

with a frontal head, is flanked on the left by two large, superimposed half-palmettes and to the right by a vertically positioned bird, most likely a peacock, to judge by its large head ornament and its extensive tail feathers. All these major decorative motifs are surrounded by narrow white margins and set against a background of densely placed dots.⁷⁷

Several details of this bowl seem to establish a link with the pre-Islamic pagan incantation bowl mentioned above. The first clue lies in an interesting similarity between the two main figures. Both wear gowns, which expand to a curious triangular shape below the waist, and pointed hats with slightly concave sides. The cap of the Islamic figure shows in addition a long tress with an angular forehead below. This motif is characteristic of many other Abbasid luster figures. Although these details do not occur on the incantation bowl under discussion, they can be found on a related contemporary piece. This piece depicts a sketchily drawn, bearded figure with a curious headdress terminating in a long wavy tress and displays the very same treatment of the forehead underneath the cap (fig. 8). Other possible similarities can be found in the attributes of both fig-



8. Bearded figure with long hair on an Aramaic incantation bowl from Nippur. Chicago, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, P59773/N39454. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

ures, and it seems tempting to see the exaggerated banner on the luster plate as a free and out-of-context interpretation of the original torch-like device of the pagan demon.

Finally, the general design of the luster bowl may derive its ultimate inspiration from the same source. At first sight the characteristic white margins around the broadly drawn motifs and the densely dotted background appear highly innovative. However, if one keeps in mind pre-Islamic prototypes such as the popular incantation bowls, this treatment might also have been derived from them. The central figures are usually enclosed in more or less accurately drawn circles indicated only by thin lines and drawn against a white background. The remaining space on the bowls is filled with densely written script, which appear from a distance as irregular dots. The treatment may have inspired the layout of the Islamic bowl, but the design has been greatly modified and abstracted in accordance with new tastes and attitudes. By the ninth or tenth century the ancient superstitions may well have sunk to the level of popular folklore, which often in turn must have resulted in a loss of context.

However, a certain degree of superstition may still underlie the iconography of the luster piece. Perhaps it is an astrological background which led to the depiction of these particular images. Many other luster plates and objects have direct connections to classical star and planet images, as Dr. Zick-Nissen has shown, and in general, astrology retained a major role in medieval Islamic society. The inscription — if the reading is correct — seems to underline the possibility that this piece might still have some magic significance even if it has now acquired an Islamic undertone. The craftsman may have intended to evoke some supernatural support, presumably for his customer, in order to reinforce the latter's power.

Given the various parallels between pre-Islamic Aramaic incantation bowls and the early Islamic luster dish under discussion — both from Mesopotamia — it seems feasible to suggest that apart from the various indirect foreign influences on monochrome lusterwares there might have been a very direct continuous iconographic tradition of adapting local pagan images to a new Islamic context.

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PEETERS – LEUVEN

THE ORIGIN OF IRANIAN BEAK-SPOUTED METAL EWERS New Considerations

Ulrike Al-Khamis, Edinburgh

From as early as the 10th century A.D. a well-known group of Islamic bronze and brass ewers appears among the metalwork generally attributed to the eastern fringes of Iran, modern Afghanistan, Turkestan and Central Asia¹.

The ewers — some of them cast, but most of them hammered and assembled from up to eight different parts — were executed basically in two major types. One of them — dating mainly from ca. the 10th to the 12th century — is characterized by a squat, nearly spherical body, which can in some cases be fluted. It carries a cylindrical, downward tapering neck, which ends above in a long, clearly demarcated and obliquely rising spout (fig. 1)². The oblique ridge, which visually separates spout and neck, is applied in order to conceal the point where the spout joins the neck. A similar ridge runs around the lower end of the neck, just above the shoulder, and is marked either by a circular or hexagonal collar. Three small loops on spout and neck may originally have held chains to attach to the ewer's lid.³

The second type, belonging principally to the 12th/13th centuries, generally has a slightly flaring cylindrical body, sometimes resting on a foot, a straight neck on a flat shoulder and — characteristically springing from the lower neck — a narrow, upward-turned lip spout. The upper part of the spout and its actual tip are often covered, the former by a metal plaque often with a crouching repoussé animal on top, the latter by a small pierced filter.⁴ A simple handle runs from the upper part of the neck to the side of the body. The form of the cylindrical body can either be plain — probably the oldest

¹ E. Baer, *Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art* (Albany 1983), pp. 95, 99; M. Aga-Oglu, "The Use of Architectural Forms in Seljuq Metalwork", *Art Quarterly* VI (1943): p. 92; G. Fehérvári, *Islamic Metalwork in the Keir Collection* (London 1976), p. 56; M. Abu'l-Faraj al-Ush, "A Bronze Ewer with a High Spout in the Metropolitan Museum of Art", *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. R. Ettinghausen (New York 1972): pp. 189-98.

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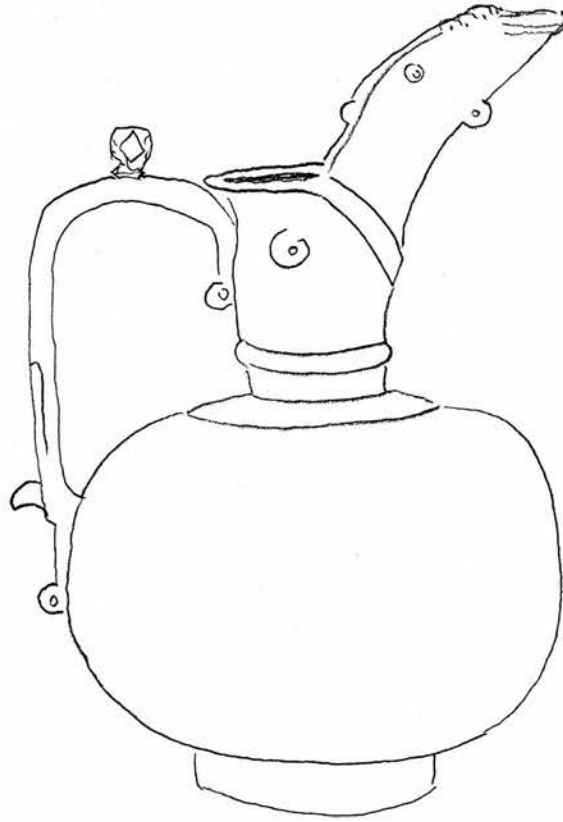


Fig. 1. Early Islamic Bronze Ewer. After James Allan, *The Metalworking industry of Iran in the Early Islamic Period* (Oxford 1976), fig. 30 no. B/1/1.

treatment of this type — or fluted, the latter type including convex or concave faceting and convex flutings alternating with triangular ribs (fig. 2).⁵ Among the rich ornamental decoration on many of these ewers, the application of embossed repoussé animals and birds on the neck, the upper part of the lip spout and around the edge of the shoulder is a feature peculiar to objects of this type.⁶

When one examines these two types of ewer, it is remarkable that all of them, despite numerous differences with regard to shape and decoration, share one feature: a high neck with an obliquely rising, upward-pointing spout.

⁵ Aga-Oglu, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-97.

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 92f.

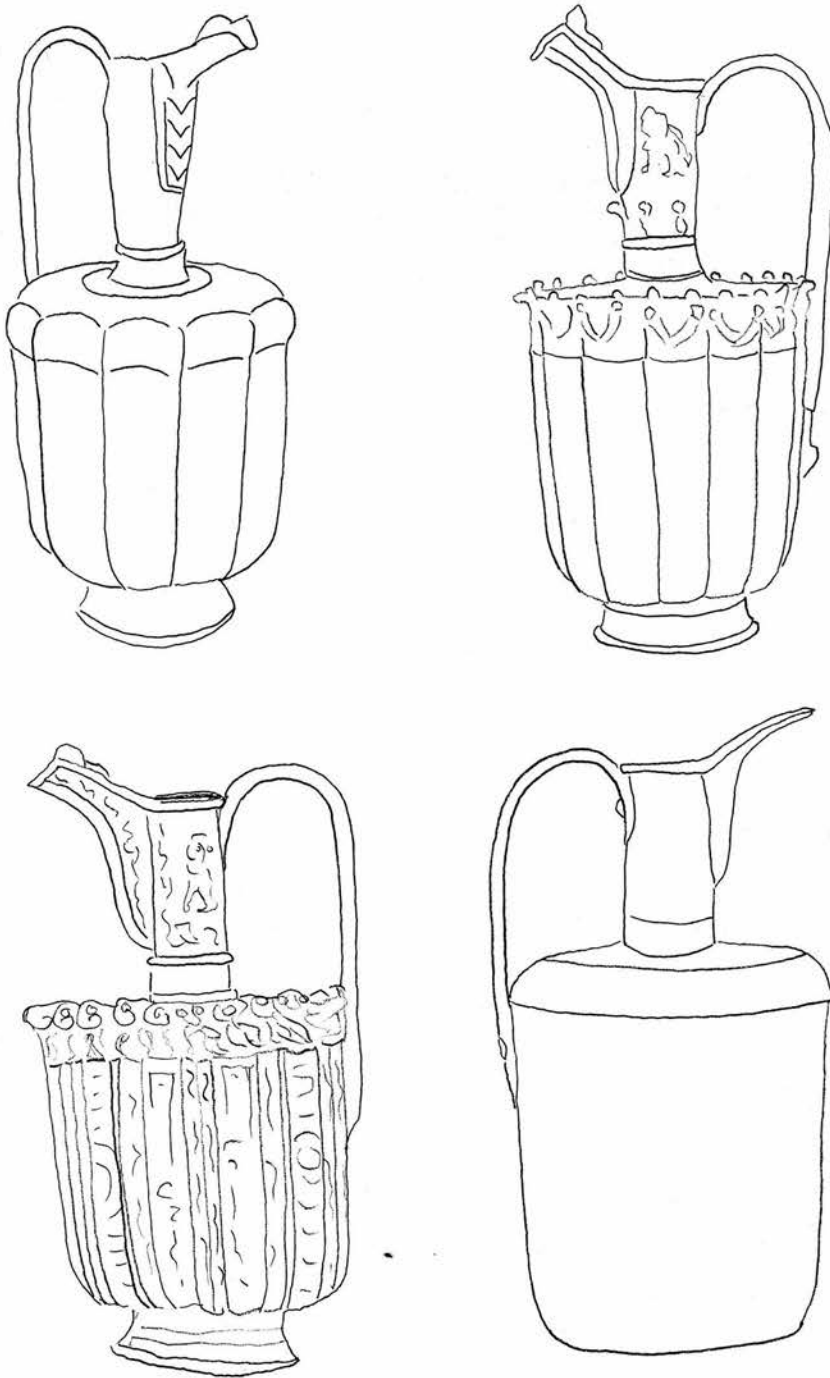


Fig. 2. 12/13th century Bronze and Brass Ewers. After Allan, *op. cit.*, figs. 31 no. C/2/2 & 32 nos. C/3/b/7, C/3/c/2 & C/3/d/2.

Vessels with such spouts seem to appear suddenly in the eastern regions of the Islamic empire, to which they can be attributed on the basis of several excavations, around the late 10th century A.D.⁷ Before that, no predecessors among the well-known ewers of the early Islamic and Sassanian periods have been cited so far as their apparently innovative shape is concerned.⁸ Nevertheless, despite the apparent lack of direct ancient models in the genre of ewers, Aga-Ogly succeeded in relating the ewers with cylindrical bodies and either plain or variously faceted surfaces directly to the contemporary architecture of Seljuq tomb towers. Such buildings are still extant in many parts of Eastern Iran and Central Asia. These monuments show a striking similarity in their layout to that of the bodies of these ewers. Thus, some towers' elevations consist of simple cylinders. Others show the use of convex tori, or alternating tori and triangular ribs. Yet others are polygonal structures.⁹

Notwithstanding the importance and validity of these observations so far as the artistic background of the ewers is concerned, another enigmatic feature of their design needs to be explained, which — as mentioned before — has no direct predecessor or artistic model at all in early Islamic and Sassanian times, whether in Iran or in any other part of the Muslim empire. This is the spout.

Common to all the ewers belonging to this large and manifold group is the high neck with a peculiar upward-pointing spout, rendered in various ways but basically following the same general concept. This functional as well as artistic detail apparently appears suddenly in the 10th century and the subsequent distribution of ewers with such spouts seems to coincide fairly closely with the rise of the Islamic Turkish dynasties in the East, such as the Qarakhanids (992-1211), The Ghaznavids (977-1186), the Ghurids (ca. 1000-1215) and eventually the Great Seljuqs (1038-1194).¹⁰ Yet even in the original homelands of these dynasties, namely modern Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, no similar ewers among the local metalwork objects seem to survive from pre-Islamic times.¹¹ Only when one turns to the West and examines the vessels for pouring made there from the earliest times, an ancient and very interesting parallel appears. This observes the principle of a spout obliquely rising from the neck in a strikingly similar way. Indeed,

⁷ Excavated examples come from Maimana in Afghanistan, Kawat Kala in Khwarazm, Ghazni and sites in Khurasan. See: U. Scerrato, "Oggetti metallici di età islamica in Afghanistan II. Ripostiglio di Maimana", *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* N.S. 14 (1964): pp. 673-714; S.P. Tolstov (ed.), *Materiali Khorezmskoy Ekspeditsii* Vol. 1 (Moscow 1959), pp. 158f, fig. 7; Vol. IV (Moscow 1963), pp. 193-197, fig. 1; B. Rowland, *Art in Afghanistan* (London 1971), no. 109, p. 140; S. Maslennitsyna, *Persian Art in the Collection of the Museum of Oriental Art* (Leningrad 1975), p. 193, no. 58.

⁸ One related pre-Islamic green-glazed pottery ewer was published by Shinji Fukai. It was dated to the 6th century or 7th century A.D. and attributed to the Iranian highlands. Unfortunately, however, the mouth area has been repaired extensively, and therefore the original appearance of the area remains unknown. For this reason the present shape can not safely be used, for the time being, in an attempt to trace pre-Islamic predecessors of the ewer type under discussion. See: S. Fukai, *Ancient Persia* (New York, Tokyo and Kyoto 1980), p. 40 no. 109, pl. 109.

⁹ Aga-Ogly, *op. cit.* pp. 92-97.

¹⁰ Fehérvári, *op. cit.*, p. 56; C.E. Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties* (Edinburgh 1967), pp. 111, 115, 181, 184.

¹¹ For the pre-Islamic history of the Turks in Central Asia see E. Esin, *A History of Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Turkish Culture* (Istanbul 1980).

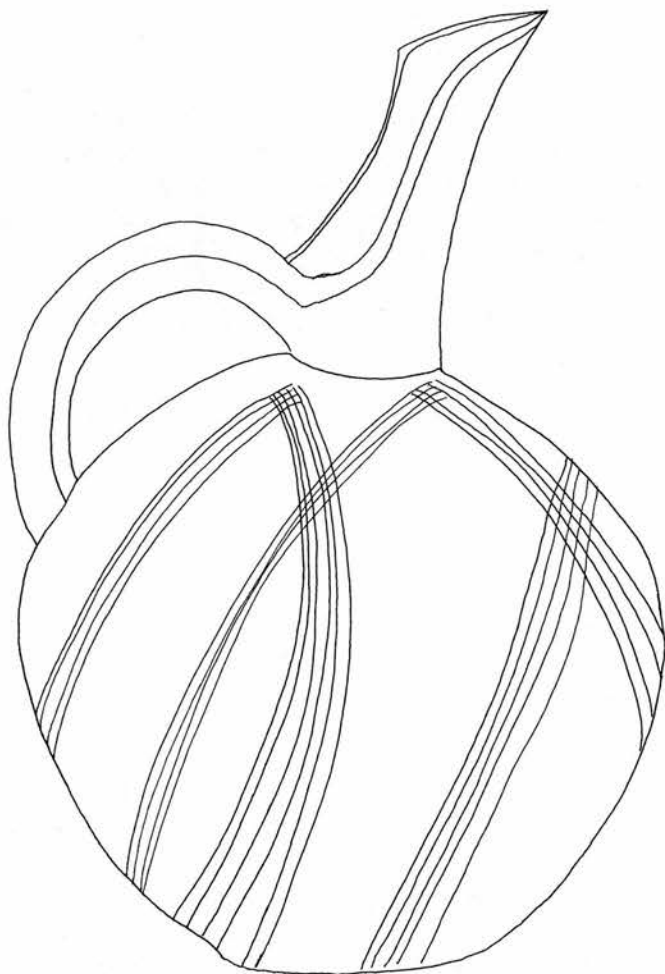


Fig. 3. Pottery Ewer, 2800-2500 B.C., Western Turkey. After J. Boardman, *Die Keramik der Antike* (Vienna 1984), p. 98.

ewers with such spouts were extremely popular and very widely distributed in Asia Minor and the Mediterranean regions from at least the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C. (fig. 3).¹² From that time dates also an early or even pre-Hittite ewer, which was

¹² J. Boardman, *Die Keramik der Antike* (Vienna 1984), p. 98; H.R. Hall, *The Civilization of Greece in the Bronze Age* (London 1928), p. 49; Very similar beaks also occur on ancient neolithic vessels characteristic of Eastern Longshan in China; but firstly, the shape of the vessels is very different with its body divided into three lobes on three short legs, and secondly, the whole type seems slowly to disappear as early as the Bronze Age. See J. Hughes (ed.), *The World Atlas of Archaeology* (London 1985), p. 261; K.C. Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China* (New Haven and London 1977), p. 164 fig. 73, p. 181 fig. 83, p. 226 fig. 104.

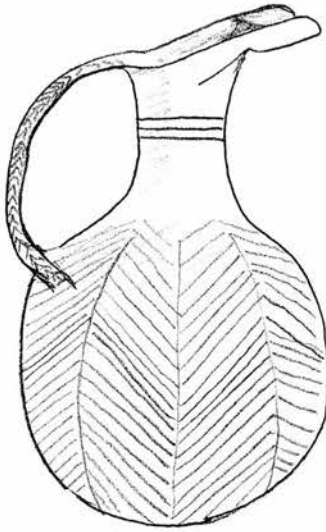


Fig. 4. Gold Ewer, Alaja Hüyük, 3rd. millennium B.C. After H.F. Seton-Lloyd, *Early Anatolia* (London 1956), pl. 5.

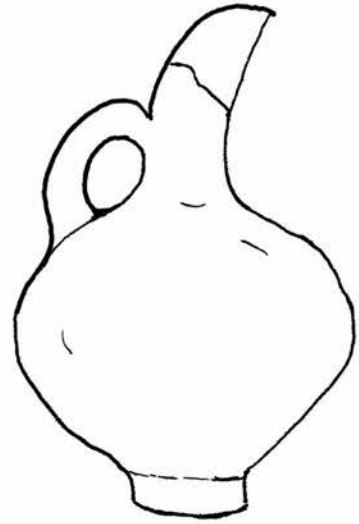


Fig. 5. Pottery Ewer, Alaja Hüyük, ca. 1600-1200 B.C. After Z. Koşay, *Ausgrabungen von Alaja Hüyük*. (Ankara 1949), pl. XXVI.

unearthed in Alaya Hüyük in Eastern-central Anatolia (fig. 4).¹³ It was hammered from fine gold sheet-metal and decorated with embossed fluting, like several other metal jugs found with it. But not only metal objects of this type have survived. Hittite ceramic vessels of similar shape are also abundant. Alaja Hüyük has also produced beaked ewers made of clay and covered with a brownish red engobe (fig. 5). Here, the large and slightly broader spout rises from a bulbous globular body on a low footring — a striking resemblance to the first type of Islamic ewers under discussion.¹⁴ Ewers of this type persisted for a long time and survived throughout the Old Hittite Empire down to the 15th century B.C., as several varieties of that period show (fig. 6).¹⁵ Even the rapid decline of the Hittite empire after ca. 1200 B.C. did not spell the disappearance of this popular ewer shape; rather was it perpetuated, as by then it had been incorporated into the cultural heritage of many other neighbouring states and civilizations. Thus, a pottery ewer from Gordion in the North-western part of Asia Minor, dated ca. 700 B.C., gives evidence of the Phrygians' preference for this ancient style, which under their rule was executed not only in clay, but also in bronze (fig. 7).¹⁶

¹³ H.F. Seton-Lloyd, *Early Anatolia* (London 1956), pp. 35-38, p. 97, pl. 5.

¹⁴ Z. Koşay, *Ausgrabungen von Alaja Hüyük* (Ankara 1949), pp. 30, 37, 47, pl. XXXI, pl. LXXXVIII, pl. XXXII.

¹⁵ G. Conteneau, *Manuel d'Archéologie Orientale* Vol. IV (Paris 1947), pp. 2192, figs. 1226, 1230.

¹⁶ E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst Anatoliens von Homer bis Alexander* (Berlin 1961), pp. 100-102, p. 80 fig. 47; K.R. Maxwell-Hyslop, "Bronze lugged Axe or Adze Blades", *Iraq* XV (1953): p. 72.

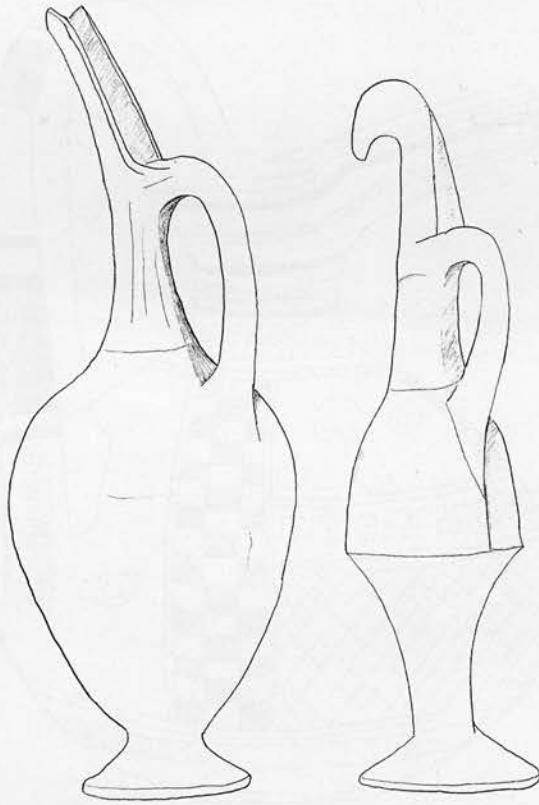


Fig. 6. Hittite Beak-Spouted Pottery Ewers, Alaya Hüyük. After G. Mann & A. Heuss (eds.), *Weltgeschichte. Eine Universalgeschichte*, Vol. I (Frankfurt and Berlin 1979): p. 717.

However, the distribution of beak-spouted ewers was not confined to Asia Minor. Variants of this type appear on the Greek islands and the mainland as well. Dating from as early as ca. 1800 B.C. is a terracotta jug which was excavated in Phaistos, on Crete (fig. 8).¹⁷ From about the same time comes a probably hammered bronze ewer found in Cyprus (fig. 9).¹⁸ The transmission of beak-spouted ewers from the East to Greece and the Greek islands could be easily explained. From the first appearance of Greek tribes in Greece ca. 2000 B.C. there were direct contacts between their archaic art and that of the

¹⁷ P. Amiet et al., *Art in the Ancient World* (London and Boston 1981), p. 403 fig. 335.

¹⁸ H.W. Catling, *Cypriot Bronzework in the Mycenaean World* (Oxford 1964), pp. 150f, pls. 19f.



Fig. 7. Phrygian Beak-Spouted Ewer from Gordion, Pottery, ca. 700 B.C. After E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst Anatoliens von Homer bis Alexander* (Berlin 1961), p. 80 fig. 47.

East; the eastern influence had been largely absorbed and transmitted by the great culture of ancient Greece. With the rise of the Mycenaean rulers on the Greek mainland these manifold contacts increased and intensified. Greek settlers arrived in Asia Minor as early as the 16th century B.C. to establish trading posts, which after the decline of the Hittites gradually led to a comprehensive colonisation of the coastal areas and the foundation of proper towns.¹⁹ Such encounters between West and East quickly resulted in manifold artistic and cultural contacts on both sides, and, with regard to the distribution of the ewer type under discussion, it would not be surprising if it had become absorbed into the expanding corpus of Greek artefacts. It would be only one of the proofs that Greek art

¹⁹ Akurgal, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-8; G. Hafner, *Kreta und Hellas* (Munich n.d.), pp. 5-7.



Fig. 8. Pottery Ewer, Phaistos, ca. 1800 B.C. After P. Amiet et al., *Art in the Ancient World* (London and Boston 1981), fig. 335.

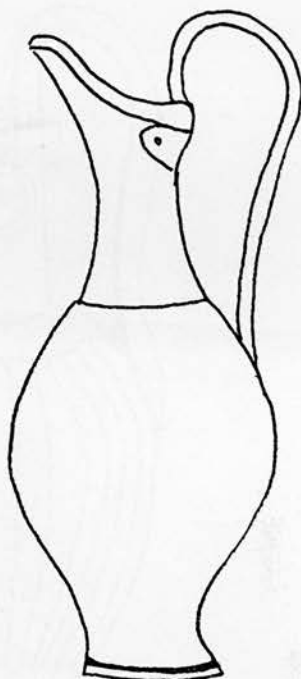


Fig. 9. Bronze Ewer, Cyprus, ca. 1800 B.C. After H.W. Catling, *Cypriot Bronzework in the Mycenaean World* (Oxford 1964), pls. 19f.

was infiltrated to a considerable degree by elements of Anatolian and especially Hittite culture.²⁰ Two interesting examples of the Greek varieties of beak-spouted ewers originate from the Attic peninsula and date to the 5th century B.C. (fig. 10). Both pieces are made of black-glaze pottery, one with convex fluting, the other plain. Both owe their origin to metalwork, a fact proved by the application of fluting, by the large round studs at the junction of handle and mouth and by the fillets above the elaborated feet.²¹ The appearance of these two pieces is interesting, as they seem to bridge the centuries and relate directly to the Islamic ewers with plain or faceted cylindrical bodies.

²⁰ It has to be noted at this point that D.K. Hill in her discussion on the long-beaked bronze jugs in Greece thinks it wise not to assume a direct ancestry of the vessels from Asia Minor as far as the Greek pieces are concerned, because directly linked pieces are missing. However, she acknowledges that direct derivation might still be established. See D.K. Hill, "The Long-Beaked Bronze Jug in Greek Land", *American Journal of Archaeology* 66 (1962); p. 57; Akurgal, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

²¹ This particular vessel shape — executed in bronze or pottery — was called "prochoos" by Homer, and according to him it was used for washing hands at meal times. Ritual usage has also been suggested. It appears for the first time around the 6th century B.C. and continued at least down to the 5th century B.C. Finds of the bronze ewers — mainly in fragments — have been made all over the Greek mainland and lands under Greek rule: Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-63, pls. 15 & 16. For the pottery ewers see H. Vickers et al., *From Silver to Ceramic*. The potter's debt to metalwork ... (Oxford 1986), p. 11

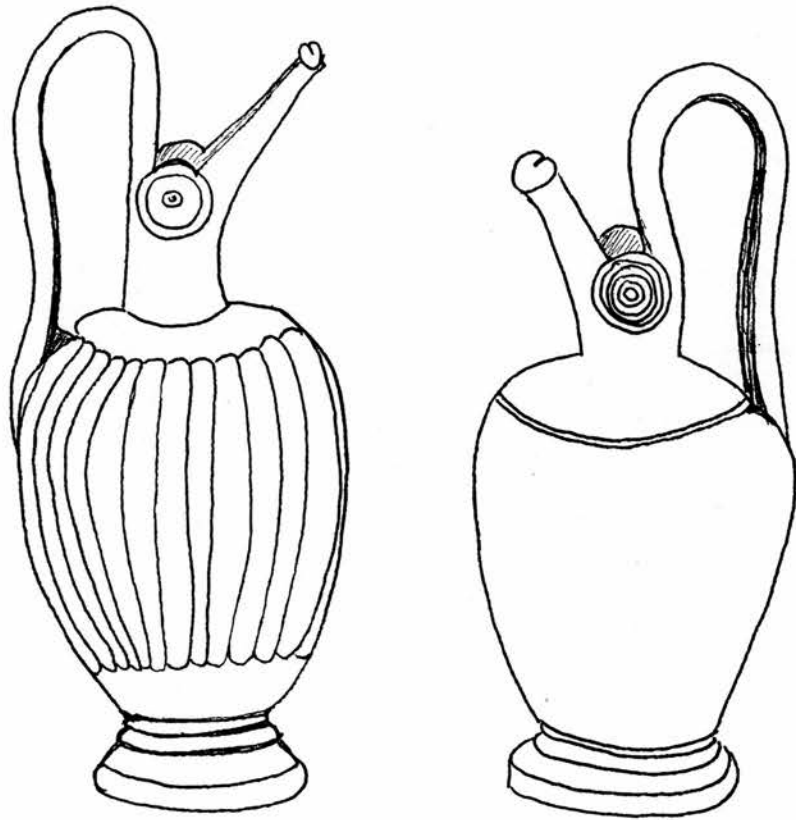


Fig. 10. Attic Black Glaze Pottery Ewers, Greece, 5th century B.C. After Vickers et al., *From Silver to ceramic* (Oxford 1986), pl. 11.

The distribution of these and other beak-spouted ewers — executed in metal and pottery — soon covered large parts of the Greek mainland, and by the 4th century B.C. they had spread north to the Balkans and Southern Russia.²²

Around the same time another type of beak-spouted pottery ewer — again based on a Greek metal prototype — was produced in Falisca in Italy (fig. 11).²³ From as early as the 8th century B.C. the Greeks had established economic strongholds and settlements in Sicily and Lower Italy, and for them these areas were part of their own cultural sphere.

²² I. Krauskopf, "Die Aufnahme fremder Kultureinflüsse in Etrurien. Etruskische Kannen und griechische Kannen der Form VI im 5. Jahrhundert", *Schriften des deutschen Archäologenverbands* Vol. 5 (Cologne 1981): p. 153.

²³ Vickers, *op. cit.*, pl. 10.

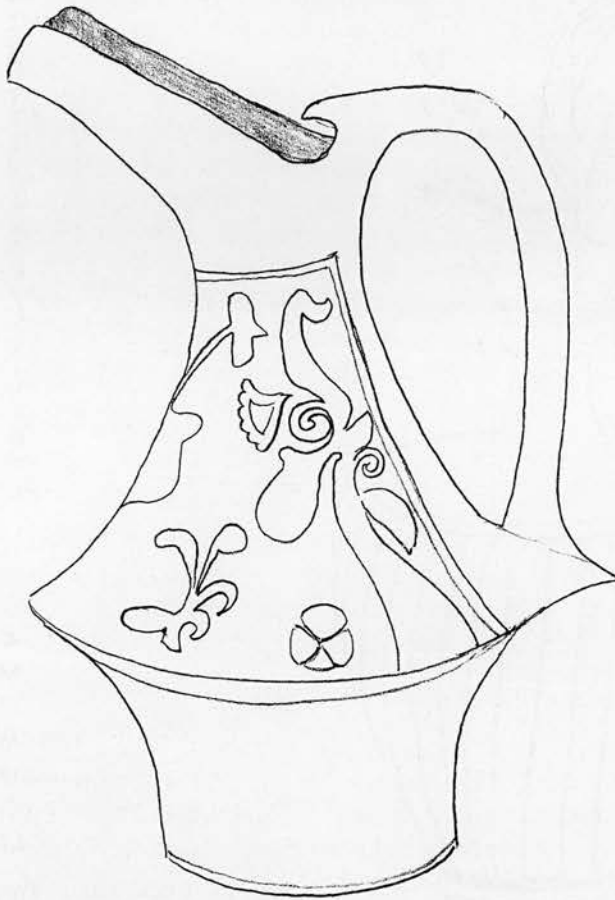


Fig. 11. Pottery Ewer. Falisca, Italy. After Vickers, *op. cit.*, pl. 10.

The native inhabitants became hellenised and perpetuated Greek culture and art.²⁴ The ewer from Falisca is merely one example of such Greek cultural infiltration into Italy.

Yet, Central and Upper Italy were excluded from this process of complete Hellenization. Here, between the Arno and the Tiber, the Etruscans — an enigmatic people perhaps originating from Asia Minor — had settled by the 9th century B.C.²⁵ They established a remarkable culture, strongly influenced by oriental features infiltrating their country from Asia Minor by way of Syria, Rhodes, Corinth and Italy or via the

²⁴ *Die Etrusker — Volterra. Kunst, Kultur, Geschichte. Archäologische Kostbarkeiten aus dem Museum Guarnacci, Volterra.* Katalog zur Ausstellung Bergisches Museum Schloss Burg an der Wupper, 25.5.-24.8.1986 (Solingen 1986), p. 10; V. Valentin, *Illustrierte Weltgeschichte* Vol. 1 (Cologne 1976), p. 129.

²⁵ K.R. Maxwell-Hyslop, "Urartian Bronzes in Etruscan Tombs", *Iraq* XVIII (1956): pp. 163, 165f.

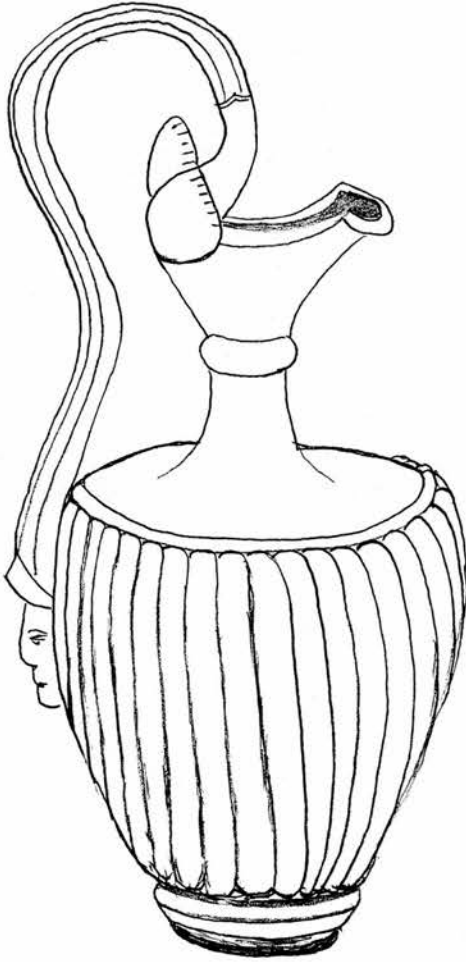


Fig. 12. Black Glaze Pottery Ewer, Etruscan, Volterra. After *Die Etrusker - Volterra*, exhb. cat. (Solingen 1986), fig. 29.

Black Sea as well as by elements of Greek art, by then predominant.²⁶ A lively, largely maritime trade developed between the Etruscans and the Greeks from as early as the 9th century B.C. and subsequently such economic links led to the increasing import of Greek products, including once again various types of beak-spouted ewers.²⁷ One example, produced in Volterra in the 4th century B.C., copies closely the ewers of black-glazed pottery from the Attic peninsula noted above, although in this case with a much shorter and less steep spout (fig. 12).²⁸ Another Greek type of beak-spouted ewer with squat

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 151, 161, 162f.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 161, 166.

²⁸ *Volterra*, p. 40.

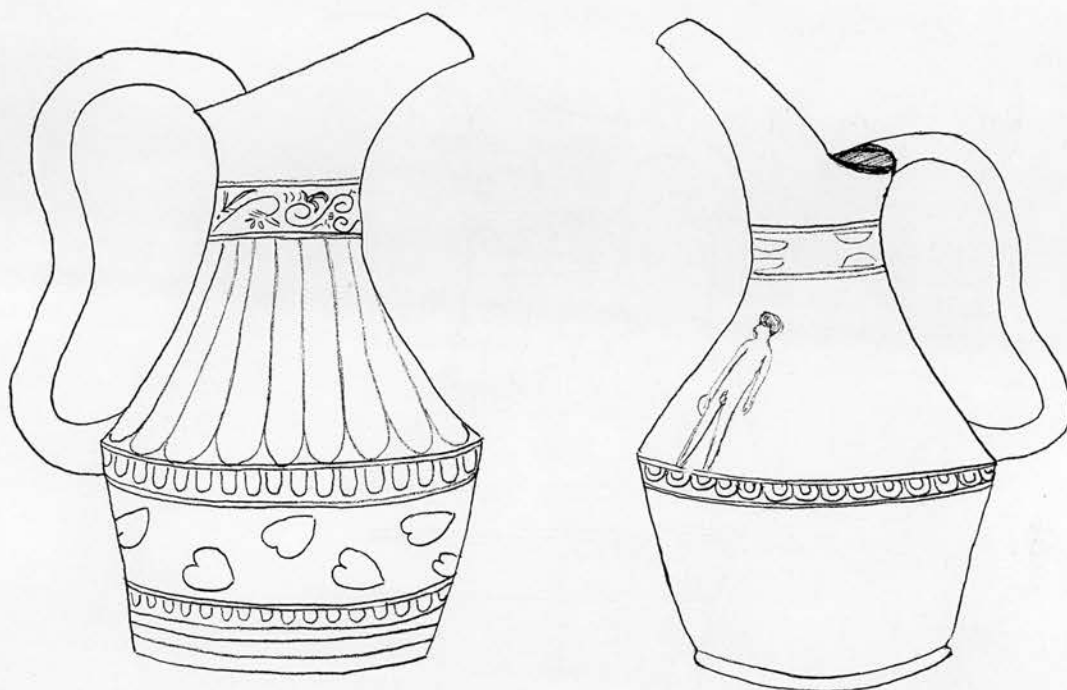


Fig. 13. Greek Pottery Ewers from Ferrara/Spina and Nola/Northern Italy. After I. Krauskopf, "Die Aufnahme fremder Kultureinflüsse in Etrurien", *Schriften des deutschen Archäologenverbandes* Vol. 5 (Cologne 1981), pls. 5 & 6.

angular body and steeply rising spout also finds an Etruscan counterpart (fig. 13 & 14).²⁹ Beak-spouted ewers in pottery and metal were produced in the Etrusco-Greek workshops of Central and Northern Italy as early as the 6th century B.C. and subsequently new varieties were developed which, in their turn, were exported to Southern Italy, re-entered a Greek environment and were copied by Attic and other Greek craftsmen.³⁰

However, Etruria's foreign contacts were not restricted to Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean alone. Through various trade routes crossing the Alps, the Etruscans had also established economic relations with the Celts, a people who had entered the northern Alpine zone around 1000 B.C. and had occupied large parts of Western Europe by the

²⁹ P. Jacobsthal and A. Langsdorf, *Die Bronzeschnabelkannen* (Berlin 1929), pl. 14 for the Etruscan piece; Krauskopf, *op. cit.*, p. 149, pls. 5 & 6 for Greek examples.

³⁰ Krauskopf, *op. cit.*, pp. 147, 151, 154; R. Pittioni, "Der urgeschichtliche Horizont der historischen Zeit", *Weltgeschichte. Eine Universalgeschichte*, ed. G. Mann and A. Heuss, Vol. 1 (Frankfurt and Berlin 1979): p. 305.

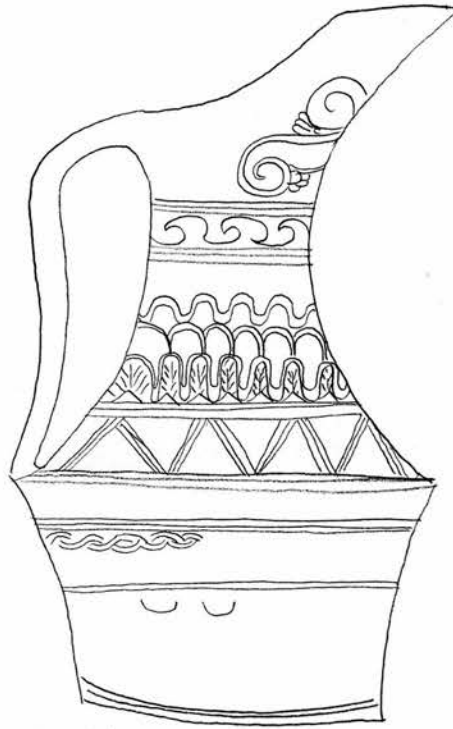


Fig. 14. Etruscan Bronze Ewer, Besseringen.
After P. Jacobsthal and A. Langsdorf, *Die Bronzeschnabelkannen* (Berlin 1929), pl. 14.

5th-4th centuries B.C.³¹ Their original centre of habitation was probably situated in the region of Western and Southern Germany, and from there they had penetrated into France, Great Britain, the Alps, the Balkans and even Asia Minor.³²

Active trading with the Etruscans probably began around 600 B.C. and among the objects subsequently imported into Celtic territories were Etruscan and Greek beak-spouted ewers, executed mainly in bronze.³³ The oldest extant example of a beak-spouted ewer found north of the Alps dates from before 570 B.C., when it was interred into a grave in Vix (Côte d'Or) near Dijon.³⁴

³¹ T.G.E. Powell, *The Celts* (London 1958), p. 10; Valentin, *op. cit.*, p. 177; Pittioni, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

³² Valentin, *op. cit.*, p. 177; Pittioni, *op. cit.*, pp. 305ff.

³³ P. Jacobsthal, *Early Celtic Art* (Oxford 1944), p. 106; Powell, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 94.

³⁴ Pittioni, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

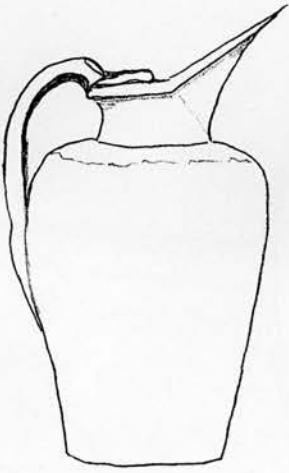


Fig. 15. Celtic Bronze Ewer, Klein Aspergle, ca. 500-400 B.C. After T.G.E. Powell, *The Celts* (London 1958), fig. 19.

In the following centuries Etruscan imports became predominant, and many varieties of bronze ewers with obliquely rising spouts entered the households of Celtic nobles for use in banquets. Later they accompanied their former owners to their tombs as indispensable utensils in their lives in the world beyond.³⁵ Yet the Celts were not content with merely adopting foreign vessels in their daily lives. Native workmen — perhaps at first aided by immigrant Greek and Etruscan workmen — started around 500 B.C. to copy the precious Etruscan beak flagons and gradually added artistic details peculiar to their own taste.³⁶ The earliest Celtic pieces still rely very closely on their Etruscan models, like a bronze ewer found in a tomb in Klein Aspergle and dated ca. 500-400 B.C. (fig. 15).³⁷ Its similarity to its Etruscan counterpart manufactured in Italy is remarkable (fig. 16).³⁸ Another piece from the Ticino in Switzerland still respects the Etruscan model, but already blends Celtic and local elements in that it obtains the shape by means of several bronze sheets pieced together, leaving the joints exposed.³⁹ Details like the mouthpiece, the handle and its attachments, as well as the terminals on the rims, are cast (fig. 17).⁴⁰

³⁵ Powell, *op. cit.* p. 10; Jacobsthal, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

³⁶ Jacobsthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 106, 107, 155; Jacobsthal and Langsdorf, *op. cit.*, pp. 61, 64-66; Powell, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

³⁷ Powell, *op. cit.*, pp. 259f., fig. 19; Jacobsthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 201 no. 385, pl. 188.

³⁸ Jacobsthal and Langsdorf, *op. cit.*, pl. 3 no. 27. This ewer is from Vulci in Italy.

³⁹ Jacobsthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 203 no. 393, pl. 196.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 203.

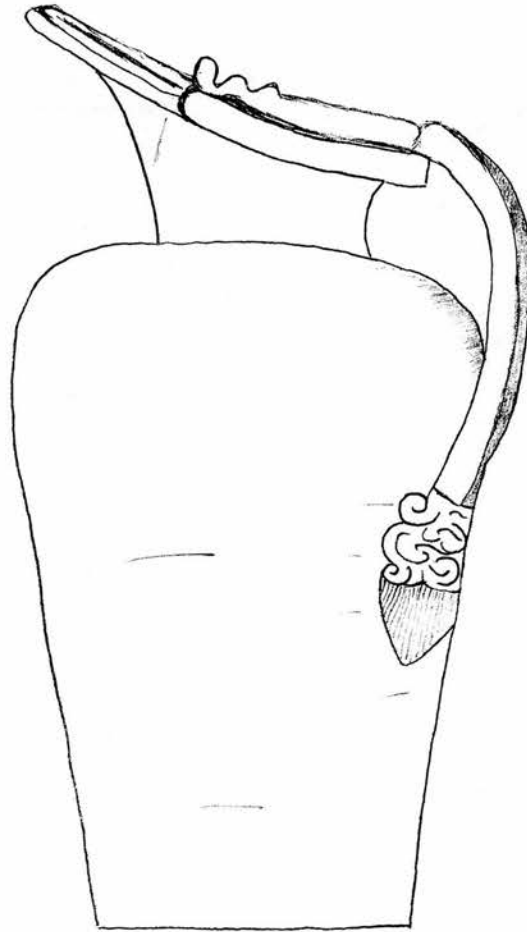


Fig. 16. Etruscan Bronze Ewer, Vulci. After Jacobsthal and Langsdorf, *op. cit.*, pl. 3.

After 400 B.C. Celtic art developed an increasing self-reliance which led to a synthesis of ancient Greek, Etruscan, Oriental and local elements, and the development of a very individual style.⁴¹

Naturally, the development of the ewers under discussion was not excluded from such trends. New shapes were developed — executed both in pottery and bronze — and the ancient models underwent transformations to correspond to the new artistic requirements of the Celtic culture. A most remarkable example of a Celtic bronze ewer found at

⁴¹ Powell, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 100; Jacobsthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 109, 156.



Fig. 17. Bronze Ewer, Ticino, Switzerland. After P. Jacobsthal, *Early Celtic Art* (Oxford 1944), pl. 196 no. 393.

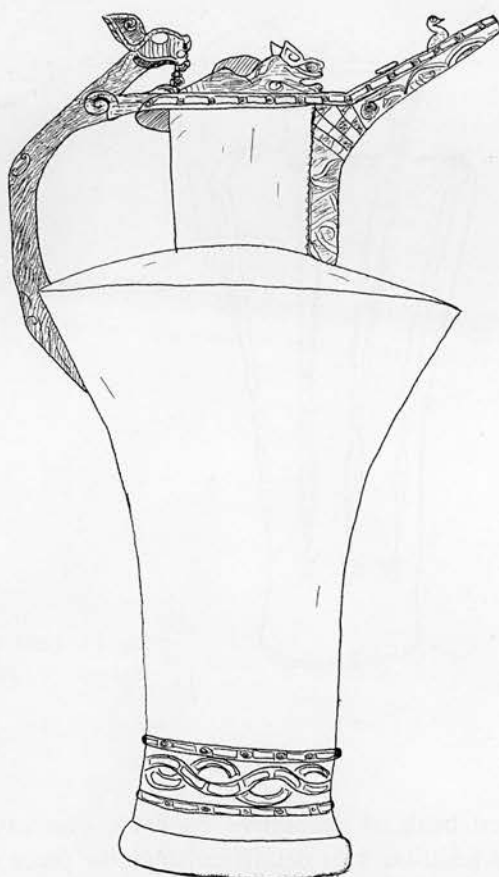


Fig. 18. Celtic Bronze Ewer, Niederjeutz, Moselle. After J. Moreau, *Die Welt der Kelten* (Stuttgart 1958), pl. 81.

Niederjeutz on the Moselle and dated to the 4th-3rd centuries B.C. deserves special attention, as it represents the mature work of a gifted Celtic artist and introduces a shape which is eminently Celtic (fig. 18).⁴² This ewer is made up from separately wrought parts. Its concave, over-elongated body, which carries a slightly convex shoulder set off from the body, and with a sharp break, was hammered from a single sheet of bronze. The foot was attached by nails, as were the decorative bands. These were rendered in openwork and attached to the lowest part of the body, to the neck as a throat-shield and to mouth

⁴² Jacobsthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 200f.

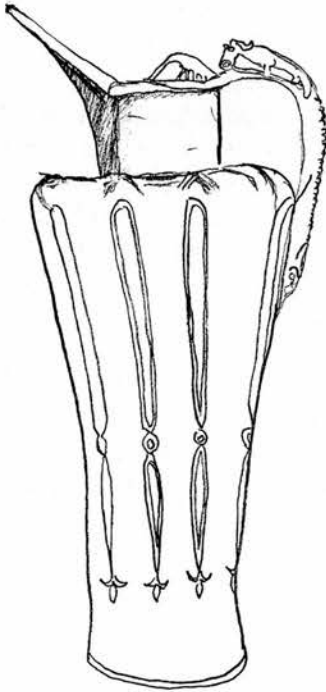


Fig. 19. Celtic Bronze Ewer, Hallein near Salzburg. After Jacobsthal, *op. cit.*, pl., 184 no. 382.

and beak as decorative covers.⁴³ The cavities in the openwork are filled with coral. In addition, cast details enhance the piece even further. A duck sits near the edge of the spout, its eyes inset with coral. Two crouching quadrupeds occupying the sides of the lower rim are cast in one piece and then rivetted on, as is the handle, which is rendered as a stylized beast.⁴⁴ A closely related piece originating from the so-called “chariot-grave” discovered in Duernnberg near Hallein in Austria is given still richer treatment (fig. 19). The body, seemingly hammered in one piece with its neck and spout, shows slim oblong panels in relief, with corresponding almond-shaped extensions below; these enclose the whole body vertically. The rim was soldered on, separately, as was the zoomorphic handle, which was cast in one piece with its lower attachment and the terminals on the rim.⁴⁵

When one examines these Celtic ewers, it seems amazing that in numerous aspects — notwithstanding great diversities in shape and decoration — they instantly recall certain cylindrical-bodied Islamic ewers executed over a millennium later. Like the latter, the bodies are often hammered out of several pieces of sheet metal and — like the second

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 200ff.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

Celtic piece mentioned above — often display repoussé work. The appearance of the spout is very similar, too, and even the details of the animals on the mouth and particularly on the tip of the spout find their counterparts on several Islamic pieces.

The Celtic beak-spouted bronze ewers, which also appear in pottery, seem to mark the ultimate peak in the artistic evolution of the ewers under discussion in the West. Already from the 4th century B.C. the increasing penetration of Rome into Central and Western Europe had led to a gradual decline in Celtic culture and art and eventually to its replacement by new Roman art forms and objects.⁴⁶ The concept of the beak-spout rising obliquely from neck or mouth, however, seems to have been perpetuated to some extent in the design of some Roman vessels. Before long it became fashionable in the former Celtic lands, and it survived up to the 3rd century A.D. Yet the high artistry of the Celts was but rarely matched in this period and was often replaced by mere mass production.⁴⁷

At this point it is worth recalling the observations made above. Ewers with large spouts rising from the neck or mouth appear for the first time in the 3rd millennium B.C. in Asia Minor, and were executed both in metal and pottery. They subsequently appear in several varieties which are widely distributed over the Eastern Mediterranean, Greece, then Italy and eventually Central Europe, where they are still popular in the 3rd century B.C. if not for a still longer period.

Consequently, it seems that ewers with one particular “spout concept” — with all its modifications — could survive 2000 years or more and be distributed over thousands of kilometres. Now, the foregoing historical survey of beak-spouted ewers in the West suggests that certain aspects of these Western ewers — and especially the concept of the obliquely rising beak-spout — seem strangely related to the much later Islamic vessels attributed to Eastern Iran and Afghanistan. Therefore it seems worth examining whether this type could have travelled to the East as well, and survived somewhere in those regions until it was introduced into Iran by the Turks during the 10th century. They might have known the type already in pre-Islamic times in the land of their origin, i.e. Central Asia and Turkestan.

It has already been indicated that in the heartlands of Islam, including Iran proper, practically no predecessors of the ewers under discussion have yet been found.⁴⁸ This fact may of course be due merely to the random nature of survivals or to lack of excavations, especially if one considers the economic and cultural relations which existed since the earliest times across the Iranian lands. Particularly after the triumphant conquest of Iran and its eastern neighbours by Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C., the systematic development of trade relations between Hellenism in the West and China in the East by ca. the 2nd century B.C. led to the establishment of a direct major trade route — later to be known as the famous Silk Road. This led from Seleuca via Ecbatana and Rayy in northern Iran to Bactria and further to the trade capitals of the Han dynasty.⁴⁹ This direct link

⁴⁶ Pittioni, *op. cit.*, pp. 308ff.

⁴⁷ Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 62.

⁴⁸ See Footnote 8.

⁴⁹ F. Altheim, “Erste Beziehungen zwischen Ost und West”, *Weltgeschichte. Eine Universalgeschichte*, ed. G. Mann and A. Heuss, Vol. 2 (Frankfurt 1979): pp. 618ff.

between the Mediterranean and Asia must certainly have seen much direct or indirect cultural and artistic transmission. However, with regard to the ewers under discussion — as mentioned before — no evidence has so far been found. This notable fact — notwithstanding the lack of surviving pieces and the limited research which has been done on this topic — may indicate that any probable route of transmission from the West — at least at first — did not lead to the East through the Iranian lands. Perhaps it rather went to the north through the steppes, at a time when the southern trade routes were not yet in regular and frequent use, i.e. perhaps before the 3rd or 2nd century B.C.⁵⁰ From antiquity onwards, this area had been an ethnic, economic and cultural entity, enabling communications to be established between areas as far apart as Western Europe and China, and thus engendering easy and rapid interchange of artefacts, trade objects and even individual motifs.⁵¹

Precisely how and when such a transmission could have taken place is at the moment impossible to establish. However, most probably it was not the result of isolated contacts or through a massive transfer of ethnic groups or cultures. Rather was it a gradual process, with objects or motifs filtering through from West to East — or vice versa — with the help of the Eurasian nomads, who, roaming the steppes from the Carpathians to Asia created a common sphere of cultural influence.⁵² Thus opportunities for direct contact between the lands in which beak-spouted ewers originated and the lands inhabited by the nomads of the steppes were manifold from ancient times. From ca. 1000 B.C. the numerous pastoral tribes of the steppes, all ethnically related but with mixed Indo-European and Turkic elements, adopted large scale transhumance from their homelands in Inner Asia. Several of them moved to the west, and by the 2nd half of the 8th century B.C. one of the most powerful contingents, the Scythians, took possession of the Armenian regions and the Southern Russian steppes.⁵³

These areas had been important centres of metallurgy since neolithic times, producing abundant copper, silver and gold objects. The Caucasus especially was a brilliant centre of cultured life during the Bronze Age and maintained connections with Mesopotamia and Asia Minor in the Hittite period, as well as with the Aegean culture.⁵⁴ Thus the Scythians had gained control over a culturally rich region, infiltrated by Hittite and Aegean culture, and perhaps in those days for the first time an encounter with metalwork and pottery produced by those civilizations could have led to a first acquaintance with beak-spouted ewers, which by then had become widely distributed in the West.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 618.

⁵¹ E.C. Bunker, "Sources of Foreign Elements in the Culture of Eastern Zhou", *The Great Bronze Age of China. A Symposium*, ed. G. Kuwayama (Los Angeles 1983): pp. 84, 91; R. Kerr, "The Tiger Motif: Cultural Transference in the Steppes", *Arts of the Eurasian Steppelands*, ed. P. Denwood (London 1978): p. 78.

⁵² Kerr, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁵³ Bunker, *op. cit.*, p. 84; G. Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia*. Handbuch der Orientalistik, 7. Abteilung, 3. Band, 1. Abschnitt (Leiden and Cologne 1970), p. 48; G. Borovka, *Scythian Art* (London 1928), p. 15; O. Jansé, "L'empire des steppes et les relations entre l'Europe et l'Extrême Orient dans l'Antiquité", *Revue des Arts Asiatiques* IX (Paris 1935): p. 9; M.I. Artamonov, *Treasures from Scythian Tombs in the Hermitage Museum Leningrad* (London 1969), p. 9; M. Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia* (Oxford 1922), pp. 10, 35f, 42; Esin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁵⁴ Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 18f, 21, 28, 32f; Borovka, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-18.

⁵⁵ Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

However, perhaps it is more likely that such knowledge was transmitted to the Scythians directly by the Greeks, who — as we have seen — utilized such ewers from at least the 6th century B.C.⁵⁶ From the days of the Scythians' first establishment in the region, i.e. the 8th century B.C., they had encountered large Greek settlements along the shores of the Black Sea.⁵⁷ These Greek colonies, which obviously retained strong ties with other Greek settlements in Asia Minor and the Mediterranean lands, immediately entered into intense economic relations with the increasingly expanding and powerful steppe kingdom of the Scythians.⁵⁸ Such close relations naturally also led to increasing cultural and artistic contacts, and by the 5th century B.C. local Greek craftsmen were working for a Scythian clientele. Moreover, Greek artefacts from the Greek homelands and from Asia Minor were imported in large quantities to the Scythian regions, among them Attic pottery, glass, silver and bronze vessels, and perhaps — it could be speculated — also ewers with obliquely rising spouts.⁵⁹ During these days of Scythian supremacy in the steppe lands, such Greek objects and even individual motifs gradually filtered through to the East as far as Bactria and even China, where purely Hellenistic bronze vessels may well have been known.⁶⁰

Bactria was certainly one of the Eastern regions that profited most from Scythian trade and must have been a willing recipient for Greek products of all kinds.⁶¹ After the invasion of Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C. this area had become a significant stronghold for the Greeks, and subsequently the increasing influx of Greek settlers led to a large-scale impact of their culture on the whole region they controlled.⁶² Subsequently, Hellenism flourished throughout Central Asia for centuries. Even when the area was sacked by perhaps Turkic tribes in ca. 130 B.C., the Greek spirit was not immediately broken, and down to the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D. the continuing activity of Greek art and culture show that, whereas the new rulers and their official culture were constantly changing, the substratum persisted largely unchanged and various religions, languages and traditions co-existed in a spirit of tolerance.⁶³ During these centuries the influx of Greek culture and art even from the outside must have been considerable, and certainly Greek, Hellenistic and perhaps other Western vessels — beak-spouted ewers included — could have reached the Greek territories in the east, either via the ancient trade routes to the north, or, from the 2nd century B.C. approximately, also via the newly established direct trade links along the Silk Route to the south.

⁵⁶ See Footnote 21.

⁵⁷ Borovka, *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 23.

⁵⁸ Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 44.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 55, 111f; Borovka, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Artamov, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 21, 29, 51; Rostowzew, *Skythien und der Bosphorus*, Vol. I (Berlin 1931), pp. 157, 186, 271, 323.

⁶⁰ G. Boroffka, "Wanderungen eines archaisch-griechischen Motifs über Skythien und Baktrien nach Alt-China", *25 Jahre Römisch-Germanische Kommission. Zur Erinnerung an die Feier des 9.-11.12.1927*, ed. Römisch-Germanische Kommission des Archäologischen Institutes des Deutschen Reiches (Berlin und Leipzig 1930): pp. 68f, 52, 65; Rostowzew, *op. cit.*, pp. 270f.

⁶¹ Boroffka, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 65.

⁶² Altheim, *op. cit.*, p. 617.

⁶³ Frumkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 53, 62; Altheim, *op. cit.*, p. 617; Esin, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

After this historical survey it might be worthwhile once again to highlight the historical events that might have engendered a transmission of beak-spouted ewers from the West to the East. When the first waves of nomads arrived in the Caucasus and surged as far as Asia Minor in the 1st millennium B.C., they encountered ancient Anatolian and Hittite art and culture — the cradle of beak-spouted ewers. Subsequently they entered into close economic and artistic relations with the Greek colonies around the Black Sea and established an overland trade route that might have enabled Greek and other Western artefacts, such as some of the ewers under discussion, to reach areas as far as Bactria and China, either as trade objects or as utensils newly adopted in nomadic life.

It has already been noted above that the occurrence of the first Islamic ewers with obliquely rising spouts in ca. the 10th century A.D. seems to coincide with the rise of Turkish dynasties in the eastern fringes of the Islamic empire. How, then, could beak-spouted ewers have found their way into the lives of the Turkish peoples? From ancient times the Turks, originating from the Altai mountains in Inner Asia, had — like their Scythian counterparts — been scattered over vast areas from Eastern Europe to present-day northern China.⁶⁴ And from the beginning they had been in close contact with the Scythians, whose influence even reached their ancient homelands in the Altai.⁶⁵ Thus beak-spouted ewers could, at some stage, have been transmitted from the Scythians, who had been in direct and long-lasting contact with the western homelands of these vessels, to the Turks. Yet it may perhaps be more likely that the Turks were introduced to this type of ewer in a region where it might have been in use among the sedentary population for some time and where large concentrations of Turks had long established themselves, namely, Bactria. As already mentioned, the tribes that first wrested this bulwark of Hellenism in the East from its Greek masters around 130 B.C. were probably of Turkic origin.⁶⁶ Turks subsequently settled in Bactria and were thus directly exposed to strong Hellenistic influence and artefacts, partly manufactured there, and partly — as mentioned before — imported. The following centuries saw an increasing influence of Turkic culture in the newly-conquered regions with a natural weakening of the ancient Greek traditions.⁶⁷

Hellenistic cultural and artistic residues remained, however, until as late as the 4th century A.D. and seem to have survived the various political upheavals and nomadic onslaughts.⁶⁸ In subsequent centuries, Turkic ethnic and cultural influences established themselves all over Central Asia as Turkic peoples spread from the Aral Sea and Khwarazm across the fringes of Eastern Iran and Afghanistan to Central India.⁶⁹ In the 3rd or 4th century A.D. the Kushan empire collapsed under the onslaught of the Sassanians and a new wave of nomadic people pressing into Central Asia from the Northeast.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Esin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 15, 8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 149f.

⁶⁸ Altheim, *op. cit.*, p. 617.

⁶⁹ Esin, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 63, 130-135, 149f.

⁷⁰ Frumkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 52; A. Belenitsky, *Central Asia* (London 1969), p. 110.

Eventually, the White Huns or Hephthalites — again of Turkic stock — founded a large empire corresponding roughly to that of the defunct Kushan state.⁷¹ This new empire, in its turn, fell in the mid 6th century A.D. to another contingent of advancing Turkic tribes, from which rose the most powerful and extensive Turkic state yet, the Turkish Khaganate, which was to cover a huge area from the frontiers of China to the Southern Russian steppes and eventually, after violent clashes with the Sassanians, also controlled Central Asia.⁷²

The centuries from the establishment of the first Turkish states until the appearance of the first Muslim forces in the late 7th century A.D. witnessed a great upsurge in the economic and cultural development of the areas under Turkish control. It seems that an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence among the various peoples living there, with their different languages, traditions and religions, prevailed. International trade flourished and an increasing number of prosperous cities displayed a rich material culture based on the ancient local heritage, but enhanced and gradually dominated by Turkish influences and artistic trends.⁷³ Since their early days in the Altai, the Turks had evinced a knowledge of and a taste for beautiful artefacts, among them textiles, painting and above all metalwork. The level of excellency they had attained in the skills of hammering, embossing, chasing, engraving and inlaying was remarkable.⁷⁴

Unfortunately, few such artefacts can today be safely identified as being of Turkish craftsmanship or at least executed in the lands under Turkish control like Central Asia, Eastern Iran and Afghanistan in pre-Islamic times. Moreover, many objects that may have been a characteristic part of life in those areas and may have revealed the nature of Turkish art between the 1st century B.C. and the 8th century A.D. have not come down to us.

One of the few pieces that can be tentatively linked with the artistic heritage of the Turks in Central Asia is a silver dish in the Hermitage in Leningrad, which has most recently been attributed to a Sogdian workshop active in Merv in the early 9th century A.D. (fig. 20).⁷⁵ In its centre a ruler, surrounded by a halo and wearing a fantastic winged crown, is seated crosslegged on a richly ornamented carpet, perhaps covering the actual throne carried by lions underneath. In the right hand he holds a drinking bowl. The ruler is flanked by two servants above and by two seated musicians below, who play the lute and the flute.

Notwithstanding this plate's undeniable dependence on Sassanian and Soghdian traditions with regard to technical execution and certain iconographical details⁷⁶, the depicted scene can be traced directly to Buddhist and Turkish conventions of ruler imagery and royal banquet scenes.

⁷¹ Belenitsky, *op. cit.*, p. 110; Frumkin, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁷² Belenitsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 110f; Frumkin, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁷³ Esin, *op. cit.*, pp. 130, 149f; Belenitsky, *op. cit.*, p. 112; Frumkin, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁷⁴ Esin, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁷⁵ B.I. Marschak, *Silberschätze des Orients* (Leipzig 1986), p. 79, pl. 30, pl. 32, p. 426 tab. no. 31, p. 429 nos 30 & 32.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 303.



Fig. 20. Silver Bowl depicting an enthroned ruler drinking in the presence of attendants and musicians, Soghdian work, Merv, 9th c. A.D. After B. Marschak, *Silberschätze des Orients* (Leipzig 1986), fig. 30.

From ancient times the rulers of the Inner Asian nomads — Altaic, proto-Turkic and Turkic peoples — were considered god-like and heavenly. As such, their depiction in art was approached in the same manner as that of divine figures, most typically the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas found in Buddhism, the most widespread religion among the Turks in pre-Islamic times. These images in their turn were based on Indo-Kushan

concepts on the depiction of the royal monarch, i.e. the Čakravartin.⁷⁷ All these representations showed the ruler seated frontally with ankles crossed.⁷⁸ According to Emel Esin this frontally squatting posture of the ruler symbolically maintained in Buddhist and Turkish tradition the equilibrium of the world and justice between all components of society, and all the elements of the world in personified form converged around him centripetally.⁷⁹ On the dish under discussion the monarch positioned thus holds a cup in his raised hand. He is attended by two standing attendants flanking him symmetrically and entertainment is provided by the two musicians playing the flute and the lute below. Following ancient conventions, all these figures create a circle around the prince, which is completed by the disposition of the two lion figures in between.

The setting of this scene indicates at first sight merely that a royal banquet is taking place. However, the ritual significance of this scene lies deeper still. Among the Turkic peoples various cultic cup-rites involving their chieftain were of the utmost significance. These were mainly performed on occasion of royal investiture and concurrent allegiance ceremonies. The ruler — with his vassals and servants aligned symmetrically around him — would be enthroned with his regalia, sitting cross-legged with ankles crossed in a pose of royal ease, which no one but he was allowed to use.⁸⁰ Before the cup was served to anybody else, he would receive the first bowl from his cup-bearer, who poured the drink from a special jug — “*sagra*” in Turkish — while a special orchestra including instruments like the lute and the flute would play ritually significant melodies.⁸¹ This cup was laden with symbolic significance. It contained “*soma*”, which was the traditional drink of the Indo-Kushan kings and was from ancient times considered a nectar bestowing immortality. According to Indian myths it was originally drunk by the legendary king of heaven.⁸² In the tradition of the nomads it was drunk in homage to the gods, while at the same time it symbolized the divinity of the monarch himself and his unique right to enjoy power over his lands. More generally the cup was also considered a symbol of life, which one drinks as the course of life continues and finally drains only at the time of death.⁸³

It is this very moment in the performance of the various Turkic cup-rites, which is often depicted in Buddhist and Manichaean Turkic art.⁸⁴ One example is a funerary stele executed by Turkish artists for the Koek Tuerk prince Bilge Kagan (d. 734) (fig. 21). Its composition — the frontally squatting prince with a cup in his hand flanked by two standing, symmetrically disposed attendants — directly anticipates the 9th-century

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*; E. Esin, “Turkic and Ilkhanid Universal Monarch Representations and the Čakravartin”, *Proceedings of the XXVI Congress of Orientalists* Vol. II (Delhi 1968): pp. 86, 93.

⁷⁸ Esin, “Čakravartin”, pp. 86, 103; E. Esin “And” — The Cup Rites in Inner-Asian and Turkish Art”, *Forschungen zur Kunst Asiens*, in Memoriam K. Erdmann (Istanbul 1969): pp. 225 no. 4, 245f.

⁷⁹ Esin, “AND”, pp. 231, 239; Esin, “Čakravartin”, p. 86.

⁸⁰ Esin, “Čakravartin”, pp. 97, 100, 106; Esin, “AND” pp. 224, 243.

⁸¹ Esin, “Čakravartin”, pp. 97, 101f, 99, 108; Esin, “AND”, pp. 229, 247.

⁸² Esin, “Čakravartin”, p. 106; Esin, “AND”, pp. 224, 226, 246.

⁸³ Esin, “Čakravartin”, p. 106; Esin, “AND”, pp. 228, 238.

⁸⁴ Esin, “AND”, p. 230 fig. 4A, p. 236 fig 9A as examples.



Fig. 21. Engraving on the sarcophagus of Türk Bilge Kagan (d. 734). After E. Esin, *A History of Pre-Islamic and Islamic Turkish Culture* (Istanbul 1980), pl. XLVIII/a.

imagery on the plate under discussion. More generally, it forms an important prototype for other representations of cup-holding monarchs in cross-legged frontal position down to the end of the Seljuq period.⁸⁵

In the context of these observations the suggestion that a Turkic scene may be depicted on the dish seems feasible. This fact is of vital importance for the theory brought forward in this article, because the servant attending the ruler on his left carries a ewer in his lowered hand, which most interestingly has an obliquely rising spout springing from the upper neck of the ovoid body.⁸⁶ In its general shape, moreover, it appears strangely connected to the ancient oriental, Greek and other Western pieces discussed above and also to some extent to the Islamic ewers which emerged around the 10th or 11th century A.D.

Ewers were of great importance during the performance of Turkic cup-rites, as they, together with the ritual cups, constituted the most important emblematic implements of the rites. The jug (*sagrak*) bore the royal seal and was considered a sign of royal power. Its name even came to symbolize the person of the ruler himself: "Thy conversation may lead thee to the *sagrak*" was a saying which indicated that the abilities of good conversation could lead to the company of kings.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Esin "*Čakravartin*", pp. 103f; Esin, "*AND*", pp. 230-232.

⁸⁶ A very similar ewer also appears on another object executed in the very same workshop in Merv in the 1st half of the 9th century A.D. See Marschak, *op. cit.*, pp. 50f, pl. 34, p. 426 tab. no. 41, p. 429 no. 34; René Jullian, *Le Musée de Lyon, Sculpture, Objets d'art* (Paris 1954), p. 17, pl. 60; Anonyme, *Catalogue Sommaire des Musées de la ville de Lyon* (Lyon 1897), p. 360; J.J. Marquet de Vasselot, "Aiguière Orientale", *Florilège des Musées du Palais des Arts de Lyon*, ed. L. Rosenthal (Paris n.d.): pp. 65f, 1 plate.

⁸⁷ Esin, "*Čakravatin*", p. 101; Esin "*AND*", pp. 225, 238.



Fig. 22. Pottery Ewer, Turco-Soghdian site, datable between 5th and 8th century A.D. After N. Bernstam, "Trudi Semirechenskoy Archeologicheskoy Ekspeditsi Chuskaya Dolina", *Materiali I Issledovniya Po Arkheologii SSSR* 14 (Moscow 1950), pl. XCV.

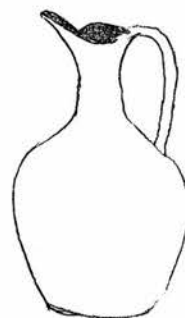


Fig. 23. Pottery Ewer from Karluk site, datable between 8th and 10th centuries A.D. After E. Esin, "AND" - The Cup Rites in Inner-Asian and Turkish Art", *Forschungen zur Kunst Asiens, in Memoriam K. Erdmann* (Istanbul 1969): fig. 12A.

Most interesting is the appearance of such decanters, which according to several sources were executed mainly in gold and silver.⁸⁸ Their shape is known from many Central Asian artefacts dating mainly from the 6th to the 8th century.⁸⁹ Typically they are represented with spouts in the form of bird and animal heads or they are rendered as complete bird or ram shapes.⁹⁰ Such treatment immediately recalls the small ewers on the 9th-century dish (fig. 20) whose abstracted beak-spout could certainly relate to the same symbolic function which the more naturalistically rendered bird spouts on those jugs were intended to express.⁹¹ Yet much closer parallels to our ewer can be found among the pottery excavated in several Turkic sites in Central Asia. From a Turco-Soghdian site datable between the 5th and the 8th century A.D. comes a bulbous pottery jug with a slight beak-spout and triangular shoulder motifs (fig. 22). Two similar vessels come from a Karlik site, datable between the 8th to 10th centuries (fig. 23), and yet another one, though later in date than our plate, from a find attributable to the Qarakhanid period, i.e. the 11th/12th centuries.⁹²

⁸⁸ Esin, *History of ...Turkish Culture*, p. 244 ann. 188 (chapter III)

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁹⁰ See for example *Ibid.*, p. 118, p. 244 ann. 188 (chapter III); Esin, "AND", p. 238 fig. 10B.

⁹¹ For the symbolic meaning of bird imagery in Turkic art see Esin, *A History of ... Turkish Culture*, pp. 100f. Certain birds are considered as messengers from heaven or auspicious emblems relating to holiness and high rank.

⁹² Esin "AND", pp. 243 fig 12A, 244 fig 12B; N. Bernstamm, "Trudi Semirechenskoy archeologicheskoy ekspeditsi Chuskaya dolina", *Materiali I Issled Po Arkh. SSSR* 14 (Moscow 1950): pl. XCV.



Fig. 24. Seljuq Bronze Bowl showing an enthroned king during a drinking feast. After E. Esin, "Turkic and Ilkhanid Universal Monarch Representations and the Čakravartin", *Proceedings of the XXVI Congress of Orientalists* (Delhi 1968): pl. XV B.

All these vessels correspond extremely closely to that depicted on the plate. They thus not only provide direct and vital evidence that beak-spouted ewers were indeed in use among the Turkic population of Central Asia for centuries, but they also strengthen the suggestion that the theme depicted on the plate may well refer to a particularly Turkish banquet scene. Perhaps the plate was manufactured by Soghdians in Merv for ritual use by one of the Turkish chieftains whose kingdoms bordered on the Eastern fringes of the young Islamic empire in the early 9th century. It could however also have been made for the general glorification of an Islamic overlord — the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun himself was ruling in Merv between 809-817 — using the conventions of royal representation current in Central Asia at the time, despite the cultic symbolism, which contradicted the religious beliefs of the new faith, in these images. Soon these same conventions of ruler imagery became an integral part of Islamic iconography and remained in use for centuries.⁹³

The cup-rites often connected with such depictions did not cease with the conquest of Islam, but continued to be performed by Islamized Turkish rulers. Even the Great Seljuqs still upheld the custom of these drinking ceremonies, and Ibn Bibi gives us lively descriptions of such feasts.⁹⁴ Such rituals continued to be depicted in Seljuq art, and in this context one bronze bowl is of particular interest (fig. 24). It closely follows the composition of the dish from Merv.⁹⁵ Again, the frontally squatting ruler with the cup in his left is flanked symmetrically by two standing attendants. The servant to the right of the ruler holds a cup, while yet again a beak-spouted ewer is placed in front of him.

⁹³ Esin, "AND", p. 232; Esin, "Čakravartin", p. 86.

⁹⁴ Esin, "Čakravartin", p. 102.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 108, pl. XV B; Esin, "AND", p. 246 fig. 13 A.

The reappearance (or perhaps persistence) of this peculiar vessel after a gap of several centuries in connection with Turkish ritual drinking feasts — as depicted on contemporary artefacts — is relevant, because it indicates that beak-spouted ewers — particularly with rounded bodies — continued to be used in a ritual context peculiar to Turkish peoples between at least the 9th century and the 11th century A.D. This then could explain the observation made at the beginning of this article, i.e. the appearance of such ewers during the rise of Turkish dynasties in the eastern lands of the Islamic empire from the 10th century onwards. It could also explain why the globular-bodied ewers with beak-spouts seem to pre-date those with cylindrical bodies. After the ritual vessels used in Central Asia had become known in Islamic territory, the practical concept of the beak-spout could have been applied to other ewer types as well, like for example several very simple hammered vessels with cylindrical bodies and necks, which had been among the domestic utensils of especially Iranian households for centuries and of which several examples have come to light in Nishapur and Maimana.⁹⁶

To summarise, then, the appearance of Islamic beak-spouted ewers seems to coincide with the appearance of Turkish dynasties on the eastern fringes of the Islamic empire from ca. the 10th century onwards. In the light of the observations made above it seems possible that the Turkic peoples who settled in Central Asia from earliest times and subsequently spread from there into Eastern Iran and Afghanistan to establish a far-reaching Turkicisation and to found petty dynasties, might have inherited this type of ewer from their Hellenistic predecessors in the ancient Greek lands of Bactria, to which it might have come from the West in Antiquity through trade with the nomads. Probably it subsequently became an indispensable utensil, particularly in the lives of the ruling classes, where it was used for ceremonial drinking purposes, as depicted on some of the artefacts discussed above. The Islamic Turkish rulers perpetuated the lifestyle of their predecessors and might thus have introduced beak-spouted ewers after their establishment in the Islamic heartlands.

⁹⁶ The suggestion was made by T.J. Arne, "Ein bemerkenswerter Fund in Östergötland", *Acta Archaeologica* III (1932): p. 105; J.W. Allan, *Nishapur – Metalwork of the Early Islamic Period* (New York 1982), p. 42. For the Nishapur pieces see Allan, *Nishapur*, pp. 78-80. For the pieces from Maimana see Scerrato, *op. cit.*, pp. 699f, fig. 30-39.

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A.C. Jones, *A History of the Persian Empire*

becomes

Jones, *History*, 313-21

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