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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.

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