A Miniature Masterpiece in Ivory

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Carved and painted ivories from the first centuries of Islam played a key role in the western 'canon' of Islamic art that developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. There were understandable reasons: the objects were made of a sumptuous material with exotic associations and universal appeal, and many were in near pristine condition, as most had been stored in European ecclesiastical treasuries for centuries, unsullied by the ravages of frequent handling or the vagaries of archaeological burial. They also formed a comprehensible counterpart and an aesthetic counterpoint to the Carolingian, Ottonian and Byzantine carved ivories being collected at the same time from the same or similar treasuries.

The pattern of extant carved ivories from the Muslim world points, however, to major changes in the twelfth century, with production declining in al-Andalus from the late eleventh century and in Egypt from at least the mid twelfth century.[1] It arguably corresponds to a more widespread decline in ivory carving in Northern Spain, Northern Europe, and Byzantium, but it is a matter of debate how much was due to long-range disruptions in the trade routes which supplied the raw ivory,[2] and how much to local factors that affected patronage and consumption. Scholarly misattributions may also distort the picture, and a case in point is the recent proposal to re-date the Salerno ivories from the late eleventh to the second half of the twelfth century.[3]

Whatever the broader picture and whatever the causes of change, the striking fact is that we have no carved ivory personal objects we can attribute with confidence to Ayyubid or Mamluk Egypt or Syria from the fall of the Fatimids until the middle of the fourteenth century.[4] In Mamluk Egypt carved ivory was used to embellish architectural items such as doors or items of furniture, but there is little documented evidence before the beginning of the fourteenth century.[5] This article looks at a carved ivory flask that has been the victim of misattribution, but can, as I hope to show, be assigned to the mid-thirteenth century.

FIGURE 1
Pyriform flask, elephant ivory, with its two major sides carved in deep relief on several levels, 58 mm high, Syria or the Jazira, mid-13th century

FIGURE 2
Front face of the ivory flask

FIGURE 3
Reverse face of the ivory flask

FIGURES 4A & 4B
Sides of the ivory flask

The flask was first exhibited in Munich in 1910, when it was in the collection of F.R. Martin.[6] It was later acquired by Alphonse Kann. He succeeded in reclaiming it after the Second World War, and it passed through his family until it was sold at auction in Paris in 2017; since then it has been in a private collection in London.[7] Despite its early publication, and its history in an illustrious collection, the flask has never been studied in detail.

Carved from elephant ivory, the flask has a pyriform profile, though instead of a bulbous form its principal faces are flattened, its edges squared [Figures 1–4]. It stands a mere 5.8 cm high and has a small square mouth with a square copper lining that must have been covered by a stopper.[8] It was clearly used as a container, and its size suggests it was for personal use, perhaps for perfume or more likely a dry or moist substance such *ithmid* (antimony) kohl which, according to accredited hadiths, was used and recommended by the Prophet. Kohl was used for its health benefits, not merely for beautification.

The flask's two flat sides are carved in deep relief on several levels, with an animal combat on one, and an inhabited scroll with human and animal masks on the other [Figures 1, 2 and 3]. Its diminutive size in no way diminished the artist's ambition, especially on the combat scene we will call the front face. Unlike most previous Islamic figurative ivories the composition is not arranged on a single baseline, with the figures occupying most of the picture plane. The composition is considerably more complex, with figures on three horizontal registers. They form two principal groups. Rooted to the baseline is a bull crumpling under a savage attack by a lion. The lion has leapt onto the bull's hindquarters and a sense of aerial movement is created by placing the lion on a register above the bull. On this same register a man strides onto the bull's neck, leaning forward with a vigour equal to the lion's [Figures 1 and 2, detail on Figure 5]. The man's arms have been broken off making it difficult to tell precisely what the artist intended, though he was possibly leaping to the bull's defence and about to attack the lion. At the top there is a warrior on a horse, and

FIGURE 4C
Base of the ivory flask

FIGURE 5
Detail of the front face of the ivory flask

FIGURE 6A
Detail of the reverse face of the ivory flask

FIGURE 6C
Detail of a man in a hat from the reverse face of the ivory flask

FIGURE 6B
Detail from the 'd'Arenberg Basin' (detail), brass inlaid with silver in the name of Al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, datable to the late 1240s. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.: Purchase — Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1955.10

FIGURE 6D
Detail of a man in a hat from another medallion on the 'd'Arenberg Basin'

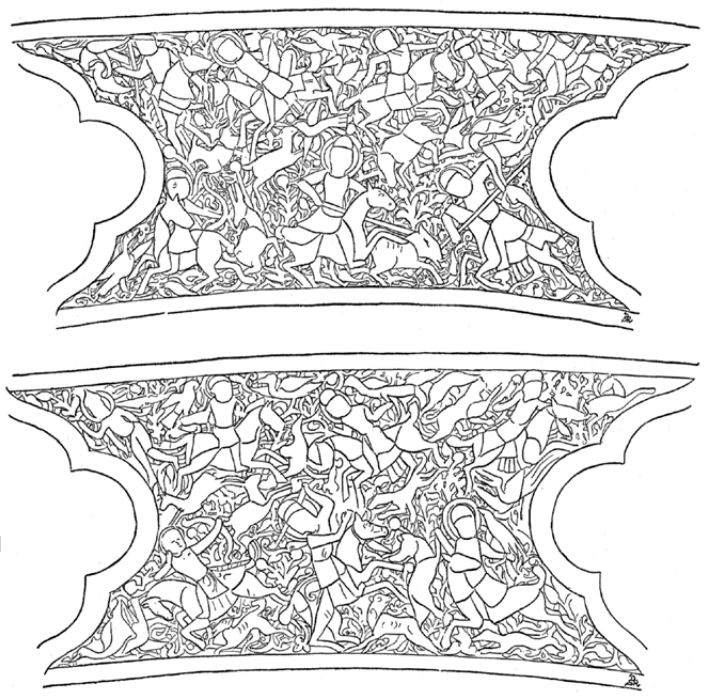
the artist has cleverly turned the horse's head sharply around to create not only a visual effect of repoussoir but a sense of the clamour and drama of a fray [Figures 1, 2 and 10a]. The horse rears slightly, making an angle towards the upper left that counteracts the shallow angle of the lion's leap. This is a sophisticated composition, even if elements of it are not immediately intelligible.

The reverse face is equally striking [Figure 3]. In place of the complex composition on the front, it has a strong central axis with strict bilateral symmetry, featuring an inhabited scroll with a human face at the top and a lioness' head at the bottom of the central axis. On either side of the central axis there are scrolls terminating in elongated arabesques or in animal heads, and while two at least of these animals seem to have straight horns it is difficult to identify the genus.

Each narrow side of the flask has two relief knops set against an area of plain ground [Figures 4a, b and c]. The top knop is triangular and seems to take a leaf form, while the lower knop is an inverted mandorla in the shape perhaps of a bird of prey, though abrasion makes identification difficult. The area between the knops is filled with crenate half-palmettes incised in a manner quite distinct from the relief carving of the principal faces. The underneath, which is well preserved, is decorated with a rectangular cartouche with concave ends, framed by a beaded border [Figure 4c]. An eight-petalled rosette flanked by crenate half-palmettes holds the centre of the cartouche.

Combat scenes featuring animals and man often require little explanation, but in this case there are peculiarities. In narrative terms the rider was presumably meant to be coming to the rescue of the bull, though his sabre seems poised to strike the man. At the bottom right an animal has its head pointing straight up towards the lion, but his posture does not convey aggression; it is more tightly wound as if in defence, and appears to be suckling, with a teat in its mouth.

This is puzzling on several counts. How could a cub be suckling from an animal leaping to attack? The scene on the flask is not to be confused with the intelligible grouping on the aquamanile in the Hermitage dated 603/1206–7, which shows a lion attacking a zebu, while the zebu suckles its calf.[9] Second, one would rightfully expect a cub to be suckling from its mother, but the lion has several curls of mane suggesting it is a male. On this count let us grant the artist the freedom of artistic licence. Third, the 'cub' has elongated ears that make it look more like a dog or jackal than a lion. A jackal, a bull and a lion recall



FIGURES 7A (TOP) & 7B (BOTTOM)
Details from a silver-inlaid brass basin, inscribed to al-Malik al-`Adil II Abu Bakr, Ayyubid ruler of Egypt and Damascus (r.1238–40). Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv.5991.

FIGURE 8
`Abd al-Mu'min bin Muhammad al-Khuy, Varqah and Gulshah, probably Konya, attributed here to 1225–50. Turkey, Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, H. 841.

the grouping we find in the scene of the Lion attacking Shanzabeh in an early thirteenth-century Syrian copy of *Kalila wa Dimna*, but in this instance two jackals are shown open-mouthed to the rear of the lion, a howling chorus not a suckling cub.[10] For there to be a relationship with *Kalila wa Dimna*, there would have had to have been a rather free association.

Instead of a narrative the scene might depict a concept of fighting to protect, the lion(ess) attacking the bull to feed its young, the two men fighting to protect their bull. Whatever the explanation, the iconography is highly unusual. It might indeed been no more than an artful conflation of independent motifs. The rider wielding his sword we shall come back to. A lion savaging a bull from the rear is a trope of medieval iconography in the Islamic world.[11] The lion(ess) suckling the cub derived perhaps from a motif that had slowly transmogrified over the centuries. On Byzantine, Early Islamic and 'Sogdian' silks,[12] we find from a rider with a dog attacking the soft underbelly of a lion. The hunting dog was eventually transformed into a cub suckling from the teats of the lioness, at least on a silver dish dated to the "late twelfth–early thirteenth century". The dish is Byzantine but was part of a cache of dishes with many features that suggest a lively interplay of ideas with Islamic metalwork.[13]

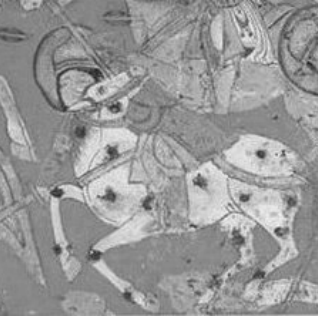
The scene on the flask remains enigmatic, and our purpose here is not to resolve the issues but to emphasise how so much was packed into this scene and with such visual sophistication and energy that it pulses with drama. The artist showed an admirable sense of composition, a gracile sense of line, a sculptural understanding of depth, and precision in carving. Although we have no known parallels in ivory, we can nevertheless fix its date and, to a lesser extent, its place of production with confidence.

When the flask was exhibited in 1910 it was described as a "powder horn" and attributed to 16th-century Egypt. In its recent sale it was described as "Époque Abbasside, vers le 11e siècle".[14] Neither attribution was supported by evidence, but the spacious discrepancy need not trouble us, as both are wayward. For diagnostic comparisons we can turn to two well-known and datable objects.

There is a striking similarity between the animated scrolls with human and zoomorphic protomes on the flask and on the basin dedicated to al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub now in the Freer Gallery Art, and formerly in the collection of the Dukes of Arenberg [Figures 6a and b].[15]

On both objects the protomes on the central axis are shown full-face, those on the side in profile. The full-face figures are the same, a feline and a man in a hat, while the flanking protomes include similar animals with pointed muzzles and long straight horns.[16]

The protomes emerge from broadly similar scrollwork on both objects. On the flask the human face occurs at the top of the central axis, the feline below. A difference, however, is that the medallions on the basin usually include the face of a bull on the central axis, whereas on the flask the third element is an



FIGURES 9A (LEFT) & B (RIGHT)
Details from *Varqah and Gulshah*. After Ateş 1961

FIGURE 9C
Detail from interior of basin silver-inlaid brass basin, inscribed to al-Malik al-`Adil II Abu Bakr, Ayyubid ruler of Egypt and Damascus (r.1238–40). Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv.5991.

FIGURE 11A
Detail from the reverse face of the ivory flask

FIGURE 11B
Detail from Varqah and Gulshsah: After Ateş 1961

FIGURE 11C
Detail from the reverse face of the ivory flask

FIGURE 11D
Detail from a marble basin, Hama, Syria, dated 676/1277–78, London, Victoria & Albert Museum 335–1903

FIGURE 10A
Detail from the front face of the Ivory flask

FIGURE 10B
Detail from the exterior of the 'd'Arenberg Basin'

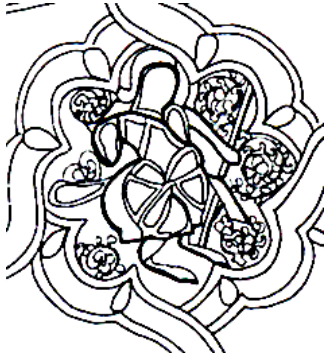


FIGURE 10C
Detail from a silver-inlaid brass tray, in the name of Al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, datable to the 1240s. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv.MAO 360.

unusual device that has two large arabesque leaves hanging like limp arms from a T-shape with a cross-bar that curves upwards to a point, a motif we shall return to.

In view of their strong central axis, Martina Müller-Wiener has dubbed examples of this type of animated-scroll the 'candelabra group'.[17] The name reflects an ultimate derivation from Classical models probably from the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, though Müller-Wiener argued it developed a different hermeunetic in the Muslim world through its connections with astronomical imagery on medieval astrolabes. The earliest cited example comes from mid-twelfth-century Aleppo, and the type continued into the fourteenth in Mamluk metalwork. The d'Arenberg basin, however, provides much the strongest parallels in the typology, arrangement and scale of the protomes, and in their balance with the scrollwork and arabesque leaves. The basin thus serves as a critical reference point, as it is a princely object with not one but ten medallions of this type, and can be dated to the1240s. Al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub was ruler of Diyarbakir in the Jazira between 1232 and 1239, of Egypt between 1240 and his death in 1249, and of Damascus briefly in 1239 and again between 1245 and 1249, but the titulature on the basin narrows its date to between 1243 and 1249.[18]

FIGURE 12A
Detail from the reverse face of the ivory flask

FIGURE 12B
Detail from the underside of a pen-case, brass with silver inlay, now mostly missing, attributed to Mosul, 1225–50. London, Victoria & Albert Museum 3653-1855

No object provides a parallel for the complex figurative scene on the flask, but the d'Arenberg basin provides the closest comparison for one of the flask's most ambitious pictorial elements, the depiction of a horse and rider with the horse turning not just its head but its neck and chest around to face the viewer [Figures 2, 10a and 10b]. In the first half of the thirteenth century artists in Iraq and the Jazira developed an impressive repertoire of horse images, some of

FIGURE 13A
Base of the ivory flask

FIGURE 13B
Detail from Varqah and Gulshsah. After Ateş 1961

FIGURE 14A
Front and base of the ivory flask

FIGURE 14B
Detail of undercutting on bull's leg on front face of the ivory flask

FIGURES 15A–C
Capitals, marble, inscribed in the name of a ruler of Hama, Syria, 13th century AD, now in the mosque of Kasım Paşa, Bozüyük, Turkey. After İnal, 'Bozüyük'.

which used extreme foreshortening, but whether shown from front or rear the horses are almost always stationary or in slight movement.[19] Foreshortened depictions of horses in violent motion seem to be restricted to near the middle of the century. The most complex equestrian scenes on metalwork are by one of the foremost Mawsili craftsman, Ahmad al-Dhaki, on a basin in the name of al-Malik al-'Adil II Abu Bakr, the young and feckless Ayyubid ruler of Egypt and Damascus between 1238 and 1240.[20] Seven cartouches on the inside of the basin are filled with riders on two registers, though with such freedom that the registers were a compositional hint rather than a constraint [Figures 7 a and b]; and in all of them the horses on the lower register are larger than those above, which imparts a greater sense of depth, a sophisticated pictorial device not used in any of the known Islamic illustrated manuscripts of the period.[21] In one cartouche we see a horse in three-quarter frontal view, and below that a horse turning its head to look to the rear [Figure 7a].[22] In another a falconer's horse turns its neck back [Figure 7b, lower right corner), while in the centre there is a horse rearing almost vertically. Yet Ahmad al-Dhaki's horses turning their necks are pictorially weaker than the horse on the flask. They look more like dolls with swivel necks [Figure 9c], whereas on the flask the horse's head is not just twisted back, the horse is straining to turn his entire neck. It is almost as if the artist is trying to show the strain on the windpipe [Figure 10a]. This visual device gives the horse on the flask a dimensionality missing from al-Dhaki's more cut-out approach.

In painting, the most ambitious depictions occur in the unique copy of the romance of *Varqah and Gulshah* in the Topkapı Palace. Its precise date is not known, but the painter 'Abd al-Mu'min bin Muhammad al-Khuyyi belonged to the ambit of one of the leading figures of Konya under the Rum Seljuks, the vizier Celaleddin Karatay, and was a signatory on 23 July 1253 to a waqf deed established by Celaleddin Karatay for his medrese in Konya.[23] In one battle scene we see horses rearing, stumbling, galloping and slowing to a trot [Figure 8].[24] Near the centre of the lower register a horse rears up so high it rises almost vertically, its throat and chin emphatic in white, its hind legs splayed to support it, while it raises it forelegs upwards and outwards for balance and threat.[25]

Ahmad al-Dhaki and 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Khuyyi produced the most elaborate, multi-tier equestrian scenes to survive from the period. Yet both found it a challenge to render the twisting neck of a horse in a three-dimensional manner, and on at least two occasions 'Abd al-Mu'min resorted to placing another horse in front and partially obscuring the horse with its neck turned [Figure 9b].[26] The depiction on the flask was not standard, and, as its closest parallel occurs on the d'Arenberg basin,[27] and on an inlaid tray also made for al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub,[28] we are, I believe, justified in dating the flask not just to the second quarter but towards the middle of the thirteenth century [Figures 10a–c].

FIGURE 16A
'Tableman' gaming piece, walrus ivory, diam. 64 mm, greatest thickness 14 mm. Northern France or England, possibly St Albans, circa 1130. London, Victoria & Albert Museum A.20-1961

FIGURE 16B
'Tableman' gaming piece, walrus ivory, diam. 64 mm, greatest thickness 14 mm. London, Victoria & Albert Museum 375-1871

FIGURE 16C
'Tableman' gaming piece, walrus ivory, diam 63 mm, greatest thickness 13.5 mm. Basel, Historical Museum, 1871.51

FIGURE 16D
'Tableman' gaming piece, walrus ivory, diam. 63 or 64 mm. St Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, formerly Basilewski Collection. After Mann 1981

FIGURE 16E
Detail from the front face of the ivory flask

The arabesque scrolls on the reverse side of the flask include long thin flabellate leaves with a globular tendril at the end – a type often referred to as a *rumi* leaf, though it was not peculiar to Anatolia and might have originated in the Jazira in the twelfth century [Figure 11a].[29] Leaves with a similar aesthetic occur in the *Varqah and Gulshah* manuscript [Figure 11b]. The pair of arabesque leaves in the centre of this side are fuller, with a very bulbous cirrhose apex [Figure 11c]. Comparisons for this more bulbous type can be found on a marble basin inscribed in the name of the ruler of Hama in Syria in 1277 [Figure 11d].[30] More flatulent leaves and bulbs can be found on a pen-box attributed to Mosul in the second quarter of the thirteenth century [Figures 12 b].[31]

In the centre of the flask's animated scroll there is an unusual escutcheon-like motif; this was not, however, a symbolic or heraldic device, but a decorative contrivance, as the same Mosul pen-box makes plain. The design on the underside of the pen-box has a rectangular symmetry that enabled the design to be reproduced using a template only a quarter of the size of the entire field, though what concerns us here is how bilateral symmetry led to some unusual shapes, as two arabesque leaves, one on either side of the central axis, became addorsed. On the flask an analogous arrangement of confronted leaves has been turned into a focal device around which six protomes pivot.

The narrow sides and the underside of the flask include crenate half-palmettes, and once again the *Varqah and Gulshah* manuscript provides a healthy parallel [Figures 13a and b]. These leaves belong to the realm of manuscript illumination and are not found on inlaid metalwork, which suggests that the artist who carved this flask drew on a wide range of inspiration, and underlines how there was a *koine* of styles and motifs across different media.

Our emphasis so far has been on the flask's design and iconography, and little has been said about its sculptural qualities. These are noteworthy as it is minutely carved not in two, but four, vertical planes. We can see this if we just look at the horse and rider [Figures 1 and 2]. The horse's body is on the upper plane (1); the horse's legs are on a lower plane (2); and the background scrollwork on a lower plane still (3); finally, there is a ground plane that is more readily visible in daylight than in some photographs (4).

The two, flat principal faces have recessed panels within a frame lightly incised with running scrollwork. Seen from the front it is difficult to see the ground plane, which adds to the sense of depth. Even in an angle shot under strong lighting the ground plane is difficult to see [Figure 14]. Yet in reality the 'step' – the distance from the upper surface of the frame to the ground plane – is only about 3 mm.[32] The ground plane is easier to see on the front face, where there is more space between the elements than on the reverse where the dense scrollwork makes it difficult to see across any distance.

The artist used several different carving techniques. Some of the motifs he cut straight down in perpendicular fashion. For others, such as the left leg of the man standing on the neck of the bull, he used an angled cut that emphasises the outline of the leg, making it look as if it is moving in three-dimensional space, even though it is not fully undercut.[33] His third technique was undercutting, in

which he excavated entire dentine beneath a motif, as can be seen for example in the left front leg of the bull [Figures 14a and b]. This was not only a difficult technique, but a fragile one too: it would have been easy to break a slender item in the process of carving, and a fully undercut element was more vulnerable to breakage after the object was complete. And slender some of the elements are. The tiny scroll to the left of the horse's head measures a mere 0.6 mm across. The horse's right foreleg is 0.7 mm wide, his rear leg 0.9 mm. By any standards these are such tiny dimensions one can only admire the craftsman. The uppermost surface of the sculpted areas is flush with the frame, for anything proud would have been quickly damaged. There has nonetheless been wear and a few breaks, as for example in the bull's left back leg and the arms of the man leaping onto the bull's neck.

The technique is not, therefore, relief but 'sunken relief' carving. The principal figures thus stand out in light against a dark background. This placed an emphasis on outline, though modelling was added with gentle sculpting and lightly incised lines, now mostly abraded. Sunken relief is a technique that characterises many of the ivories from the Muslim world, and appears as early as the Umayyad period, when both relief and sunken relief were used for bone and ivory.[34] It is the predominant technique in Andalusian ivories of the caliphate and Taifan periods. It is not paralleled in metropolitan Byzantine ivories nor more generally in Late Antique and Early Medieval Europe, and its distinctiveness deserves to be stressed. In terms of origin, it has been traced to Coptic influence, and it was the principal technique for most of the ivories attributed to the Fatimids, even if some of them heightened the visual contrast between the ivory and an ajouré ground.[35] It might be assumed, then, that the carving on our Ayyubid-era flask was a development from the Fatimid tradition. There are, however, great differences in the handling that suggest that the artist was looking across a wider landscape for inspiration.

Sunken relief was used to carve four distinctive marble capitals that presumably came from Hama as they are inscribed in the name of the Ayyubid ruler of Hama Sultan al-Malik al-Muzaffar Taqi al-Din Mahmud, which could refer to either Muzaffar II (1229–44) or Muzaffar III (1248–98) [Figures 15a–c].[36] Although distinct in material and scale from the flask, they convey much of the same visual effect and spirit: the relatively flat upper surface; the contrast of light and dark; the carving on several planes; and the vivacious characterisation of the human figures [Figure 15b].[37] There is even an inhabited scroll with animal protomes [Figure 15c]. These capitals broaden the artistic milieu of the flask beyond metalwork, and emphasise the importance of drawing and painting as a source of inspiration for different media in thirteenth-century Syria.[38]

In the realm of ivory carving nothing from the Muslim world compares closely to the work on the flask. There is, however, a group of carvings from twelfth-century Europe that provide a striking comparison. Carved elephant or walrus ivory gaming pieces or 'tablemen' were produced in quantity in Northern Europe in the twelfth century, and some 250 survive, the most pertinent for our purposes being the so-called 'St Martin's group', of which there are at

least thirty-two known examples. The group is characterised by its depictions of "lively action" with figures not "adhering to a single ground line"; its "high relief with portions often deeply undercut" and "details of the body and dress … indicated only by incised lines". Two-thirds of the group show combat scenes "between men or animals or between men and animals".[39] Two examples from the Victoria & Albert Museum nicely illustrate these characteristics [Figures 16a and b]. It has been suggested they originally belonged to the same set, with their different borders indicating opposing sides.[40] Several others are thought to belong to the same set: one in Basel has a static horse and rider [Figure 16c], while one in the Hermitage has a vigorous combat with a pig-headed man in a bent-knee posture comparable to the figure on the flask [Figures 16d and e].[41] In size, relative scale of their figures, technique, imagery, and compositional complexity, the tablemen of the 'St.Martin's group' offer intriguing, if less sophisticated, comparisons to our flask.

Like chess, games of tables – variants of what we know as backgammon – were popular amongst the crusaders. In 1250 while on the Seventh Crusade Louis IX was incensed when he saw his brother playing backgammon when he felt he should have been in mourning, and in 1254 on his return to France he promulgated a ban on dice, chess and tables.[42] It seems highly likely that the crusaders brought carved tablemen with them to the Levant, though to my knowledge no example has yet been found there.[43] And since the passion for chess and tables was as lively amongst the Muslims as it was amongst the Christians, one can imagine how European tablemen could have come into Muslim hands through gift or booty, their figural imagery raising few scruples in secular settings where figures abounded.[44] The issue is their dating. While there is disagreement about where the 'St Martin's group' was made – Northern France or England – there is unanimity on their date, the second quarter of the twelfth century. In other words they date a century earlier than our flask. If the artist who made the flask was in any way inspired by such a gaming piece from Northern Europe, he was looking at an antique.

Nothing suggests that either of the flask's figural compositions derive from a prior tradition of ivory carving in the Muslim world. Almost no carved ivories can be ascribed to Egypt and Syria from at least the middle of the twelfth to the

middle of the thirteenth century, and when carved ivories began to be produced with some continuity under the Mamluks from the early fourteenth century on they included few figurative carvings. This points to a decline if not a caesura in the production of figural ivories in the region.[45]

On the other hand, the flask reflects a Jaziran or ultimately Jaziran aesthetic of the second quarter of the thirteenth century. With two highly specific points of comparison, the d'Arenberg basin enables us to date the flask to the second quarter of the thirteenth century, arguably to the 1240s. The basin is traditionally ascribed to Syria, for that was where its dedicatee al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub ruled in the 1240s. There will be a temptation, then, to assume the flask was made in Syria, but confidence about its dating should be tempered by caution about its provenience, for we still lack an understanding of stylistic niceties to distinguish fully between many Syrian and Jaziran artefacts of this period, and the flask's figural style is closer to what has traditionally been regarded as Jaziran than to Syrian painting in the first half of the thirteenth century. At this point it might be more comfortable to assign the flask to a broader geographical attribution – the 'Fertile Crescent'.

The specific handling of the sunken-relief technique on the flask has no good parallels from the Muslim world. The tablemen of the 'St Martin's group', on the other hand, are close in size, scale of their figures, and general visual effect. In a modest way their possible relationship with the ivory flask raises a far broader question about the 'permeability' of Muslim visual culture during the Crusades. Although there is a growing interest in the frontiers of exchange and production between the Muslim world and Europe, there remain several ingrained tendencies. One is to credit the Muslim and likewise the Byzantine world with precedence – in terms of both chronology and status – across a range of architectural and artistic ideas and techniques. The corollary is unconsciously to assume that, while the Muslim heartlands of the Near East were open to an influx of artistic inspiration from Central Iran and Khurasan, they were closed to inspiration from the West. We might do well to recognise these tendencies as prejudicial, and to become alert to the possibility of what John Hanson in the context of influences between European and Byzantine ivories has called "interprenetration".[46]

If the flask was not the product of a workshop that continued from the Fatimid period or a workshop that continued under Mamluk rule, can we say anything about who produced it? Three alternatives suggest themselves. One is that it was the product of a dedicated ivory carver who was unfettered by the repetitive traits of a craft tradition, and who was alert to contemporary trends and perhaps even to antique items such as European tablemen. Or perhaps it was the work of a specialist craftsman in another field who demonstrated his dexterity and artistic sensibility by occasionally carving ivory – a woodworker, for example, though there is no thirteenth-century woodwork in this style or fineness from Egypt or the Fertile Crescent to support the notion.

A third possibility is that the flask was not carved by a dedicated professional but a person who practised a skill as a subsidiary occupation or for personal satisfaction and recognition. We have an example from the succeeding century: 'Ali bin Ibrahim known as Ibn al-Shatir (705/1306–777/1375). He wrote numerous astronomical treatises, held the post of establishing the times of prayer at the Great Mosque of Damascus, where he made an innovative sun-dial with a gnomon aligned to the celestial pole, and produced metal astrolabes and other instruments. He has been called "the most distinguished Muslim astronomer of the fourteenth century," yet he was also celebrated enough for his ivory marquetry that he was known as "the incrustator" (*al-muta`im*).[47] This is a category of artist who – outside the realm of calligraphy – has received little recognition in the field of Islamic art.

ENDNOTES

1. An impressive carved ivory from Jerusalem between 1131 and 1143 are the covers of Queen Melisende's *Psalter*: Barbara Drake Boehm, Melanie Holcomb, Elizabeth Dospel Williams et al., *Jerusalem 1000–1400: Every People under Heaven*, New York, 2016, Jerusalem 1000–1400: Every People under Heaven, New York, 2016, 244, cat.121; Bianca Kühnel, 'The Kingly Statement of the Bookcovers of Queen Melisende's Psalter', in *Tesserae, Festschrift für Josef Engemann* (Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband 18), Münster 1991, 340–57. For a group of Andalusi polygonal caskets with ajouré ivory plaques that can be dated to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, see Julian Raby, 'Polygonal Pyxides: a contribution to the chronology of *taracea* in al-Andalus', forthcoming.

2. John P. O'Neill, *The Art of Medieval Spain*, A.D. 500–1200. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art: 1993; Adolph Goldschmidt and Kurt Weitzmann. *Die Byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.–XIII. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols, Berlin, 1930–1934. Anthony Cutler (*The Craft of Ivory, Sources, Techniques, and Uses in the Mediterranean World: A.D. 200–1400*, Washington, DC, 1985, 34–35) emphasises the lack of ivory in Byzantium after the late eleventh century, and a rise in the use of bone.

3. Sarah M. Guérin, 'Avorio d'ogni ragione: The Supply of Elephant Ivory to Northern Europe in the Gothic Era.' *Journal of Medieval History* 36, 2010, 156–74; Guérin, 'Forgotten Routes? Italy, Ifrīqiya and the Trans-Saharan Ivory Trade', *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 25/1, 2013, 70–91. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2013.767012. See also Anthony Cutler, *The Hand of the Master: Crafsmanship, Ivory and Society in Byzantium (9th–11th Centuries)*, Princeton, NJ, 1994. 41–55. Francesca dell'Acqua et al. *The Salerno Ivories: Objects, Histories, Contexts*, Berlin 2016

4. There are several openwork ivory pyxides datable to the 14th century, one in the name of the Mamluk ruler of Egypt and Syria, al-Malik al-Salih Salah al-Din Salih (r.1351–54), but there is debate about whether the finest are Mamluk and others Nasrid, or all are Nasrid in origin: Stefano Carboni, 'Cylindrical Ivory Boxes with Openwork Decoration: Mamluk, Nasrid, or Something Else?', *Journal of the David Collection*, 2/2, 2005, 215–225. For the Nasrid only attribution, see Mariam Rosser-Owen, *Islamic Arts from Spain*, London, 2010, 63–64. For ivory gaming pieces, see Anna Contadini, 'Islamic Ivory Chess Pieces, Draughtsmen and Dice', *Islamic Art in the Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford 1995,111–54. Evidence for the use of ivory in furniture from the Ayyubid period is scant and mostly debatable. The minbar commissioned by the Zangid Nur al-Din in 564/1168–9, and completed under his son al-Malik al-Salih Isma`il in 570/1174–75, had ivory inserts, but the lack of similar work on other mosque furniture of the period emphasises how exceptional this was (Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum. Deuxième Partie: Syrie Du Sud. Tome Deuxième – Jérusalem "Haram"*. Mémoires publiées par les membres de l'institut Français d'archéologie orientale du Caire. Tomes Quarante-Quatrième, Quarante-Cinquième, Cairo 1920, pls xxix-xxx and 1925, 393–402; Sylvia Auld, 'The Minbar of Nūr Al-Dīn in Context', in *Ayyūbid Jerusalem*, edited by Robert Hillenbrand and Sylvia Auld, London, 2009, 72–93; Yasser Tabbaa, 'Originality and Innovation in Syrian Woodwork of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', in *Material Evidence and Narrative Sources: Interdisciplinary Studies of the History of the Muslim Middle East*, edited by Daniella Talmon-Heller and Katia Cytryn-Silverman, Leiden, Boston, 2015). For ivory panels on a lunette from the mausoleum of Sayyid Nafisa in Cairo, see Gaston Wiet in Jean David-Weill, *Les Bois à épigraphes jusqu'à l'époque Mamlouke*. Cairo 1931, vol.I, 29–32 with due reservations about an Ayyubid date . Cf. Ahmad Hamdi et al. Islamic Art in Egypt 969–1517, Cairo 1969, 235, cat.no.322. A door with arabesque and figural ivory plaques has been attributed to the Late Ayyubid or Early Mamluk period (*Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds*, Christie's, London, 5 October 2010, lot 134. I am grateful to William Robinson for generously sending me photos he had taken of the door.) A C-14 test of one of its ivories suggests an early Mamluk date is more likely. A free-standing cabinet for books in the Coptic Museum in Cairo includes a figurative ivory plaque comparable to those on the door, but the item is not precisely datable. A small ivory plaque carved with a double-headed eagle has been catalogued as "Fatimid–Ayyubid" and twelfth-century, but the arabesque agrafe looks later, and the inclusion of two agrafes, one encircling the lower body of the bird, the other encircling the two necks, is similar to the double-headed eagle on the globular incense-burner made for Badr al-Din Baysari in about 1270 (Ahmad Hamdi et al. *Islamic Art in Egypt*, 46 cat.no.39, pl.5b. Esin Atıl, Renaissance of Islam: *Art of the Mamluks*, 286, Washington, DC, 1981, 58–59, cat.no.11).

5. Relief-carved ivories appear from at least the reign of Muhammad ibn Qala'un (r. 1293–1341): Rachel Ward, 'Two Ivory Plaques in the British Museum', in *Cairo to Kabul: Afghan and Islamic Studies Presented to Ralph Pinder-Wilson*, edited by Warwick Ball and Leonard Harrow, London, 2002, 248–54. That early Mamluk wooden minbars do not include ivory inlays points to a major departure which entailed either reinventing an earlier tradition or reviving one that had lain largely dormant. Ivory was available on the market in Egypt in the first part of the thirteenth century, for there is a record of Venetians purchasing seven "of the largest elephant tusks" in Alexandria in December 1226 (Guérin 'Avorio d'ogni Ragione', 167).

6. Friedrich Sarre and Frederick R. Martin, *Amtlichen Katalog Der Ausstellung München*. Munich 1910, cat.2182, unillustrated; eidem, *Die Ausstellung von Meisterwerken muhammedanischer* Kunst in München, Munich 1912, vol.IV, photo of nos 2152, 2181 and 2182.

7. Collection of Alphonse Kann (1870–1948), Saint-Germain-en-Laye. It was confiscated in October 1940 during the Nazi occupation and deposited in the Jeu de Paume, ref.

Ka 155. It was transferred to Buxheim in Bavaria, but eventually returned to France and restituted in July 1947. It was inherited by Hélène Bokanowski, Alphonse Kann's niece; thence by descent to the owner who sold it in auction: Paris, Artcurial, 7 November 2017, *Archaeology and Middle East Arts including Henry de Montherlant Collection*, lot 162.

8. The flask tapers in thickness towards the top from a maximum of 20.2 mm at the base, to 18.4 mm in the middle, to 16 mm at the shoulder.

9. Dalu Jones and George Michell, *The Arts of Islam*, London 1976, 169, cat.178.

10. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Arabe 3465: Paul Johannes Müller and Claudia Müller-Schinkievicz, *Miniatures Arabes*, Paris 1979, pl.40.

11. Willy Hartner and Richard Ettinghausen, 'The Conquering Lion: The Life Cycle of a Symbol', *Oriens* 17, 1964, 161–71.

12. Dorothy G. Shepherd, 'Zandaniji Revisited', in Documenta *Textilia: Festschrift Für Sigrid Müller-Christensen*, edited by Mechthild Flury-Lemberg and Karen Stolleis, Munich 1981, 114; Otto von Falke and Julius Lessing. *Kunstgeschichte der Seidenweberei*, Berlin 1913, vol.I, fig.80. Cf. von Falke *Kunstgeschichte der Seidenweberei*, 1921, fig.55; Wolfgang F. Volbach, *Early Decorative Textiles*. London 1969, 100, pl.46, though the lion is attacking an onager not a lion.

13. Anthony Cutler, 'Everywhere and Nowhere: The Invisible Muslim and Christian Self-Fashioning in the Culture of Outremer', in *France and the Holy Land: Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades*, edited by Daniel H. Weiss and Lisa Mahoney, Baltimore MD and London 2004, 253–81; Barbara Drake Boehm et al., Jerusalem 1000–1400: *Every People under Heaven*, New York, 2016, 220, cat.no.117. For a fuller discussion, see Christie's London *Important Early European Furniture, Sculpture and Tapestries Including Three Private European Collections*, 9 November 2006 (sale number 7272), lot 390, with a date in the last quarter of the twelfth century. For the hoard found near Tatar Pazarcick (modern Bulgaria), see Anna Ballian and Anastasia Dandraki, 'A Middle Byzantine Silver Treasure', *Benaki Museum* 3, 2003, 48–80. The teats do not show up fully in the photograph in New York 2016, but there are three clearly visible on the dish itself, and the cub is suckling the middle one.

14. See above, notes 6 and 7.

15. Esin Atıl, Art of the *Arab World*, Washington dc 1975, 64–68, cat. 27; Ranee A. Katzenstein and Glenn D. Lowry, 'Christian Themes in Thirteenth-Century Islamic Metalwork,' *Muqarnas* 1, 1983, 54–66; Esin Atıl, W. T. Chase, and Paul Jett. *Islamic Metalwork in the Freer Gallery of Art*, Washington dc 1985, 137–47.

16. The protomes differs from medallion to medallion, and in at least one medallion the human protome wears a tricorn hat similar to that on the flask [Figures 6c and d].

17. Martina Müller-Wiener, 'Lost in Transformation: Animated Scrolls Reconsidered', *Beiträge zur Islamischen Kunst und Archäologie* 3, Ernst-Herzfeld-Gesellschaft), edited by Lorenz Korn and Anja Heidenreich, Wiesbaden 2012, 163–76.

18. Katzenstein and Lowry 'Christian Themes'. Nuha N.N. Khoury, 'Narratives of the Holy Land: Memory, Identity and Inverted Imagery in the Freer Basin and Canteen', Orientations, May 1998, 65. *al-murabit* and *al-muthaghir* were not used by al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub consistently before 1243. *Khalil amir al-mu'minin* "the beloved of the Prince of the Believers [i.e. the Caliph]" might indicate that the basin dates after his investiture by the Caliph in 1247, but as he styled himself *khalil amir al-mu'minin* as early as 1243, it is safer to assume the basin dates from the 1240s (Rachel Ward, 'Style Versus Substance: Christian Iconography on Two Vessels Made for the Ayyubid Sultan Al-Salih Ayyub', in *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand*, Edinburgh, 2005, 317).

19. Foreshortening from the front occurs in the Paris copy of the *Kitab al-Diryaq*, dated the equivalent of 1199: Bishr Farès, *Le Livre de la Thériaque, manuscrit arabe à peintures de la fin du XIIe siècle conservé à La Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*, Cairo 1953, pl. XIV, cf. pl. XIII; Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, 'Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire de la peinture Persane, 1: Trois Manuscrits de l'Iran Seldjoukide." *Arts Asiatiques* 16, 1967, figs 9 and 12; David Storm Rice, 'Inlaid Brasses from the Workshop of Ahmad Al-Dhakī Al-Mawsilī', *Ars Orientalis* 2, 1957, pl.16b, and 304, where he raises a question about the manuscript's date that has never been adequately addressed, suggesting it might be a later copy of one dated the equivalent of 1199. Al-Wasiti, the painter of the Paris copy of al-Hariri's *Maqamat* dated 1237, uses extreme foreshortening to depict two horses from the rear and one from the front: Rice 'Ahmad Al-Dhakī', pl.16c. See also the horse on the extreme left of the frieze of riders on the frontispiece of the Vienna copy of the *Kitab al-Diryaq*. It is surprising that foreshortening was not used more. One of the last Mamluk examples is a penbox dated 1304 (Rice 'Ahmad Al-Dhakī', 304, figs 30 a and b. Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 82–83, cat.no.22). In Iran it was not much used under the Ilkhanids, but does recur in the middle of the fourteenth century under the Muzaffarids, as two dated examples, one from 1347, the other from 1350, illustrate. However, the results are spindly and trite compared to the freshness and boldness of the examples from a century earlier.

20. Rice 'Ahmad Al-Dhakī'.

21. Rice 'Ahmad Al-Dhakī', 302–303.

22. Rice 'Ahmad Al-Dhakī', pl.7a and fig.28. The text on 304 should read "left-hand upper corner" not "left-hand lower corner".

23. 'Abd al-Mu'min gives his name and patronymic on fol.58b of the manuscript (Ahmed Ateş, 'Un vieux poème romanesque Persan: récit de Warqah et Gulshāh', *Ars Orientalis* 4, 1961, fig.38). Osman Turan, 'Selçuk Devri Vakfiyeleri Iii. Celâleddin

Karatay, Vakıfları Ve Vakfiyeleri,'," *Belleten* 12/45, Ocak 1948, 134 and 144, transcribes his name in the *waqf* deed as "al-shaykh `Abd al-Mu'min bin Mahmud al-Khuyyi", thus with the patronymic Mahmud rather than Muhammad. One of his sons, Hasan bin 'Abd al-Mu'min bin Muhammad al-Khuyyi, was the author of a well-known guide to the art of epistolography, and lived in Kastamonu during the reign of Argun Khan (r.1284–91): Tahsin Yazıcı, s.v. "Hûî, Hasan b. Abdülmü'min" *İslam Ansiklopedisi*; Mahmut Demir, 'Türkiye Selçuklu Emiri Celâleddin Karatay ve Antalya Dârü's-Sülehâsı: The Seljuk Emir Jalaluddin Qaratai and the Dârü's-Sülehâ of Antalya', *Mediterranean Journal of Humanities* 4, 2019, 127–40.

24. Another battle scene is in two registers and almost as dramatic: Ahmed Ateş, 'Un vieux poème romanesque Persan', pl.2, fig.5.

25. This posture was so complex the artist became confused about how to show the horse's tail, which he painted as if from the rear. 'Abd al-Mu'min *nisbah* indicates a connection with Khoy in present-day Azerbaijan, and Melikian-Chirvani argued that his style was indebted to Iran, though with no illustrated manuscripts of this type surviving from Iran, we have to rely on connections with the figurative ceramics of Kashan. The 'battle plate' in the Freer Gallery testifies to an interest in Iran in dramatic equine depictions at the beginning of the thirteenth century, but the horses are jejune compared to 'Abd al-Mumin's (Renata Holod, 'Event and Memory: The Freer Gallery's Siege Scene Plate'. *Ars Orientalis* 42, 2012, esp. fig.7). There are precedents in Sasanian silver that show a horse's head turned, though with varying degrees of success: Prudence Oliver Harper and Pieter Meyers. *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period: Volume I, Royal Imagery*. New York, 1981, xiv, 72–74, 76–79, pls 23, 25, 26.

26. Ahmed Ateş, 'Un vieux poème romanesque Persan', pl. 1, fig. 2 (fol. 7b) and pl. 2, fig.4 (fol. 11a); Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, 'Le Roman de Varqe et Golchah' *Arts Asiatiques* 22, special number, 1970, figs 3 and 8. The decorator of a candlestick of the type associated with Siirt or Konya, datable to the last quarter of the thirteenth century, masked the issue by covering the lower part of the neck and the chest of the horse with a caparison: London, Victoria & Albert Museum, acc.no. 711–1910: Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World 8th–18th Centuries*, London, 1982, 358–60, cat. no.168 (not illustrated).

27. There is, however, a difference in way in which the horse's forelegs are depicted on the flask and the basin.

28. Gaston Wiet, 'Inscriptions mobilières de l'Égypte Musulmane', *Journal Asiatique* 246, 1958, 239–41; Sophie Makariou, *L'Orient de Saladin: L'art des Ayyoubides*, Paris 2002, 144, cat.no.120.

29. Bernard O'Kane, 'A Tale of Two Minbars: Woodwork in Egypt and Syria on the Eve of the Ayyubids,' in *Ferdowsi. The Mongols, and the History of Iran: Art Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Period: Studies in Honour of Charles Melville*, edited by Robert Hillenbrand, A.C.S. Peacock and Firuza Abdullaeva, London 2013, 323. See also Yahya Abdullahi and Mohamed Rashid Embi, 'Evolution of Abstract Vegetal Ornaments in Islamic Architecture', *International Journal of Architectural Research: ArchNet-IJAR* 9.

30. Victoria & Albert Museum inv.no. 335–1903: Riis, Poul Jørgen, Vagn Poulsen, and E. Hammershaimb, *Les Verreries et Poteries Médiévales. Hama. Fouilles et Recherches de la Fondation Carlsberg 1931–1938*, Nationalmuseets Skrifter Større Beretninger, Iii, vol. IV.2, Copenhagen 1957, 7 fig.4; Barry Wood 'Basin' in *Discover Islamic Art, Museum With No Frontiers*, 2019. http://islamicart.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;uk;Mus02;9;en accessed 12 September 2019.

31. Moya Carey, 'Traces of Mosul: An Inlaid Brass Pen Box in the V&A', in *Trade and Culture in the Islamic World and Beyond, from the Fatimids to the Mughals*, edited by Alison Ohta, J. M. Rogers and Rosalind Wade Haddon, London 2017, 18–25. The motif occurs on the underside of the pen-box, which is not illustrated in the article. I am grateful to Moya for showing me the object in storage.

32. I have adopted Anthony Cutler's term: Cutler *Hand of the Master*.

33. On this technique, which Cutler calls *kerbschnitt*, see Cutler Hand of the Master, 111.

34. Henri Stern, 'Quelques oeuvres sculptées en bois, os et ivoire de style Omeyyade', *Ars Orientalis* 1, 1954, esp 130–31. See also Ernst Kühnel, *Die Islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen viii.–xiii. Jarhunderts*, Berlin 1971.

35. Undercutting and angled cutting to produce strong contrasts of light were also common in Coptic monumental sculpture: Josef Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst*. Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire nos 7001–7394 et 8742–9200. Vienna 1904, 45–56; Mab van Lohuizen-Mulder, 'Early Christian Lotus-Panel Capitals and Other So-Called Impost Capitals,' *Babesch. Bulletin Antike Beschaving. Annual Papers on Classical Archaeology* 62, 1987, 131–151; but cf. Judith McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt 300 BC – AD 700*, New Haven, Conn.; London 2011, 331, 423, note 5.

36. Now in the Kasım Paşa Mosque in Bozüyük in Turkey, the capitals were presumably removed by Kasım Paşa when he was Ottoman governor of Hama between 1516 and 1520. Rudolf M. Riefstahl, 'Vier Syrische Marmorkapitäle mit figuralen Darstellungen in der Moschee zu Bozüjük', *Der Islam* 20, 1932, 186–95; Franz Taeschner, 'Beiträge zur frühosmanischen Epigraphik und Archäologie', *Der Islam* 20, 1932, 109–86; Günter İnal, 'Bozüyük Kasım Paşa Camii Kürsüsünün Sütun Kabartmalarıyla İlgili Bazı Yorumlar', *Belleten* 43/169, 1979, 49–66. Taeschner associates them with the earlier ruler, referring to a mihrab in the mosque of Nur al-Din in Hama with two columns inscribed in the name of Al-Malik al-Muzaffar II Taqi al-Din Mahmud and, curiously, with a frieze of running animals (Taeschner, 'Beiträge', 185, note 2; see Ernst

Herzfeld, 'Mshattâ, Hîra und Bâdiya. Die Mittleänder des Islam und ihre Baukunst', *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 42, 1921, 135, fig.9; Herzfeld 'Damascus: Studies in Architecture–II', *Ars Islamica* 10, 1943, 40, 45). Riefstahl rejected this largely because he was developing an idiosyncratic argument that the Ayyubids were largely anti-figural; he also thought one figure's broad-brimmed hat belonged more to the period after the Mongol invasions. One of the inscriptions refers to *makān mubārak*, the other to *dār*. The latter seems more appropriate to a secular context than to a mosque.

37. The chiaroscuro effect differs from the translucency often found on Byzantine religious ivories, on which see Cutler *Craft of Ivory*, 44; *idem Hand of the Master*, 104–105, 227–31.

38. A related capital, now in the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, was sold in London, Christie's *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds*, 7th October 2008, lot 128, It was astutely noted in the catalogue: "It is as if the design had been created by somebody more used to working on paper and then transferred to the relevant medium."

39. Vivian B. Mann, 'Mythological Subjects on Northern French Tablemen', Gesta 20/1, 1981, 161–71; Adolph Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der romanischen Zeit. xi.–xiii. Jahrhundert*, III, Berlin 1923, 7–10, in general pls LII–LIX; Paul Williamson, *Medieval Ivory Carvings: Early Christian to Romanesque*, London 2010, 414–428.

40. Williamson *Medieval Ivory Carvings*, cat.107 and 108.

41. Respectively, Mann 'Northern French Tablemen', fig.1 and Goldschmidt Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der romanischen Zeit*, III, 46, cat.206 and pl.LIV. The Hermitage tableman was formerly in the Basilewski collection. It is not on the Hermitage's Online Collection, and was perhaps sold in the 1930s. Goldschmidt gives the size as 6.3 cm, but Alfred Darcel and Alexandre Basilewky, *Collection Basilewsky: catalogue raisonné, précédé d'un essai sur les arts industriels du Ier au XVIe siècle*, Paris 1874, 24 (of the catalogue raisonné) give the diameter as 64 mm and the thickness as 15 mm.

42. Elizabeth Lapina, 'Gambling and Gaming in the Holy Land: Chess, Dice and Other Games in the Sources of the Crusades', *Crusades* 12, 2013, 130; H. J. R. Murray, *A History of Board-Games Other Than Chess*, Oxford 1952, 117–19; cf. H. J. R. Murray, *A History of Chess*, Oxford 1913, 410, note 50 on ban on dice and chess.

43. Nine Men's Morris must have been popular, to judge from the 13 boards incised into stone found in Crusader castles in the Levant: Lapina, 'Gambling and Gaming', 129–30, and 122, note 5; Michael Sebbane, 'Two Games Boards', In Yizhar Hirschfeld *Ramat Hanadiv Excavations: Final Report of the 1984–1998 Seasons*, Jerusalem 2000, 226–31.

44. Lapina, 'Gambling and Gaming', 216.

45. See above, note 1.

46. John Hanson, 'The Stuttgart Casket and the Permeability of the Byzantine Artistic Tradition', *Gesta* 37/1, 1998, 13–25.

47. He was sufficiently renowned for his ability in ivory incrustation (*ta`tīm al-`āj*), a skill he learnt from his uncle, that he was known as "the incrustator" (*al-muta`im*): Leo A. Mayer, *Islamic Astrolabists* and Their Works, Geneva 1956, 40–41. On his astronomical contributions, see E.S. Kennedy and Imad Ghanem, *The Life and Work of Ibn Al-Shātir, an Arab Astronomer of the Fourteenth Century.* Aleppo 1976; David A. King, 'Ibn Al-Shāṭir: 'Alā' Al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm' in *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers, Springer Reference*, edited by Thomas Hockey and et al., New York, 2007, 569–70.

NOTES

Figure 7a (top) & 7b (bottom), p.4 – After Rice 1957, 'Inlaid Brasses from the Workshop of Ahmad al-Dhakī al-Mawsilī,' Ars Orientalis 2, 1957, figs. 28 and 29.

Figure 8, p.4 – Photo: http://www.selcuklumirasi.com/historical-items-detail/varka-ve-gulsah

Figure 9c, p.5 – Photo: G. Garitan, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bassin_du_sultan_al-Adil_II_Abu_Bak_09574.JPG

Figure 10c, p.5 – After Sophie Makariou L'Orient de Saladin: L'Art des Ayyoubides, Exposition présentée à l'Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris 2002, 144, cat. 120

The text here has been adapted from an article to be published in November 2021 by Gingko Library:

Fruit of Knowledge, Wheel of Learning: Essays in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand, edited by Melanie Gibson

PROVENANCE

The flask is first recorded in the collection of F.R. Martin, when he exhibited it in the exhibition he organised with Friedrich Sarre in Munich in 1910. It was subsequently acquired by the eminent collector Alphonse Kann, but was appropriated in October 1940 during the Nazi occupation. It was then deposited at the Jeu de Paume, ref. Ka 155. From there it was transferred to Buxheim in Bavaria, but was eventually returned to France and restituted in July 1947. Following Alphonse Kann's death in 1948, it was inherited by his niece, Hélène Bokanowski, It descended through the family to the owner who sold it at auction in Paris in 2017: Artcurial, 7 November 2017, *Archaeology and Middle East Arts including Henry de Montherlant Collection*, lot 162. Since then it has been in a private collection in London.

Collection of F.R. Martin [Fredrik Robert], (1868-1933), Stockholm, Sweden

Collection of Alphonse Kann (1870-1948), Saint-Germain-en-Laye

Confiscated in October 1940 during the Nazi occupation and deposited in the Jeu de Paume, ref. Ka 155

Transferred to Buxheim, Bavaria, Germany

Returned to France, and restituted in July 1947

Inherited by Hélène Bokanowski, Alphonse Kann's niece

By descent to the owner who sold it in auction: Paris, Artcurial, 7 November 2017, Archaeology and Middle East Arts including Henry de Montherland Collection, lot 162 where it was identified as "Époque Abbasside, vers le 11e siècle"

EXHIBITED

Die Ausstelungen Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst, München, 1910 no. 2182, "Kleine Pulverhörner" 14.Jahrh., F.R. Martin, Stockholm

FREDRIK ROBERT MARTIN

(b. Stockholm, 8 May 1868; d. Cairo, 13 April 1933).

Swedish diplomat, scholar, collector and dealer. In 1884 he became assistant at the ethnographical museum in Stockholm and by 1890 was assistant at the archaeological museum. He combined his interests in ethnography and archaeology on a visit to Siberia (1891–2), publishing his findings in L'Age du bronze au Musée de Minoussinsk. He then turned to Islamic art, traveling widely and collecting in Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Egypt and Turkey.

He began to acquire Islamic book paintings at Bukhara in 1894 and in the following year sold 387 oriental manuscripts to the University Library at Uppsala. In the winter of 1896 he excavated at Fustat, returning with several thousand ceramic fragments. In 1897 he exhibited his collection at Stockholm. About this time he formed the opinion that manuscripts had been the chief disseminators of ornamental motifs in the Islamic world. From 1903, when he was attached to the Swedish Embassy in Istanbul as dragoman, he acquired a number of precious manuscripts and albums, and he also probably formed in these years a collection of etchings of views of Istanbul, portraits of sultans and political pictures that went to Lund University.

He published *A History of Oriental Carpets before 1800*, an important study that brought attention to examples in Swedish collections, and was the first to use depictions of carpets in Islamic paintings for dating purposes. He was involved with the Munich exhibition of Islamic art in 1910 and contributed to the catalogue. His interest in the arts of the book culminated in *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey*, which emphasized the achievement of Persian painting in the 15th century. His collection was exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1924.

This information is taken from the entry on F.R. Martin in *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art*, edited by Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom.

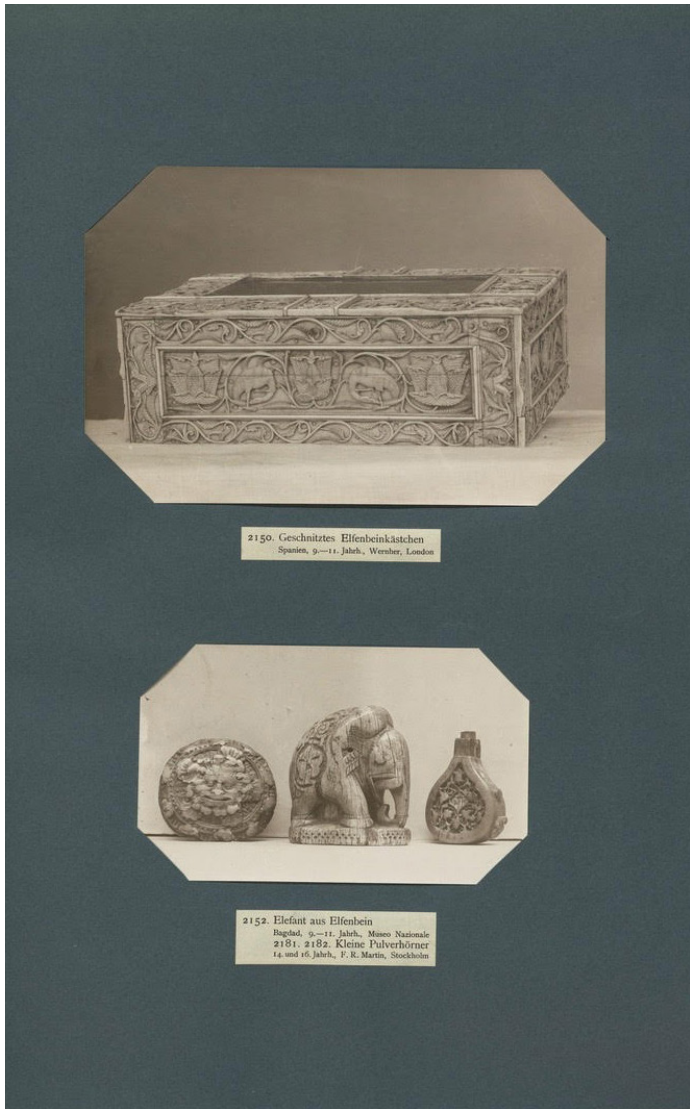
ALPHONSE KANN

(b. Vienna, 14 March 1870; d. London 1948)

Was a prominent French art collector. He was a childhood playmate and adult friend of the writer Marcel Proust, who incorporated several of Kann's features into the character of Charles Swann (in À la recherche du temps perdu). The name Kann, written with double "nn", was said in Paris to be "le plus chic du chic". Known for his discerning taste and shrewd collecting instincts, Kann shocked the art world in 1927 by auctioning off (at the American Art Association, New York City) most of his Old Master collection (including works by Bruegel, Cimabue, Fragonard, Pollaiolo, Rubens and Tintoretto) in order to concentrate on the acquisition of 19th-century and modern art, which he collected vigorously over the following decade. Kann, who was of Jewish heritage, left France for England in 1938 without making an inventory of his eclectic art collection, which was kept in a St Germaine en-Laye mansion and subsequently looted in October 1940 by Nazi occupiers. Kann eventually recovered only a small fraction of his large collection before his death in England in 1948. Although he did not live to see a copy, the Nazi inventory of Kann's art collection ran to 60 typed pages. Decades after the war, several paintings from Kann's collection were discovered in prominent European and U.S. museums. "Smoke Over Rooftops," a 1911 painting by Fernad Léger, was returned in October 2008 to Kann's heirs by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts after an eleven-year investigation.

In the 1990s, eight antique manuscripts once owned by Kann turned up in the vaults of Wildenstein & Company, still bearing the distinctive Nazi catalog numbers ("KA 879" to "KA 886", in red pencil) likely made by Bruno Lohse as he processed the Kann collection in the Jeu de Paume. The discovery of the missing manuscripts prompted a lawsuit by Kann's heirs against Wildenstein & Company.

This information is based on the entry in Wikipedia.



After Sarre and Martin, Die Ausstellung von *Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst in München*, Munich 1912, vol.IV, photo of nos 2152, 2181 and 2182

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