



Inv. no. 71/1979

BRONZE MIRROR WITH AN ANIMAL-COMBAT MOTIF

AFGHANISTAN, GHAZNA; C. 1100

DIAM: 8.5 CM

The animal-combat motif is rooted in a large number of pre-Islamic cultures in the Middle East, and it is generally considered to symbolize rebirth. The powerful animal lives by killing weaker ones and in doing so gains the strength to survive in a cruel world. Particularly the lion attacking an ox has been seen as a symbol of the beginning of the new agricultural year. Both before and after the advent of Islam, the animal-combat motif was also used quite specifically to symbolize the prince's power over his subjects.

In the decoration on the back of this hand mirror, the reference to the eternal cycle of life is very clear: a lion attacks a cow with a suckling calf. This motif, in particular, was very widespread in the medieval art of the Islamic world.

Published in:

Kjeld von Folsach: *Islamic art. The David Collection*, Copenhagen
1990, cat.no. 314;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Fabelvæsner fra Islams Verden*, Davids Samling,
København 1991, cat.no. 86;