

# ABOUT A TYPE OF ISLAMIC INCENSE BURNER

MEHMET AGA-UGLU

INCENSE burners were no novel vessels produced to meet the specific needs of Islamic social life. The origin of thurification with various aromatic substances for magical, religious, or social occasions, and the devising of special vessels for the purpose, go far back to the historical beginnings of the Near Eastern peoples.<sup>1</sup> Islam, although in principle opposed to luxurious ways of life, did not prevent the use of incense and perfumes. The popularity of perfumes during the first centuries is best illustrated by the lengthy legistic opinions expressed in the *Hadith* literature,<sup>2</sup> and, among others, by a chapter in the manual for elegant manners "of a man of polite education," written by Abu'l-Tayyib Muhammad ibn Ishaq al-Washsha.<sup>3</sup>

Historical sources are extremely generous with accounts on the subject.<sup>4</sup> A few examples can be cited here, and others will be presented elsewhere. According to a descriptive account by al-Mas'udi, the 'Abbasid caliph, al-Ma'mun (198/813-218/833), presided over an assembly of legists every Tuesday. When these and other learned men came to the palace to attend these meetings, they were first

ushered into a chamber and served a meal, after which the incense burners were brought so that the guests could perfume themselves before entering the caliph's presence.<sup>5</sup> The amount of aromatic substances, particularly aloes and certain varieties of sandalwoods, used for thurification in the households of caliphs and dignitaries, must have been enormous. We are informed by al-Tabari, for example, that Amr ibn al-Laith, the founder of the Saffarid dynasty of Eastern Iran, sent to Caliph al-Mu'tamid in the year 268 (881/82) 200 minas of aloes wood which he had confiscated from a grandson of Abu Dulaf.<sup>6</sup> Among the properties left after his death in 301 (913), by Abu'l-Husayn Ali ibn Ahmad al-Rasibi, the 'Abbasid governor of Khuzistan and neighboring territories, were great numbers of gold and silver vessels, perfumes, and other valuables, as well as 4,420 *mithkals* of aloes wood for thurification.<sup>7</sup>

Thurification was, however, not confined to the audience halls of caliphs, kings, and their dignitaries, or to the drawing rooms and private chambers of urban aristocracy. An important account by the early tenth-century geographer, Ibn Rustah, suggests that religious institutions were likewise incensed, apparently under the influence of Christian church practice. Our authority relates how the orthodox caliph, 'Umar, presented to the mosque at al-Madina a silver incense burner ornamented with human figures which was brought by him from Syria.<sup>8</sup> More than five centuries later the famous Spanish traveler, Ibn Jubayr, describes a religious ceremony during the month of Ramadan in a mosque at Mekka which was perfumed with aloes wood from a censer.<sup>9</sup>

1. See the exhaustive article by Fr. Pfister, "Rauchopfer," in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Zweite Reihe, I, cols. 267 ff. For ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Palestine, numerous references will be found in J. R. Partington, *Origin and Development of Applied Chemistry*, London, 1935, pp. 146 f., 306, and 515 ff. This extremely useful book contains some 25,000 references. Hence, many errors, as the author himself recognized, were inescapable, and therefore it must be consulted with great caution. Regarding various incenses known to pre-Islamic Iran, consult Bundahishn, transl. by E. W. West, *The Sacred Books of the East*, V, *Pahlavi Texts*, Part 1, Oxford, 1880, pp. 102 f., chap. xxvii, 19; see also B. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, Chicago, 1919, p. 193. For the Islamic periods valuable information will be found in the respective chapters of the twelfth volume of al-Nuwayri's *Nihayāt al-'Arab fi Funun al-'Adab*, Cairo, 1937.

2. A. J. Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*, Leyden, 1927; see under "perfume."

3. *Kitab al-Muwashsha*, ed. R. E. Brünnow, Leyden, 1886, chap. 26, pp. 125 f.

4. Highly important in this connection is the observation of the great Islamic sociologist-historian, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, ed. E. M. Quatremère, Paris, 1848, II, pp. 265, 17 f., who places the use of perfumes among the higher arts employed by the luxurious urban society.

5. *Muru'j al-Dhahab wa Ma'adin al-Jawhar*, ed. B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille, Paris, 1861-77, VII, pp. 38, 9 f.

6. *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa'l-Muluk*, ed. J. de Goeje et al., Leyden, 1879-1901, ser. 3, VII, p. 2018, 4.

7. Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Leipzig, 1866-73, II, p. 617, 20; see also B. de Meynard, *Dictionnaire géographique, historique et littéraire de la Perse*, Paris, 1861, pp. 204 f., and A. von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalifen*, Vienna, 1875, II, pp. 209 f.

8. *Kitab al-'A'laq al-Nafisa*, ed. J. de Goeje, Leyden, 1892, p. 66, 15.

9. *Rihlah*, ed. J. de Goeje, Leyden, 1907, p. 151, 13; also the

The lavish use of incense and perfumes was not without influence upon the commercial activities of the Islamic peoples. Since earliest times trade in incense was an important branch of overseas commerce. Aloes, sandalwoods, and other aromatic substances were extensively imported from India, the East Indies, and Africa,<sup>10</sup> not only for interregional trade, but also for transshipment to European markets.<sup>11</sup> During the entire mediaeval period, the principal cities of the Islamic world possessed special Markets of the Perfumers (*Suq al-Attariyin*),<sup>12</sup> well supplied with great varieties of fragrant oils and essences, as well as with all kinds of aromatic woods, herbs, and gums.

These few historical accounts will suffice to indicate the place of incense in the Islamic social and religious structure during the mediaeval centuries, and consequently to determine the scope of the contribution made by industrial arts in providing the necessary utensils to meet this specific requirement. Historical literature records that Hamadan was one of the centers prominent in the production of incense burners in the early tenth century. Ibn al-Faqih, describing the industries of that city, asserts that "The people of Hamadan are especially skilled in the manufacture of (metal) mirrors, spoons, incense burners, and gilded kettle drums."<sup>13</sup> Corresponding to the wants of various strata of cultured societies, the incense burners, called in Arabic *mijmar*, in Persian *ud-suz*, and in Turkish *bukhurdan*,<sup>14</sup> display in greater or lesser degree the artistic trends of the

translation by C. Schiaparelli, *Ibn Gubayr. Viaggio in Ispagna, Sicilia, Siria e Palestina, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egitto*, Rome, 1906, p. 181.

10. Abu Zayd Sirafi, *Silsilat al-Ta'warikh*, ed. J. T. Reinaud, Paris, 1845, p. 30,7, and al-Idrisi, *Nuzhat al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraq al-Afaq*, transl. P. A. Jaubert, Paris, 1836-40, I, p. 51.

11. W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce de Levant au moyen-âge*, Leipzig, 1923, II, pp. 563 f. and 581 ff.; also A. Schaube, *Handels-geschichte der romanischen Völker des Mittelmeergebiets bis zum Ende der Kreuzzüge*, Munich and Berlin, 1906, pp. 187, 197, and 315 f.

12. For Baghdad see G. Le Strange, *Baghdad during the Abbasid Chaliphate*, Oxford, 1924, p. 272; for Istanbul, Ewliya Chelebi, *Siyahat-Nameh*, Istanbul, 1896, I, p. 599.

13. *Kitab al-Buldan*, ed. J. de Goeje, Leyden, 1885, p. 253, 19: **أهل همدان خاصة حذق باتخاذ المرايا والملاعق والمجامر والطبول المذهبة**

14. Another frequently used Arabic term is *mabkhara*. Historical references about these terms for incense burner will be found in the special chapter devoted to the glossary of Islamic metal objects in the first volume of my forthcoming *Corpus of Islamic Metalwork*. In this connection I would like to make a note of caution regarding the matter of Islamic terminology. R. Ettinghausen in his recently published article, "The Bobrinski 'Kettle,' Patron and Style of an Islamic Bronze," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XXIV, 1943, pp. 194 f., pertinently reiterates the fact that vessels like that of the former Bobrinski collection are not "kettles," but buckets. As a matter of recognition it should be noted that the Bobrinski piece was already called a *seau* by G. Wiet over a decade ago ("L'exposition d'art persan à Londres," *Syria*, XIII, 1932, p. 78) and in the guidebook of the oriental department of the State Hermitage (*Putevoditel' po zalam vostoka*, Leningrad, 1939,

periods to which they belong, and are among the notable decorative objects bequeathed to us from the past.

E. Kühnel merits the distinction of being the first to call our attention to the fact that the shape of these incense burners with cylindrical bodies and domed covers is related to similar vessels found among the preserved Coptic bronzes.<sup>15</sup> The striking similarity between the Coptic examples and the Islamic pieces is evident, and suggests their common origin beyond any doubt. The Coptic incense burner, formerly in the collection of D. Fouquet and now in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (Fig. 1), is sufficiently indicative in this regard. Of bronze and 16 cm. high, its body and cover are entirely in openwork, the body being formed of uninterrupted vine scroll and the cover having five rosettes containing radiating leaves. The knob is surmounted by an eagle and a wooden handle was originally inserted in the short tube attached to the body.<sup>16</sup> The exact date of this and other Coptic pieces of the group is difficult to determine with certainty. J. Strzygowski assigned the

p. 121) the same and identical bronze objects are termed *satl*, which is a correct word for this type of bucket. The Arabic term *satl* has been defined, for example, by the eleventh-century lexicographer, al-Zamakhshari, in his *Muqaddimat al-Adab*, ed. J. G. Wetzstein, Leipzig, 1840, p. 28, 18, as a vessel used in the hot bath. *Barniyya*, suggested by R. Ettinghausen, *op. cit.*, p. 195, is something else. In mediaeval Arabic this word signified a glazed or unglazed pottery vessel, and even, according to some authorities, a flask or bottle of glass. Reserving further discussion of these terms for the *Corpus*, in the meantime reference can be made to the readily accessible E. W. Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*, London, 1863, I, p. 196, or to the Arabic-Turkish dictionary, *Akhtar-i Kebir*, Istanbul, 1324/1906, I, p. 131, composed in the year 1545 by Mustafa ibn Shams al-Din Qara-Hisari. In both these dictionaries the exact definitions of *barniyya* are given in accordance with the opinions of classical lexicographers.

15. "Islamische Rauchergerät," *Berliner Museen. Berichte aus den preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, XLI, 1920, col. 242.

16. O. Wulff, *Altchristliche und mittelalterliche byzantinische und italienische Bildwerke*, Berlin, 1911, I, pp. 205 f., no. 980, pl. XLVI. For further Coptic incense burners of this type see J. Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst. Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire*, Vienna, 1904, p. 283, no. 9118, pl. XXXII, and E. Kühnel, *op. cit.*, fig. 89.

There is in the museum of the German Campo Santo in Rome an incense burner which is believed to be of Coptic origin. It has a simple, cylindrical body devoid of any ornamentation, resting on three feet, with cover attached by a hinge. The cover is perforated and is crowned by a seated dove. The upper rim of the body has three loose rings to hold the chains which are missing. Thus the piece is related to the well-known hanging thuribles, although its shape is similar to those with handles; see F. Witte, "Thuribulum und Navicula in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung," *Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst*, XXIII, 1910, cols. 109 f., fig. III.

A related incense burner, probably of German workmanship, fashioned after an Eastern prototype, is in the collection of antiquities in the Schloss at Mannheim. Its cover is, however, differently shaped and has perforated round medallions with christmon. Originally it also hung from a chain. J. Lessing, "Frühchristliche Weihrauchfässer," *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, II, 1881, pp. 89 f., fig. 1; also Ch. Rohault de Fleury, *La messe. Études archéologiques sur ses monuments*, Paris, 1887, v, pp. 153 f., pl. CDXV.

similarly shaped piece in the Cairo Museum to the Islamic period without suggesting a particular century,<sup>17</sup> and O. Wulff in his description of the piece presented here was content in offering no date at all.<sup>18</sup> One can be certain, however, that such incense burners were popular among Copts since the pre-Islamic period, and were still produced for some time after the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs.

This particular type of incense burner was also known to Byzantine ecclesiastic art of the early Middle Ages. The Staatliche Museen in Berlin possess such a piece, unmistakably Byzantine in origin (Fig. 2).<sup>19</sup> It measures 23.5 cm. in height and is cast of bronze. Both the cylindrical lower part and the dome-shaped cover are formed in openwork of repeated semicircular double arches. The knob, the straight handle ending with a dragon's head, and the three feet attached to the body from the side are devoid of any particular ornamentation. As far as I am aware, this piece is the only known Byzantine incense burner of its kind. But this circumstance does not preclude the possibility that the type was equally as popular as that of the hanging thuribles.<sup>20</sup> The number of preserved monuments of Byzantine ecclesiastic furniture belonging to the period before the year 1200 A.D. is very small. The reason for this, most certainly, is that they were for the greater part made of silver, and consequently perished in the hands of Western and Eastern invaders during the centuries-long decline of the Byzantine Empire. One should recall, for example, the fate of the silver plate of Bishop Paternus, found among the Sasanian gold vessels near Poltava,<sup>21</sup> or of the silver plate with two angels flanking a cross, found in the Gouvernement of Perm in Siberia,<sup>22</sup> to realize how the objects of Eastern Christian ecclesiastic art were scattered all over the Eurasiatic continent. Islamic historical accounts about the looting of Christian art treasures in Syria, Anatolia, Armenia, and elsewhere, are illuminating in this regard; so are the statements of Byzantine and Armenian annals.<sup>23</sup>

E. Kühnel has already suggested that the shape of these

17. *Loc. cit.*

18. *Loc. cit.*

19. O. Wulff, *op. cit.*, II, p. 93, no. 1983, pl. XVI.

20. For Byzantine and Coptic examples of such thuribles, see O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the British Museum*, London, 1901, p. 87, no. 399; A. B. Tonnochy, "The Censer in the Middle Ages," *The Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, ser. 3, II, 1937, pp. 46 ff.; E. von Mercklin, "Aus der Antikenabteilung im Hamburgischen Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe," *Archäologischer Anzeiger. Beiblatt zum Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts*, LV, 1940, pp. 62 f., figs. 55-60, and J. D. Cooney, *Late Egyptian and Coptic Art. An Introduction to the Collections in the Brooklyn Museum*, New York, 1943, p. 19, no. 34.

21. Graf A. Bobrinskiĭ, "Pereshchipinskiĭ klad," *Materialy po arkheologii Rossii*, Petrograd, 1914, pp. 111 and 117, pl. 1.

22. Ya. I. Smirnov, *Vostochnoye srebro*, St. Petersburg, 1909, p. 9, pl. XV, no. 38, or Ch. Diehl, *Manuel d'art byzantin*, Paris, 1925, I, pp. 316 f., fig. 160.

23. Some of these accounts are of particular interest for the

Coptic incense burners seems to have been carried as far as Iran.<sup>24</sup> In this connection, attention is invited to an historical event so far not evaluated by the students of Islamic art; namely, the presence of Coptic settlers in Mesopotamia. We are informed by a great number of historical statements that after the revolt of the Copts against the Egyptian administration in the year 214 (829), the rebels were severely punished by the 'Abbasid general, Afshin, and the survivors, together with their families, were evacuated to 'Iraq, where they were settled in the vicinity of Baghdad.<sup>25</sup> It should be remembered that the Copts were a people of craftsmen. There can be little doubt, therefore, that these enforced emigrants brought the traditions of various crafts to 'Iraq with them and were not without some effect upon the formation of the Islamic art of the early 'Abbasid period. Similarly it is not impossible that the type of Iranian incense burner, which will presently be considered in brief, was introduced by these Coptic settlers and later carried to such artistic centers as al-Rayy and Shapur, which are the provenances of two pieces of considerable interest.

The first, and certainly the earlier of the two, is the incense burner unearthed by the French archaeological expedition at Shapur.<sup>26</sup> The history of the city after its conquest by the Arabs offers a basis for the approximate dating of the piece. An old Sasanian settlement, Shapur (Bishapur, or Sabur of early Arab geographers) was occupied by Arab conquerors in the year 16 (637). It remained side-tracked, however, by rapidly developing events, mostly because of the growing administrative and economic importance of the neighboring city of Kazirun and the newly founded Islamic military camp at Shiraz. Once considerably famed as a center of the perfume and textile industries, Shapur, according to the account of al-Maqdisi,<sup>27</sup> was in the process of decline during his time (the first decades of the tenth century) with its suburbs already in ruins. Half a century later, toward the end of Buwayhid rule, the city was destroyed by Abu Sa'd ibn Muhammad ibn Mama, the chieftain of the powerful Kurdish Shabankara tribe. Although we are informed by Ibn al-Balkhi, the geographer of the first half of the twelfth century, that the Seljuq administration endeavored to restore the devastated city, it seems more probable that these efforts were never successful. The city

study of Islamic metalwork and will be presented in the *Corpus*. References here can be made to the passages of the tenth-century Armenian historian, Moses Kalankatvasi, *History of Aghvankh*, ed. G. Shahnazarian (in Armenian), Paris, 1860, pp. 125 f. and al-Tabari, *op. cit.*, ser. 3, VII, pp. 2103, 4 f.

24. *Op. cit.*, col. 244.

25. For historical sources see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, p. 994.

26. R. Ghirshman, "Les fouilles de Châpour (Iran)," *Revue des arts asiatiques*, XII, 1938, p. 13, pl. IX, 5.

27. *Ahsan al-Taqa'im fi Ma'rifat al-Aqalim*, ed. J. de Goeje, Leyden, 1877, p. 432, 15.

remained forever in ruins.<sup>28</sup> The incense burner in question, therefore, must be a work of a period not later than the first half of the eleventh century.

Made of bronze in a pan-like shape with three feet and a long handle, it has a semispherical cover surmounted by a figure of a standing bird (Fig. 3). The only ornamental decoration of the piece consists of engraved circlets with inserted dots. These are arranged both in triangles and in a row. It is conspicuous that this simple motif is one of the most characteristic designs of Coptic art, examples of which are numerous.<sup>29</sup> To mention only a few, attention can be called to the bronze incense burner in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection,<sup>30</sup> to the bronze lamp and cross, both in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin,<sup>31</sup> or to the ivory box in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the figure of the bird in itself recalls parallels in Coptic art. It is not my intention to attribute the Shapur incense burner to Coptic origin. Nevertheless, evidence points toward such possible derivation.

The other incense burner is the frequently published piece in the Islamic Department of the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (Fig. 4), which is said to have been found in the ruins of al-Rayy,<sup>33</sup> and is probably a work of the early twelfth century. This piece, of heavy appearance is cast of bronze, with a low, cylindrical body resting on three feet, and a long, perforated handle. The dome-shaped cover with four arched apertures is crowned with a harpy, the tail of which ends in a dragon, which in turn twists and curves upward to attack the head of the harpy. The drop-like bosses of the body are very characteristic of a group of

mediaeval Islamic mortars and seem to have been known to the Iranian art of metalwork in earlier centuries.<sup>34</sup>

The same museum possesses another pan-like incense burner, the cover of which is missing. It shows the same drop motifs, and has a long handle ending in the figure of a lion standing on his hind legs and facing inward.<sup>35</sup> This peculiar Hellenistic theme makes us place the piece in a period even earlier than that of al-Rayy.

While the examples from Shapur and al-Rayy show close affinity to the Coptic pieces, the incense burners to which this paper is devoted form a group of markedly different features. It should first be noted that this particular group seems to have been a Syro-Mesopotamian specialty which was introduced to Iran on one hand, and to Mamluk Egypt on the other. So far, no definitely authenticated pre-Mamluk Egyptian piece has been known. A bronze incense burner with engraved inscriptions, interlaced bands, and perforated medallions, seen by E. Kühnel in the year 1913 in the art market and published by him as belonging "zweifelloos der Fatimidenzeit Ägyptens um 1100,"<sup>36</sup> needs re-examination. But unfortunately the present ownership of this piece is unknown, and the reproduction in E. Kühnel's article (Fig. 5) does not show the ornamentation in sufficient clarity to make a comparative study possible. The technique of the decoration and the type of ornamental motifs alluded to are in themselves not criteria for attributing the piece to the Fatimid period of Egypt. Judging from the shape, one is inclined to place the piece in the thirteenth century and to classify it as a work of North Mesopotamian or Syrian origin. There is, indeed, a distant relationship between this piece and Coptic incense burners, but they differ from each other considerably. It should be observed that the Coptic pieces always have low bodies (with the feet included) and proportionately larger covers. On the other hand, the proportions between these parts of the Islamic incense burners is quite the opposite; namely, their bodies are invariably larger than their covers. This, it should be underlined, constitutes a marked characteristic of the Is-

28. *Fars-Name*, ed. G. Le Strange and R. A. Nicholson, London, 1921, p. 142, 17. I am inclined to accept the opinion of V. F. Büchner ("Shapur," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV, p. 317) that the city never rose after its destruction. In the article by G. Salles and R. Ghirshman, "Chapour. Rapport préliminaire de la première campagne de fouilles," *Revue des arts asiatiques*, X, 1936, p. 117, it is said that the city was destroyed "à la fin de la dynastie bouride"; to avoid confusion the name of the dynasty should be corrected to Buwayhid.

29. E. Diez, "Bemalte Elfenbeinkästchen und Pyxiden der islamischen Kunst," *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, XXXI, 1910, p. 232. This simple motif occurs on a great many objects almost everywhere in Islamic countries. As an example, mention can be made of a bronze padlock dated 541 (1146/47) and signed by Abu Bakr ibn Ahmad, found in the ruins of the ancient city of Wolga-Bulghars, Bilar (later called Bilyarsk), see S. Malov, "Zamok iz Bilyarska s arabskoj nadpis'yu," *Zapiski Kollegii Vostokovedov pri Aziatskom Muzeje*, II, 1927, pp. 155 ff.

30. *Pagan and Christian Egypt. Egyptian Art from the First to the Tenth Century A.D.*, Brooklyn Museum, 1941, p. 33, no. and fig. 87.

31. O. Wulff, *op. cit.*, I, pls. XXXIII, no. 798, and XLIV, no. 944.

32. *Pagan and Christian Egypt*, p. 98, no. and fig. 98. For further examples see J. Strzygowski, *op. cit.*, pls. VIII, no. 8831; XIX, nos. 8906, 8907, and XX, nos. 8922, 8929, 8951; also O. Wulff, *op. cit.*, pls. XIV, no. 351; XXV, no. 548; XXX, no. 693, and others.

33. E. Kühnel, *op. cit.*, col. 244.

34. The "drop" motif occurs on a cast bronze bulb found in Tal-i Zohak (district of Fasa, Iran), published by the late Sir Aurel Stein, "An Archaeological Tour in Ancient Persia," *Iraq*, III, 1936, p. 140, pl. XXIX, 34. The same motif also decorates a very important but little-known bronze ewer of traditional Sasanian shape in the Museum of Fine Art of the Ukrainian Academy of Science in Kiev. See M. Vyaz'mitina, *Mistetstvo krayin Islamu. (Muzei Mistetstva Vseukrayins'koyi Akademii Nauk, Kiev, 1930)*, p. 71, no. 389, pl. XI. It is of interest to observe that the "drop" motif was employed in stucco carvings of Sabz Pushan near Nishapur, belonging to the latter half of the tenth century. See W. Hauser, "The Plaster Dado from Sabz Pushan," *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Section II, XXXII, 1937, p. 23, fig. 30.

35. E. Kühnel, *op. cit.*, col. 244, fig. 94. A Coptic stand for a lamp in the British Museum has as its feet three lions standing on their hind legs and facing the baluster stem. See O. M. Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 100, no. 496, pl. XXVI.

36. *Op. cit.*, col. 242.

lamic incense burners of the type, and also, as a matter of fact, of the Byzantine piece already presented. Thus it would seem more likely that the Islamic craftsmen adopted the type, not from the Coptic art of Egypt, but rather from the ecclesiastic art of southeastern provinces of Byzance, where the Christian artistic tradition was preserved and cherished for a longer period of time.

The same can also be said about the feet of the Islamic incense burners. In the first place, their peculiar shape does not find parallel among the Coptic metals. Undoubtedly derived from the zoö-morphic form, they are characterized by a protruding single or double rib over the ankle. This particular detail occurs on the feet of some Islamic bronzes of diverse origin and periods,<sup>37</sup> and, which is very important for our thesis, on the feet of a Byzantine bronze candelabrum in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin.<sup>38</sup> Not only in their protruding ribs, but also in their shape, the feet of this candelabrum are very similar to those of the Islamic incense burners. Here again we have an unmistakable connecting link between Byzantine metalwork and the objects under consideration.

Of all the known incense burners of the group, a special place should be reserved for the important, but somewhat neglected, piece in the British Museum (Fig. 6). It is dated, and displays the characteristic ornamental and compositional features of North Mesopotamian (Mosul) inlaid metals, and hence is of particular interest for our discussion. The cylindrical part is decorated with three round medallions, two of which are framed by arabesque bands and filled with interlaced geometrical pattern. The third medallion was occupied by the joining end of the handle, now missing. Between these medallions and three arabesque quatrefoils runs an interrupted band of benedictory Arabic inscription. Above and below this band, amidst the T-frets, are round, eight-petaled rosettes. The decoration of the cover consists of parallel registers. The principal register, bordered by plaited, three-strand strips, has four octagonal medallions of interlaced geometric pattern, and in between, symmetrically composed arabesque devices, the background of which is perforated. Around the base of the knob is an inscription band of poetical content which ends with the statement that the piece "was made in the year six hundred and forty-one," corresponding to 1243/44 A.D.<sup>39</sup> The

37. Cf. H. Glück and E. Diez, *Die Kunst des Islam*, Berlin, 1925, figs. 438 and 441; H. D. Hallis, "A Unique Seldjuk Bronze," *Ars Islamica*, II, 1935, fig. 1. Fr. Sarre pointed out the similarity of these feet to the forefeet of the well-known fountain piece in the shape of a lion found in Spain (*Sammlung F. Sarre. Erzeugnisse islamischer Kunst. Teil I. Metall*, Berlin, 1906, p. 14). The protruding ribs occur also on this lion's feet, but, of course, this detail should be identified with common late Hellenistic proto-types.

38. O. Wulff, *op. cit.*, II, p. 91, no. 1978 and figure.

39. أنا في باطني الجسيم ولكن ظاهري قتر رائحات  
إحبات عمل في سنة احد واربعين وستمائة i.e., "Within me is

knob is decorated with a plait pattern and lancets; the joining rims of the body and cover are left plain, while that on the lower end of the body is occupied by a loosely twisted double strand with inserted beads. Finally, the feet have arabesque ornaments. There is no need to make comparisons of individual ornamental elements or their compositional treatment with those of the attested inlaid metals of the Mosul school. These are well known, and the incense burner in the British Museum has been accepted as a work of this school since its descriptive publication by Stanley Lane-Poole.<sup>40</sup>

To the same North Mesopotamian school and the first half of the thirteenth century the incense burner in the collection of R. Harari in Cairo (Fig. 7) unmistakably belongs. The same compositional disposition of design is likewise characteristic of this piece. On a background of T-fret pattern, the lower part is ornamented with foiled medallions containing horsemen. In between are an interrupted band of *kufi* inscription and six-petaled rosettes. The medallions on the cover enclose arabesque devices and double-headed eagles in alternation. At the base of the knob is, as is usual, a band of benedictory inscription. Aside from all other ornamental motifs, the representation of the heraldic bird is, in itself, definite testimony to the fact that the incense burner cannot be of Iranian origin, as has been intimated in a recent publication.<sup>41</sup> The double-headed eagle remained completely unknown to mediaeval decorative arts of Iran. On the other hand, its examples on architectural monuments and objects of industrial arts of North Mesopotamian origin are numerous.<sup>42</sup> Presumably an heraldic emblem of some Urtuqid and Zengid princes, it was fre-

hell fire; but without float sweetest odours; it was made in the year six hundred and forty-one." The reading is by S. Lane-Poole, *The Art of the Saracens in Egypt*, London, 1888, p. 206, no. 2.

40. M. van Berchem, "Notes d'archéologie arabe," *Journal asiatique*, III, 1904, p. 33; G. Migeon, *Manuel d'art musulman*, Paris, 1927, II, p. 66; and G. Wiet, *Catalogue général du Musée arabe du Caire. Objets en cuivre*, Cairo, 1932, p. 173, no. 52.

There are three more incense burners of the type in the British Museum. One of these will be presented here later. Of the remaining two, one has been briefly described by S. Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 213, no. 6, according to whom the lower part is decorated with medallions filled with enthroned figures and beasts of the chase. One of these medallions is occupied by a handle. On the cover are nine seated figures holding caps, cymbals, etc., and a band of Arabic benedictory inscription. The reproduction of this and the fourth piece must await an opportune time because they have not been photographed and have been removed to a place of safety for the duration of the war. For information concerning these incense burners I am indebted to M. Basil Gray, the Deputy Keeper in charge of Oriental Antiquities of the British Museum.

41. R. Harari, "Metalwork after the Early Islamic Period," *A Survey of Persian Art*, London, 1938-39, VI, pl. 1338C.

42. See the important observations of M. van Berchem, *Amida*, Heidelberg, 1910, pp. 97 ff., where the literature on the subject has been discussed. Cf. also Fr. Sarre, "Ein orientalisches Metallbecken des XIII Jahrhunderts im Königlichen Museum für Völkerkunde zu Berlin," *Jahrbuch der Königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen*,

quently employed in stylized renditions to decorate the inlaid metals of the thirteenth century. One of these renditions shows the bird with lanceolate, shield-like breast, outstretched legs showing two talons, and widespread wings, the outer plumes of each curving upward and carrying an animal head.<sup>43</sup> Exactly such double-headed eagles decorate the incense burner in the R. Harari Collection. It should be noted that the upper part of the knob of this piece has been broken off, but in its original form it was most probably identical with the knobs of those pieces which are recognized here as being of North Mesopotamian or Syrian origin.<sup>44</sup>

Of noteworthy cultural, as well as artistic significance is another incense burner in the British Museum (Fig. 8). It belongs to the small, well-known group of Syro-Mesopotamian Islamic metals decorated with Christian figural subject matter. Both the lower part and the cover are inlaid with rows of compartments with foiled, pointed arches and loop-like partitions in which, against a background of arabesque scrolls, stand aureoled Christian personages (saints) in various postures, holding beakers, staves, and so forth. This subject matter in identical composition is known from a candlestick in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, which, according to the inscription, was made in the year 646 (1248/49) by Dawud ibn Salama of Mosul.<sup>45</sup> Another piece displaying the same decoration is the silver-inlaid

bronze plate formerly in the collection of L. M. Belinko, now in the State Hermitage.<sup>46</sup>

This particular type of compartment is a motif which was frequently employed by the North Mesopotamian metal workers of the thirteenth century. A few examples may be considered. It appears on the neck of the ewer by Ali ibn 'Abd Allah al-'Alawi of Mosul,<sup>47</sup> and on the upper part of a candlestick in the Metropolitan Museum.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the motif determined the shape of some North Mesopotamian candlesticks. The concave middle sections of the small octagonal candlestick in Çinili Köşk Müzesi in Istanbul<sup>49</sup> and of two more pieces, one in the State Hermitage<sup>50</sup> and the other in the Museo Civico in Turin, are formed of such compartments with loop-like partitions.

This is not the place to discuss in detail the origin and the development of this motif. It was known and effectively employed in Mesopotamian art of the 'Abbasid period. The stucco wall decorations in Samarra made use of it in a number of variations as a principal element of all-over pattern. There the motif is found within the so-called first style and was rendered as a strongly undulating band, the upper curved parts of which are trefoiled while the lower are left rounded.<sup>51</sup> In later centuries we find the motif on architectural monuments in Iran, both in stucco and stone carvings, as well as in brick composition. The earliest recorded examples, to my knowledge, are found in Ghazna, and belong to the eleventh century.<sup>52</sup> They are very similar to those employed in Samarra. But the majority of Iranian examples represent a slightly modified form. This difference consists in the drawing together of the connecting bands between the trefoiled upper and rounded lower sections. By so doing, the originally undulating band is transformed into trefoil-arched compartments with loop-like partitions. In such form it occurs in the interior of Masjid-i Jum'a in Qazwin, built between the years 500 and 509 (1106-15),<sup>53</sup> and again on the brick minaret of the

xxv, 1904, pp. 64 ff. For the Mamluk examples consult L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, Oxford, 1931, pp. 9 f., pl. III.

43. This particular type with some variations was employed also in the neighboring countries, Anatolia and Syria. From the former we possess a magnificent example in the gold brocade in the Apollinari Shrine in Siegburg (see O. von Falke, *Kunstgeschichte der Seidenweberei*, Berlin, 1913, fig. 163) and from the latter, the enameled glass beaker once in the Spitzer Collection (reproduced by E. Garnier, "La verrerie," in *La collection Spitzer*, Paris, 1891, II, pp. 81 and 90, pl. 11). On North Mesopotamian metals the outer plumes of eagles' wings, after interlacing under the tail, are sometimes terminated with animal heads. For an example, see the candlestick in Fr. Sarre, *Erzeugnisse islamischer Kunst*, p. 13, no. 20, fig. 13. There is a thirteenth-century North Mesopotamian salver in the British Museum on which the double-headed eagle carries, in addition to the animal heads, busts of bowmen on the upward-curved tips of its tail plumes. The salver has been briefly discussed by S. Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 214, no. 7, but without exact description of the double-headed eagle. It can be seen, however, on the postcard, *Serie XVIII*, no. 7, issued by the British Museum.

Another interesting North Mesopotamian variant is the combination of this heraldic bird with the representation of the moon. This occurs on a bronze plaque in the Musée du Louvre, reproduced by G. Migeon, *Musée du Louvre. L'orient musulman*, Paris, 1922, p. 14, no. 39, pl. 14; and on a small candlestick in Çinili Köşk Müzesi in Istanbul; see M. Aga-Oglu, "Islamische Metallarbeiten aus Istanbuler Museen," *Belvedere*, IX, 1932, p. 15, fig. 28.

44. I did not have an opportunity to examine the piece. The observation about the knob is based solely on the study of its reproduction and thus needs further verification.

45. E. Kühnel, "Die Metallarbeiten," in Fr. Sarre and F. R. Martin, *Die Ausstellungen von Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst in München*, Munich, 1912, II, pl. 146.

46. *Otchet Imperatorskoï arkheologicheskoi kommissii za 1898 god*, St. Petersburg, 1901, p. 88, fig. 147, also E. Kühnel, *op. cit.*, pl. 153. The plate has been published recently by A. Yakubovskii, "Kashgarskoye blyudo XII-XIII vv.," *Pamyatniki epokhi Rustaveli*, Leningrad, 1938, pp. 209 ff.

47. E. Kühnel, "Zwei Mosulbronzen und ihr Meister," *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, LX, 1939, pl. 11.

48. *Op. cit.*, fig. 13.

49. M. Aga-Oglu, "Islamische Metallarbeiten aus Istanbuler Museen," fig. 28.

50. E. Kühnel, "Die Metallarbeiten," pl. 144, no. 3064. The shape was also known to the Syrian metal workers, being undoubtedly introduced from North Mesopotamia. See G. Migeon, *Exposition des arts musulmans au Musée des arts décoratifs*, Paris, 1930, pl. xviii.

51. E. Herzfeld, *Der Wandschmuck der Bauten von Samarra und seine Ornamentik*, Berlin, 1923, p. 103, figs. 134-136, 153, 154, and pl. LXIII.

52. S. Flury, "Les décor épigraphique des monuments de Ghazna," *Syria*, VI, 1925, pls. X, 2, and XIII, 1.

53. For the reproductions see A. U. Pope, "The Architecture of

year 514 (1120) in Bistam,<sup>54</sup> as well as in modified form on the mihrab of a mausoleum in Arabkuh (Province of Yazd).<sup>55</sup> Once more we find it as a lambrequin-like frieze composed of bricks on the Mil-i Radkan near Quchan, constructed in the year 680 (1281).<sup>56</sup> From Ghazna the motif was carried to India, where we encounter it in Delhi, carved in stone, on the tomb which is believed to be that of Iltutmish (died 633/1236).<sup>57</sup> In the regions west of Iran the frieze in identical form occurs in the Ulu Jami' in Wan.<sup>58</sup> In this structure of the Seljuq period it decorates the interior wall in exactly the same manner as in the mosque in Qazwin, and is undoubtedly of direct Iranian inspiration, if not a work of an Iranian artist. The presence of this motif in Iran throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is of importance. While it was very popular in that country, the motif was not used, save for a single exception, in North Mesopotamian, Anatolian, or Syrian architectural decoration. The only known example is the stucco lintel of a door in the Christian-Chaldean church, Mar Shem'un, in Mosul.<sup>59</sup> Stylistically of the thirteenth century, the motif has here been rendered in modified form, interlaced with arabesque palmettes. Thus there can be no doubt that the motif under discussion was introduced into the ornamental repertoire of the Mosul school from Iran, as were many other technical and decorative elements. Its use on the incense burner in the British Museum, as well as on the candlestick and the plate already mentioned, was dictated by the desire to replace the ordinary and commonly used arcades with more decorative niches.

The simple arcade is represented by the lower part of an incense burner formerly in the collection of Friedrich Sarre and now in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (Fig. 9).<sup>60</sup> As on the Eumorfopoulos canteen now in the Freer Gallery,<sup>61</sup> the Christian personages (saints) are standing under the arches, some holding ecclesiastical objects, the others praying or engaged in conversation. The background of the figures is filled with arabesque scrolls, the lower rim has a simple, plaited double-strand with inserted

the Islamic Period," *A Survey of Persian Art*, IV, pl. 305; also V, pl. 523.

54. *Op. cit.*, IV, pl. 360 B.

55. A. Godard, "Arabkuh," *Athar-é Iran*, I, 1936, fig. 37.

56. E. Diez, *Churasanische Baudenkmäler*, Berlin, 1918, pl. 7.

57. J. A. Page, *An Historical Memoir on the Qutb: Delhi. (Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, XXII)*, Calcutta, 1926, pp. 13 f., pl. XI.

58. W. Bachmann, *Kirchen und Moscheen in Armenien und Kurdistan*, Leipzig, 1913, pl. 61.

59. Fr. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet*, Berlin, 1911-20, II, pp. 292 f., fig. 279; also G. L. Bell, *Amurath to Amurath*, London, 1911, p. 259, fig. 172.

60. Fr. Sarre, *Erzeugnisse islamischer Kunst*, p. 14, no. 21.

61. M. S. Dimand, "A Silver Inlaid Bronze Canteen with Christian Subjects in the Eumorfopoulos Collection," *Ars Islamica*, I, 1934, fig. 2.

beads, and the feet are ornamented with scrolling arabesques.

The question of where the inlaid bronzes with Christian subjects were manufactured has been frequently discussed. Some of them were very probably made in North Mesopotamia, and the others in neighboring Syria. The incense burner of the British Museum is undoubtedly such a Syrian work produced under strong North Mesopotamian influences. Its Syrian origin is indicated not only by the type of figural motifs, but also by the arabesques filling the spandrels and the loop-like partitions. These and the undulating scrolls of the lower rim in their sketchy forms are typically Syrian. Moreover, the feet of the incense burner with their angular surfaces seem to have been a peculiarity of some Syrian pieces.<sup>62</sup>

The artists of these metal works, including the two incense burners here described, were Christians, beyond any doubt. But they were thoroughly schooled in the principles of Islamic art; and most likely it was through the intermediary of such Christian artists that the type of incense burners under discussion was first introduced into Islamic decorative arts. That Christian artists continued their crafts throughout the entire Middle Ages, transmitting them from generation to generation, is best illustrated by an account of William, Archbishop of Tyre. Relating the events of the year 1098 A.D., he speaks of an Armenian family of armorers in Antioch with the following observation: "Erant autem ex eis in civitate familiae valde nobiles, antiquam ducentes ex generosis proavis sanguinis dignitatem; inter quas erat tribus una generositate insignis, quae dicebatur Beni Zerra; quod in lingua latina interpretatur, filii loricatoris. Hi enim, sive a primo eorum parente, qui hanc artem exercuit, sive ab eo quod ipsi hanc professionem exercerent, ut loricas intexerent, dicebantur filii loricatoris. Probabilius tamen est et videtur, quod quidam ex eis adhuc eidem arti darent operam; ut, secut nomen habebat hereditarium, ita et per successionem traditam artem non deserent."<sup>63</sup> This was, most certainly, not an isolated case. There were in Damascus, Aleppo, Amid, Mosul, and other

62. Compare the feet of the piece in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fig. 15.

63. *Willermi Tyrensis Archiepiscopi Historia Rerum in Partibus Transmarinis Gestarum*, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, Paris, 1864, V, chap. XI, p. 212. Here is the translation by E. A. Babcock and A. C. Krey, *A History of Deeds Done beyond the Sea*, New York, 1943, I, pp. 241 f.: "There were among the people in the city certain very noble families, inheritors of the ancient dignity of race from distinguished ancestors. Among these was a family notable for its lineage, by name Beni-Zerra, which means, in the Latin tongue, sons of the makers of breast-plates. For thus they were called, either from the fact that their original ancestor practiced this art, or because they themselves carried on that trade. It seems quite probable indeed that some of this family still followed that craft and exercised the art, which had been handed down through successive generations and to which they owed their hereditary name."



FIG. 1. Berlin, Staatliche Museen: Incense Burner, Coptic, Early Mediaeval

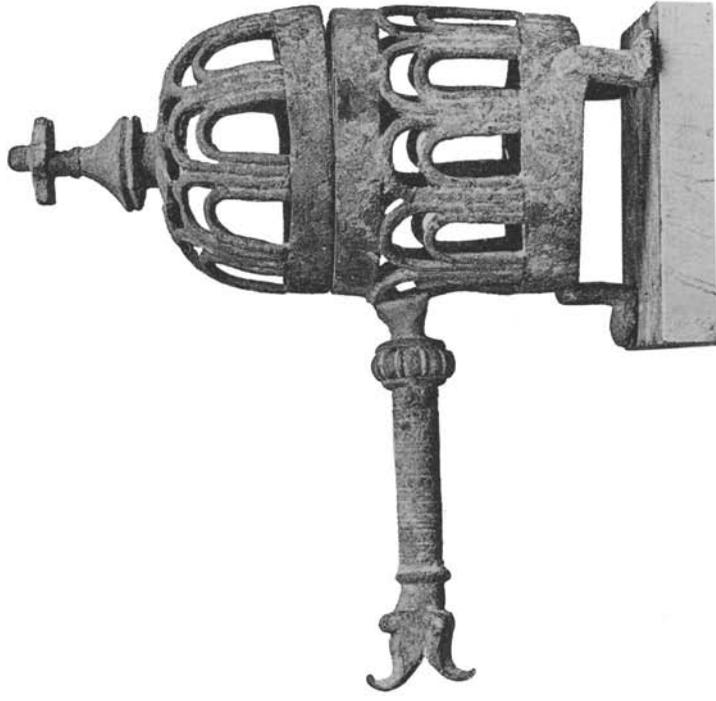


FIG. 2. Berlin, Staatliche Museen: Incense Burner, Byzantine, Early Mediaeval



FIG. 3. Paris, Louvre: Incense Burner, Iranian, First Half of the XIth Century



FIG. 5. Ownership Unknown: Incense Burner, North Mesopotamian or Syrian, XIIIth Century



FIG. 4. Berlin, Staatliche Museen: Incense Burner, Iranian, First Half of the XIIIth Century



FIG. 6. London, British Museum: Incense Burner, North Mesopotamian (Mosul), Dated 641 (1243/44)



FIG. 7. Cairo, R. Harari Collection: Incense Burner, North Mesopotamian, First Half of the XIIIth Century



FIG. 8. London, British Museum: Incense Burner, Syrian, XIIIth Century



FIG. 9. Berlin, Staatliche Museen: Lower Part of an Incense Burner, Syrian, XIIIth Century



FIG. 10. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery: Incense Burner, Syrian, Second Half of the XIIIth Century (Courtesy of the Walters Art Gallery)



FIG. 11. Prague, Umělecko-Průmyslové Museum: Incense Burner, Syrian, End of the XIIIth Century



FIG. 12. Cairo, R. Harari Collection: Incense Burner, Syrian, End of the XIIIth Century

ancient artistic centers of Syria and North Mesopotamia a great number of craftsmen who remained faithful to their Christian beliefs, and were in many other aspects of material and spiritual life participants alongside their Moslem compatriots in the creation of that which we are accustomed to call the Islamic civilization. This was particularly true in the realm of artistic endeavors. Thus the artist who made the candlestick in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Dawud ibn Salama, himself undoubtedly a Christian, was one of the outstanding representatives of the Mosul school. Inlaid metals with Christian subjects were not produced exclusively for Christian institutions or patrons of art, but also for Moslem rulers. According to its inscription, the famous basin in the collection of the Duke of Arenberg in Brussels was made for the Ayyubid sultan, Malik Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub.<sup>64</sup> Its artist remains anonymous, but must have been a Christian who was not only thoroughly familiar with Biblical iconography, but was also one of the great masters of Islamic decorative arts. Another artist, this time a Moslem, 'Ali ibn Hamud, was patronized by a Turkish amir, Atmish al-Sa'di, for whom he made a silver inlaid ewer in the year 673 (1274), and also by a certain Christian, whose name, Haqta(?) ibn Theodora, is inlaid on the vase dated 651 (1259) and ornamented with non-Christian figural motifs.<sup>65</sup> These facts can be easily multiplied and supplemented with examples from other fields, but this would be beyond the limit of the present thesis. I shall return to this highly important subject elsewhere in the future.

We come now to what is artistically one of the most outstanding pieces of the entire group — the brass incense burner in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore (Fig. 10). Identical in shape to the foregoing pieces and inlaid with silver only, its lower part is decorated with units of scrolling stems symmetrically composed and coalescing with water fowls (widgeons and swans?) and a pair of animal heads. It is of significance to notice how the tails of some of the birds terminate in volutes. The scrolling units, in their turn, are connected with each other by lion masks. The plumage of the birds and the details of the animal heads are engraved with utmost care and grace. Contrasting with the delicate drawing of the body is the bold, perforated design of the cover, consisting of heavy scrolling stems carrying large arabesque leaves. Although the ornamental motif of the lower part is unique in its compositional treatment, and has no counterpart among known Islamic inlaid metals, nevertheless in its component elements it finds parallels among the metals of the thirteenth century. The

64. M. van Berchem, "Arabische Inschriften," in Fr. Sarre and F. R. Martin, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 6 ff.

65. For the works by 'Ali ibn Hamud see G. Wiet, "Un nouvel artiste de Mossoul," *Syria*, XI, 1931, pp. 161 ff., or *L'exposition persane de 1931*, Cairo, 1933, pp. 36 ff.

varieties of the so-called "grotesque" arabesques employed in Islamic art are well known,<sup>66</sup> but in its present rendering it is quite unusual, in that, instead of heads only, the entire bodies of the birds combine with the scrollwork. In North Mesopotamia, as far as I am aware, the motif finds its only similar, but not identical, parallel in the stucco carvings of Qara Saray near Mosul. Here in a frieze birds of different species are standing with folded wings in confronted position, their tails coalescing with undulating stems.<sup>67</sup>

It should be observed, however, that birds connected with scrollwork also decorate some North Mesopotamian and Syrian inlaid metals. But these are always represented either in pairs fighting each other, or in groups of four, or six or more, in flight. In the former country the motif almost always remained a secondary ornamental element, and thus quite different in its function from that on the incense burner. Here, not only is the motif the principal decoration, but also its substance differs considerably; namely, in that the fowls are depicted as swimming. Hence they are represented with folded wings and "submerged" legs. The subject in itself is therefore unprecedented in the repertoire of inlaid metals. Another important feature of the design is the careful engraving of details. The fine rendition of the plumage, the S-like double lines — the upper curve forming the eye and then extending downward so that the lower curve forms the alula of the bird — are executed with great ingenuity. In this respect the design is linked to the late thirteenth-century Syrian works. The artists of Mosul were interested primarily in the general effect of inlaid decoration, and were less particular about the engraving of details. The inlaid metals of Syria, however, showed a marked tendency and a steadily increasing devotion of the artist to the difficult engraving of de-

66. The origin of the motif goes back to the animal style of greater Asia, and thence it was introduced both to Europe and the Near East. The subject deserves a monographic study. In the meantime see the bronzes found in Yenissei and Kotschkar, both reproduced in J. Strzygowski, *Aliai-Iran und Völkerverwanderung*, Leipzig, 1917, pp. 214, 216, fig. 178, no. 13, and fig. 180. For the European examples see A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser, VIII-XI Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1914-26, I, p. 85, no. 180, II, pl. LXXXIII, or M. H. Longhurst, *Catalogue of Carvings in Ivory, Victoria and Albert Museum*, London, 1927, I, p. 66, no. 254, pl. XLI. For an Armenian example, A. Sakisian, "Thèmes et motifs d'enluminure et de décoration arméniennes et musulmanes," *Ars Islamica*, VI 1939, p. 81, fig. 24.

67. Fr. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, II, p. 241, and III, pl. xcvi. Birds coalescing with stems also decorate the illuminated chapter-head of an Armenian Bible dated 1295 in the Library in Etchmiadzin, reproduced in Graf A. S. Uvarov, "Echmiyadzinskaya biblioteka," *Trudy arkhéologicheskovo s'yezda v Tiflize, 1881*, Moscow, 1887, p. 365, pl. XII, no. 28. For a Syrian parallel see the capitals from Hama, published by R. M. Riefstahl, "Vier syrische Marmorkapitälé mit figuralen Darstellungen in der Moschee zu Boz Üjök," *Der Islam*, XX, 1932, pp. 186 f., fig. 11.

tails, be it the pattern of a gown, the plumage of birds, or the fur of animals. This Syrian stylistic peculiarity reached its highest degree of perfection from approximately the last decades of the thirteenth until about the middle of the following century. The most important Syrian inlaid work displaying the final phase of this technical perfection is the famous basin in the Musée du Louvre known as the "Baptistère de Saint-Louis," which in my opinion is a work of the early fourteenth century.<sup>68</sup> Its artist, the master Muhammad ibn al-Zayn, was probably a native of Damascus where the art of inlaying remained still at its height during the last decade of the same century. Of great interest in this regard is the personal observation of the Italian traveler, Simone Sigoli, who visited Damascus between 1384 and 1385. The passage relating to his description of the metal industry in that city, which until now has remained unnoticed by students writing on the subject, reads as follows: "Ancora vi si fa grande quantità di bacini e mescirobe d'ottone, e propriamente paiono d'oro, e poi ne'detti bacini e mescirobe vi si fanno figure e fogliami e altri lavorii sottili in argento, ch'è una bellissima cosa a vedere. E così di tutti i mestieri vi sono perfettissimi a grandi maestri, e veramente l'ordine ch'eglino hanno tra loro è una bella e nobile cosa, però che se'l padre sarà orafo, i figliuoli non possono giammai fare altro mestiere che questo, e così vanno di discendente in discendente, sicchè per forza conviene che sieno perfetti maestri d'oloro mestieri."<sup>69</sup>

A further suggestion for the Syrian origin of the incense burner of the Walters Art Gallery is found in the decoration of a silver inlaid cylindrical inkstand in the Schloss Museum in Berlin.<sup>70</sup> Unmistakably a Syrian work, it is decorated, in addition to round medallions containing

68. The present writer was the first to recognize in this basin a work of Syrian origin. See my "Ein Prachtspiegel im Topkapu Sarayi Museum," *Pantheon*, II, 1930, p. 457. The same opinion has been expressed recently by M. S. Dimand in *Ars Islamica*, VIII, 1941, p. 210.

69. *Viaggio al Monte Sinai*, Parma, 1843, pp. 61 f. Freely translated, the passage means: "There are still made great quantities of brass basins and ewers, almost gold-like in appearance, and these basins and ewers are inlaid with figures, foliage, and other delicate designs in silver, which are most beautiful to see. There are perfect great masters of all crafts and truly the organization which they have established among themselves is a beautiful and noble thing, wherefore if the father should be a goldsmith, the sons can never thereafter be engaged in any other craft than this, and so it goes from generation to generation so that by force of circumstances they are obliged to be perfect masters of their craft."

More than three centuries earlier the vessels of "gold-like" Damascus brass attracted the attention of the Iranian traveler, Nasir-i Khusraw, who saw them in Cairo. See *Sefer-Nameh*, ed. Ch. Schefer, Paris, 1881, p. 52, 13. Cf. also my "A Brief Note on Islamic Terminology for Bronze and Brass," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXV, 1945, p. 223. Other historical accounts of the metalwork in Syria will be presented in the first volume of my *Corpus*.

70. Reproduced in E. Kühnel, *Islamische Kleinkunst*, Berlin, 1925, fig. 115.

mounted hunters, with scrolling stems carrying the foreparts of animal bodies and flying birds, among these being two ducks with folded wings, the tails of which end in volutes in exactly the same manner as the tails of the birds on the incense burner. Moreover, the lion masks holding the stems together occur on both pieces. But for our comparative observation, the most suggestive motif on the inkstand consists of the bands of the uninterrupted scrolls carrying waterfowls with folded wings and "submerged" legs.

A few words should be said about the decoration of the cover of the incense burner in the Walters Art Gallery. It is not without importance to observe that stylistically related and symmetrically composed heavy scrolling stems carrying arabesque leaves find their parallel on the famous vase of the so-called "Collection Barberini."<sup>71</sup> This vase, made for the Ayyubid ruler of Aleppo and Damascus, al-Nasr Salah al-Din Yusuf (634/1236-658/1260), is most certainly a work from a Syrian atelier.<sup>72</sup> Thus this incense burner is neither Iranian, as classified in recent publications,<sup>73</sup> nor a work of North Mesopotamia, but a product of Syria during the second half of the thirteenth century.

To the end of the same century also belongs the silver- and gold-inlaid incense burner in the Umělecko-Průmyslové Museum in Prague (Fig. 11).<sup>74</sup> The lower part of the piece is bordered by gold meander bands which at certain intervals interlace to form round medallions. These enclose seated musicians playing the flute and tambourine. The spaces between the medallions, on a background of leafy scrolls, are occupied by standing figures. The same design is repeated on the cover with additional bands of benedictory inscription interrupted by wheel rosettes. The decoration of the joining rims consists of oblique lancets. That of the lower rim consists of flying waterfowls, while the feet have double-headed eagles. The background of the figures in the medallions on the cover has been entirely cut out, as in the incense burner with Christian subjects in the British Museum.

The type of figures,<sup>75</sup> the frieze of flying waterfowls, and the use of gold in the inlay are very characteristic of

71. G. Migeon, *L'Orient musulman*, pl. 30.

72. The best testimony for its Syrian origin is the shape of the vase. Cf. the famous sixth-century silver vase found in Hims, Ch. Diehl, "L'École artistique d'Antioche et les trésors d'argenterie syrienne," *Syria*, II, 1921, pl. XII.

73. R. Harari, *op. cit.*; not mentioned in the text but reproduced in pl. 1338B; also Ph. Ackerman, *Guide to the Exhibition of Persian Art*, New York, 1940, p. 289.

74. E. Kühnel, "Die Metallarbeiten," pl. 151, no. 3067, published as "Mesopotamian XIII century"; in *Ausstellung München 1910. Amtlicher Katalog*, Munich, 1910, p. 229, with the same attribution but with a question mark.

75. Unfortunately the silver inlays of the figures have fallen out. There can be no doubt that these were minutely engraved in accordance with the prevailing style.

the metal works produced in the Syrian ateliers. It should be stressed that the occurrence of the double-headed eagle on the incense burner does not conflict with its origin, since this heraldic motif, as has already been pointed out, was known and frequently employed in the decorative arts of Syria.

It is without any justification that one of the most typically Syrian incense burners (Fig. 12) has been published by its eminent owner, R. Harari, as an Iranian work.<sup>76</sup> There is not a single ornamental motif in the piece which can be attributed to Iran. The broken T-fret, the interlaced eight-foiled medallions filled with a flock of flying waterfowls around a central whorling rosette are elements which occur again and again on Syrian inlaid metals. Moreover, the arrangement of the inlaid design on the feet is direct testimony to its origin. Here a whorling rosette occupies the upper part and the remaining surface is covered by leafy arabesque scrolls. Exactly the same composition of design can be seen on the feet of the incense burner bearing the name of the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, Malik Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun (Fig. 14). This stylistic connection, be it remembered, shows the influences exercised by the Syrian metal industry upon the inlaid works of Mamluk Egypt. The R. Harari incense burner differs from all known pieces of the type because of the shape of its knob.<sup>77</sup>

As previously stated, only two pieces of all preserved incense burners of the type have their handles intact. One of these is in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 13).<sup>78</sup> It is inlaid with silver and gold, and on a background of T-fret pattern displays round medallions, each enclosing an enthroned personage flanked by a flagon and beaker. Between the medallions are elongated shields containing simulated *kufi* inscriptions inlaid in gold, and additional hexagonal wheel rosettes. The band of benedictory inscription at the base of the knob — interrupted by round rosettes — oblique lancets, and plaited strands on the rims, complete the decoration of the body and the cover. The tube-like, tapering handle is inlaid with a loosely twisted double-strand with inserted beads, simulated *kufi* inscription, and undulating stems of leafy arabesques. The first and the last of these motifs, in addition to lancets and arabesque devices, adorn the somewhat angularly surfaced feet. The incense burner is a Syrian work of the early fourteenth century and represents stylistic features which can be observed on a large number of inlaid metals, as, for example,

76. R. Harari, *op. cit.*, vi, pl. 1338A. This incense burner, or its counterpart, has been reproduced in J. W. Mollett, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Words Used in Art and Archaeology*, London, 1883, p. 319, fig. 652.

77. Is this a late addition?

78. The piece was published by E. Kühnel, "Islamischer Rauchgerät," col. 243, fig. 91, long before it was presented to the Museum by the late J. P. Morgan.

the cylindrical box at one time in the possession of Demotte.<sup>79</sup>

Incense burners of this type were evidently still produced in Syria during the second half of the fourteenth century. G. Wiet describes a dome-shaped cover in a private collection in Cairo. The silver inscription names a certain functionary of Saif al-Din Mankali-Bugha, the Governor-General of the province of Damascus, whose administration terminated in the year 768 (1367).<sup>80</sup>

From Syria this type was introduced into Egypt during the Mamluk period. Although the shape remained the same, the decoration underwent stylistic changes. Figural design was generally avoided and inscription, frequently of historical content, became the dominant ornamental element. Arabesque scrolls and various palmette devices also gave place to more or less stylized floral design. Two important incense burners representing the Egyptian group have been preserved, and both were made for the Mamluk Sultan, Malik Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, who ruled, with interruptions, from 693 (1293) to 741 (1341). One of these is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 14) and the other in the collection of the late Baron Edmond de Rothschild. Richly inlaid with silver and gold, its decoration consists of inscription bands interrupted by multifoiled medallions containing more inscriptions composed in a circle around heraldic inscribed rosettes.<sup>81</sup> The background of the inscriptions, as well as the spaces above and below the bands between the additional heraldic rosettes, are thickly filled with stylized blossoms and leaves. The rims are occupied by a simple zig-zag pattern, and the feet display floral design, in addition to an inscribed shield. Attention should be directed to the form of the knob which differs considerably from those of Syrian and North Mesopotamian pieces. Its convex-fluted surface and somewhat simplified profile seem to be Egyptian peculiarities. An identical knob also surmounts an unpublished Mamluk mosque suspension in the shape of a chalice with conical cover in the Türk ve Islâm Âsari Müzesi in Istanbul.

The incense burner of the Victoria and Albert Museum is one of twenty-eight known metal objects inscribed with the name of Sultan Malik Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun.<sup>82</sup> Among these, the most important is the famous *kursi* dated 728 (1328) and signed by Muhammad ibn Sunqur Baghdadi, Sinayi.<sup>83</sup> Although the artist was not a

79. This box has been reproduced by R. Harari, *op. cit.*, pl. 1335, as an Iranian work, without explanation; it is of typical Syrian manufacture, as is pertinently observed by M. S. Dimand, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

80. *Objets en cuivre*, p. 219, no. 272.

81. On this and similar blazons consult L. A. Mayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 34 f.

82. See the list in G. Wiet, *op. cit.*, pp. 27 and 200 ff.

83. *Op. cit.*, pp. 14 ff., pls. 1 f. A hypothetical question might be asked: was the artist of the pen box of the year 680 (1281)

native of Cairo, his style, nevertheless, is typically Egyptian, and there is not a single ornamental motif decorating his work which can be considered as having been introduced from distant Baghdad. On the contrary, we find many parallels among the decorations of inlaid metals of Syro-Egyptian workmanship. The heraldic inscribed rosettes, the inscriptions in Mamluk *naski* in circular composition, and the multifoiled medallions, occur both on the *kursi* and the incense burner. Stylistically related also are the floral designs of both pieces, although they are more luxuriantly executed on the incense burner. Thus, there can be no doubt that the piece under consideration was produced sometime between 1328 and 1341.<sup>84</sup>

We now come to the consideration of the Iranian examples of the group. It has already been pointed out that this particular type of incense burner was carried from North Mesopotamia to Iran. This introduction took place, certainly, before the Mongol invasion, when the artistic relations between Iran and the countries lying to the west still followed their normal course.

Foremost place among the Iranian incense burners of the type should be given to a recently rediscovered piece. Hidden for many decades among the art treasures of the late J. P. Morgan,<sup>85</sup> this incense burner (Fig. 15) is a

Mahmud ibn Sunqur, a senior brother of Muhammad ibn Sunqur? There is a space of 47 years between the dates of their respective works, which differ from each other also in style. But it is not impossible that they might have been half-brothers and were born some twenty or twenty-five years apart — a circumstance especially common in a society with the institution of polygamy. The difference in their styles is easier to explain. They were the offspring of two fundamentally different schools. Mahmud was probably active in Iran, while Muhammad was schooled in Cairo. Both artists were sons of a Turkish father — a fact which is implied by their parental name: Sunqur.

84. Present conditions prevent the publication of the counterpart of this incense burner in the collection of the late Baron Edmond de Rothschild. In *Katalog mezhdunarodnoi vystavki pamyatnikov iranskavo iskusstva i arkhologii. Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh*, Leningrad, 1935, p. 475, no. 18, an incense burner is listed without any indication of its shape, as being of bronze on three feet and made for an Egyptian amir of the fourteenth century.

G. Wiet, *op. cit.*, p. 82, no. 3335, pl. XXVII, published a small basin (h. 4 cm., diam. 12 cm.; in the Arab Art Museum), the inscription of which, curiously enough, calls it a *mabkhara*, "incense burner," made for Sultan al-Malik al-Zahir Muhammad. The owner, otherwise known by the name of Malik Zahir Saif al-Din Jaqmaq, ruled from 842 (1437) to 857 (1453). Thus the basin was made sometime between these two dates. G. Wiet has already observed that "on n'aurait jamais pensé qu'il ait pu servir à cet usage." But he did not venture to conjecture the implication of this singular epigraphic statement. Was the small basin an accompanying piece for a real incense burner and used to hold incense for replenishment or receive the ashes? If so, why does the inscription call it an "incense burner"? Possibly the text was composed to be inlaid on the vessel used for thurification, and, without change, was also inlaid on this basin, supposedly belonging to the set. If this hypothesis does not correspond to actual fact, was the production of incense burners of the familiar shape abandoned during the fifteenth century in Cairo?

85. The piece was kept in Mr. Morgan's Long Island home. For

welcome addition to the repertoire of Islamic metal works of noted historical significance. Cast of bronze and richly ornamented with silver inlay, it is 20.5 cm. high and has a cylindrical, slightly tapering body resting on three heavy feet. Its cover is dome-shaped and surmounted by a strongly profiled knob. Except for slight damage on one side of the lower part, at present patched by a square sheet of metal, and some silver pieces which have fallen out of the inlaid decoration, the incense burner is in a fairly good state of preservation. Its straight, projecting handle is also missing, but such is the case with all known incense burners of this type, save the two pieces already mentioned. The cover was originally attached to the lower part by a hinge and an additional chain, both of which have been broken, with only small parts still remaining.

The inlaid decoration is arranged in registers and covers the entire surface of the body and lid. This decoration, bordered on the body by meander strips, consists of four arabesque units, alternating with four lozenge-shaped, foiled medallions. The arabesque units are composed of symmetrically scrolling and intersecting stems carrying full and half-palmettes. Three of the medallions, against an arabesque background, contain a representation of the moon, depicted as a youthful, seated figure in frontal view with crossed legs and lifted arms holding a crescent around its head. The fourth medallion has been left plain and was originally covered by the joining end of the handle. The same ornamental motifs also occur in the principal register of the cover, the only variation being that the arabesque units are differently composed. Also, the ground here is pierced by small, round holes to permit the escape of aromatic fumes. Around the base of the knob, within a straight line, is an additional band containing an inscription. The knob itself has interlaced, semicircular lines crowned with palmettes on its curved section. The upper set-off rim of the body and also that of the cover are inlaid with oblique lancets in such manner that together they form a chevron. Finally, the lower rim has a loosely twisted double-strand with inserted beads, and the frontal surfaces of the feet are decorated with arabesque scrolls. The bottom of the body is left open, and inside its upper part is a shallow receptacle surrounded by an undulating stem with attached half-palmettes, likewise inlaid with silver.

The inscription (Fig. 16), inlaid upon a background of raised, dented scrolls, is without diacritical points. It consists of two distinct parts, both in textual content as well as in the style of script. The first part is a short, common eulogy, written in formal *naski* character, and reads:

العز والبقاء والمدلحة [sic] والشاء

"The glory, the longevity, [ . . . ] and the praise." The

this information I am indebted to Miss Belle da Costa Greene, director of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.

third word is, in all probability, المدحة, "the praise," but has been inlaid erroneously with a lam between dal and ha. Such mistakes are not unusual in the epigraphic texts, but this particular benedictory word does not occur, so far as I am aware, in the eulogistic protocols of this class. It will be further noticed that the last word الثناء has between lam and alif three dents instead of two.

The second part of the inscription, written in a light, individualized, cursive script, is the signature of the artist. It reads: عمل حسين بن ابو بكر [sic] سنّي رازي  
"Work of Husayn, son of Abu Bakr [sic] Sinni-i Razi."

Before attempting to determine the origin and the period of the artist, a few remarks should be made about the signatory inscription itself. First of all, the artist's paternal name should be in the genitive, and thus spelled أبي بكر Abi Bakr. But again, this obvious grammatical error is not the only exception to be found in the recorded epigraphic texts, and seems to have been a mistake frequently made in the non-Arab countries, Iran<sup>86</sup> and Anatolia.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the double nisba of the artist has been written without the articles al. This, as G. Wiet has already pointed out,<sup>88</sup> is characteristic of some signatory inscriptions on objects by Iranian craftsmen.

Grammatically the inscription is far from satisfactory. But it should be kept in mind that most of the craftsmen of the Middle Ages, and especially those of non-Arab origin, were not grammarians. The benedictory or historical inscriptions of the objects made to order were usually composed by secretaries or learned persons, and given to the artist to be engraved or inlaid. Thus, these objects are mostly free from grammatical mistakes. Even so, in some cases they are replete with errors, such as, for example, the inscriptions on the silver vessels of Amir Abu'l-'Abbas Walkin ibn Harun.<sup>89</sup> However, when the objects were not made on specific order, it is more likely that the artists themselves composed the texts of the inscriptions. Such would seem to have been the case with our incense burner.

The artist, as his nisba indicates, was a native of al-Sinn of al-Rayy. We would be at a loss to identify this particular locality if al-Istakhri, the famous geographer of the early tenth century, did not inform us about it. In his description

of the province al-Jibal, our authority states that among the famed districts belonging to the territory of al-Rayy were "the Inner and Outer Qasrans, Bihzan, al-Sinn, Basha-wiya, and Dunba."<sup>90</sup> Unfortunately, however, neither al-Istakhri himself nor the reviser of his work, Ibn Hawqal,<sup>91</sup> offers any additional details concerning the exact location of the district. About two and a quarter centuries later, al-Sam'ani (died 562/1166) in his *Kitab al-Ansab* mentions al-Sinn, not as the name of a district, but as a village belonging to the territory of al-Rayy.<sup>92</sup> His information, however, is based on the authorities of an earlier period. The same is also the case in the accounts of Yaqut al-Hamawi. First, in his description of al-Rayy, which he visited shortly before the occupation of the city by the Mongols in the year 617 (1220), the author quotes,<sup>93</sup> word for word, the passage of al-Istakhri. Later he returns to the subject, and this time expressly relates his information to the well-known theologian, al-Hazimi, who was a native of Hamadan, but lived and died in Baghdad in the year 584 (1188).<sup>94</sup> Al-Sinn, this time, is mentioned in connection with certain learned men simply as "a place in the district of al-Rayy."<sup>95</sup>

This is all we know about al-Sinn of al-Rayy. Zakariya al-Qazwini and al-Dimashqi are silent, and even such an authoritative writer on Iran as Hamd Allah Mustawfi, who discourses at length about the administrative districts of al-Rayy and mentions many towns and villages within the territory, does not record it at all.<sup>96</sup> Thus we may infer with reasonable certainty that the district and its homonymous village were no longer known under the name of al-Sinn during the lifetimes of these authors, i.e., during the Mongol period. Was the name of the district changed some time during the Seljuq administration? Whatever the case may have been, it remains certain that the village al-

90. *Masalik al-Mamalik*, ed. J. de Goeje, Leyden, 1870, p. 209,6. ومن رساتيقها المشهورة قصران الداخل والخارج وبهزان والسنن وبشاويه ودنيا

91. *Al-Masalik wa'l-Mamalik*, ed. J. de Goeje, Leyden, 1873, p. 270,16, repeats word for word the passage of al-Istakhri. In the Topkapi Sarayi codex edited by J. H. Kramer, *Opus geographicum auctore Ibn Haukal*, Leyden, 1938, p. 379,12, the passage has been distorted and instead of "السنن" stands "الشبر".

92. Ed. D. S. Margoliouth, Leyden, 1912, fol. 315b,22 f.: "السنن قرية من قرى بالري". See also the synopsis of al-Sam'ani's book by Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Lubab*, Cairo, 1938, I, p. 573,6.

93. *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, II, p. 894,22.

94. C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, Weimar, 1897-1902, I, pp. 356 and 366.

95. *Op. cit.*, III, p. 196,9: "السنن في موضع من اعمال الري". See also his *Mushtarik*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen, 1846, pp. 251 f., and al-Dhahabi, *Kitab al-Mushtabih fi Asma al-Rijal*, ed. P. de Jong, Leyden, 1881, p. 279,7.

96. *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, ed. G. Le Strange, Leyden, 1915, pp. 52,11 ff. His contemporary, Abu'l-Fida, *Taqwin al-Buldan*, ed. J. T. Reinaud and MacGuckin de Slane, Paris, 1840, pp. 288 f., quotes the passage of Yaqut's *Mushtarik*.

86. See M. Kanykoff, "Sur quelques inscriptions musulmanes du Caucase," in *Mélanges asiatiques tirés du Bulletin historico-philologique de l'Académie impériale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg*, 1849-52, I, p. 248; also *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, ed. E. Combe, J. Sauvaget and G. Wiet, Cairo, IX, 1937, p. 31, no. 3247.

87. M. van Berchem and Halil Edhem, *Asie Mineur. Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, III, Cairo, 1910, pp. 10, note 1, and 36, no. 23; Mübarek Galib, *Ankara. Anadolu Türk Asar ve Mahkukati Tetebuatina Esas*, Istanbul, 1922, I, pp. 47, 48, and 53, II, pp. 4, 9, and 25; Rizvan Nafiz ve Ismail Hakki, *Sivas sehri*, Istanbul, 1928, p. 153; see also L. A. Mayer, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

88. *L'exposition persane de 1931*, p. 47, no. 51.

89. G. Wiet, *op. cit.*, pp. 18 ff.

Sinn continued to exist until the Mongol invasion, a fact which is confirmed by the *nisba* of our artist, Husayn ibn Abi Bakr, whose incense burner unmistakably belongs, as we shall see later, to the second quarter of the thirteenth century.

There remains still the question: why did the artist, instead of calling himself merely al-Sinni, employ a double *nisba*? The reason for this is readily explained. First of all, the case is not an isolated one. Al-Sam'ani,<sup>97</sup> Yaqut,<sup>98</sup> and a number of other mediaeval writers mention several persons who were likewise known by the same *nisba* of al-Sinni al-Razi. Apparently there was a necessity for these men, as well as for our artist, to indicate explicitly that they were natives of al-Sinn, situated in the territory of al-Rayy, because there existed in 'Iraq during the Middle Ages several homonymous localities. One of these was a village near Baghdad;<sup>99</sup> the other, a castle near Sumaisat in al-Jazira (upper Mesopotamia),<sup>100</sup> and the third, a well-known town lying on the eastern bank of Dijlah (Tigris) between Mosul and Takrit which was also frequently called al-Sinn al-Barimma.<sup>101</sup>

Evidently there was another compelling reason for the adoption of this double *nisba* by Husayn ibn Abi Bakr. He lived during one of the most turbulent periods of Iranian history. His native territory, al-Rayy, was overrun by the Mongol invaders in the year 617 (1220). The massacres and destruction wrought by the conquering armies were disastrous for the intellectual and economic life of Iran. Many prominent men of religion, letters, sciences, and the arts were forced during the first decades of Mongol rule to seek material and spiritual safety in 'Iraq, Syria, and Anatolia, where the arts were in full bloom under the patronage of the Seljuq, Zengid, and Ayyubid rulers. The contributions of the Iranian immigrants during this period to the art and architecture of these countries are well known, and there is no need to enumerate them here.<sup>102</sup> Thus, in my opinion, Husayn ibn Abi Bakr was one such immigrant

97. *Loc. cit.*

98. *Loc. cit.*

99. Al-Sam'ani, *loc. cit.*

100. Yaqut, *op. cit.*, III, p. 169, 18.

101. Ibn Khurdadhbih, *Kitab al-Masalik wa'l-Mamalik*, ed. J. de Goeje, Leyden, 1889, p. 94, 5; al-Tabari, *op. cit.*, ser. 2, VI, p. 194, 5, 11. See also G. Le Strange, *The Land of Eastern Caliphate*, Cambridge, 1930, p. 91. There were, moreover, two mountains, one called Sinn al-Sumayra, situated at a distance of five *farsakh* from Dinawar on the great route to Khurasan (Ibn Khurdadhbih, *op. cit.*, p. 119, 8), and the other, known as Sinn al-Darb, in Syria (al-Dimashqi, *Nukhbat al-Dahr fi 'Aja'ib al-Barr wa'l-Bahr*, ed. A. F. Mehren, St. Petersburg, 1866, p. 114, 6).

102. Consult M. van Berchem and Halil Edhem, *op. cit.*, pp. 9, no. 4, and 8, no. 49; A. Gabriel, *Monuments turcs d'Anatolie*, Paris, 1934, II, p. 127; Fr. Sarre, *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*, Berlin, 1910, p. 127, and G. Wiet, "L'exposition d'art persan à Londres," *Syria*, XIII, 1932, p. 87. See also A. Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers égyptiens d'époque mamlouke*, Cairo, 1930, pp. 17 f.

who came to North Mesopotamia, possibly to what was then the center of metal work, Mosul, and being not far from al-Sinn on the Tigris, he purposely adopted the double *nisba* so as to distinguish himself from the natives of the neighboring town.<sup>103</sup> A comparative study of his work will show that Husayn ibn Abi Bakr was an offspring of Iranian artistic culture, but active in the sphere of the Mosul school. The shape of the incense burner as a whole and in each component part is identical with pieces of North Mesopotamian manufacture. But more indicative are some of the motifs of its inlaid decoration. In the first place, the meander strip bordering the body and the cover is one of the ornaments most characteristic of North Mesopotamian and Syrian metals. Examples are numerous: it decorates the ewer by 'Ali ibn Hamud of Mosul, another ewer dated 644 (1246) in the Walters Art Gallery, the bowl in Museo Nazionale in Florence, and others.<sup>104</sup> No explanation is needed for the popularity of this particular ornamental motif in the regions of the former Hellenistic East. It was a foreign element for Iranian decorative arts, and if it does occur on some metals of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it should be attributed to influences emanating from outside. On the other hand, in North Mesopotamia and the regions lying to the west and north, the meander had been known since ancient times, and was frequently employed during Islamic centuries, not only in industrial arts, but also in architectural decoration.<sup>105</sup>

Another minor, but nevertheless typical, motif of our incense burner is the decoration of the lower rim of the body. This consists of an engraved, loosely twisted double-strand with inserted, inlaid beads. In this particular form the motif seems to have been a favored ornament of the North Mesopotamian group of inlaid metals, and it decorates almost all attested pieces of the Mosul school, of which references to only a few will suffice. These are the vase by 'Ali ibn Hamud, the ewer dated 623 (1226) in The Metropolitan Museum of Art,<sup>106</sup> the famous ewer made in Mosul by Shuja' ibn Mana,<sup>107</sup> and another ewer from the

103. R. Harari, "Metalwork of Later Islamic Periods," *A Survey of Persian Art*, III, 1938, p. 2496, was the first to expound the theory of emigration of Iranian artists to Mosul.

104. *Walters Art Gallery. Handbook of the Collections*, Baltimore, 1936, figure on p. 49. The meander band is on the handle. For a better reproduction, see M. Aga-Oglu, "6000 Years of Persian Art. The Iranian Institute's Exhibition in New York," *The Art News*, xxxviii, April, 1940, figure on p. 10. For the bowl in Museo Nazionale see E. Kühnel, *Islamische Kleinkunst*, Berlin, 1925, fig. 114.

105. It decorates, for example, the capitals of the Jami al-Kabir in Mosul and the mihrab of a mausoleum in Sinjar. See Fr. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, II, p. 218, fig. 232; III, pls. IV and CVI.

106. M. S. Dimand, "Dated Specimens of Mohammedan Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, I, 1929, fig. 7.

107. G. Migeon, *Les arts musulmans*, Paris, 1926, pl. XLVIII.

year 657 (1259) in the Musée du Louvre.<sup>108</sup> Like the meander, this particular motif was used also in architectural decoration, as, for example, on the minaret of Jamī' al-Kabir in Mosul.<sup>109</sup> The motif was, however, not unknown to the Iranian metal workers. Its presence in an earlier period than those of the North Mesopotamian examples is attested by such a piece as the splendid incense burner in the shape of a panther(?) made by 'Ali ibn Muhammad, whose *nisba* still remains to be deciphered. A work of the twelfth century, the piece has around its neck the same twisted strands with inserted copper inlaid beads.<sup>110</sup>

The chevron motif of the joining rims of the body and the cover has a prehistoric antiquity.<sup>111</sup> It was employed as a decoration of moldings, rims, and similar parts of metal objects everywhere, both in the West and in the East. But it can readily be observed that the chevron on our incense burner is formed, not of repeated simple V-shaped pattern, but of oblique lancets. In this particular variation it seems to be another characteristic ornamental motif of North Mesopotamian and Syrian metals, although it occurs in isolated cases on a few Iranian works.

While the shape of the incense burners, the meander design, and even the loosely twisted double-strand with inserted beads, as well as the chevron of oblique lancets, can be recognized as typical North Mesopotamian features, the units of arabesque scrolls decorating the body and cover, and the personification of the moon in the medallions are, in their compositional form and iconographic details, the elements which differ considerably from the North Mesopotamian examples, but find their closest parallels in Iran. An attentive analysis of the arabesque scrolls will confirm their stylistic origin. Those commonly used on the North Mesopotamian bronzes have, primarily, the function of an all-over pattern and thus being a subordinated element, are of secondary value. On the incense burner of Husayn ibn Abi Bakr, however, the arabesque compositions are independent units, and their relation to the medallions is not that of subordination, but of coördination — an indication that the artist must have been schooled in some place where this artistic principle was prevalent. And this place was his native country, Iran, particularly the artistic circle of the Seljuq metropolis, al-Rayy. Unfortunately, no inlaid metals from this artistic center are preserved, but the polychrome painted pottery produced here during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries presents adequate

comparative material. As a parallel, we may invite attention to the magnificent bowl in the Musée du Louvre.<sup>112</sup> The same coördination of ornamental motifs can be observed on the outside of this bowl where the alternating figures and arabesque devices are complementary and not dominating each other. Similarly, the inside of another bowl, at one time in a private collection shows a register divided by elaborate arabesques into compartments, each containing a horseman. The entire design is treated in such a manner that it is impossible to distinguish which is the principal motif, the horseman or the arabesque.<sup>113</sup>

Another general, but by no means unimportant, stylistic feature is the marked difference between the disposition of the inlaid ornaments of North Mesopotamian bronzes and those of our incense burner. As a rule, the ornaments of North Mesopotamian metals, and particularly of the Mosul school, cover every available surface of the object with utmost density, thus leaving very little undecorated background. On the contrary, the ornamentation of our piece is sparsely inlaid against ample background. This, again, is one of the characteristics of the painted decoration of al-Rayy potteries. The same can also be observed on some thirteenth-century engraved and inlaid bronzes of Iran, as, for example, on the candlestick which is said to have been found in Hamadan and is now in the Gulistan Museum in Teheran.<sup>114</sup>

Moreover, the arabesque devices decorating the incense burner are of definite Iranian type and show close stylistic affinities to similar arabesque decoration of the contemporary painted potteries. Each of the identically composed arabesques of the lower part consists of an S-shaped stem repeated in complementary position and carrying both full and half-palmettes with long, hair-like tips. At the joining points, the scrolling stems are held together by small, round beads. Similar beads, or rather, buds, are also attached to various parts of the stems. Noteworthy, too, is the manner in which the half-palmettes meet each other with their tips at the joining section of the stems. Such S-shaped stems, in complementary composition and carrying palmettes, can be seen on the inlaid cylindrical box of East Iranian origin, belonging to the second half of the twelfth century, in the collection of A. Peytel in Paris,<sup>115</sup> or, in more elaborate form, in the thirteenth-century pottery bottle with relief decoration formerly in a private collection.<sup>116</sup> Round beads holding together the scrolling stems, and two half-palmettes meeting each other with their tips so as to form a

108. G. Migeon, *L'orient musulman*, pl. 31, no. 39.

109. Fr. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, II, fig. 238.

110. I. A. Orbeli, "Bronzovaya kuril'nitza XIIv. v vide barsa," *Pamyatniki epokhi Rustaveli*, p. 298, pl. 54. For a better reproduction see R. Harari, *op. cit.*, VI, pl. 1304.

111. The motif occurs as the molding decoration on the famous silver vase from Maikop, third millennium B.C. See M. Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, Oxford, 1922, pl. II, 4.

112. G. Migeon, *op. cit.*, pl. 28, no. 119.

113. M. Aga-Oglu, *Exhibition of Islamic Art, M. H. De Young Memorial Museum*, San Francisco, 1937, fig. 125; cf. also fig. 145.

114. R. Harari, *op. cit.*, VI, pl. 1316.

115. R. Harari, *op. cit.*, pl. 1311A.

116. R. M. Riefstahl, *The Parish-Watson Collection of Mohamadan Potteries*, New York, 1922, figs. on p. 199.

symmetrical pattern, find, again, their exact parallels in the painted arabesques of al-Rayy potteries.

Besides the ornamentation of the aforementioned bowl in the Musée du Louvre, attention can be called to the principal arabesque decoration of the bowl in the collection of C. L. David.<sup>117</sup> Instead of round beads, the differently shaped scrolling stems of the arabesque devices on the cover of the incense burner are held together by small, rectangular shields and interlaced crescent-like motifs surmounted by palmettes. Both of these details were known in Iran. The former occurs with the same function, for example, on the concave section of the neck of the candlestick already referred to in the Gulistan Museum, and on the pottery plate in the Charles B. Hoyt collection, attributed to Kashan,<sup>118</sup> but, in its arabesque decoration closely related to al-Rayy ware. The crescent-like motif interlaced with scrolls can be seen on the upper part of the body of the Herat ewer dated 577 (1182),<sup>119</sup> in the interior of another thirteenth-century bowl in the Musée du Louvre,<sup>120</sup> or on the lower part of the body of a bottle, where it occurs on the intersecting points of the stems, forming a double ogival lattice design.<sup>121</sup> It is evident even from these brief comparisons that the arabesque decorations of our incense burner are Iranian, both in general stylistic aspects and in the individual elements of which they are composed. These, and other Iranian ornamental elements, can be recognized in a great many inlaid bronzes of North Mesopotamia. But this is a subject which deserves a special treatise, and cannot be adequately dealt with here.

There remain the stylistic and iconographic features of the figural motif in the medallions to be considered, but first, a few words about the motif itself. The generally accepted view that the representation of the moon was "the badge" of Badr al-Din Lu'lu', the Atabek of Mosul,<sup>122</sup> because it happens to appear on his coins and on the Sinjar Gate of his capital city, is based on a hypothetical suggestion made for the first time by M. van Berchem.<sup>123</sup> But it was the same savant who later, in a discussion of archaeo-

logical evidence, reached the convincing conclusion that it is impossible to recognize in this planetary sign either a distinctive emblem of a ruling prince or of a dynasty.<sup>124</sup> This final opinion remained, unfortunately, unnoticed by the majority of writers on the subject. It is furthermore believed that the title of this ruler, Badr al-Din, which means "full moon of religion," has a symbolic relation to the representation of the moon. But this again does not correspond to actual fact, since the figure on Atabek Lu'lu's coins is holding, not a full moon, but a crescent. Moreover, the sign appears on coins minted long before Badr al-Din Lu'lu's time, in the year 585 (1189), by the Zengid prince of Mosul, 'Izz al-Din Mas'ud I,<sup>125</sup> whose title means "glory of religion," and has nothing to do with the moon whatsoever. Neither can it be the emblem of the city of Mosul, as E. Kühnel is inclined to believe,<sup>126</sup> for the simple reason that the cities of Islamic countries did not have emblems, and Mosul was no exception.<sup>127</sup> Without pressing the argument too far, and reserving further discussion for the future, we should emphasize that the planetary sign under consideration was depicted both on the coins as well as over the Sinjar Gate solely for its magical properties. Examples of such planetary or zodiacal representations on coins, architectural monuments, and objects of decorative art are numerous, and attention will presently be called to a single, but pointed, instance, namely, the centaur on the coins of the Urtuqid prince of Mardin, Nasr al-Din Urtuq Arslan, dated 599 (1202).<sup>128</sup>

There is no need here to go into an explanation of the astrological views of the Islamic peoples and the magical significance they attached to celestial bodies. A characteristic document, and one pertinent to our subject, is the bronze mirror in the R. Harari Collection. Dated 548 (1154) and of Mesopotamian origin, it is ornamented in relief with representations of seven planets. The astrological purport of the mirror is evident, not only from its decoration, but also from its inscription.<sup>129</sup> The figures on this mirror are, as far as I am aware, the oldest dated examples of Islamic planetary signs, and therefore deserve to be placed at the beginning of our discussion. In spite of the sketchy nature of the cast relief, the iconographic form of

117. A. U. Pope, "The Ceramic Art. A History," *A Survey of Persian Art*, v, pl. 658.

118. R. Ettinghausen, "Evidences for the Identification of Kashan Pottery," *Ars Islamica*, III, 1936, fig. 24.

119. Gräfin P. S. Uwarow, *Die Sammlungen des kaukasischen Museums*, Tiflis, 1902, v, pl. xv.

120. G. Migeon, *op. cit.*, fig. 59. In this connection it is interesting to note that identical ogival lattice design with crescents at the intersections decorates the bronze ewer made in the year 624 (1227) by Qasim ibn 'Ali, the pupil of Ibrahim ibn Mawaliya(?) of Mosul, formerly in the collection of Brimo de la Roussilhe.

121. R. M. Riefstahl, *op. cit.*, fig. 59.

122. Fr. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 212 f.; also E. Herzfeld, "Der Thron des Khosrô," *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, xLI, 1920, p. 139.

123. "Monuments et inscriptions de l'atabek Lu'lu' de Mosul," *Orientalische Studien (Festschrift für Theodor Nöldeke)*, Giessen, 1906, p. 201, note 1.

124. *Amida*, Heidelberg, 1910, p. 94, note 4.

125. S. Lane-Poole, *The Coins of the Turkumân Houses of Seljook, Urtuk, Zengee . . .*, *Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum*, London, 1877, III, p. 186, no. 529, also I. Ghalib Edhem, *Catalogue des monnaies turcomanes*, Constantinople, 1894, p. 94, no. 130, pl. v.

126. "Zwei Mosulbronzen und ihr Meister," p. 14.

127. M. van Berchem, *op. cit.*, p. 86, writes: "J'ai déjà dit que nous ne connaissons à ce jour aucun exemple certain d'armoiries musulmanes de cité. . ."

128. I. Ghalib Edhem, *op. cit.*, p. 52, no. 68, pl. III.

129. For the inscriptions see *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, VIII, 1937, p. 265, no. 3160; for the reproduction, R. Harari, *op. cit.*, VI, pl. 1301 A.

the moon figure is easily perceivable. It is represented as a youthful male personage seated in frontal view with crossed legs and raised arms holding a crescent around his face. It will be readily noticed that the figure differs from the known examples in its most important feature: the crescent does not frame the upper part of the body. In this aberrant form it continued to decorate some North Mesopotamian bronzes, as, for example, the base of a brass candlestick in The Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>130</sup> Thirty-six years after the date of Harari's mirror, the planetary figure appears on the coin of the Zengid prince, 'Izz al-Din Mas'ud, in its typical iconographic form which remained unchanged, except for some minor variations, during the following centuries.<sup>131</sup>

Of all planetary signs, only the representation of the moon was singled out to decorate the North Mesopotamia-

130. M. S. Dimand, *A Handbook of Muhammadan Art*, New York, 1944, fig. 87.

131. The iconographic type of seated figure holding a crescent seems to have originated under the influence of the pagan cult of the Sabians in North Mesopotamia (Harran). On the other hand, as Fritz Saxl pointed out in "Beiträge zu einer Geschichte der Planetendarstellungen im Orient und Okzident," *Der Islam*, 111, 1912, p. 156, there is a certain relationship between this Islamic planetary sign and the representation of the Moon God, Mah, of the well-known silver dish found in Klimova. See I. A. Orbeli and K. V. Trever, *Sasanidskii metall*, Moscow and Leningrad, 1935, pl. 19. Regarding the subject matter, consult E. Herzfeld, "Die Sasanidsche Quadrigae Solis et Lunae," *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, 11, 1930, pp. 128 ff. As a further suggestion, we might call attention to another representation of the moon on the silver dish with cult scene in the Bibliothèque Nationale, on which it occurs twice in the form of a crescent with an inserted bust of a masculine figure in profile. See E. Babilon, *Le cabinet des antiques à la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, 1887, p. 167, pl. XLVII, or Ya. I. Smirnov, *op. cit.*, pl. XVII, no. 40; cf. also the stone relief from Hama in M. I. Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art," *Yale Classical Studies*, v, 1935, fig. 42. But between these non-Islamic types and those of the Islamic Middle Ages there is a gap of several centuries and the intermediary links are, as far as I am aware, not recorded. There is another representation of the moon in the form of a rounded female face framed by a crescent. Early Islamic examples of the type are unknown, but we find it in a fourteenth-century manuscript in the Bodleian Library (reproduced in E. Panofsky and F. Saxl, "Classical Mythology in Medieval Art," *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, 1v, 1933, fig. 28, lower right-hand corner of the illustration) and again in another codex of the year 984 (1516) in the Hofbibliothek in Vienna (see J. von Karabacek, "Zur orientalischen Altertumskunde," *Sitzungsberichte der kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien*, 172, 1913, p. 10, note 1, fig. 2. This particular representation of the moon finds its poetical parallel in the Persian allegorical expression *mah-i char deh* (*quarta decima luna*), to which J. von Karabacek first referred (*loc. cit.*), and upon which E. Herzfeld (in Fr. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, 11, p. 213, note 1) later built his famous but not convincing explanation of the planetary sign on coins and its relation to the meaning of the atabek's title, Badr al-Din. Finally, in a fourteenth-century manuscript of a treatise on astrology by Abu Ma'shar in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Arabe 2583) the moon and the sun are represented as seated female figures holding, instead of the crescent and the circle of rays respectively, rings around their faces. See E. Blochet, *Musulman Painting, XIIIth-XVIIth Century*, London, 1929, pl. XXXIII.

mian inlaid metals. This was, however, as far as the preserved material permits us to judge, not the case in Iran, where it never was depicted separately, but always accompanied by the other six signs.<sup>132</sup> The oldest recorded Iranian example of these signs is on the late twelfth-century ewer formerly in the collection of Count A. A. Bobrinski, and now in the State Hermitage.<sup>133</sup> And again we find them represented on the thirteenth-century potteries from al-Rayy and Kashan,<sup>134</sup> and on the silver inlaid bronze pen box by Mahmud ibn Sunqur from the year 680 (1281).<sup>135</sup> So much for the Iranian examples.

Coming back to the iconographic and stylistic peculiarities of the figural motif on Husayn ibn Abi Bakr's incense burner, we note first that it has been rendered in a highly unconventional manner — hence, the general discrepancy and deviation of some details from the well-established iconographic type. The crescent does not frame, as was almost obligatory, the upper part of the figure's body, but only the head from the shoulders up. Furthermore, by bringing together the points of the crescent, the craftsman has transformed it into a ring which encircles the head of the figure. Another point needs explanation: the figure is represented bareheaded with curled locks of hair falling down the sides. Is the figure intended to be a female? If so, then it is a departure from the basic conception, since the moon in Arabic is male and occurs as such with a crown or some other headgear on the objects produced in North Mesopotamia. On the other hand, the dress of the figure is that of a man. In any case, all these unusual deviations show that the artist was not bound by the prescribed iconographic norms. Now it is significant that the same unrestricted treatment of this planetary figure can be observed on some Iranian examples, particularly those belonging to the period of our artist. For instance, on an al-Rayy bowl, at one time in a private collection in New York, the figure is represented as a female with raised arms, but not holding the crescent.<sup>136</sup> On the Kashan bowl in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts,<sup>137</sup> not only has the moon

132. The ewer in the Victoria and Albert Museum (R. Harari, *op. cit.*, pl. 1327), attributed by E. Kühnel (*op. cit.*, p. 15) to the Mosul school and by M. S. Dimand ("A Review of Sasanian and Islamic Metalwork in A Survey of Persian Art," *Ars Islamica*, VIII, 1941, p. 208) to Iran, has among its inlaid decorations the representation of the moon only, which is an indication that the piece, although of distinct Iranian shape, nevertheless was produced under strong North Mesopotamian influences and possibly by an Iranian artist in Mosul.

133. E. Kühnel, "Die Metallarbeiten," 11, pl. 143, no. 3049.

134. A. U. Pope, *op. cit.*, v, pls. 656A and 713.

135. The pen box is dated as above and not 608 (1211/12) as given in W. Hartner's most interesting article, "The Pseudo-Planetary Nodes of the Moon's Orbit in Hindu and Islamic Iconography," *Ars Islamica*, v, 1938, p. 136, and fig. 14.

136. A. U. Pope, *op. cit.*, v, pl. 656A.

137. *Op. cit.*, v, pl. 713.

been personified as a woman, but also the points of the crescent which she holds join each other over her head, thus offering a parallel to that of the incense burner.

Attention is invited to the peculiar rendition of the figures' concavo-concave trunk. In this respect, they are the forerunners of the figures represented on a group of Iranian inlaid metals belonging to the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The tendency to render the seated figures (in frontal view) with concavo-concave trunks can be already observed in Iran at the beginning of the thirteenth century, if not even earlier. A conclusive example is presented by the painted figures of the bowl dated 624 (1227) on loan in the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>138</sup> There is, however, a difference between these examples and the figure of the incense burner: a difference in the dress. Instead of the traditional robe, the figure is clad in a tunic with somewhat loose sleeves, trousers, and soft half-boots. This apparent change of dress is another departure from iconographic conventionalism, but it is significant from the stylistic point of view. Similarly dressed, elongated figures occur on a group of inlaid metals manufactured after approximately the first quarter of the thirteenth century. One of the best representative examples of this group is the aforementioned candlestick found in Hamadan. Of course, there are noticeable differences between the figures of the two pieces compared, which should be attributed to the personal mannerisms and skills of their respective craftsmen. Nevertheless, the stylistic relation is apparent. From artistic as well as technical points of view, the candlestick is the work of a person who was more skilled in drawing human figures than arabesque scrolls. On the other hand, the opposite, contrasting feature is evident on the incense burner on which the arabesque devices are much more vigorously executed than the representation of the moon. One may note the naïve form of the figure's head.

The suggestion that the artist of our incense burner, Husayn ibn Abi Bakr, was an Iranian active in North Mesopotamia thus finds its confirmation also in the ornamental decoration of his work. But it can be questioned why the North Mesopotamian ornamental elements found on the incense burner could not have been introduced to Iran, as Iranian elements were introduced to North Mesopotamia. To believe that the movement of artistic influences still continued to flow during the catastrophic years of the Mongol invasion from the countries situated to the west of Iran to such devastated centers as al-Rayy or Nishapur is to neglect the actual conditions prevailing in that country. During the period from 1220 until about 1256 there could be no normal relations in artistic or any other cultural fields. It was after the relative peace and order established during

the reign of Hulagu that the cultural life of Iran resumed its normal course of development, and that relations with neighboring western countries were restored. On the other hand, the same Mongol invasion and the resulting instability of social order caused an emigration of artists. With them went the artistic principles which were responsible, to be specific, for a sudden flourishing of the art of inlaid metals in North Mesopotamia.

The number of known incense burners of our type actually produced in Iran is small: there are recorded at present but one "intact" and two fragmentary pieces. One of these fragments, the lower part of an incense burner in a private collection in New York (Fig. 17), shows that the type was adopted by the Iranian metal workers in its original shape. Unfortunately, the cover of the piece is missing,<sup>139</sup> but in all probability it was of the usual domed shape with a surmounting knob. Distinctly Iranian are the ornaments and their disposition. Bordered by loosely twisted double-strand bands, the burner shows three round medallions of interlaced geometrical pattern. These alternate with three elongated shields. The shields have concave ends, and they are filled with delicately drawn scrolling stems, which carry palmettes in symmetrical, circular arrangement. Small palmette devices are also inlaid on the upper parts of the feet. It is interesting to note that the medallions and the bordering bands are perforated. None of the above-discussed incense burners has perforations on the body. They are unnecessary because the receptacle for the incense is always placed on the upper level, immediately under the cover, which is always perforated.

The alternation of round medallions and elongated shields with concave ends is typical of the Iranian metals of the Seljuq period. They are engraved in identical arrangement on the silver bottle inscribed with the name of a certain Abi 'Ali Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Shadan, and on the silver plate made for the daughter of a Turkish nobleman, 'Izz al-Din Önör.<sup>140</sup> Both pieces can be attributed to East Iranian ateliers. Such forms are also engraved on the unpublished bronze mortar of unusual shape in the collection of D. K. Kelekian, presently on loan in the Arab Art Museum in Cairo. Of Iranian style are likewise the palmettes of scrolling stems which are inlaid on a background

139. In Ph. Ackerman's *Guide to the Exhibition of Persian Art*, p. 458, no. W, this incense burner has been described as having a "domed cover." The cover, which was removed at my suggestion, did not belong to the piece, but to a twelfth-century inkstand of the well-known type (see G. Migeon, *L'Orient musulman*, pl. 17, no. 80). Moreover, it could not have belonged to the incense burner because it is not perforated, and was, furthermore, hinged at the wrong place.

140. Both vessels are in the State Hermitage. See Ya. I. Smirnov, *op. cit.*, pls. LXXXII, no. 147, and LXXXIV, no. 151. For the inscriptions, see M. van Berchem, "Inscriptions mobilières arabes en Russie," *Journal asiatique*, xiv, 1909, pp. 406 and 410 f.

138. D. K. Kelekian, *The Kelekian Collection of Persian and Analogous Potteries*, Paris, 1910, pl. 39.



FIG. 13. New York, Metropolitan Museum: Incense Burner, Syrian, First Half of the XIVth Century (Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



FIG. 14. London, Victoria and Albert Museum: Incense Burner Made for the Mamluk Sultan Malik Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, Egyptian, First Half of the XIVth Century



FIG. 15. New York, Formerly Collection J. P. Morgan: Incense Burner by Husayn ibn Abi Bakr Sinni-i Razi, First Half of the XIIIth Century



FIG. 16. Inscription on the Cover of the Incense Burner Reproduced in Fig. 15



FIG. 17. New York, Private Collection: Lower Part of an Incense Burner, Iranian, First Half of the XIIIth Century



FIG. 18. Paris, H.-R. d'Allemagne Collection: Incense Burner, Lower Part, Iranian, XIVth Century; Cover, North Mesopotamian, XIIIth Century



FIG. 19. New York, Private Collection: Lower Part of an Incense Burner, Iranian, XIVth Century

of engraved, minute spirals.<sup>141</sup> Considering the type of palmettes in particular, and the medallion and shield composition in general, one is justified in placing this fragmentary incense burner in the first half of the thirteenth century, i.e., in the period preceding the Mongol invasion.

Figure 18 reproduces an incense burner, the lower part and the attached cover of which do not, however, belong to each other. These pieces, in the collection of H.-R. d'Allemagne, are said to have been found in Khorasan.<sup>142</sup> The lower part shows a slight deviation of shape in that the feet are not attached directly to the cylindrical body, as is the case with pieces of Syrian and North Mesopotamian origin, but, instead, to a rather wide flange added to the lower end. Whether this addition of the flange constitutes a peculiarity of Iranian incense burners is difficult to determine with certainty. It appears on the fragment reproduced in Figure 19, although its presence can be observed also on the incense burner recorded by E. Kühnel (Fig. 5).<sup>143</sup> The decoration of the piece suggests its fourteenth-century origin, and consists of leafy, undulating scrolls and bands of beads forming medallions each of which encloses a large full-palmette. The design was probably inlaid with silver. The cover, as can be readily observed from the reproduction, belonged to an incense burner of a different period and style. Its silver-inlaid T-fret pattern, meander band, and the perforated arabesques filling the round medallions are, both in individual forms and in compositional interrelation, typical of the works of Mosul. Hence the cover must be of thirteenth-century North Mesopotamian origin, a fact which has remained unnoticed up to the present.

We shall close our discussion with a brief description of the lower part of a fourteenth-century incense burner in a private collection in New York (Fig. 19). Inlaid with silver, its decoration consists of five round medallions occu-

ried by seated musicians playing flute and tambourine, represented in side view.<sup>144</sup> Between the medallions are symmetrically composed scroll devices carrying leaves. Bands of undulating stems with leaves complete the decoration of the body. Similar stems occur also on the feet. The flange with projections shows a loosely twisted double-strand interrupted by heart-shaped knots carrying leaves. The projections at the joining points of the feet are reminiscent of bird heads which occur at the same place on some tripod bases of stands.<sup>145</sup> Further inlaid ornaments decorate the inside of the receptacle, among which are seven disk rosettes, a motif which for several centuries persistently occurred on Iranian metalwork.<sup>146</sup>

How long incense burners of this type remained in production in Iran is difficult to determine. Iranian book paintings which occasionally offer a clue to the shape of various vessels are of no aid. In the paintings of the famous Uighur *Mī'raj Nameh*, from the year 840 (1436), in the Bibliothèque Nationale, we find the representation of an incense burner which, in its shape, is not related to those discussed here. It has a cylindrical body; the four feet form trefoiled arches; and the conical convex-fluted cover has a pointed knob.<sup>147</sup> It is quite possible that with the beginning of the Timurid period, when the arts and crafts in Iran underwent fundamental transformation, the type was abandoned to give place to the one depicted in this miniature.

#### NEW YORK CITY

144. Identical figures decorate the silver-inlaid casket in the Victoria and Albert Museum, reproduced by R. Harari, *op. cit.*, pl. 1359.

145. M. Aga-Oglu, "Some Islamic Bronzes of the Middle Ages," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, xii, 1931, p. 91, fig. 4.

146. All my efforts to locate the cover of a bronze incense burner, presumably excavated at Hamadan and formerly in the collection of A. Kann, were without results (*The Alphons Kann Collection*, sale catalogue of the American Art Association, Inc., New York, 1927, no. 295). Any information concerning the whereabouts of this cover will be highly appreciated. Another cover with silver inlay and Arabic inscription, found in Samarqand, is listed in the catalogue of the Leningrad exhibition of Iranian art (*op. cit.*, p. 363, no. 8).

147. E. Blochet, *op. cit.*, pl. LXXX.

141. These spirals are identical with those of lustered Kashan potteries.

142. H.-R. d'Allemagne, *Du Khorassan au pays des Bakhtiariis. Trois mois de voyage en Perse*, Paris, 1911, II, p. 70.

143. The flange, of similar shape, is a characteristic part of tripod stands produced in Iran and elsewhere. For examples of such stands see R. Harari, *op. cit.*, pl. 1284, and G. Wiet, *op. cit.*, pl. xxv.