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BRASS TRAY STAND, ENGRAVED AND INLAID WITH SILVER

EGYPT OR SYRIA; 1ST HALF OF 14TH CENTURY

H: 24.4; DIAM: 23.2 CM

This brass tray stand belongs to a fairly rare but familiar type from the Mamluk period and undoubtedly held a correspondingly richly inlaid, separate brass tray. The stand, like many other pieces of metalwork from this period, is decorated with distinctive, Arabic inscriptions: “The Honorable Authority, the High, the Great, the Just, the Holy Warrior, the Defender, the Protector of the Frontiers, the one helped by God.”

The inscriptions make it clear that the piece was made for a highly placed anonymous official close to the sultan, and the quality of the inlaying and type of decoration are quite close to those on metalwork that was made for the court in the first half of the 14th century.

The decoration is characteristic of the period and can almost be viewed as an international Islamic style. The monumental cursive inscriptions, in particular, can be found on much of the art from the

same period from Egypt, Syria, and western Iran

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