About the journal

Hadeeth ad-Dar is a publication of the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah. Every year, the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah organises a series of lectures known as the Cultural Season. Hadeeth ad-Dar was created to share these lectures with academic and cultural institutions and Friends of the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah around the world. Cultural Season 15 will get underway in October 2009 and, as with previous years, will present scholars in a wide variety of fields related to arts and culture in the Islamic world.

The Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah (DAI) is a government cultural organisation based on a Kuwaiti private art collection. Since its inception in 1983, DAI has grown from a single focus organisation created to manage the loan of the prestigious al-Sabah Collection of art from the Islamic world to the State of Kuwait to become an internationally recognised cultural organisation.

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Embroidered Tent Hanging
India, 17th century
L: 170 cm  W: 140 cm

Hadeeth ad-Dar  Volume 29
Nikophorus Phokas in 962, Prince Hamdanid Sa'd ad-Daula moved his residence from the city to the much safer Citadel. By doing so, he changed the function of the Citadel from a location of religious powers to a military stronghold.

Under the leadership of Imad ad-Din Zangi and his son, Nur ad-Din, Muslims succeeded in stopping the expansion of the Crusaders. Related to its particular location, in front of the Latin States, the Citadel was the subject of re-enforcements.

Nur ad-Din built a large residence, the "Golden Palace". He also built a mosque, the Mosque of Abraham, which proves that the legend of Abraham was still alive at that time. The prayer hall was characterised by the re-use of classical elements, including a column and a capital. A corbel from a well provides evidence of financial support during the reign of Nur ad-Din.

The Citadel’s importance peaked during the Ayyubids, in particular under Sultan al Malek az-Zaher Ghazl, son of Salah ad-Din. In consideration to its strategic location, the sultan refortified Aleppo into an important stronghold.

The walls of the city expand from the classical periods ramparts, and the Citadel is still integrated in the eastern city wall.

The works implemented by Malek al-Zaher are well known, thanks to two chroniclers, Ibn Shaddad in 1190 and Ibn Abi Tayeh in 1192. The moat is enlarged and made deeper. A wall is built on the outer part of the moat.

The slope or glacis base of the Citadel is recovered by large blocks of stone, polished to make its ascension difficult.

The quality construction of the glacis is remarkable. In spite of a recent legend, which assumes that the stone-cladding of the glacis have been remove for other construction at the end of the Ottoman period, as seen in this old engrave from the middle of the 19th century, the missing area of stone are quite old. The project could have been stopped for budgetary reasons.

According to chroniclers, a tall bridge (figure 5), which served as a viaduct, was built to access the monumental entrance at a cost of 50,000 dinars and took five years to complete. We also know the qualities of the wood used for its foundations.

But the most impressive realisation of Malek al-Zaher is its entrance. During the Mamluk period, a throne hall was added to the original Ayyubid construction. What you see today is a reconstruction of the entrance as it was during the Ayyubid period, a passage between two towers. According to
chroniclers, the entrance was constructed in 1190, and finished, according to an inscription, in 1212.

The gate is not in front of the bridge but in the left tower. It is covered by an arch with two monsters, snakes with two heads (figure 6). On one of the metal doors a horseshoe is in the opposite direction of all the other ones. According to tradition touching this brings luck to the visitor. Also, cypress trees are found in each square.

A series of inscriptions are integrated in the entrance. In spite of a monumental one to the glory of Malek al-Zaher, there is a little one that is very interesting. It refers to the death of the architect of this entrance, the former architect of Nur ad-Din, Ibn Shaqwayq, during the collapse of the eastern tower of the entrance in 1204.

While reinforcing the existing structure of the Citadel, the Ayyubids built a large complex. This complex was composed of an entrance, previous or contemporary to the monumental one, paths (figure 7), a ceremonial forecourt, a large palace, a royal hammam, an arsenal, the palace al-Tawashi, former palace of the son of Malek al-Zaher, al-Malek al-Aziz, and a deep cistern.

From the central space, a passage serves the first floor; a second passage serves a little qa’a, a third passage to a third qa’a, another passage the royal hammam and the last serves the staff area, kitchen and a garden, famous for its aromas of its plants and flowers. The portal is a chef-d’oeuvre of the Ayyubid architecture, sophisticated in its composition, but really pure in its geometry. Rare are such delicate muqarnas (figure 8).

Essential elements for comfort in a palace hammam (figure 9) were also restored. It includes a traditional succession of spaces: changing/rest room/ bimani, medium room/wastani and the hot room/jouwani. The servants have an independent access.

In addition to upgrading the defences of the Citadel, the construction of a palace and a mosque, Malek al-Zaher develop also the infrastructure and
especially the water resources. He built a deep well and a large cistern.

Both structures represent large subterranean spaces related to the scale of the complete site.

While trying to determine how to complete the pavement of the central space of the qa‘a, the archaeological mission found a real surprise. Old elements still in situ were discovered. The negative of the pavement on the bedding mortar appears. Some, minus a few centimetres of the pavement, clearly indicated a previous marble slab pavement, and others indicated stone slabs pavement. The geometrical design appears and was completed.
At the beginning of the conservation work, a strange 34 metre deep structure appeared - full of debris. After cleaning the debris, another section of 18 metres was discovered. The structure was in fact a well, composed of a central well shaft with stairs around. At the lower level, a secret passage was discovered, linking the Citadel to the northern advance tower.

A Byzantine cistern was also found in the Citadel. It was used as a prison and some famous crusaders were incarcerated there, including the Count of Edessa, Jocelyn II, Renaud de Châtillon, and the king of Jerusalem, Baldwin II. The cistern is a large reservoir of 17 metres by 17 metres by 16 metres high. Four massive pillars support arches and vaults.

The Mamluks ruled over Syria from their capital, Cairo following the victory of Sultan Baybars over the Mongols in the mid-13th century. The city walls were enlarged to protect new quarters, and the city grew around the Citadel. In spite of important reconstruction work done on the ring walls after the Mongol destruction, and the construction of some towers, no major changes were done to the Citadel at that point. Ultimately, the Mamluks did decide to install a garrison in the Citadel.

The most remarkable Mamluk construction was the perfect addition of a throne hall, used by the
sultan during his visit in Aleppo, above the Ayyubid entrance of the Citadel (figure 10). The two portals in the forecourt of the throne hall are in the pure Mamluk tradition. On the terrace of the Ayyubid entrance (A), was first added a defence mezzanine to create a flat floor (B). The throne hall was later added (C).

The first structure was added in 1406, by the governor Jakam and had a wood ceiling which collapsed. A second attempt from sultan Qaitbay was done in around 1470 also with a wooden ceiling, which also collapsed. Qanswah al-Ghuri, in 1506, covered the hall with nine cupolas.

The Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums reconstructed a modern concrete flat roof in place of the cupolas and covered the ceiling with copy of Damascene ceilings (figure 11). Doing so, at least, it is perhaps not so far of the ceilings created by Jakam and Qaitbay.

But despite systematic fortification of the main outposts on the northern frontier of the Empire, the Ottoman armies took Syria in 1516. Aleppo was then located in the heart of the empire and threats from external enemies subsided. New quarters were built outside the city walls and the importance of the Citadel diminished.

The Citadel became a quarter of the city and some traditional courtyard houses were built, sometimes with materials from the fortifications. Excavations in the western area of the Citadel discovered a complete quarter.

These excavations have exposed remains of walls of these houses as well as workshops and other buildings for services. Courtyards, passages, service rooms, generally paved, are visible, and living rooms, covered with a lime screed, sometimes with a special treatment at the entrance of the room, are recognisable.

At the middle of the 19th century, Ibrahim Pasha, reinstall a garrison in the Citadel and built a barracks. In doing so, he evacuated the Citadel's civil population. Soldiers were housed in the Citadel until the late 1930s, after which the complete site was abandoned until the restoration work was launched in the 1990s. Today, the site (figure 12) beautifully demonstrates the historic and cultural capital and patrimony of Syria, of the whole area, and – more broadly – of the rich architectural traditions of the Muslim World.

Figure 1: Aerial view of Aleppo
Figure 2: A 1930s photo of the entrance
Figure 3: Aerial view today
Figure 4: Relief of the Storm God Temple
Figure 5: Bridge, with entrance in background
Figure 6: Gate of the snakes
Figure 7: Ayyubid Path, Before and Now
Figure 8: The Portal
Figure 9: The Royal Hammam Plan and View
Figure 10: Succession of the composition of the entrance to the citadel
Figure 11: View of the inner space of the Throne Hall Before and Now
Figure 12: Entrance of the Citadel today, with visitors
The primary role of coins is to aid economic transactions. In addition to this monetary role, coins, paper money and other types of numismatic material are a form of propaganda. Each time a new coin, paper issue, or medal is struck it contains information important to the political authority who ordered the new piece prepared. Sometimes the changes are obvious as in Iran when, after 1979, all images of the Shah were removed from Iranian currency; other times they are more subtle as when the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia issued 50 riyal notes with the image of the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa mosque to show their solidarity with the Palestinian people. At the same time coins are also a very conservative form of transmitting information. Often the new messages and/or images are carried forward in time but without the original meaning being retained. U.S. dollars are printed on green paper because that is what everyone expects while only a few may realize that this is done because during the American civil war which was 150 years ago, green paper was the only paper available for American currency. I will return to this role of money as a conveyor of information at the end.

Islamic coinage is the direct heir of a tradition which began in the sixth century B.C.E. Greek world and was carried forward in time to the Roman, Byzantium and the Persian Sassanian Empires. Unlike its predecessors, far more data was inscribed on most of the coins struck by Muslim rulers than for earlier historic periods. Most Muslim dinars (gold coins), dirhams (silver coins), and even fals (a copper coin) included the hijra date it was struck, the mint or city where it was struck, the name of the ruler such as a caliph or sultan, sometimes a local governor or other governmental officials, and religious formulae. The most obvious use of this type of data is to reconstruct political history when other types of data such as historical chronicles are lacking. But Islamic numismatic data can be used for other purposes and the following two examples illustrate such cases.

According to the 9th century Muslim chronicler al-Baladhuri and other later Islamic historians when the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur (754 - 75) came to power he issued an edict declaring that taxes paid in dirhams to his treasury were to be made only in Abbasid coinage and Umayyad dirhams struck by three governors who had governed the Iraqi city of Wasit. They were 'Umar ibn Hubayrah (gov. 720 - 723), Khalid ibn Ablullah (gov. 723 - 738) and Yusuf ibn 'Umar (gov. 738 - 743), which meant the hijra years 102 to 126. The chronicler also relates that the purity of the silver coins for each of these governors was better than his predecessor.
Table 1: Annulet patterns on some Wasit dirhams

<table>
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<td>0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
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Table 2: Parts of a Muslim Name

kunya A kinonym in the sense of “father of . . . .”, which may refer to one’s actual child or an epithet or honorific sense of parentage.

ism A proper name, usually given at birth and the name under which an individual would be found in medieval dictionaries.

nasab A patronym in the sense of “son of . . . .”, which may refer to one’s actual child or an epithet or honorific name.

laqab An honorific title, which can be earned or acquired such as in the case of al-Ikhshid. Abbasid caliphs were known by their laqabs, which were compound names ending in a reference to God [Allah]. Other compound names ended in al-Dawla [State] as in Nasir al-Dawla [Defender of the State].

nisha This is a broad category of names, which included professions, places of origin, or original ownership in the case of those of slave origin such as al-Ikhshid [Belonging to al-Ikhshid].

The questions then arise: why did al-Mansur issue such a degree and how were his tax collectors able to identify which coins were minted by the three named governors? Umayyad dirhams lack the name of any governor and it would have taken so much time to read each coin to see the name of the mint and then the date that it would have been a very expensive, counterproductive way to collect taxes.

To answer these questions one begins with the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik who is famous for introducing the all-epigraphic dinars and dirhams beginning in 697 and 698 (77 and 78 hijra) which were rapidly accepted as the norm for all Muslim coinage. In the centre of one side of the dinar and dirham was a form of Muslim affirmation of faith which reads in English, “There is no deity except God, Alone, He has no partner” and was written in Arabic in three lines. On the other side of the coin the centre included most of Sura al-Ikhlas, the Unity Sura (number 112), which speaks of God as One without partners and without being the Father or the Son. On Umayyad dirhams these words from Sura al-Ikhlas were inscribed in four lines. (figure 1) Abd al-Malik had introduced Sura al-Ikhlas as part of his anti-Byzantine propaganda but it was quickly accepted as being an integral part of what made Umayyad silver and gold coins Islamic. This is an example where the initial meaning of a new coin type changed from its propaganda value to its role as a marker of an Islamic coin.

When the Abbasids took power in 750 they wanted to use the coinage as additional evidence of the legitimacy of their claims to lead the Muslim community as caliphs. In particular, the Abbasid claim rested on their being descendants of the Prophet through his uncle al-Abbas. Therefore, the Abbasids dropped Sura al-Ikhlas from the coinage and replaced it with the phrase “Muhammad is the Apostle of God” (Muhammad rasul Allah) written in three lines. (figure 2) Even if you were an illiterate Abbasid tax collector you could immediately tell if one side had three lines with one word in each of them (Muhammad/rasul/Allah) or four lines with a lot of words crowded together (Sura al-Ikhlas). But this didn’t solve the problem of how to tell which Umayyad dirhams were minted in Wasit by the named three governors and therefore acceptable and which Umayyad dirhams should be rejected.

Before turning to how tax collectors could tell the difference between the acceptable and unacceptable Umayyad dirhams it is necessary to know why this was important. In the 20th century some coin collectors were willing to melt some of their Umayyad dirhams to see how much silver was in them but they didn’t want to destroy too many pieces and therefore their sample was very small and no distinct pattern emerged as to which Umayyad dirhams were purer than others. However, at the same time there was developed a non-destructive method for testing the purity of silver coins without destroying them or making
them unsafe to touch and study. The method was
called Neutron Activation Analysis. The silver in the
silver coins was made radioactive with a very short
half-life so that the relative percentage of pure silver
in the coin could be calculated and then returned to
the owner after a very short period of time without
it retaining any radioactivity. The coin was safe to
handle while the scholar learned the percentage of
silver in the coin.

The amazing discovery was that the purest silver
Umayyad dirhams struck from Spain to Central
Asia and from 698 to 750 were minted by the three
named governors for the mint of Wasit. The coins
were almost 100% pure silver. The Abbasid caliph
al-Mansur knew that by accepting the dirhams
struck by the three named Umayyad governors
he was receiving almost pure struck silver bullion,
which was not the case for the Umayyad dirhams
minted in other cities and for other dates. While this
answers why al-Mansur issued his edict, it doesn’t
answer how his tax collectors could distinguish
the almost pure silver issues from other less pure
Umayyad dirhams in an efficient manner.
A careful study of Umayyad dirhams by scholars led to the discovery that a series of small circles called annulets placed in the larger circles on the side of the dirham in which the affirmation of faith appeared in three lines corresponded with specific governorships. (Table 1) To put it another way, if a tax collector learned three patterns illustrated in the accompanying diagram, the tax collector would know which coins were minted in Wasit by each of these three governors and never have to read a single word of Arabic. Look at the diagram, then at the image of the three coins showing the side with annulets and identify which two were minted by the named governors and which one wasn't. (Figure 3) You don't have to read a word of Arabic to do this. Therefore, a combination of a careful numismatic study of Umayyad coins and modern science explained the reasons behind a medieval text describing the actions of an Abbasid caliph and how his tax collectors could put his edit into practice.

The next example illustrates how we can learn something from Islamic numismatics not found in the historic texts. The setting is tenth century Egypt and Palestine when these lands were ruled by a minor Muslim dynasty called the Ikshshids (935 – 969) founded by one Muhammad ibn Tughj al-Ikshshid (935 – 45). The effective ruler after al-Ikshshid's death was an African eunuch named Kafur (d. 968) who allowed al-Ikshshid's sons Unjur (946 – 60) and Ali (960 -66) to serve as governors before ruling in his own name (966 – 68). Kafur was made famous by the great poet al-Mutanabbî (d.965) who first wrote poems in praise of him and then some very vicious ones when the poet felt he hadn't receive proper recognition and reward from his African patron.

Before analyzing Ikshshid coinage it is necessary to review the parts of a traditional medieval Muslim name. Each Muslim has an ism or proper name (Table 2) such as Muhammad. The individual is entered in biographical dictionaries and even some modern telephone books by their ism. The ism is followed by a nasab, which refers to one's pedigree or ancestors, such as Ibn Tughj (son of Tughj). The most common form of an Ikshshid name is the ism-nasab combination such as Muhammad b. Tughj.

In theory an ism is preceded by a kunya, which may be actual or honorific. Muhammad b. Tughj's kunya was Abu Bakr. Each of his sons had a kunya. The kunya for Unjur, his son and successor, was Abu'l-Qasim. Even the eunuch Kafur had a kunya according to the medieval sources although, obviously, it could only have been honorary. Following the nasab, a person's laqab, if he had one would be listed. A laqab was an honorific title or epithet, which could be acquired on accession to power as was done by every 'Abbasid caliph during this era or was granted by the caliph. For example, Muhammad ibn Tughj did not have a laqab but wanted one. He wrote to the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad asking for the title al-Ikshshid because that had been the title of Central Asian rulers before Islam and his grandfather had been imported into the Islamic world as a slave to serve in the Abbasid cavalry as a Mamluk from these lands. Muhammad ibn Tughj accompanied his request with appropriate financial gifts for the caliph and those around him and was eventually awarded the laqab al-Ikshshid. A full medieval Muslim name could also include a nisba, which was a general category including nicknames, places of origin, or relationship to a former owner. According to the medieval chronicles, Kafur held the nisba al-Ikshshid because he had been acquired by Muhammad ibn Tughj al-Ikshshid.

A careful examination of Ikshshid dinars and dirhams leads to an interesting discovery. Before Muhammad ibn Tughj received his laqab al-Ikshshid no part of his name appeared on any of the regular Ikshshid coinage. After he received his new title, he felt that the honour was so great and that others in the Abbasid world who had acquired laqabs were putting their titles on their coinage, he would do the same. Ikshshid coinage for the last years of al-Ikshshid's life all had his laqab on the last line in the centre of one side. (Figure 4)
Before he died, al-Ikhshid had taken his older son Unujur with him to meet the Abbasid caliph who was at the time in Syria. The caliph called al-Ikhshid by his new title rather than calling him Muhammad or Muhammad ibn Tugj. As a sign of honour, the caliph then called al-Ikhshid’s son not by his ism Unujur, but by his kunya Abu’l-Qasim. Unujur felt so honoured by this that when he became caliph and was prepared to put his name on the coinage he listed himself as Abu’l-Qasim the son of al-Ikhshid. Unujur was succeeded by his younger brother Ali as Abbasid governor of Egypt and Palestine but Ali had never received a laqab for himself although he did use the phrase “son of al-Ikhshid” (bin al-Ikhshid) nor had any caliph called him by his kunya, although he had one. Therefore when it came to putting his name on the coinage as governor he only listed himself as Ali son of al-Ikhshid. Finally, Kafur the effective ruler of Ikhshidid lands decided it was time to stop the pretence that a member of the Ikhshidid family was even reigning let alone ruling and so he took over the governorship himself. But when it came to the coinage, he only placed the letter kaf, the first letter of his name on the coinage. (figure 5)

Here is an amazing case where four different rulers of the Ikhshidid dynasty each had the political power to put on the regular coinage whatever they wanted but the social norms were so strong they didn’t. The founder of the dynasty having bought a fancy title, the laqab, and was so proud of it that he demanded that it be used in all the Friday prayers where he was named, also had it inscribed on his coinage. Obviously his older son who succeeded him couldn’t claim the title al-Ikhshid for himself but he had met the caliph and had been called by the caliph by his kunya. This was still more prestigious than the experience of most others, so Unujur had Abu’l-Qasim inscribed on his coinage. The next in line, Ali, had no laqab of his own, hadn’t been called by a caliph by his kunya, and was only left with his ism Ali and so that is what appeared on his coinage. Finally, we find Kafur, the most important political and military figure in Ikhshidid lands but not a biological member of the Ikhshidid family, not willing to use any part of his name on the regular coinage only the first letter of his ism. Here is a case where a careful examination of the coinage reveals a hierarchy of parts of a Muslim name that mattered and the social conventions of how they were to be used in the tenth century on coinage so strong that when a set of governors in Egypt had the power to ignore them by putting whatever part of their name they wanted on their coinage, they didn’t.

Returning to my opening remarks, each of us has the ability to be an historian and to use numismatic evidence. When you are travelling or even at home, take a moment, look at the currency circulating where you are whether it be in the form of paper money or coinage and ask yourself, what political, religious or social messages the ruling authorities wished to transmit through images and text when they first issued that money.
An Early Jaziran Pen Case
At The Benaki Museum

Anna Ballian
Presented in English
18 February 2008

The Benaki Museum of Islamic Art opened its doors in 2004 and is located in the historical centre of Athens in a complex of neoclassical buildings. So far it is the only museum dedicated to Islamic Art in Greece and SE Europe. Until 2004 the Islamic Art collections were part of the main Benaki Museum originally founded in 1931. After its foundation, the museum expanded tremendously over time with the large number of new donations, and the need for re-arrangement, renovation and decentralisation became pressing.

The result was that in 2000 the new main Benaki was opened housing solely the Greek collections, and there are now several other autonomous branches apart from the Islamic Art Museum, such as the Historical Archives, the Photographic Collection, the Modern Greek Painting Collection, the Toy and Childhood Collection and others.

A brief sketch of the personality of Antony Benaki, who donated his large collections to the Greek state together with his family mansion in 1930, is here necessary (figure 1). Benaki was born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1873 into a wealthy family of the Greek community. His father Emmanuel Benaki became prominent in the cotton industry and banking, and later, when settled in Greece, he was also involved in politics since he was a close friend of Eleftherios Venizelos, the most important Greek politician of the age.

Antony Benaki's interests were different. He was raised in the cultured environment of Alexandria and was an active member of its multi-national and cosmopolitan society. He developed an interest in collecting early on, and it was in Egypt, during the last decades of the nineteenth century and in the early 20th century, that he began to acquire his Islamic collections in the same period that the Islamic collections of the great European and American museums were formed, and very often through the same dealers. Therefore it is not surprising that in some instances their collections and the Benaki museum’s complement each other.

It is remarkable that Benaki very early recognised the significance of Islamic civilisation and looked far beyond the cultural and political stereotypes of his age. It was after all an age of national claims and successive wars. However in his taste for Islamic art he was not alone. Other Greeks of Alexandria and Cairo shared the same interests. This close circle of connoisseurs was formed around Benaki himself and Christophroros Nomikos who was the first Greek historian of the Arabs. Both Nomikos and Benaki acknowledged the importance of Islamic art and civilisation in a twofold way: as an inheritor of the Greco-Roman tradition in the wider area of the Mediterranean, and also as a creator of artistic ideas, which were disseminated among the neighbouring civilisations and spread as far as Europe. It is interesting that recent scholarship studies the early Islamic period, which is the Arabic period par excellence, as a continuation of Late Antiquity.

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Coffee And The Conquest Of The Night In The Early Modern Era; From Yemen To Istanbul To London

Cemal Kafadar

Presented in English
27 January 2009

Fernand Braudel, one of the best-known and most influential of 20th century historians and a tireless researcher on material life and the dynamics of capitalism in the early modern era, has the following caveat for historians of coffee: "There is a danger that the history of coffee may lead us astray. The anecdotal, the picturesque, and the unreliable play an enormous part in it."

Ibrahim Pecevi, writing in the 1630s, two or three generations after the emergence of coffeehouses wrote: "Until the year 962 AH (1554-55), in the High, God-Guarded city of Constantinople, as well as in Ottoman lands generally, coffee and coffeehouses did not exist. About that year, a fellow called Hakam from Aleppo and a wag called Shams from Damascus came to the city: they each opened a large shop in the district called Tahtalkala, and began to purvey coffee. These shops became meeting places of a circle of pleasure seekers and idlers, and also of some wits from among the men of letters and literati, and they used to meet in groups of 20 or 30. Some read books and fine writings, some were busy with backgammon and chess, some brought new poems and talked of literature. Those who used to spend a good deal of money on giving dinners for the sake of convivial entertainment, found that they could attain the joys of conviviality merely by spending an asper or two [democratisation of conspicuous hospitality and patronage] on the price of coffee. It reached such a point that all kinds of unemployed officers, judges and professors, all seeking preferment, and corner-sitters with nothing to do proclaimed that there was no place like it for pleasure and relaxation, and filled it until there was no room to sit or stand. It became so famous that, besides the holders of high offices, even great men could not refrain from coming there. The imams and muezzins and pious hypocrites said: 'People have become addicts of the coffeehouse: nobody comes to the mosques!' The ulema said: 'It is a house of evil deeds; it is better to go to the wine tavern than there.' The preachers in particular made great efforts to forbid it. The muftis arguing that anything which is heated to the point of carbonization, that is becomes charcoal, is unlawful, issued fatwas against it. In the time of Sultan Murad III, may God pardon him and have mercy on him, there were great interdictions and prohibitions, but certain persons made approaches to the chief of police and the captain of the watch about selling coffee from back-doors in side-alleys, in small and unobtrusive shops and were allowed to do this. After this time, it became so prevalent that the ban was abandoned. The preachers and muftis now said that it does not become completely carbonised, and to drink it is therefore lawful. Among the ulema, the sheikhs, the viziers, and the great, there was nobody left who did not drink it. It even reached such a point that the grand viziers built great coffeehouses as investments and began to rent them out at one or two gold pieces a day."

Almost all the themes one would need to cover in dealing with the history of coffee and coffeehouses are underscored here: new and immensely popular forms of sociability; secularisation of public space;

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new sites and forms of public literary activity; tensions with the authorities; new fora for political mobilisation; new circumstances to renegotiate the boundaries of prohibition and permissiveness; coffee as a commodity and the coffeehouse as an investment.

But let us go back to the beginnings of the use of coffee and to its stimulating effect that is not mentioned by the 17th century historian I quoted at length, presumably because the buzz of coffee was by then taken for granted. By the time it reached Istanbul, coffee had of course been known in much of the Arab world for more than a century.

The earliest reports on the consumption of coffee associate it with different mystics based in Yemen. In each case their concern related to wakefulness:

“At the beginning of this [the 16th] century, the news reached us in Egypt that a drink, called qahwa, had spread in Yemen and was being used by Sufi shaykhs and others to help them stay awake during their devotional exercises ... Then it reached us, some time later, that its appearance and spread there had been due to the efforts of the learned shaykh, imam, muttla and Sufi .... al-Habhani ... He found that among its properties was that it drove away fatigue and lethargy, and brought to the body a certain sprightliness and vigour.”

Or, alternatively, and more commonly, it is attributed to al-Shadhili: “He found that it made his brain nimble and that it promoted wakefulness and stimulation for [the performance of] religious duties. So [he began] taking it for nourishment and food and drink, and he directed his followers to do so too, until [the practice] became widespread in Yemen.”

To the extent that coffee is a part of our modern lives, then, we owe that part of modernity to totally unexpected figures: mystics from Yemen. In a sense, that is how we started to be wired. There are links here to the proliferation of mood-altering and addictive substances such as opium, in the late medieval era, but with a big difference: coffee worked as a stimulant and encouraged sociability.

After its early use in Yemen just prior to 1400, coffee reached Mecca and Medina in the mid-15th century; Cairo in the early-16th century (when confrontations with the authorities were reported); Istanbul in the mid-16th century and with it, a new institution was created for its enjoyment. In Istanbul, the coffee shop owners were organised as a corporation before 1582. This is known since
records show them as one of the guilds parading at the Hippodrome during the 60-days-long circumcision festivity party thrown in honour of Prince Mehmed, later Mehmed III. Not surprising, since Istanbul had more than 600 establishments before 1600.

By the end of the 16th century, even small towns in this region boasted of several coffeehouses. Coffee houses began appearing in Europe in the mid-17th century, specifically in (Marseille, Paris, Vienna, Oxford, and London).

In short, in two and a half centuries, the seed of the plant that we call coffee, had been discovered to stimulate wakefulness and sociability by some Sufis in Yemen; a social institution had been created around it in populous cities like Cairo and Istanbul; that social institution became immensely successful and popular among the rapidly growing urban populations of the 16th and 17th centuries; and the social institution was exported to Europe (through various intermediaries) where, with some adaptations, it became just as popular.

If you were to add the interweaving stories of tea and chocolate, with which coffee had some competition and some modus vivendi, you would have a global narrative of social beverages [accompanied by sugar] that constituted one of the most significant aspects of consumption, new modes of sociability exhibited by new urban elites and middle classes. Coffee and tea answered a certain demand; there is no other explanation for their success.

Going back to Istanbul and other Ottoman cities of the early modern era, let me now turn my attention to the social scene of the coffeehouses. Who were the patrons of these establishments?

Gianfrancesco Morosini, the Venetian bali [combination commercial attaché and de facto ambassador] in Istanbul, describes coffeehouse patrons of 1585 as follows: “All the people are quite base, of low costume and very little industry, such that for the most part they spend their time sunk in idleness. Thus they continually sit about, and for entertainment they are in the habit of drinking - in public, in shops and in the streets - a black liquid, boiling [as hot] as they can stand it, which is extracted from a seed they call Cavee ... and is said to have the property of keeping a man awake.”

This curious (paradoxical?) description of coffeehouse patrons, as both “sunk in idleness” and indulging in a drink with the property of keeping one mentally alert, is an early forerunner of 19th century modernist and orientalist depictions. At that time, the institution had indeed become déclassé and came to be associated with backwardness and idleness in the minds of modernisers in the Middle East and Europe. Hence, the move to cafes, which were more acceptable to the modernised middle classes, and, eventually, to Starbucks.

Pecevi, on the other hand, reports that members of the Ottoman elite were among both those who frequented the coffeehouses and those who invested in them. In addition, research reveals textual and visual evidence that supports his records.

Jean de Thévenot, a French scientist who stayed in the city in 1655, noted that the Constantinopolitans deemed coffee to have medicinal properties, and added: “There is no one poor or rich, who does not drink at least two or three cups a day.” He also wrote that: “All sorts of people come to these places, without distinction of religion or social position; there is not the slightest bit of shame in entering such a place, and many go there simply to chat with one another.”

But when Thévenot mentions that “there is not the slightest bit of shame in entering such a place,” (as opposed to taverns, he implies), he is speaking only of men. Coffeehouses were, in the Middle East and the Balkans, male spaces. It takes a perceptive and gender-conscious observer like Lady Montague, wife of the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in the early 18th century, to see that Ottoman women were at least as concerned as men with conviviality and they found ways to meet similar social demands in different institutions.
The public bathhouses, Lady Montague observed, serve as “women’s coffeehouses.”

Genders hardly mixed, but all sorts of men indeed, “without distinction of religion or social position,” did visit coffeehouses. Over time, coffee shops emerged with specialised clientele: certain professions, groups, regiments of the military were likely to have their coffeehouses (adorned with special insignia, for instance). Many coffeehouses, however, at least the larger and centrally-located ones, attracted different sorts of people.

Due to the enticement of such environments, Jewish rabbis in the 16th century were compelled to answer questions “as to whether coffee prepared by gentiles was prohibited not only on the Sabbath but on the remaining days of the week as well.” Rabbi David ibn Abi Zimra who resided in Egypt in from 1513 to 1553, was probably the first to face the question and he “saw no problem with the beverage being prepared by a non-Jew. ...” Coffeehouses, however, were for him another matter entirely: “I do not consent to its being drunk at a meeting place of non-Jews, ... if it is indeed for medicinal purposes one may send for it and have it delivered home.”

And even if particular coffeehouses were limited in terms of the religio-ethnic or social backgrounds of their clientele, coffeehouse culture as such recognised few boundaries. An orthodox-minded Jewish scholar and poet like Menahem de Lonzano and a musician-poet named Israel Najara felt obliged to produce Hebrew poems for melodies well-known in Turkish among Ottoman Jews who frequented coffeehouses in Safed, Thessaloniki, or other cities. De Lonzano’s book was printed in 1573; Najara’s book was printed in Safed in 1587 and then went through various reprints. In these books of songs, they had to give the first lines in Turkish so that the melody and the maqam would be recognized to their readers who would then, they hoped, sing it in Hebrew. (Just like writing Hebrew or Arabic lyrics to “Yesterday” and then jotting down the first line: “yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away” so that the readers and singers would get it right).

It is not only the religio-ethnic composition of the patrons of coffeehouses but also the new modes of patronage made possible by these institutions that transgressed the social boundaries that the authorities of different communities would like to have maintained. Some members of the Ottoman elite lamented the fact that conspicuous patronage and ostentatious hospitality had been rendered so inexpensive.

M. Ali in Cairo wrote, “When jundis [soldiers] go, for instance, in a coffeehouse and there have to get change for a gold coin, they will definitely spend it all. They regard it as improper to put the change in their pocket and leave. In other words, this is the manner of showing their grandiosity to the common people. But their grand patronage consists of treating each other to a cup of coffee, of impressing their friends with one [cup] of four cups of which costs one para.”

Peccevi, in a more neutral tone noted, “Those who used to spend a good deal of money on giving dinners for the sake of convivial entertainment, found that they could attain the joys of conviviality
merely by spending an asper or two on the price of coffee." This was a democratisation of conspicuous hospitality and patronage through the encroachment of new urban middle classes, or bourgeoisie, in public life. A linguistic collection from mid-17th century of usages among peasants in central Anatolia has the following specimen: "pompous city-folk slurp coffee."

To boot, the new modes of sociability facilitated by the coffeehouses were also secular, or at least outside the control of the religious authorities. No such space existed before: the taverns were not shunned by all of Muslim society, but their appeal was much more limited. There was also the issue of sobriety and acceptability of coffee in general that alcoholic beverages could not enjoy. Taverns simply did not present a competition to the coffeehouses in terms of the size of their clientele, either Muslim or non-Muslim.

Thévenot reported: "generally in the coffeehouse there are many violins, flute players, and musicians, who are hired by the proprietor of the coffeehouse to play and sing much the day, with the end of drawing in customers."

A source writing ca.1580 mentions some additives: "I was asked about coffee whether it is permitted and safe. I replied: yes, it is safe. The only difficulty are those additions to it." This was probably a reference to tobacco smoke, which was linked to coffeehouses.

When asked about smokers, Ottoman scholar Katip Celebi wrote: "The more severe the interdictions became, the more people's desire to smoke increased, in accordance with the saying men desire what is forbidden and many thousands of men were sent to the abode of nothingness."

Europe's initial encounters with coffee happened abroad, through travellers in Ottoman lands. English chaplain William Biddulph, who traveled throughout the region in the 17th century noted that "It is accounted a great curtesie amongst them to give unto their friends when they come to visit them, a finion as scudella of coffa, which is more holsome than toothsome, for it causeth good concoction and driveth away drowsiness." George Sandys, a British administrator who spent time in Istanbul in the early 17th century concurred, writing, "They sit, chatting most of the day and sipp of a drink called coffee, in little china dishes, as hot as they can suffer it: black as soote, and tasting not much unlike it ... which [aide], as they say, digestion, and procureth alacritie." Pietro della Valle in 1650: found it beneficial, primarily "per la corraboratione della stomaco e per la vigilanza della notte."

Starting around the middle of the 16th century, coffee became a temptation and then a habit for Europeans as well. Throughout the late-16th and early-18th centuries, coffee was exported in large quantities from the Middle East to Europe. Caïrene merchants made huge fortunes on the trade. That said, we do know that coffee was brought to Vienna and to Paris much before that by Armenian merchants. Oxford, however, was probably the first town to have a coffeehouse (being a university town, this is perfectly understandable).
Ever mindful of trade, European merchants were alarmed at the rising volume of coffee imports. By the 1710s, "the Dutch were growing coffee in Java for the European market and the French were [soon thereafter] even exporting coffee grown in their West Indian colonies to Turkey. By 1739, West Indian coffee was mentioned as far east as Erzurum in eastern Turkey [now]. Colonial coffee brought by Western merchants was cheaper than that coming from the Red Sea and greatly reduced its share of the market." [As an imported commodity, coffee was soon joined by sugar, as the Ottomans "took to sweetening their coffee."]

The political turmoil of Cairo in the late-18th century, that paved the way for Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798, cannot be understood without coming to terms with the changes in the production and marketing of coffee.

It took a long time for the authorities to take coffee lightly. Confrontations between the consumers of coffee and the authorities started as early as 1511. It was then that the attention of a zealous inspector of markets (and public places) in Mecca. A legal council was convened to discuss the permissibility of both the substance itself and of the social gatherings held by its devoted consumers (or addicts as they were sometimes called in the proceedings).

The 1533 case in Cairo was finally decided after an experiment. Several people were asked to drink coffee in front of the judge who then observed them for a while. Not seeing any effects resembling intoxication, he decided in favour of coffee, but pro- and anti-coffee riots took place in Cairo and elsewhere in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At least part of the tensions between the authorities and the coffee-drinking public was related to the increasing use of the night time by the latter.

And there were, of course, few festivities that extended into the night but coffee did make a difference in an ongoing process. The Sufis' demand for stimulants in their nocturnal vigils has already been noted.

A similar point is made about Jewish spiritual life in the late 16th century. "A central element in Safed spirituality, especially in its Lurianic [Judaic mysticism] variety, was the considerable stress it placed upon nocturnal forms of piety."

... Some confraternities were known by names such as "Early Risers," Awakener of the Dawn," or "Watchmen of the Morning." Something is known about coffee consumption in Safed and among these circles at this time.

It was growing at rates alarming to the orthodox establishment that also opposed certain forms of Lurianic mysticism. "The introduction of coffee brought with it, beyond the mere availability of a new stimulant, the emergence of new perception of the night in which the hours of darkness could be shaped and manipulated by human initiative rather than condemn man to passive repose."

Coffee and the coffeehouse did much to change the relationship of individuals and social groups to the night time. Outside the few nights in the yearly calendar wherein festivities took place in or spilled over into the hours of dark, "men [now] went out at night to drink, meet with others, exchange information, ideas, or pleasuranties, and otherwise amuse themselves."

Looking at the changing uses of the night time for conviviality and public entertainment, the new turn to nocturnal vigils among both Muslim and Jewish mystics, as well as the more secular members of such confraternities, one could observe that the introduction of coffee and coffeehouses in the cities of the Islamic eastern Mediterranean during the 16th century accompanied "the gradual breakdown of some of the conventional divisions between day and night. The latter became associated, to an increasing degree, with activity rather than repose, and with sociability outside the home."

It would be foolhardy to argue that coffee is the factor behind the extension of human activity and public sociability into the night time in the modern era, but coffee accompanied that momentous change and a fine companion to our modern tempo it has been. It made the morning and the night more manageable than they had ever been and thus served as a tool in the conquest of the night that is associated with modernity and is still unfolding.

Thanks to Professor Kaladar for the images of coffeehouses in the Middle East and Europe.
Goethe - Why He Considered Himself To Be A Muslim

Manfred Osten
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The great German poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was born in Frankfurt in 1749. At the age of 82 he died in Weimar, where he had established what is called the Classical Weimar period of German literature, together with Friedrich Schiller. One of the characteristics of this period was Goethe's exceptional effort to set up an international virtual forum in order to encourage a permanent dialogue between leaders in German literature and the most prominent poets and writers from other countries.

In order to counterbalance narrow-minded chauvinistic tendencies prevalent in Germany in the 19th century, Goethe focused on the literature of the Islamic oriental world with extraordinary empathy for many years. The poetic result is universal poetry. That is to say Goethe's personal dialogue with the Orient resulted in a sublime masterpiece of poetry known as the "West-Eastern Divan" ("West-östlicher Divan").

In Germany it has rarely been noted that Goethe's brilliant work of poetry, The West-Eastern Divan (which was published in 1819), can be considered to be a personal testimony of his admiration for the history, culture and religion of the oriental world. In oriental culture Goethe encounters an unexpected positive phenomenon; he recognises a general refusal, due to religious reasons, of those negative, over-hasty tendencies of Western Europe. These tendencies he considered to be "the most lamentable disaster of our time, consuming in the next moment the moment that has just passed" (Goethe to Nicolovius in 1825).

In 1828, in a conversation with his note-taker Eckermann, Goethe expressed his feelings of aversion against these tendencies, saying: "We old Europeans, by the way, are not at all well; our conditions are much too artificial and complicated, our food and way of living lack appropriate nature and our social dealings are lacking in proper love and good will."

Similar ideas had already been expressed by Alexander von Humboldt who, during his voyages in Latin America, confided to his diary in March 1801: "I was extremely impatient, putting thousands of questions to the native Indian regarding the way I had lost. The Indian, however, did not answer at all. He continued to look at a tree motionlessly and he showed me (as if nothing had ever happened) a fat iguana slipping from branch to branch [...]. He lives outside of space and time while we Europeans seem intolerable to him, restless beings, possessed by demons".

All this leads to the question: What actually are those restless European demons that were already frightening Goethe at the beginning of the 19th century? To Goethe, Europe was increasingly evolving into a "velociferous" world driven by progress and future-oriented demons. The word "velociferous" in this context is Goethe's very own coinage for the modern self-destructive linkage between "velocitas" (the Latin word for velocity and haste) and "Lucifer", the devil. Goethe's drama Faust

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can therefore be considered to be a metaphor for the tragedy of this very modern interdependency of velocitas and Lucifer. Because here Mephisto, as Lucifer, tempts Faust with all those velociferoes devices of modernity such as faster weapons, faster transportation and the virtual money of today's world-wide financial crisis, all of which drive the impatient Faust to fatal illusions and disaster.

To Goethe the "velociferoes" tendencies in Europe even posed a threat to the last and most spiritual bastion: language. Long before Hugo von Hofmannsthal's epoch-making Letter to Lord Chandos, Goethe had already poetically expressed profound language skepticism, a fear of the loss of language and of the expulsion from the paradise of confidence in language. He feared that even words would be affected and seized by the impatient "velociferoes" whirl of his time, that words would disappear in the modern noise of "awkward waffle" (and idle talk) of an inhumane language.

Driven by impatience we would be left with a language which was already well on its way to accelerating itself, creating a sense of degenerating into mere information, into information as a linguistic failure. The result of this would be that our language would no longer match and reflect human experience. And language corrupted by political lies and the vulgarity of mass consumption would turn into an instrument of bestiality.

Goethe described this dangerous process by saying: "How unsettled I feel by the dubious traits of awkward idle talk/where nothing persists and everything flies/where already gone is what you see/ and it embraces me, this frightening, grey-knitted web". At the end of the 20th century the German author Botho Strauss summed up this interdependency of haste and empty talk in a modern vision, saying: "The air around us seems to be filled with the almost audible howling of a monstrous wave of empty talk racing around the world at an incredible speed."

Summarizing, one could say that for Goethe the history, culture and religion of the oriental world occurred as the antithesis of all these aspects of velociferoes tendencies in Europe that posed a threat to a humane language and way of living, eventually leading to the self-destruction of the hero in Goethe's drama Faust.

But before Goethe's poetical emigration to the non-velociferoes world of Islam, he discovered an early advocate for the concept of slowness and deceleration in Europe: Goethe unexpectedly came across some texts of the Dutch philosopher Baruch de Spinoza (1632-1677). Spinoza's own biography reflects a tendency towards slow motion and deceleration. In particular Spinoza's Ethik (written in 1677) revealed a counter-world to Goethe's own impatience, a counter-world rejecting the overhasty tendencies and desires of his time.

Goethe regarded Spinoza's pantheistic concept of nature to be the great countermovement to the restless European world of progress; it's haste and future-orientated restless desires. Because, according to Spinoza's pantheistic concept, it is only in nature that everything occurs inevitably and in perfection, as nature comes from God. And it was this pantheistic concept which - in Goethe's opinion - cast repeatedly a positive Spinoza-like light on the Prophet Mohammed.

To Goethe, Islam, too, appeared to be the manifestation of an "anti-velociferoes" concept due to its religion of "unconditional confidence and devotion to God's will".

This positive opinion throws light on Goethe's early resistance to the discreditation of Mohammed in the West which predominated in 18th century Europe. A determined advocate of this discreditation, French philosopher Voltaire sent his tragedy Mahomet to the Prussian king Frederick the Great in December 1740. In his accompanying letter he indignantly commented on the Prophet with the words: "That a camel dealer wants his fellow citizens to believe that he talks to the archangel Gabriel [...] this certainly is what nobody can excuse [...] unless superstition had extinguished in him all natural light."
Goethe, who translated Voltaire's *Mahomet* tragedy at his Duke's request in 1799, had a different opinion. Although he agreed with Voltaire's rejection of religious fundamentalism, he resolutely distanced himself from Voltaire's negative opinion about Mohammed. In his translation Goethe therefore suppressed the inhuman final monologue in Voltaire's *Mahomet*, and his favorable translation was staged in Weimar in January 1800.

Furthermore, Goethe opposed this contemporary reception of Islam, which declared Mohammed to be a false prophet as early as 1772/73, by beginning his own project of writing a biographical *Mahomet* drama in five acts. Goethe considered Mohammed to be the *Sturm und Drang*, the *Storm and Stress* ideal of a great active-creative genius. In his own *Mohammed* drama Goethe intended to make the prophet's fate his search for God and how the prophet dies the purity of the idea of his absolute devotion to God's will would triumph.

Unfortunately however, only one prose scene has been preserved of Goethe's *Mohammed* project. In addition, a famous hymn that was published by Goethe in 1789 called *Mahomet's Hymn (Mahomet's Gesang)* has also survived. In this hymn the Prophet is glorified as the divine nature of a river carrying everything within it. Mohammed in the metaphor of a giant river appears as an absolute ruler, irresistible, joyfully carrying "the children to God, to their father's heart".

Concurrently to this enthusiastically declared advocacy for Mohammed, Goethe begins a very personal dialogue with Islam - a dialogue already characterised by visionary views in regard to modern times which we are about to approach only now. That is to say Goethe was obviously already aware of the danger of an inscrutable temporal (and cultural) schism between Islam and the impatiently accelerating occident.

Goethe therefore saw a strong necessity for both to enter into a dialogue with each other. But unfortunately Goethe's own attempt to enter into such a dialogue represented by his *West-Eastern Divan*, this great poetic cycle with the explanatory *Notes and Reflection for a Better Understanding of the West-Eastern Divan*, totally failed. Even as late as the beginning of the 20th century numerous copies of the first edition of this early attempt at establishing a west-eastern dialogue remained unsold at Goethe's publisher Cotta. And unfortunately even today knowledge of this intercultural stroke of genius is limited to the esoteric circle of a few specialists of German studies.

Although he was not understood by his own nation, Goethe was, in any case, the precursor for something important by writing the *West-Eastern Divan*. He prepared a conversational divan with Islam pursuing a simple and, simultaneously, difficult strategy of dialogue - a dialogue based upon the conviction stated and explained by him in his *Notes and Reflections* that the *Qur'an* was nothing less than the most important religious document in the history of mankind next to the *Bible*.

One result of this deep respect for the orient was that Goethe consciously gave reason to the suspicion that he was a Muslim himself. And Goethe apparently lived in accordance with this since he stated: "If Islam means devoted to God then all of us live and die as Muslims".

Goethe by and by immersed himself deeply in the Islamic world by reading the *Qur'an* and oriental poetry - poetry translated, amongst others, by Heinrich von Diez, the Orientalist scholar and Prussian ambassador in Constantinople, and by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, the Austrian Orientalist and diplomat in the orient.
Before this, Goethe himself had already translated the 6th sura from a Latin edition of the Qur'an and had done exercises in Arabic script. He had also taken part in a Muslim service when Bashkir soldiers from Russia - at that time allies in the war against Napoleon - came to Weimar in 1814. According to Goethe this service took place "in the lecture hall of our Protestant grammar school where the suras of the Qur'an are recited".

On the other hand, Goethe emphasises Mohammed's claim to absolute truth contained in the Qur'an. In his Notes and Reflections on the West-Eastern Divan he concludes: "To very briefly say as much as possible, one may find the entire content of the Qur'an summed up at the beginning of the 2nd sura where it says: "In this book there is no doubt".

Goethe indeed recognised the categorical diction of the Qur'an; he records: "In regard to its content and purpose the style of the Qur'an is rigid, great and terrifying, in some places truly sublime; in this way one wedge drives the other and nobody should be surprised at the great effectiveness of this book". Most probably this "great effectiveness" of the Qur'an is what leads Goethe to the disturbingly modern conclusion: "In the history of mankind the truly real, singular and most profound topic, which comes before all others, will always be the conflict between belief and disbelief".

However, despite his reservations, Goethe came to the conclusion that "the Qur'an is attractive, amazing and ultimately engenders admiration". In a conversation with Eckermann in 1827, Goethe revealed what fascinated him most profoundly about Mohammed's doctrine: "That philosophical system of the Muslims serves as an appropriate model to be applied to oneself or to others in order to find out on which level of spiritual virtue one really stands." This "spiritual virtue" which Goethe primarily associated with Islam was an idea he already admired in Spinoza's pantheistic doctrine: the inclination towards determinism, towards the belief in a fate predestined by God. Or, as he expressed it to Chancellor von Muller: "Confidence
Antony Benaki's collections of Islamic art cover, in a geographical sense, all the lands in which Islamic civilization flourished, and they represent the most important phases in the development of Islamic art between the 7th and 19th centuries. Major collections consist of ceramics, woodwork, jewellery, textiles, glassware, metalwork, arms and armour. The collection of Islamic metalwork, one object of which will be presented here, consists of metalware dating from earliest Islamic times until the 19th century. Their provenance is mainly the Arab countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey and Iran, but a few artefacts from Spain and India are also included. If we exclude the material of the Ottoman period, some 100 intact or nearly intact pieces are attributed to the medieval Islamic period. Metalwork must have represented a particular interest of Antony Benaki, as the formation of such a collection required considerable dedication and knowledge at a time when the interests of the cultured Alexandrian collectors were focused mainly on ceramics and fabrics, no doubt because of their strikingly colourful decorative effect.

An early Jaziran pen case

A brass pen case (figure 2) which retains part of its silver and gold inlay only in the interior is of special interest because of its inscription that mentions the date 615 AH/1218 AD and the name of the Ayyubid sultan al-Adil Abu Bakr (592 AH/1196 AD Damascus, 596 AH/1200 AD Cairo – 615 AH/1218 AD). Although badly damaged it can be read. The cursive inscription at upper surface of the lid: ...glory and prosperity.../blessing(?)/ and.... On the inside, a Kufic inscription on the sides reads ...malik Adil Abu Bakr 615 AH... Around the outer sides runs a damaged and illegible inscription.

This makes the pen case the earliest piece in the series of some fifteen inscribed objects with the name of an Ayyubid ruler, the 1225 celestial globe of al-Kamil, al-Adil's son following, and the famous Barberini vase closing the line. It is also the earliest known pen-case of a rectangular shape coming from the Near East showing the outstanding iconography of a ruler in the cosmic setting.

Pen cases and inkwells in the medieval Islamic world are associated with men of the pen, with the learned and educated. Owners of inkwells and pens were scholars or wise men. Thus in the manuscript of the Paris Kitâb al-Diryâq (Book of Antidotes) we find three illustrated pages containing the portrait of nine physicians of antiquity (including Galen) who contributed to the development of the antidote recipes. They are shown with their necessary attributes of learning, pen case, inkwell, bookstand, oil lamp etc.

From the 10th century on, inkwells were mentioned in Iranian poetry and historical works as symbols and prominent insignia of royal power and ministerial office, a notion perhaps dating back to Sasanian Iran and adopted by the Islamic caliphate. The so-called state inkwells were royal or ministerial, the latter made on the occasion of the vizier's investiture.

Among the recorded list of pen cases two leave no doubt as to their high status and we can actually characterise them as state inkwells. The pen case dated 607 AH/1211-1 AD made for Majd al-Mulk al-Muzaffar, vizier of the last Khwarizmshah, now at the Freer Gallery of Arts; and the pen case of ca. 1320 AD belonging to Abû-l-Fida, the famous governor of Hama. Both seem to fit well into the picture of power, scholarship and statesmanship; the vizier Majd al-Mulk al-Muzaffar is known to be a founder of a library in Merv while Abû-l-Fida is renowned for his literary works, the most important of which are a history of the world and a geography.

A good third example of a presumably state inkwell is mentioned in the chronicle of Sibt al-Sawzi who describes the defeat of Badr al-Din Lu'lu', the atabeg of Mosul, by the Khwarazmians in 1237 AD: "Lu'lu' escaped all alone riding a fast horse. The Khwarazmians looted his chattels, his treasures
and humility" were "the true basis of any better religion".

This insight brought about Goethe's decision to try "to hold himself on to Islam", as he confessed in a letter addressed to the composer Zelter in Berlin. To what measure he interpreted Islamic devotion to God as an everyday way of life can be seen from his categorical dictum in the West-Eastern Divan: "When fate afflicts you fate knows why: it wants you to follow!"

In his discussions with Eckermann, Goethe left no doubt that, in his opinion, Mohammed's doctrine was highly practical and implementable: "In order to give young people a solid religious basis Muslims strengthen their conviction that nothing will happen to man other than what has long since been predestined by God, who guides everything. Therefore they are well prepared to lead their life and are seldom in need of anything else." To Goethe, this remarkable "confidence" in the will of God contrasted sharply with the Western "imperative of fear". And it is this imperative of fear which is the reason Goethe's hero Faust - driven by his velociferores desires and ambitions - ends his life in blindness. Faust is struck with blindness due to his fearful and future-orientated attitude which prevents him from being able to appreciate the divine glory of the present.

Apart from this aspect, it should also be mentioned that Goethe's remarkable "confidence" in the will of God led to his own skepticism of the western concept of man's free will. Goethe admired Spinoza's pantheistic religious doctrine: "Everything that is, is God". Consequently this means that even man's seemingly free will has its ultimate source in God. Goethe therefore considered the idea of free will as a possibly wrong concept, thus already anticipating irritating evidence from modern neuroscience.

Let me conclude by coming back to the Muslim service that Goethe attended in Weimar in 1814, where he prayed together with the Bashkirian soldiers from Russia. The motivation for this joint prayer originated in Goethe's preference for a Spinoza-like mentality of slow motion and calmness and his attraction to the anti-velociferous religion of Islam. Besides this, Goethe expressed an act of tolerance by taking part in this Muslim service. He did so in the sense of his own provocative definition of tolerance in Maxims and Reflections: "Tolerance should only be a temporary attitude, it ultimately has to lead to recognition. To tolerate means to insult."

On the other hand, by contrast, Goethe made an additional, quite realistic remark concerning tolerance in his novel Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship: "In daily life almost nobody is tolerant! Although one may allow others to live according to their nature and character one is nevertheless inclined to exclude all those from all activities who have a different point of view from oneself."

These two ambiguous and divergent remarks on tolerance should be kept in mind in order to better understand Goethe. Goethe considered thinking in ambiguities, in paradoxes and contradictions as the most sublime way to approach truth. Goethe's two ambiguous remarks on tolerance should be kept in mind also with regard to the fact that nowadays Muslims represent the majority of the population in more than 50 countries of the world. Six million Muslims live in the USA, five million in France, more than three million in Germany, two million in Great Britain, and around 700,000 in Italy and Spain. Incidentally, the Muslim religion has the fastest growing community by far in the world. With its following of 1.3 billion, this community is already the second largest religion after Christianity which has 1.9 billion believers. The demographic outlook predicts a Muslim century since every 4th new member of the human race will be Muslim by the end of the first quarter of this century.

Goethe does not offer any solutions for the future. But it should be stressed that in his West-Eastern Divan Goethe leaves both the problematic and the positive aspects of the Occident and Islam open for a mutual exchange in the spirit of tolerance, thus paving the way for a real Divan of wise men. Goethe considered a dialogue in this spirit to be "more delicious" than gold and light. It should be mentioned that the German philosopher Nietzsche once said that he would have given away "entire truckloads full of fresh and most modern biographies" for a conversation of this kind with Goethe. But it was also Nietzsche who observed without any illusion that "Goethe existed - and still exists - for just a few."

Thanks to Dr. Osten for the images shown in this article.
From Aigai To The Edges Of The Hellenistic World

Angeliki Kottaridi
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In the beginning of the first millennium before Christ - as recounted in the most famous example of epic poetry, Homer’s Iliad – the Hellenic territory was made up of many small tribal kingdoms. Despite the fact that their relationships were not always friendly, Greek tribes spoke the same language, believed in the same gods and were conscious of their common tradition and ethnic descent. This consciousness is eloquently imprinted in the mythic genealogies of the epic poetry.

Aigai, is derived from the word aiga, “the goat”, and was the first city of the Macedons. Perched on the foot of Pieria Mountain, it controlled the extended fertile plains spreading around it, and was well protected from hostile invasions from the north by the river Aliakmon.

The first excavation of this site took place in the impressive ruins of the palace by Leon Heuzey in 1860. However, substantial research was launched during the ’30s by the University of Thessaloniki and the Greek Archaelogical Service.

In 1977, after 37 years of scientific work in Vergina, the modern name of the place, Professor Manolis Andronikos reached the core of the great mound and revealed the tombs of Philip II and Alexander IV, namely the father and the son of Alexander the Great. Philip II’s burial was the most magnificent funeral ceremony ever known in historic Greece. The unexpected discovery opened new dimensions for the study of the ancient Greek art and history as well. Finally, the place gained back its name Aigai having been lost during the course of the centuries.

Many other discoveries on the site followed: the theatre, the citadel and the city walls, sanctuaries with royal offerings and inscriptions, more than 1,000 graves, among them 8 temple-shaped, vaulted Macedonian tombs, and two royal burial plots with extraordinary rich finds dating from the 6th, 5th and 4th centuries BC.

In the Early Iron Age (11th - 7th centuries BC) a rich and populous centre, Aigai emerged from the mist of prehistory as an open urban unit, consisting of settlements scattered around the ‘city’. This central nucleus evolved organically, with no predetermined plan and its spatial composition is dictated by the royal presence and power, with reference to the divine and the need for domination and defence. In other words: palace, sanctuaries and citadel. It is obvious that this archaic model of spatial organisation gives expression to a society based on an aristocratic clan structure, in which royal authority is a reference point and a force for cohesion.

Isolated in the self-sufficiency secured to them by their abundant flocks, their forested mountains and their fertile plains, the Macedons, like other Greek tribes, remained outside the economic, social and political developments which led to democracy. Until the 4th century BC, Macedons retained institutions, customs and traditions characteristic of the Homeric society.

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The goat as symbol of Aegai on the royal coins of 5th c. BC.

![Figure 1]

2006

![Figure 2]

A man of great intelligence and resolution, an outstanding general and an excellent diplomat, Philip II ruled Macedonia in the first half of the 4th century BC. He managed, during the 24 years of his rule, not only to rescue the state from destruction; he also dramatically increased its territory and made Macedonia the leading power of the time.

Philip II managed to yoke other cities to his chariot and achieved the hitherto unachievable, to be elected ruler of all the Greeks, in preparation for the campaign in the east.

Alongside his struggles for power, Philip who was a devotee of the ideas of the Pythagoreans,
also emerged as a great patron of arts and letters, an enlightened ‘despot’ on the Platonic model. He gathered at his court the cream of the artists and intellectuals of the period and actively sought ideological support for his policy among men of intellect.

"Never has Europe known such an outstanding man as Philip son of Amyntas", wrote the historian Theopompos, who was his contemporary. Philip, who turned chaos into order and weakness into strength, was truly an extraordinary man, and he knew it. Himself the model and the ideal, he did not need to appear handsome. In the milieu of the Macedonian king the realistic portrait was born and a new dimension for the art was opened.

In Philip II's time, the Macedonian court became, to art and culture, what Pericles' Athens had been in the previous century. New trends that came into being in the circle of Philip II were transmitted to the world by Alexander and created the foundation of the Hellenistic world.

At the end of the 5th c. BC, while the situation in the collapsing democracy of Athens became difficult and insecure, the court of Aigai emerged as a welcoming haven for intellectuals and artists who found a fervent patron in the person of king Archelaos. The new palace of the king was decorated by Zeuxis, the most celebrate painter of the time. The great poet Euripides, integrated into Macedonian aristocracy as one of the kings 'companions', was to write his last tragedies here inspired by local traditions.

As the rich finds from the necropolis indicates, the 6th century BC was a time of prosperity for the Macedonian capital. The first half of the 5th century BC was dominated by Alexander I, a ruler capable of taking advantage of the circumstances. He made the Macedons lords of the land that took its name from them. During his time, the city became the centre of the most important Greek state in the north and life reached new levels of sophistication and luxury.

In the middle of the 7th century BC Perdikkas I became king and established the dynasty of Temenides, which was to rule for three and a half centuries and provide history with two of its most fascinating heroes, Philip II and Alexander the Great. Direct descendants of Heracles, son of Zeus, the Temenides rulers of Macedonians, incarnate
incessantly through the myth of their family, the heroic epic tradition. As the seat of the kings, Aigai became the cradle of the dynasty, and its history followed the fate of the royal house.

The tradition, inaugurated at Aigai, the ancient Macedonian metropolis, set its stamp on the royal centres of the Hellenistic world. It reached its zenith in Alexandria, with the museum and the library.

Since the spring of 2007 the enormous work for the systematic documentation and restoration of the palace of Philip II in Aigai, excavated partly in the 19th century and partly between the '30s and the '70s but, actually, never properly published, began and a lot of new information has already been discovered.

Built in a prominent position, it dominated the aspect of the entire area. Located in the same building-unit as the theatre, the royal house was very near to the sanctuaries which occupied the western part of the city. Obviously behind these structures lay a specific design inspired by a clear ideological stance: The centre of the political and religious authority blended in the person of the ruler should be combined with the theatre, the centre of art and culture for all the citizens.

More than 12,000 square metres in size; the palace of Philip was not only the biggest building of classical Greece (three times bigger than the Parthenon) but also one of the most important achievements of the Greek architecture. Centre of power and, simultaneously a residence, the palace combined the monumental features of public architecture (colonnades, friezes, stoas [an ancient Greek covered walk or colonnade]) with the functionality of private structures.

Equipped with every possible convenience and meticulously designed down to the last detail, it is the model of the ideal residence. The palace is a veritable monument of magnificence, functionalism and mathematical clarity, based on the Pythagorean doctrines. The use of the golden ratio epitomises the Platonic ideals of the divine harmony which should rule the world.

As the concrete manifestation of the ideal residence, it incorporates the greatest achievements of the classic era and opens the gate to the new era. It formed the archetype of the building with peristyle,
an architectural model repeated thousands of times throughout the world, though none of the repetitions attained the fullness and the absolute clarity of the original.

Floors with inlaid marble and wonderful mosaics, heavy, bronze-clad, wooden doors, and walls of brightly coloured stucco adorned with choice paintings. Precious furniture and vessels composed the setting for the royal banquets in which luxury was harmoniously combined with elegance and wealth with impeccable good taste.

The two couches found in the tomb of Philip II, richly decorated with reliefs of ivory and inlays of glass and gold, allow us to imagine the splendour of the royal ambience Hand-crafted by great artists, rightly earn their place among the masterworks of ancient art. On the frieze of the couch found in the main chamber is a hunting scene. The absence of the heroic nudity and the presence of the characteristic Macedonian attire of the time indicate the disposition for realism that dominates the modelling of the figures themselves.

Worked with absolute precision and meticulous attention by the hand of an accomplished artist, the heads of the hunters, absolutely monumental despite their miniature size, are without doubt among the most remarkable studies of the human figure known from ancient art.

Without doubt the palace of Aigai was the archetype of all the Hellenistic palaces and not only this. The ideology which lies behind the mathematical clarity of its concept seems to inspire and influence also many other structures scattered in the entire Hellenistic world. One of them I believe to be found in the Hellenistic Fortification of Failaka which is actually far more important, than it was thought to be.

Let us summarise the history of the Hellenistic fortress of Icarus on Failaka island. Around 325 BC the Greeks arrive on the island that guards the sea gate of the Middle East. According to the written sources, Alexander the Great manifests his interest for this island and names it Icarus. In Tel Khazneh, not far from the location where the fortified sanctuary was to be erected, came to light the first indications of the Hellenic presence on the island.

The head of a satyr, the spoon and the calyx are very common objects in early Hellenistic Macedonia.
The bronze fragments that, wrongly, have been considered as a belt, are parts of the reinforcement of a typical Hellenic shield, a precious offering of a warrior to the Soteira (the saviour), the great goddess of the island.

The coins of Alexander and Seleukos the 1st that were found together with those, limit the period of this activity around 300 BC that means in the time of King Seleukos the first. Age-mate and companion of Alexander, Seleukos was also a pupil of Aristotle. As ruler of the eastern empire, he proved to be the most loyal of all his successors to Alexander’s vision.

Founder of cities whose names recall the motherland, Seleukos conserved the Macedonian traits, traditions and obviously the measurements and the canons, and in a way he stays the most Macedonian of all. At the same time he was more open to the idea of the coexistence in terms of equality for all the nations, tribes and people of his vast kingdom.

The Icarus inscription indicates that the king himself ordered the creation of the sacred enclosure, in order to manifest in an unequivocal manner, the nature of his authority.

The placement of the temple on the central axis of the fort, the wise design, the absolute consistency of proportions and the implementation of the same canon from the part to the whole, bear witness of a main concept forming a prototype. Inspired from the ideas born in the environment of Macedonian court it seems to be created by one of the celebrated architects, working for the Hellenistic ruler.

The powerful image of the fortress combine with the holy character of the sanctuary marks in space the nature of the new sovereign’s authority. The absolute clarity of form and the geometric coherence constitutes a declaration of faith to the principles of the ratio and the divine law, incarnated in the person of the enlightened sovereign.

The connection of the political and military authority to the divine is a programmatic act and the combination of the Ionic capital with the
Persian base should be viewed in this context. This demonstrates in the most official way in the front of the holy temple, the same intention that Alexander expressed with the marriages at Soussas: the intention of uniting and leading the nations to coexist in harmony, while obeying the divine law, expressed through the authority of the monarch.

It cannot be excluded that Danish scholar Knud Jeppesen is right and that the Ionic temple is dedicated to Apollo, the mythical ancestor of the Seleukides, since Straban as well, mentions the temple of Apollo on the island of Icarus. Artemis then, who has been considered by the Greeks as the old goddess of the island, finds her place next to her brother. The correspondence of measures is also an indication that this temple as well, was part of the same project as a gesture of good will to the local population. If this is correct it could also explain its traditional form. The slight displacement of the axis constitutes, perhaps, an indication for the delay of the realisation of the program - perhaps the delayed transfer of the sanctuary of Soteira that is reported on the inscription?

The representative character of the complex remains certain. The fortified sanctuary of Icarus erected in the entrance of his empire from the sea gate of Arabia, is in a way something like a visiting card of the ruler. Therefore it is situated at the south-western edge of the island, facing the sea, open to the coast and not to the hinterland, a landmark for the ships arriving full of perfumes from Arabia and treasures from the east.

After two seasons of work this collaboration is being proved particularly productive. The first precious outcome was the conservation of the famous Icaros inscription, which, after 2000 years, is placed back on its base and now waits to be presented to the public in the new exhibition. Many other finds have been already restored as well but, the main focus of our activities was the research of the south-western part of the Hellenistic fort.

With very careful digging and very detailed documentation, we tried to comprehend the life in the fortress, which seems to be more complex and rich and of greater duration than has been considered until now. Two more habitation phases are revealed, which were not discovered by the excavators of the other parts of the fortress. The earlier (1st century BC) extends throughout the entire area of our research. At least four houses have being found with more than one room and revealed quite rich “destruction layers”. Very rich also are the destruction layers of two older buildings which seem to have been destroyed suddenly by fire probably before the end of the 2nd century BC.

In the part of the site where the previous interventions had not reached down to the older
construction and the foundation level, we had the opportunity to discover the adobe of the rampart and study, one by one, its mud bricks. We also, in correlation with the rest of the forts' remains, were able to examine its building phases. It seems that there were at least five, and not only two or three, as was previously considered.

The foundation level, the way of construction of the western tower and its connection to the rampart indicates that this does not belong to the original form of the fort. Most probably the western tower as well as the small northern gate and its reinforcements have been added some years later. In the original design, the fortress had a plain and clear geometrical shape. It was perfectly square, reinforced with four identical towers at its corners and had a single access, shaped in the form of a monumental tower. The entrance was situated in the southern part overlooking the sea, which during the antiquity, as shown by our trenches, reached far closer to the fortress than it does today.

One should have expected to find the monumental entrance in the actual middle of fort's façade, but this was not the case. The entrance was moved to the east and by comparing the distances from the door's axis to the two angles of the front, we noticed that their ratio was 1:6. In other words the placement of the entrance was calculated exactly according to the golden ratio.

The width of the enclosure wall is 7 feet, the same as in the fortresses in Macedonia. The exterior width of the towers reaches 20 feet, while the width of their walls is 5 feet. The tendency to use, in terms of feet, net ratios became obvious and reached a precision level of centimetres.

As we have concluded after detailed and systematic measuring on the wall carved stone elements of the Ionic temple, the foot that was being applied equals 0.328m. This is the so-called Doric foot, which was also used in the Macedonian kingdom. There were similar findings with the bricks, which are square and have the same dimensions as those found in Aigai.

On the axis of the eastern part of the enclosure is the Ionic temple and its altar. Both buildings differ from all other structures in terms of the material - imported oolithic limestone and not the common beach rock - as well as of the construction technique. Here well dressed stones are applied with a remarkable precision on the exterior surface of the walls, connected in the interior with a filling consisting of rubble and clay. This technique, particularly common in the new Macedonian capital Pella, is characterising the early Hellenistic era.
The rectangular base has a width of one foot and one palm, in other words 0.56 m. This appears to be a considerably important modulus. 0.56 m multiplied by 10 gives the interior dimensions of the cellar of the Ionic temple, the dimensions of the smaller square temple and those of the building leaning on the southern wall. Furthermore it gives both the distance between the temple and its altar and the distance between the temple and the huge rectangular building that had to be situated to the north, and has been extensively altered by later interventions. The same modulus - 0.56 m - multiplied by 100 gives the dimensions of the fortress at its mid axis.

The divine proportion that rules the Platonic universe, where god expresses himself as the mathematical golden mean [1.618, known as τ], the absolute canon of beauty that gives breath to the Parthenon marbles and to the colonnades of the palace of Altag is imprinted in the sacred fortress of the island of Icarus as well. There, with stones and Macedonian measures has been built a tangible manifest of the enlightened hegemony, a domination that dreams of a peaceful coexistence under the authority of rationalism.

The relationship of the width to the length of the temple is 1.6, which is the golden ratio. The axis of each of the two columns is found at the point of the golden section to the angles of the temple and this cannot be a simple coincidence.

One Doric capital, that is most probably from a later date (2nd c. BC), should not be associated with the small temple. Without the slightest indication for the existence of a porch, the small square temple is obviously an oikos with flat roof, and its shape was following the local tradition. The junction of the Ionic capital with the Persian base in the columns is an idea repeated in the coexistence of the two temples one next to the other, the Hellenic next to the local one, a fact that probably recalls the existence of two different cults.

It is very probable, that similar fortified sanctuaries might have existed, dispersed at different points of the frontiers, or the main roads and the entrances to the vast empire of the Seleukides, but until today they haven't been discovered. So the fact that here we have the opportunity to excavate one of them, makes Failaka particularly important for the study of the Hellenistic world.
and all the possessions of his army. I have been informed that a silver inlaid pen case which was worth two hundred dirhems fetched five dirhems..."

The importance of the pen case at court as an instrument of the royal government and public office is depicted in manuscript illustrations and metalwork. In the Rashid al-Din manuscript of the *Compendium of Histories* several miniatures show court scenes involving the solemn use of the imperial inkwell and pen case.

The best known examples come from the baptistère de Saint-Louis in the Louvre Museum, in Paris. In one of the medallions an enthroned Mamluk ruler is flanked by two *amirs*, one holding a sword — the *silsahdar* and the other carrying in both arms a pen case or state inkwell — the *dawadar* or secretary of the state. To further emphasize the importance of the object and the public office held by the *dawadar* the word *dawat* is inscribed on it.

Al-Adil’s pen case is the only royal state inkwell known to us and it is unfortunate that most of the silver inlay has come off. The design, however, is still discernible, as are certain details of the craftsmanship and the princely symbolism of the iconography.

The upper surface of the lid has been abraded and has completely lost its inlay, but we can see the design of three parallel zones, the middle one bearing a cursive inscription interrupted by three nearly identical astrological medallions consisting of two concentric rings, the sun in the centre, the six planets around it and the twelve signs of the zodiac in an outer ring. Two medallions on the short sides and three at the back show the planetary signs around the sun; on the front side are three medallions with dancers and musicians.

The inside of the lid has a rectangle containing three medallions with court scenes with loose arabesques around, and four roundels with geometric interlocked T-motifs, all within a continuous pearl band. The lid is bordered with a frieze of pacing or chasing animals and lancette leaves. The animals are interrupted by ten wheel motifs, two of which at the far left retain part of their original gold inlay. Animals include such real and fantastic quadrupeds as a dog, a winged unicorn chasing an elephant, a winged hare, a griffin, a donkey and a bear among others.

The central medallion shows a haloed enthroned ruler (figure 3), perhaps the sultan al-Adil himself, seated cross-legged on a throne-like low seat with a high back. He is wearing a turban and although the design of the inlay has been nearly completely erased we can be confident that he used to hold a wine beaker. Two flying angels are carrying a billowing scarf that forms a canopy above his head. The throne is held by two winged lions that are shown back to back licking their right paws as they lift the exalted prince to heaven. In late antique art the scarf or the canopy reveals divinity and by extension also royalty, and the winged lions or griffins are the solar creatures that carry the deified ruler to the Heavens.
The ruler is flanked by two attendants, members of his personal body guard or royal slaves. Although not fully developed as in the later 13th century by the Mamluks in Egypt, the institution of the young elite body of slaves in the service of the sultan is attested as early as during the 12th and first half of the 13th centuries in the Jazira, and is also documented by pictorial sources such as the Vienna Kitab al-Diryaq. It is in the frontispiece of this well known manuscript, that we can identify the attributes of the attendants. The figure standing to the right in an uncomfortable stance with one foot raised ceremonially and probably holding a now erased sword is the sword bearer of the sultan or silahdar. The figure to the left is seated on a low platform, and what initially appears to be his left hand lifted towards the sultan, is in reality the neck of a goose carried in his lap; he is probably the hunt master of the sultan. The scene is best viewed on a tray stand from the Jazira, now in Qatar, where the silver has been fully retained and the attendants carrying a goose and a sword can clearly be seen.

The medallions flanking the enthroned ruler illustrate the well known themes of the ruler’s entertainment: dancing and music (figures 4-5). The semi-circle on top of the roundels indicates the sky and more generally an outdoor activity. It is rarely if ever found on figural metalwork but it is met on minal and Kashan pottery and is typical of Jaziran manuscripts such as the Paris and Vienna Kitab al-Diryaq; it is thus a telling example of the debt of early Jaziran metalwork to manuscript illustration. In one medallion, three figures dance to the sound of two seated tambourine players and a player of a square instrument, either the qanun or the santur. In the other medallion the centre is occupied by a harpist with a long braid hanging on his/her back, and among the identifiable instruments are a long-handled lute, a tambourine, and a flute; a ewer is floating at the far right.

The bottom of the pen case is decorated with a dense geometric interlace of eight-pointed stars which enclose a rosette with a large silver dot in its core (figure 6). The visual resemblance to the night sky and the stars in the firmament is striking. The large medallion in the middle with the figures of the planetary signs complete the astrological picture.

In medieval Islamic art and particularly in metalwork there are numerous depictions of the sun, the planets and the zodiac. The complete set consists of two concentric rings, the sun in the centre, the six planets around it and the twelve signs of the zodiac in an outer ring, as on the cover of this pen case – the other known pen box with three identical astronomical cycles on the lid is in Bologna. But it is rare, and more often we encounter a kind of mixture of planets and signs, and specifically the planets in their zodiacal domiciles. The moon and the sun [the sixth and seventh planets respectively] have only
one zodiacal domicile, the Sun in Leo and the Moon in Cancer, the other planets have two.

On the pen case, the planetary figures (figure 7) are displayed as they appear in astronomical texts: they begin with the Moon as the closest to the earth and end with Saturn the farthest removed, and are arranged in a circle with the sun in the centre. They are depicted either as solitary astrological figures or in their respective domicile. Contained within interconnected roundels and reading from the bottom and clockwise they are: the Moon, a figure seated cross-legged holding a crescent, a crab's pincers at the right symbolising its zodiacal domicile; Mercury, as a young man, a beardless scribe (al-katib), seated in profile, one knee raised to support the paper, and holding a scroll and a pen; Venus (represented by Libra as it is Libra's planetary lord), a figure seated cross-legged under scales; the next figure is of a man running and probably depicts Mars, because he is holding his attributes, a sword and a severed head, the latter feature related to the astronomical image of the constellation of Perseus, who holds the head of Medusa. There is some confusion because the same figure of a running man is used for the personification of Saturn in the last medallion who, however, instead of holding the usual axe, is depicted with a sword. In between Mars and Saturn, Jupiter is depicted as a figure seated cross-legged on a throne with high back, with no specific attributes but as a wise old man wearing a turban. In the middle medallion, the Sun is riding on the lion, its only zodiacal domicile.

There is little doubt that the pen case is a work of a Jaziran artist: the medallion's pearl border is a vestigial feature from silverware that is met only in early Mosul pieces like the Benaki box of Ismail ibn Ward (617 AH/1220 AD) and the Metropolitan ewer of ibn Jaldak (623 AH/1226 AD). The geometric interlacing on the top of two cylindrical boxes, one in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the other in Berlin, and also on the top of the small box of Ismail ibn Ward, that again appear to be a typical feature of the early phase of Mosul metalwork.

The heavy debt to manuscript illumination has already been underlined but there is more to be said on the iconography: the pen case is the second oldest piece of Jaziran metalwork, the oldest being the ewer of Ibrahim ibn Mawaliya in the Louvre. On the shoulder of the latter a lively procession scene is depicted with attendants, servants with several animals, including dogs, a gazelle, and a cheetah, and courtiers paying homage to the enthroned ruler, but the general feeling of the scene is that of a garden party.

On the Benaki pen case on the other hand the enthroned ruler is solemnly depicted and lifted on his lion throne as a true Alexander ascending to heavens. There is no doubt that the solar iconography and its royal symbolism was fully understood by people at the time, whether Muslims or Christians, whether living under Muslim or Christian rule. On the Victoria and Albert box mentioned above, a pre-Islamic poem is inscribed equating the ruler with the sun and his subordinates with the stars, a comparison made also for Sayf al-Dawla, the well-known hero of the Arab-Byzantine frontier, by al-Mutanabbi. Arabic panegyrics on the prince comparing him to the ascending sun draw on roots deep in Late Antiquity as do similar poems and epigrams praising the neighbouring Byzantine emperor. This is an era and an area of classical revival and survival but also of living traditions. On a candlestick, now in Boston, made a few years later after the pen case, in 622 AH/1225 AD by Abu Bakr ibn al- Hajj Jaldak, the ruler is seated on a solar lion throne and is crowned or rather blessed by a figure with outstretched arms, reminiscent of Christ.
Probably starting around this time, throne scenes became the most important subject in the metalwork of the Jazira and Syria combined with planetary signs and astrological representations. The pen case is literally showered with nearly identical astrological medallions: three on the cover, five on the outside, one on the bottom inside. The sun is in the middle of all medallions, the planets and zodiacs revolve around it, the stars and the firmament are in the background.

The symbolism of the iconography is obvious. In its original, glittering state, the pen case must have been an impressive gift worth giving to the sultan. Al-Adil became supreme sultan in 1200 AD but was already conducting the affairs of the Ayyubid family and state much earlier. The gift of a royal state inkwell with such an explicit symbolic iconography probably indicates the commemoration of a specific event and/or the confirmation or reconfirmation of an allegiance.

What kind of event occurred which could have provided the occasion for such a gift? Unfortunately there is no concrete evidence, we only know of the troubled military situation during the last months of al-Adil’s reign. After a long and fruitful period of peace with local Crusaders, and commercial treaties with Italian maritime states, the 72 year old sultan faced a fresh wave of Crusades from overseas. With the arrival of the Fifth Crusade in 614 AH/1217 AD al-Adil, leaving the bulk of his forces on guard in Egypt with al-Kamil, moved into Syria to assist his other son al-Mu‘azzam to screen the approaches to Jerusalem and Damascus. There he realized that he could not deal with the number and fanatic zeal of the Crusaders and he chose to retreat, rejecting his son’s proposals for a direct attack. He even left the town of Baisan [Bethsaida] at the mercy of the invaders. Again his son al-Mu‘azzam questioned his decision but the sultan with growing impatience swore at his son in Persian, evidently desiring to conceal his remarks from his Arab or Turkish followers. He finally retreated some 40 miles south of Damascus at the camp of Marj as-Suffar leaving his son at the head of the army.

Another contemporary source relates a conversation to have taken place between father and son in which the sultan advised against combat while the Christians were still filled with Crusading ardour; he preferred to wait until they had become weary when, he said, the land could be freed without peril. As the Christians came to the Jordan river and lake Tiberias they would find outlets for their religious fervor by bathing in the sacred river and making pilgrimages to local holy places. And so it happened. After the needless pillage of Baisan on the Jordan river the Crusaders spent their time on fruitless assaults on the fortresses of the Lebanon and on mount Tabor. Afterwards they occupied themselves collecting alleged relics and soon returned home.

Sometime between the retreat or the departure of the Crusaders and the arrival of the Crusader fleet in Damietta in May 1218 AD the pen case was given to the sultan maybe as a solemn recognition of his wise policy that spared the Syrian lands of the Ayyubids. A few months later, at the camp of Marj as-Suffar outside Damascus, al-Adil on hearing the news of the loss of the tower of Damietta to the Crusaders, died of the shock; it was 7 Jumada I 615 AH/31 August 1218 AD.
The Citadel Of Aleppo:
A New Face

Thierry Grandin
Presented in English
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The Old City of Aleppo is one of the most remarkable examples of medieval cities in the Middle East, and certainly one of the most ancient (figure 1). Archaeological objects refer to settlements in Aleppo as early as the 5th millennium.

The Citadel rises today in the centre of the Old City, with its 5,000 years of history. Remains of a temple in the Citadel date the uses of the hilltop from the beginning of the 3rd Millennium BC. In the Old City, as well as in the Citadel, historical monuments bear evidence of the multiple eras including those of the Luwians, Hittites, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Umayyads, Hamdanids, Zangids, Ayyubids, Mamluks and Ottomans.

For centuries, the Citadel impressed locals and visitors. It was the source of interesting illustrations. It was also source of inspiration for photographers, as in this one from the 1930s (figure 2), showing this little caravan crossing Aleppo just in front of the Citadel.

Today, the Old City, where more than 120 thousand people reside, is also the location of active traditional enterprises. The "Mmeq", the famous covered markets and caravanserais, is still the economical centre of Aleppo, a city of more than 2.5 millions inhabitants. The Citadel remains the main landmark for its inhabitants. The citadel and its historical extra-muros quarters were registered by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1986 (figure 3).

In the 1930s, an aerial photo from the French architect Ecochard shows the Citadel completely abandoned. This was the situation until the end of the 1980s. At the beginning of the 1990s a few interventions undertaken by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, but overall the condition remained constant until 1995.

Between 1996 and 2007, the combination of archaeological excavations conducted by the University of Berlin under the direction of Dr. Kay Kohlmeyer and the conservation project for the Citadel of Aleppo sponsored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture exposed "A New Face of the Citadel of Aleppo", which bears evidence of multiple historical eras.

According to legend of how Aleppo got its name, the Prophet Abraham passed through Aleppo on his way from Ur to the Holy Land. The legend said that he had milked his flock of sheep on the hill and handed out the milk to the poor, thus giving birth to Aleppo's name, Halab, derived from the word Haleeb, milk.

The first settlement in Aleppo was justified by the proximity of the river Quewil to the west which ensured a permanent water supply and by the presence to the east of an easily fortifiable natural hill. It was logical that the natural hill became an acropolis and, by the middle of the Byzantine period, the location of major temples.

The temple of the storm god was discovered during a Syrian-German archaeological mission from 1996 to 2007. It is located on a high point of the hill and was linked to an important building.
probably a palace. In addition to the remains of the temple, which are still visible today in several places, are basalt blocks which date from this period. Ultimately, the excavations revealed several building periods of the temple.

In its original condition, around 2800 BC, the shrine of the storm god is composed of an entrance porch, two lateral rooms, a vast hall 27 metres by 18 metres, and a cultic niche to the north in the axe of the entrance. Only limestone blocks are used in the lower part of the walls; the rest of the construction was in mud bricks. At that time, the storm god was named Hadda, and he was one of the seven storm gods commemorated in the area.

Later, around 2400 BC, the cultic niche was filled in and the direction supplicants faced to pray changed. The new focus was marked by the presence of a basalt stele.

A later stele shows a king making offerings to the storm god. Luwian hieroglyphs name King Taitas of Padgasatini as the king on the stele. This unique discovery identified a previously unknown kingdom, which extended from southern Turkey to Syria in 1200 BC. At that time, the king of Ebla used to come in Aleppo and present offerings to a storm god named Addu.

During the Hittite period, the hall was reduced to the size of 27 metres x 12 metres, perhaps after a fire, and the northern wall furnished with a serial of extraordinary and well-preserved basalt reliefs. This represents the first known use of decorated orthostats in the Near East.

The basalt reliefs (figure 4) are of importance for understanding Middle Eastern art and religion, with its roots and traditions. The depictions of gods follow Bronze Age Anatolian and Syrian traditions, while the carvings of beasts and genii follow the Mesopotamian tradition. The reliefs depict the storm god - club in hand - boarding a bull-drawn chariot, sparring lions, bull-men, and many geometric designs.

The discovery of the temple of the storm god at the Citadel is of prime importance to the study of the Syrian culture and its part in the development of human civilization. With the excavations of Tell Mardikh/Ebla, 60 km south of Aleppo, these remains revealed that Syria in the 3rd and 2nd millennium BC was not simply a cultural annex of its famous neighbours.

An important event in Aleppo's history was its conquest by Muslim troops in 636. After the destruction of Aleppo by the Byzantine Emperor