



Inv. no. 32/1970

INKWELL, CAST, ENGRAVED, AND PUNCHED BRONZE, INLAID WITH COPPER AND SILVER

EASTERN IRAN; 2ND HALF OF 12TH CENTURY

H: 9.5; DIAM: 7.5 CM

In the course of the 12th century, it was common for bronze objects to be inlaid with silver and copper – and later gold was added as well.

According to the inscription on the lid, this inkwell was made by a certain “Shah Malik,” who decorated it in typical fashion with scenes from a carefree life and a great many good wishes for its owner.

The form was common in the period. Three chains were attached to the now partly missing hinges and passed through the three eyes on the lid so that the inkwell could be carried on a belt. The ink – *hirb* – was a liquid made from gallnuts and vitriol.

Published in:

Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman (eds.): *A survey of Persian art: from prehistoric times to the present*, London 1938-39, pl. 1311a;

L. A. Mayer: *Islamic metalworkers and their works*, Geneva 1959, pl. 13;

André Leth: *David's Samling. Islamisk kunst = The David Collection. Islamic Art*, København 1975, p. 82;

*The arts of Islam : Hayward gallery, 8 April - 4 July 1976*, London 1976, cat.no, 183;

Anthony Welch: *Calligraphy in the arts of the Muslim world*, Folkstone 1979, cat.no. 40;

Eva Baer: *Metalwork in medieval Islamic art*, Albany 1983, pp. 68 and 140, fig. 117;

F. Sarre and F.R. Martin (eds.) *Die Ausstellung von Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst in München 1910*, London 1985, cat.no. 3035, pl. 151;

*Art from the World of Islam. 8th-18th century*, Louisiana, Humlebæk 1987, cat.no. 71;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Islamic art. The David Collection*, Copenhagen 1990, cat.no. 320;

Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lundbæk and Peder Mortensen (eds.): *Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal: the history and culture of the Islamic world*, The National Museum, Copenhagen 1996, cat.no. 108;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection*, Copenhagen 2001, cat.no. 481;

Hana Taragan: "The "speaking" inkwell from Khurasan: object as "world" in Iranian medieval metalwork" in *Muqarnas*, 22, 2005, pp. 37-39, figs 12 and 13;

Margaret S. Graves: *Arts of allusion: object, ornament, and architecture in Medieval Islam*, New York 2018, fig. 3.24, pp. 124-126 and fig. 3.26-3.27, pp. 128-138;