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CAT. 25. LIMESTONE MATRIX FOR STAMPING LEATHER

IRAN OR AFGHANISTAN; C. 1200

This matrix of greenish limestone was carved on both sides with no fewer than 13 different designs, which could be transferred to various leather objects. Some of these objects can be readily identified, for example the lyre-shaped wallet with a flap, and the David Collection has three contemporary leather wallets of this type (see e.g. 14/2001).

It is striking how the artist was able to design the individual arabesques so that they fit every shape and fill each out entirely. This is, in fact, one of the typical characteristics of a successful arabesque. So is the symmetry along one or more axes. This feature is found on all the patterns except for two narrow ones, where the arabesque almost has the character of a vine scroll, one with calligraphy.