

PISANELLO'S HAT.
THE COSTUME AND WEAPONS DEPICTED
IN PISANELLO'S MEDAL FOR JOHN VIII PALAEOLOGUS.
A DISCUSSION OF THE SABER AND RELATED WEAPONS

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ABSTRACT - RESUMEN

A group of six drawings by the Veronese artist Antonio Pisano depicted the Byzantine Emperor John VIII Paleologus wearing costumes and weapons according to islamic types. This paper studies these objects in relation to other contemporary islamic weapons.

Un grupo de seis dibujos del artista veronés Antonio Pisano representa al emperador bizantino Juan VIII Paleólogo vestido y armado según modelos islámicos. Este trabajo estudia dichos objetos en relación a otras armas islámicas contemporáneas.

KEY WORDS - PALABRAS CLAVE

John VIII Palaeologus. Antonio Pisano. Pisanello. Costumes. Medals. White arms. Swords. Islam. Byzantium.

Juan VIII Paleólogo. Antonio Pisano. Pisanello. Indumentaria. Medallas. Armas blancas. Espadas. Islam. Bizancio.

When John VIII Palaeologus was crowned Emperor of Byzantium in 1425 he inherited an enfeebled empire that controlled little more than Constantinople; its economy in ruins and its military power negligible. Byzantium faced almost constant pressure from the Ottomans and John's only hope lay in securing alliances with their enemies in both the East and West. Consequently, he tried to develop contacts with the Mamluks and Karamanids and in 1438 went to Italy to seek Western military help. To facilitate this he proposed unification of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches and a ecumenical Church council was assembled first at Ferrara and then at Florence. The resulting Act of Union did not lead to the military aid John had hoped for, but instead caused severe unrest in Constantinople, and a break with the Russians who henceforth refused to acknowledge the primacy of the Byzantine church and began to choose their own Metropolitan.

A group of six drawings by the Veronese artist Antonio Pisano, known as Pisanello (c. 1395 - c. 1455) coincide with these Church councils. Pisanello depicted the emperor mounted on a small horse and wearing a tall conical hat with a long pointed «shovel-like» brim; he also copied the inscription from a Mamluk robe of honour, *tirāz*, and drew a saber, bow, bow case and quiver (Figs. 1, 2, 3). Such drawings have sometimes been called «orientalist» fan-



Fig. 1. Drawing by Pisanello of the inscription on the *tirāz* and also depicting John VIII mounted on a small horse and wearing a tall hat with a pointed brim. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Ms M.I. 1062, recto.

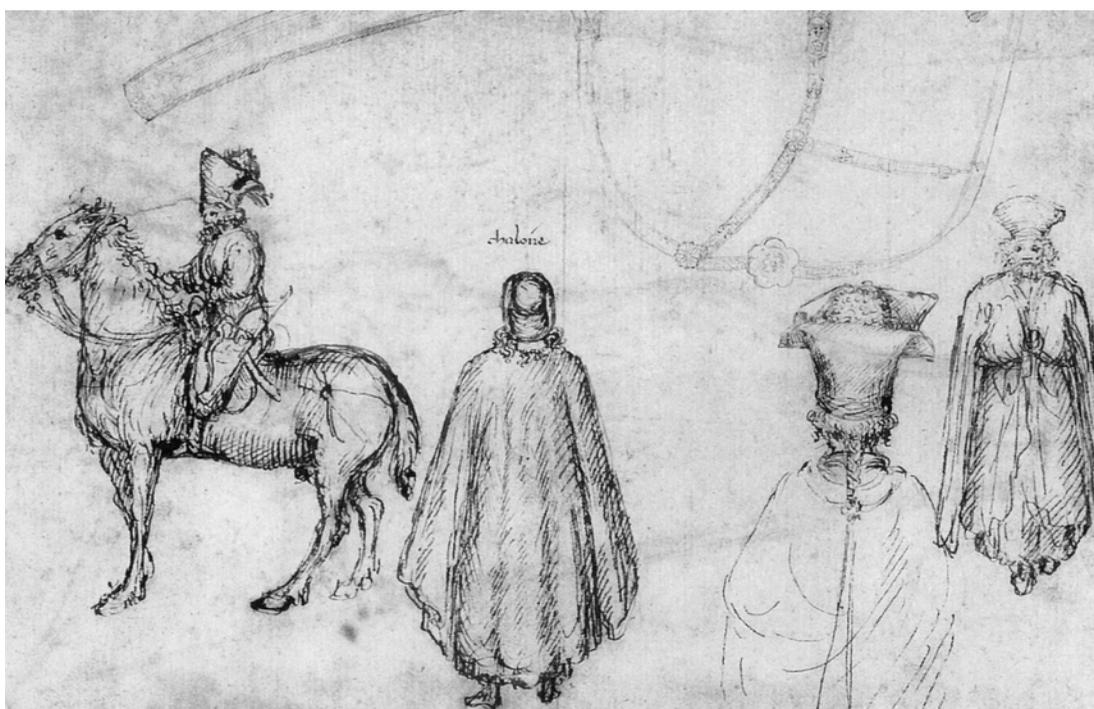


Fig. 2. Drawing by Pisanello depicting the emperor on horseback and the Mamluk saber, Art Institute of Chicago.

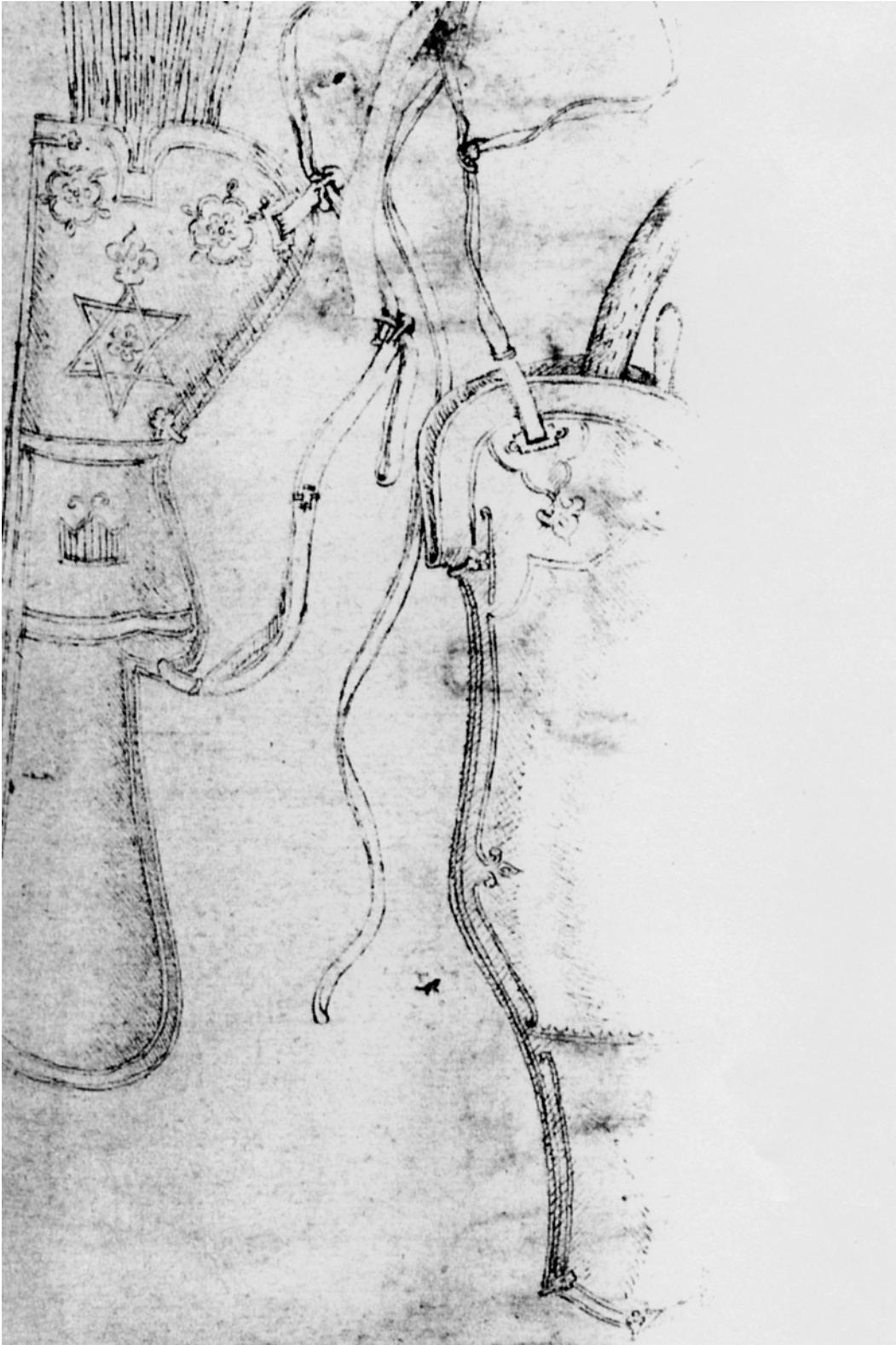


Fig. 3. Bow case and quiver, verso of 2.



Fig. 4. Pisanello's medal. British Museum, London, CM 1907, 2-4,2.

tasies, but in this case the weapons, hat and *ḫirāz* inscription accurately represent Islamic types of the period. In an article discussing the drawings Michael Vickers mentions a letter and a gift, *kaniskion*, sent by the Mamluk sultan Al-Ashraf Sayf al-Dīn Bārsbāy (r. 825-42/1422-38) to John VIII. He suggests that since the Emperor is addressed as «beloved of the Pope of Rome» the letter and gift must have been sent in about 1438, that is to the period of the proposed union between the Orthodox and Roman churches.

There is reason to think that the objects in the drawing represent Bārsbāy's gift to the Emperor. The presentation by a ruler of a complete garniture, along with a robe and hat was commonplace in the Islamic world and was considered especially appropriate between rulers. Perhaps to show the Romans that he had support in the Near East the Emperor must have decided to draw attention to the gift, and therefore commissioned Pisanello to make a commemorative medal (Fig. 4). Pisanello's preparatory drawings for the medal date to 1438 and the medal must have been cast in Ferrara in 1438-9.¹ On one side there is an inscription in Greek:

John, Emperor (Basileus) and Autocrator of the Romans, the Palaeologus.

and on the side with the equestrian portrait the signature of the artist in both Latin and Greek:

The work of Pisano the painter.

THE OBJECTS IN THE DRAWINGS

The objects sent in a royal gift need not necessarily have been produced in the rulers domains; for example the Mamluk sultan Baybārs I (658-76/1260-77) sent a gift to Berke Khān of the Golden Horde (r. 655-666/1257-67) which included:

¹ British Museum, London CM 1907, 2-4,2, see London 1994, cat. no. 232.

Qaljuri swords with silver hilts, gilded iron maces...Frankish helmets with silver collars, painted shields...bridles inlaid with metal...saddles from Khwarazm...cross bows from Damascus with strings of silk...²

Damascus was of course within the Mamluk empire, but apart from the cross-bows the other objects were from Europe, Eastern Iran and perhaps Yemen.³

The Hat

The hat depicted on the medal (Fig. 4) and in one of the Louvre drawings (Fig. 5b) is of ribbed conical form set at the top with a small roundel placed in a flower shaped setting; the surrounding elongated brim and upturned back piece are also ribbed. It seems certain that the type is Islamic in origin and can be traced back to prototypes of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Later, probably based on the example set by Pisanello this type of hat was depicted in Italian sculpture, painting and drawing, always in an Eastern context. An almost identical hat is represented on the bronze doors of St. Peter's in Rome sculpted by Antonio di Pietro Averlino known as Filarete (c. 1400-1462). Filarete sculpture depicts the Greek delegation to the Council of Florence in 1439 and the figure wearing the «shovel» hat and seated on the elaborate stool is perhaps John VIII (Fig. 5d). His hat differs slightly from that on the medal in that there is a gap at the side between the brim and the back-piece. Exactly the same hat is represented in two paintings by Piero della Francesca. In one dated to between 1456 and 1466 it is worn by the Emperor Constantine and in the other of between 1445 and 1456 it is worn by Pontius Pilot (Figs. 5a, 5c). Similar conical hats are worn by the high priest Caiphas in a painting by Miguel Jiménez of ca. 1485-87⁴ and by Herod in a painting of 1461-2 by Benozzo Gozzoli⁵. All of these representations are later in date than Pisanello's drawings and it seems likely that these later «shovel» hats are based upon his renditions. Italian artists of the late 15th century probably regarded this type as appropriate for Byzantines and other easterners, and created fanciful interpretations of the original type such as in two drawings of about 1470 (Figs. 5e and 5f).⁶

Throughout most of the Islamic world hats distinguished men of different rank. L. A. Mayer notes that among the Mamluks for example certain types such as the *takhfīfa* could only be worn by the sultan, or by high ranking amirs to whom he had personally given it. Mayer mentioned that a special kind of large *takhfīfa* was called *al-nā'ūra* and these were sometimes given with a robe of honour to an important amir. Another type of hat associated with the higher levels of the Mamluk military aristocracy was a Tartar type known as a *sarāqūj*. Mayer concluded that such hats were tall and conical with upturned brims. This Turkic or Tatar type can be traced back to at least the thirteenth century and as evidence Mayer cites those worn by Turkic warriors in a thirteenth century manuscript probably from Northern Iraq (Fig. 6a).⁷

² Sadeque 1956, pp. 189-90.

³ It is uncertain whether *qaljuri* swords were made in the Yemen or whether the word refers to a sword type rather than a geographic location, see Alexander 2001, esp. p 200 and note 76.

⁴ Zaragoza Museum, ill. in Toledo 1992, cat. no. 149.

⁵ National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

⁶ 5e has been called a portrait of Mehmed II, but this is uncertain, the coloured drawing has been attributed to the Master of the Vienna Passion and is based on an engraving by Antonio Pallaiuolo (1433-98), the coloured drawing is in the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul; the engraving is in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin Kupferstich-kabinett, inv. no. 140-1879.

⁷ Mayer 1952, pp. 30-31, *Kitāb al-Diryāq*, Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, inv. no. A.F. 10, folio 1.

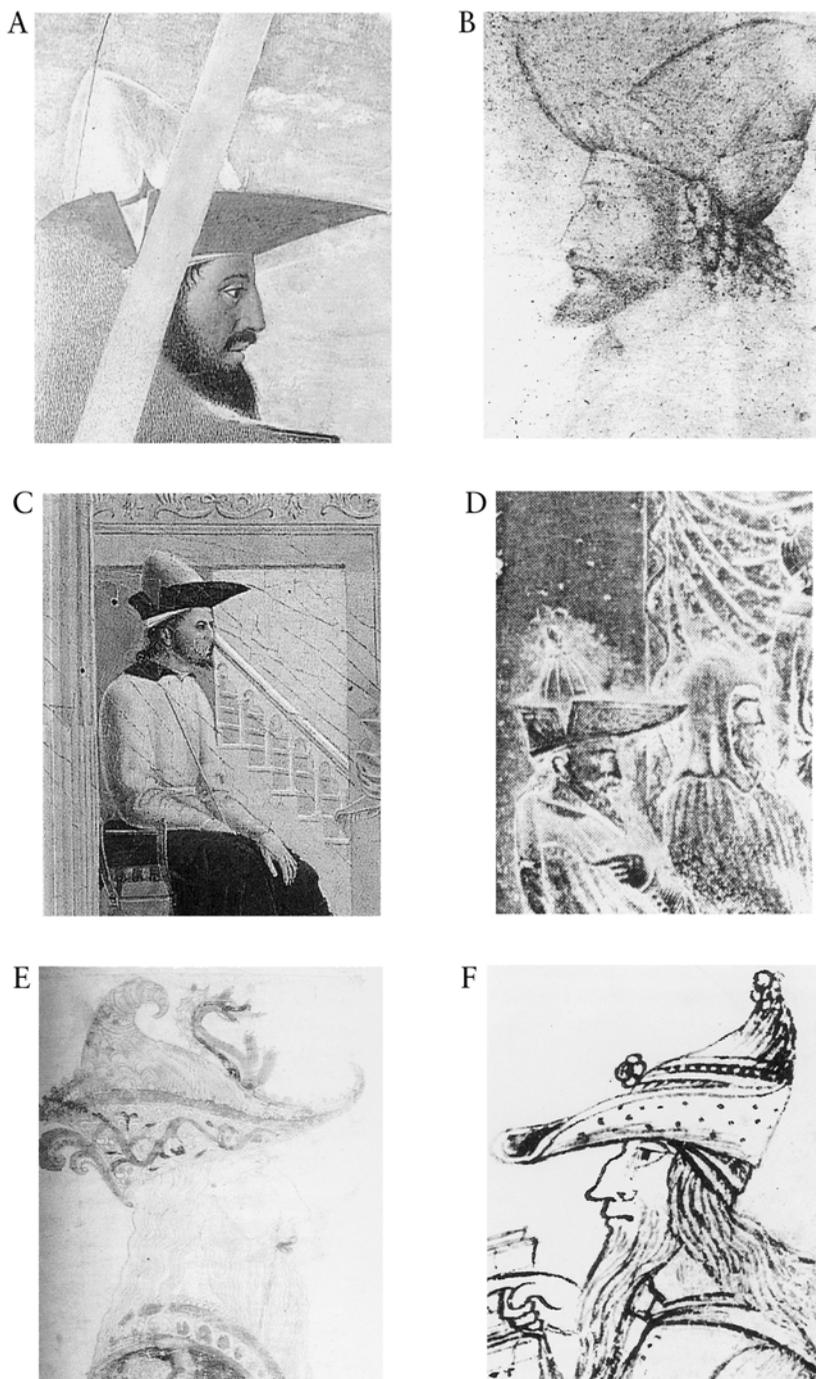


Fig. 5. A) Detail from *The Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, fresco, 1456-1466, The Emperor Constantine wearing an elongated hat with a long pointed brim. by Piero della Francesca, S. Francesco, Arezzo. B) Drawing of John VIII, by Pisanello, Musée du Louvre, MS 2478. C) Detail from *The Flagellation of Christ*, Pontius Pilot wearing an elongated hat with a long pointed brim, fresco ca 1445 - 1456, by Piero della Francesca, S. Francesco, Arezzo. D) John VIII at the Council of Florence, detail from the bronze doors of St. Peter's in Rome, by Filarete. E) So called *Il Grand Turco*, coloured drawing, Italy, ca 1470, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi. F) A Jew wearing a variation of the «shovel» hat, Italy, ca 1470, British Museum, MS; Add. 26957, folio 43 verso.

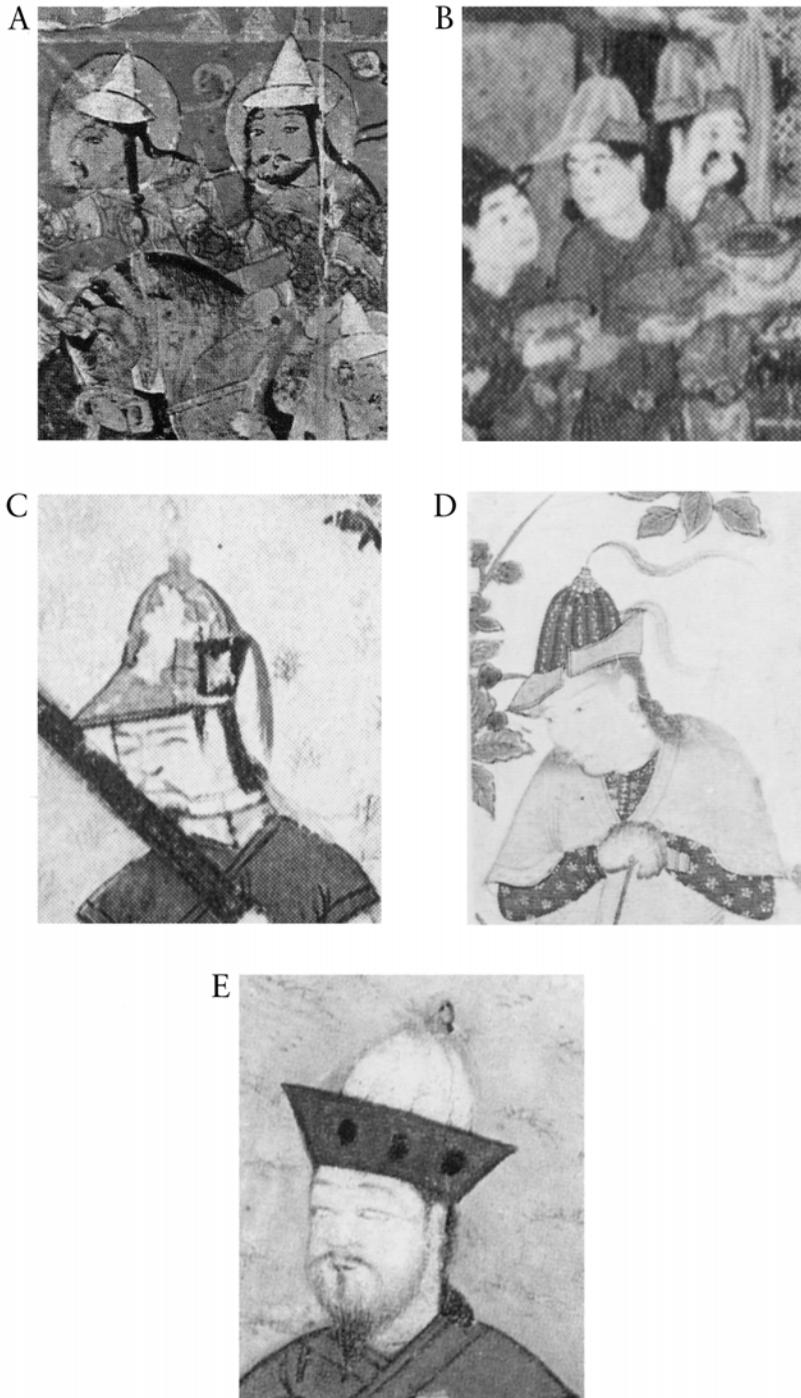


Fig. 6. A) Detail from frontispiece of a *Kitāb al-Diryāq*, Nationalbibliothek, Vienna inv. no. A.F. 10, folio 1. B) Detail from the *Diwān* of Khwājū Kirmānī, Baghdad, 798/1396, British Museum, London, Add. 18113, folio 12a. C) Detail from a *Jamīʿ al-Tawārīkh* of Rashīd al-Dīn, Baghdad, ca. 1390, Topkapı Sarayı Museum, inv. no. H. 1654; fol. 179b. D) Courtier, detail from a 15th century Timurid painting, Topkapı Sarayı Museum, inv. no. H. 2160, fol. 51r. E) Timur, detail from a *Zafarnama* of Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī, Shiraz, dated 839/1436, Cambridge, Harvard University Art Museums, bequest of the estate of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, inv. no. 1960. 198.

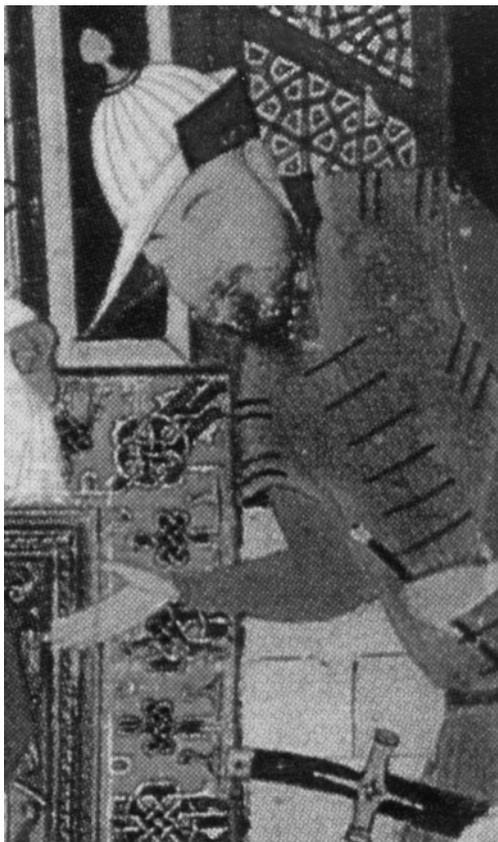


Fig. 7. Warrior, detail from a *Bustan* of Sa'di, Herat, dated 893/1488, Cairo, General Egyptian Book Organization, Adab Farsi 908.

The hats in the Iraqi painting are schematically rendered and it is not possible to discern the exact shape of their rims. The closest parallels (both in shape and in colour) with the hat represented by Pisanello are those depicted in two Jalayirid manuscripts from Baghdad, one dated 798/1396⁸ and the other of about 1390 (Figs. 6b and 6c). These hats are all worn by courtiers whereas a hat with a central cone of the same type but with an upturned brim is worn by Timur in a painting of 839/1436 (Fig. 6e). Timur's hat also resembles that of John VIII in its colour, as can be established from the colour-notes Pisanello added to his drawings. He wrote that the Emperor's hat should be white on top and red below.⁹ The hat worn by Timur is white on top and blue below. That the central cone of Timur's hat was white and had a knob at its top is confirmed by the eye-witness account of the Spanish ambassador Ruiz de Clavijo who headed an embassy to Timur in 1403. Clavijo wrote:

*His highness had taken his place on what appeared to be small mattresses stuffed thick and covered with embroidered silk cloth...and he wore on his head a tall white hat on the crown of which was displayed a balas ruby.*¹⁰

⁸ The Jalarids were a successor dynasty to the Mongols and ruled in Western Iran and Bagdad.

⁹ Vickers 1978

¹⁰ Le Strange 1928, p. 220; Clavijo also records that he was given by Timur a robe, shirt, riding horse and a hat. p. 236.



Fig. 8. Steel helmet inscribed in the name of sultan Barsbāy, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. 6130.



Fig. 9. Scabbard mount from a sword inscribed with the name of the Mamluk sultan Qā'itbāy (r. 873-906/1468-96). Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/180.



Fig. 10. Reverse of a 15th century Ottoman scabbard mount. Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/386.



Fig. 11. Scabbard mounts from a saber in the court style of the Ottoman sultan Meḥmet II. Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/106.

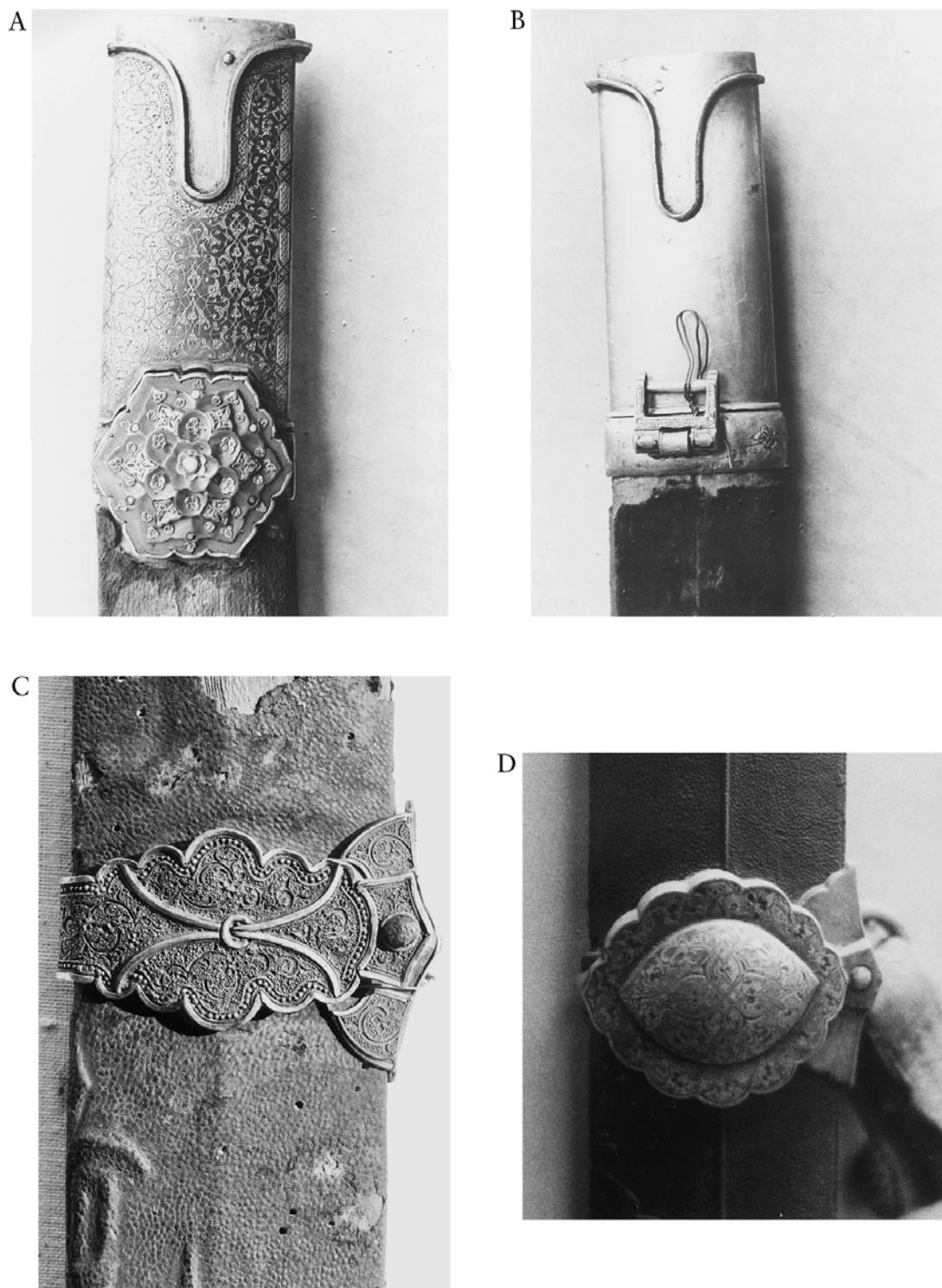


Fig. 12. A) Scabbard mount from a Timurid saber, probably Samarqand mid 15th century. Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, 1/220. B) Reverse of 1:220. C) Scabbard mount of cat. no. 12, Mamluk? or Nasrid? late 15th century. D) Scabbard mount from a saber in the court style of the Ottoman sultan Bâyezîd II, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi 1/387.

The ruby described by Clavijo must have been in a metal setting, and this is indicated in the paintings and drawings by the knobs which appear in all the Timurid examples and on the hat worn by John VIII. Although Timur's hat has an even upturned brim, the other Timurid examples (Figs. 6d and 7) are all ribbed and are of the general form worn by the Byzantine emperor (Fig. 5b). John's hat is clearly of Eastern derivation but this does not mean it was Timurid. The Mamluks also wore elongated conical headgear as is demonstrated by a helmet of this form inscribed with the name of Barsbāy. Naturally, for a helmet it does not have a pointed brim, and is reminiscent of both a pharonic crown and of an elongated Timurid or Ottoman *tāj* (Fig. 8).

The Robe, Boots and Bow

Pisanello seems to have precisely copied the inscription on the robe. It reads

Glory to our Lord the Sultan al-Malik al-...(?)...Abu'l Nasir.

Robes and cloaks have long had an important symbolic and ceremonial function in the Near East, Muḥammad for example is referred to in the Qur'ān as the «Mantled [or Cloaked] One» and from the early Islamic period onward the giving of a robe was a standard element in an investiture,¹¹ and the presentation of a robe of honor was one of the primary forms by which a reward was bestowed. Perhaps the sultan thought of the emperor as a political inferior.

As regards *ṭirāz* Ibn Khaldūn reports

It is part of royal and governmental pomp and dynastic custom to have the names of rulers...put on the silk...the writing is brought out by weaving a gold thread...of a colour different from that of the fabric itself...Royal fabrics are embellished with such a ṭirāz in order to increase the prestige of...those whom the ruler distinguishes by bestowing on them his own garment when he wants to honor them...¹²

Pisanello's colour notes indicate that the writing should be gold and the robe itself blue. The use of royal titles and the use of gold further indicate that this robe was a royal gift.

The letters of the inscription were gold on a blue ground, the rosettes and arabesques gold on red.

The boots of pale yellow leather winter boots called *khuff*, made of yellow leather (*adim*) imported from Ta'if¹³

The bow in Pisanello's drawing is perhaps one of the Syrian bows, called *fahlah*, superb, described by Barsbay's contemporary Taybugha. A similar bow is represented in a miniature of about 869/1465 painted for Rene, Duke of Anjou¹⁴ That such Mamluk objects were prized in Europe is further evidenced by the report of Bertrandon de la Brocquiere, who visited Damascus in about 854/1450. He purchased a

...white tarquais (quiver) complete, to which hung a sword and knives...¹⁵

¹¹ Stillman 1979, pp. 6-7

¹² Ibn Khaldun p. 65-6

¹³ Mayer 1952, p. 34.

¹⁴ Unterkirchner 1980, pl. I.

¹⁵ White 1848, p. 304.

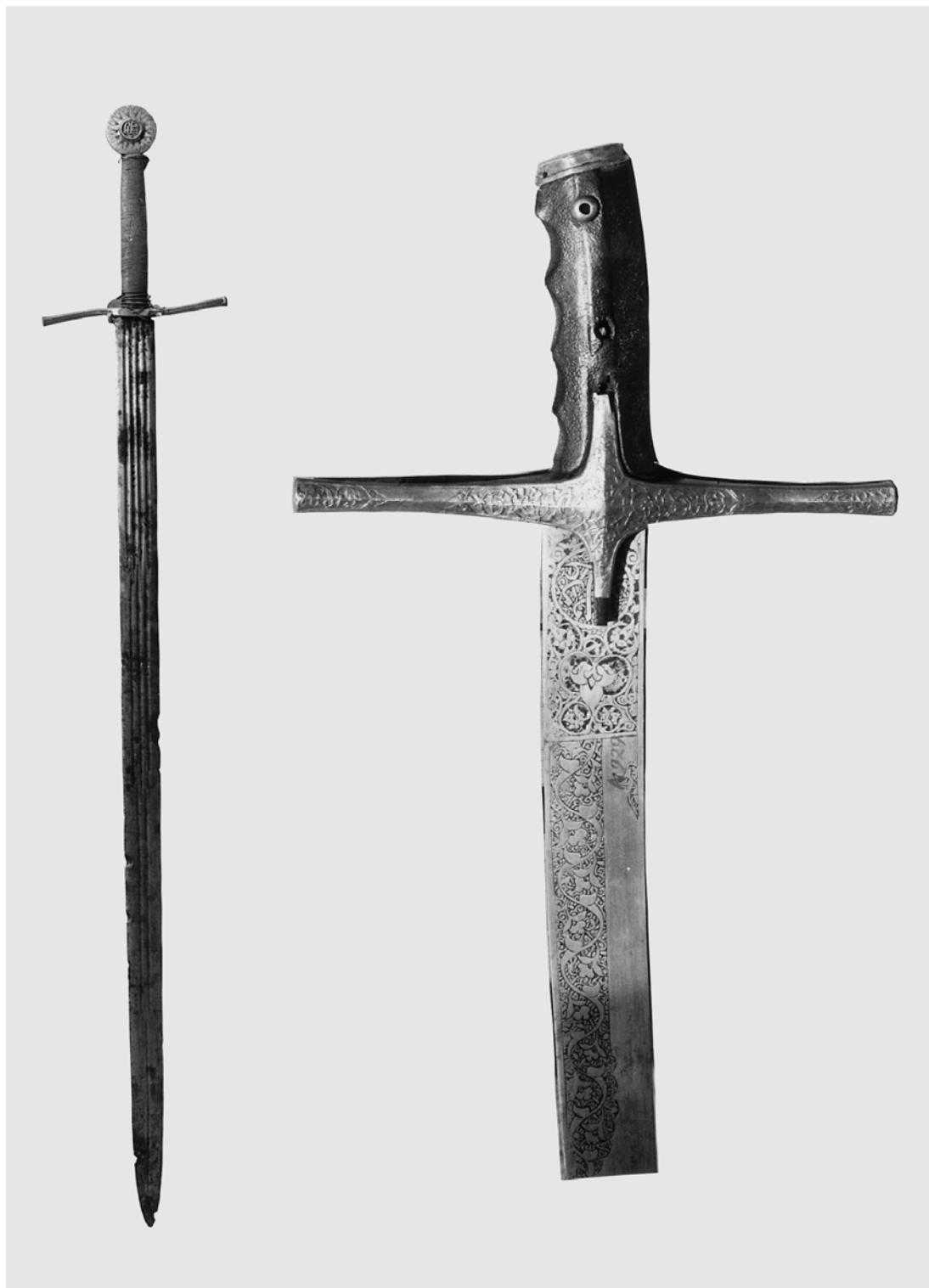


Fig. 13. A) Saber, the blade Mamluk or Ottoman, early 16th century, fittings Hungarian ca 1550. Wafensammlung, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. no. A 929. B) Sword, with the blazon of Dragffy. Moldavia, 2nd half 15th century. Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/2637.

The Saber

The saber in the drawing is typically Mamluk and weapons of this and related types are catalogued below. The hilt of the saber in Pisanello's drawing has been cut off and theommel and part of one quillon are no longer visible.¹⁶ However, it is evident that the hilt is slightly inclined towards the cutting edge of the blade and that there are two ornamental rivet covers and another ornamental frame around the wrist strap hole. The guard has hilt and scabbard prongs and relatively short quillons, round in section with flat tips. The shape of the blade is indicated by the slightly curved scabbard. Whilst the scabbard itself is embossed with a lobed palmette design and has two sling mounts or bracelets for the suspension of the belt. The bracelets consist of a fan shaped support set with two ornamental roundels. The lower chape is thin and almost rectangular in shape. The belt is set with ornamental plaques similar to those on the scabbard mounts. Pisanello's notes describe the colour of the bow case, quiver and scabbard:

the sheath of the bow brown and grained, and also that of the quiver and scimitar.

The short flat tipped quillons are of a very specific Mamluk type, whilst the ornamental rivet covers and the belt and scabbard fittings conform to a number of examples from a number of different centers in the Islamic world.

Fittings for the hilt, belt and scabbard:

The hilt of the John VIII's saber has three ornaments along its length, the uppermost of which is set with a ring. Similar ornamental frames occur on numerous Mamluk, Ottoman and Timurid swords and sabers of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and do not provide much help in attributing an object to a specific center of production.¹⁷ The scabbard mounts in Pisanello's drawing are also of a widely used type. They consist of two fan shaped bands set at their fronts with roundels (Fig. 9). In some examples the fan shaped element flairs out from the back of the scabbard (Fig. 10) whilst in other examples it is restricted to one edge; the rest of its length being of a simple band, sometimes the band itself serves as the ground for the decoration (Fig. 11), but in most other cases the band is set at the front with some sort of decorated plaque (Figs. 12 b and c). In other cases the support consists of a simple band with a decorated plaque at the front (Figs. 12 a and b). The scabbard in the drawing is also decorated, and again very similar embossed decoration can be seen on several surviving scabbards (cat. no. 12). The belt fittings are also set with lobed mounts and with several «fleur de lis» shaped appliqués of the same type as appear on the bow case.

The guard and flat tipped quillons:

Swords and sabers with flat tipped quillons are not exclusively Mamluk, and from the thirteenth to early sixteenth century the general type was widespread both geographically and chronologically. A number of swords and sabers with flat tipped quillons are catalogued

¹⁶ The quillons are the lateral extensions from the center of the guard and serve to protect the hand.

¹⁷ For example rosette shaped ornaments around the wrist strap hole are used on a Timurid saber possibly made for Ulugh Beg ibn Shahrukh (1394-1449) in Samarqand, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi 1/220 and on a sword inscribed with the name of the Mamluk sultan Qā'itbāy, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi 1/180, see Yücel 2001, cat. no. 39.

below (Mamluk examples nos. 2 - 16). Many of the Mamluk examples are roundish in section and compare with those in the drawing which are perfectly round.

Also included in the catalogue section are several probably Ottoman examples (nos. 17-21); these tend to have longer quillons than the Mamluk pieces. The precise origin of the rounded quillon type depicted in Pisanello's drawings remains obscure. Certainly, European knightly swords from much earlier periods had squarish or rectangular quillons with flat tips, but with certain exceptions roundish quillons with flat tips tend to date to the fifteenth and early sixteenth century and occur in both Europe and in the Islamic world. The southern European and Ottoman examples of the late fifteenth century have much longer quillons than the Mamluk examples and include a saber now in Vienna and a Moldavian sword taken as booty or given as tribute to the Ottomans in about 1504 (Figs. 13 a and b).

Flat quillons were also used on Timurid sabers, and the warrior depicted in Illustration 5d carries a saber with quillons of this type. However, the quillons differ from the rounded Mamluk examples in that they are not only faceted but have block like flattened ends.

The hat, robe, boots, horse-trappings and weapons drawn by Pisanello are not manifestations of an «orientalist fantasy» but represent specific types of clothing and arms. Since the drawings are so carefully and faithfully rendered they provide a valuable contribution to our understanding of medieval Islamic costume and weaponry.

CATALOGUE - ISLAMIC SWORDS WITH FLAT QUILLON TIPS

1. SWORD

Probably Golden Horde 13-14th century

State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. no. 30-59.

DESCRIPTION:

The hilt has a wheel shaped pommel of silver and niello decorated around the outside with an interlocking knot pattern and in the center of one side with a falcon attacking a deer and on the other with a hexagram. The pommel is secured to the tang with a rivet, one end of which is fitted with a wring for the attachment of a wrist strap. The grip of wood is bound with silver wire. the guard is straight with knot like rings before the slightly flaring flat tips. There is a ring of silver above and below the guard each circlet inscribed with an Arabic inscription. The steel blade is straight and double edged. The scabbard has not survived but the silver and niello sling mounts are of the band type carved and pierced at their centers with knot motifs.

INSCRIPTION:

*Made by the order of the Amir Ghiyas al-Dīn...*¹⁸

NOTES:

The flat tipped quillons on this sword are the earliest surviving Islamic example of the type. The sword was discovered during archaeological excavations near the Russian village of Ray-Gorodok, Slaryanskiy uyezd, Kharkivskaya guberniya and was found along with coins of the Golden Horde. A very similar sword is illustrated in an Islamic manuscript of 1272.¹⁹

¹⁸ Mayer, p. 97.

¹⁹ The *Dakāʾik al-Ḥakāʾik* of Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sīwāsī, ill. in Hartner 1938, fig. 22.

The style of the weapon is unique in many ways and appears to have a number of seemingly unrelated sources. The construction of the guard is very similar to that on Seljuk and Ayubbid swords, whereas the wheel pommel is probably derived from a European prototype. The dragon heads below the lower inscribed circlet have their closest parallel on a fifth century Viking sword from Denmark.²⁰

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Mayer 1962, p. 97; Otchet 1898, p. 84f, fig. 156 a-q.

2. SWORD

Attributed to ʿAlī, 4th Caliph, decoration on the blade Mamluk, 15th century.

T.L. 138 cm, L.S. 101 cm.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 2/138 (I 11)

DESCRIPTION: (r. 35-40/656-60)

The hilt of wood is octagonal in section and covered with red leather embossed with a guilloche pattern, it is slightly inclined to one side and has a rounded pommel cap of silver gilt below which is a finger rest. The guard of steel covered with silver foil decorated at the center in repoussé with a symmetrical arabesque; the quillons are roundish in section and flair towards their flat tips. The wide blade is damascened in gold in the «contour réservé» technique on the right side with a composition consisting of a floral arabesque forming a circle that continues on either edge of the blade in a lanceolate form; between the two arms a rectangle inscribed with an Arabic inscription in a cursive script. The scabbard is of wood covered with red leather. In the upper section between the chape and the first bracelet it is embossed against a gold ground with an Arabic inscription. The mounts are of the band and fan clamp type set on the front with a circular plaque that is chiseled and engraved with a lion attacking a deer.

INSCRIPTIONS:

On the blade: *made by order of our lord, maqam...*

On the scabbard: *There is no hero like ʿAlī and no sword like dhūʿl-fāqar.*

NOTES:

The word *maqam* in the inscription also occurs in one of the titles used by several mamluk sultans, including al-Malik al-Ashraf Abuʿl-Nāṣir Qāʾitbāy (r. 873-906/1468-96). An example is on a sword blade made for Qāʾitbāy from iron found in the Prophet's tomb in Medina where his titles include the phrase *al-maqam al-sharīfian*. Qāʾitbāy appears to have begun using such titulature after his restoration of the Prophet's mosque in Medina. The decoration on the blade is also typical of that found on swords, axes and standards from Qāʾitbāy's period and for that reason the inscription can almost certainly be reconstructed as being in his name.

The fittings on the scabbard can be compared to Safavid metalwork of the late 15th to early 16th century²¹ and it is likely that this piece was composed in about 1500. The reason that this sword has been attributed to the Prophet's cousin and son in law ʿAlī (r. 35-40/656-60) is unclear.

²⁰ National Gallery, Copenhagen, see Wilson 1980, p. 130.

²¹ cf. Safavid belt dated 912/1507, published in Pope 1939 pl. 1394.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Çiğ 1967 p. 4; Zaki 1979 p. 204 no 204 (called sword of Zayn al ʿAbidŪīn); Nicolle 1976 p. 11; Yücel 1970 p. 46 fig 2; Alexander 1984 cat no 51; Alexander 1999, fig. 11; Yücel 1988, cat. no. 11; Yücel 2001, cat. no. 11; Alexander 2001, fig. 4.

3. SWORD

The blade attributed to Abuʿl-Faraj ibn Yūsuf

Dated 150/767.

T.L. 101, L.B. 89.4, W.B. 4.7, W.G. 12.4 cm.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/100 (I 33)

DESCRIPTION:

The grip is missing but has an octangular sectioned pommel cap is of silver gilt, its top chiseled with annulets. The guard of steel has quillons with a central ridge and slightly rounded in section with flat tips. The blade of steel is straight and single edged and is badly rusted. There is one gold filled hole and Arabic inscription in a cursive script along one side.

INSCRIBED:

This is what the vizier Abuʿl-Faraj ibn Yūsuf took into his possession in the year 150/767.

NOTES:

Abuʿl-Faraj ibn Yūsuf was a vizier of al-Manşūr (136-158/754-775). The hilt has not been preserved, but a photograph taken by Hans Stöcklein in 1934 shows this sword with a hilt and scabbard. The guard in the photograph has quillons that are round in section with flat tips.

The guard associated with the blade in the 1980s has slightly spear shaped tips and is not the same as that recorded by Stöcklein the quillons of which had flat tips; however, the pommel cap seems to match that in his photograph.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Stöcklein 1934, fig 16, p. 217 no. 3 and p. 216 fig. 16; Zaki 1956, p. 271 no. 3; Zaki 1953-4, p. 378, no. 3; Yücel 1988, cat. no. 27; Yücel 2001, cat. no. 27

4. SWORD

Inscribed with the name of al-Mustaʿīn? (r.248-252/862-866)

Total length 105 cm

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/109

DESCRIPTION:

The guard of steel shows traces of gilding and has quillons with a central ridge and rounded in section with flat tips. The blade is straight and double edged and diamond shaped in section. Its tang is slightly inclined to one side and has several gold filled holes. It is inscribed with a Kufic inscription, now very worn.

INSCRIPTION:

«Made for Mustaʿīn al-Malik....Shaddad?»

NOTES:

Only the guard remains, the rest of the hilt is now missing. The inscription is very worn which leaves the reading of the name in some doubt.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Yücel, 1988 no. 28; Yücel 2001, no. 28

5. SABER

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk period

Inscribed in the name of al-Malik al-Ashraf Abu'l-Nāṣr Qā'itbāy, (r. 872-901/1468-96)

T.L. 101.3, L.B. 84, W.B. 3.8, W.G. 11.5, L. S. 87.2.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi inv. no. 1/181

DESCRIPTION:

The hilt of walrus ivory is fixed to the tang with three rivets covered by mother of pearl plugs, it is ovular in section and slightly inclined towards the cutting edge of the blade; the pommel cap is missing but the grip is carved with a finger rest. The cruciform guard of gilded steel has hilt and scabbard prongs and slightly faceted quillons that flair towards their flat tips. The blade is single edged with a spatulate double edged section towards its point. It is inscribed in Arabic in a cursive script. The scabbard is of leather embossed with a large palmette at the top and with floral forms. The mounts are missing but the ridges at the side indicate that they were of the bar and fan clamp type.

INSCRIPTIONS:

For our Lord, the sultān al-Malik al-Ashraf Abu'l-Nāṣr Qā'itbāy may his victory be glorious.

NOTES:

The grip is similar to that on a saber made for Meḥmet II,²² however, it differs in that it is carved of one piece of ivory whereas those on the Meḥmet swords are of two pieces, one fixed to either side of the tang. The palmette forms on the scabbard are similar to those on the scabbard in Pisanello's drawing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Yücel 1988, no. 43; Yücel 2001, no. 43.

6. SWORD

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk period

Inscribed in the name of al-Malik al-Ashraf Abu'l-Nāṣr Qā'itbāy.

T.L. 101.7, L.B. 92.5; W.B. 5.1; W.G. 12.0

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/86 (III 18)

DESCRIPTION:

The grip and pommel cap are missing. The guard of steel with hilt and scabbard prongs has traces of gilding and quillons hexagonal in section that flair slightly towards their flat tips. The blade has a straight tang with traces of a makers' stamp. It is of flattened ovular section inlaid with gold on one side with an Arabic inscription in a cursive script, of which the uprights are enlarged at their tops. There is a trace of a maker's stamp on the tang.

INSCRIPTIONS:

*To our Lord, the wise, the efficient, the sultān al-Malik al-Ashraf Abu'l-Nāṣr Qā'itbāy may his victory be glorious.*²³

²² TKS no. 1/90, see Yücel 2001, cat. no. 87.

²³ Translated by Ludvik Kalus.

NOTES:

The scabbard seems to have perished since Stöcklein's photograph was taken. The inlaid inscription is typical of those on swords and sabers mentioning Qā'itbāy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Stöcklein 1934, p. 214, fig. 15, no. 3; Yücel 1988, no. 38; Yücel 2001, no. 38.

7. SABER

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk period, 15th century
T.L. 96.1; L.B. 81; W.B. 3.2; W.G. 10.7
Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/213

DESCRIPTION:

The hilt of iron is damascened in gold and silver with a floral design and has a large fluted «turban» shaped pommel with eleven facets. The guard is octagonal in section and is damascened en-suite, it has hilt and scabbard prongs and quillons that flair slightly before their flat tips. The straight single edged blade of watered steel has a spatula shaped double edged section towards its point. It is engraved on the left side with the tamga of the Ottoman arsenal.

NOTES:

The arabesque decoration is very similar to that on two Mamluk axes of the second half of the fifteenth century.²⁴ The spherical pommel relates this sword to a group of similar Mamluk weapons preserved in the Topkapı, Askeri and Deniz Museums in Istanbul,²⁵ and also to an Ottoman type generally known as *mec*.²⁶

Long thin swords such as this can be traced back at least to the 10th century where one appears in a painting of a mounted warrior from Nīshāpūr.²⁷ No physical example survives from this early period but the Mamluk and Ottoman examples show that these stiff, thrusting blades were often been forged with three or four sides. An Ottoman miniature of ca 1639 depicts sultan Murād IV carrying such a sword.²⁸ The English traveler, Sir John Smithe, writing in about 1000/1591, described these weapons:

*tocks very conveniently worne after the Hongarian and Turkie manner under their thighs which tocks are long narrow stiff swords onlie for the thrust.*²⁹

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Yücel 1988, cat. no. 54; Yücel 2001, cat. no. 54.

8. SWORD

Mamluk, 15th century, signed by ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Misrī
T.L. 94; L.B. 87; W.B. 5.2, W.G. 16.
Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/222 (II 7)

²⁴ Historisches Museum, Dresden, inv. nos. Y 251 and Y 252 Illustrated in Nickel 1972, p. 221, ills. 14 and 15.

²⁵ Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. nos. 1/187, 1/189, 1/209, 1/211, 1/212, 1/213, Askeri nos. 1480, 11598, 2332, Deniz Müzesi, Istanbul.

²⁶ cf. 1/91 (III 44). In modern Turkish such swords are called *Mec*, and in other parts of Europe they are variously known as *Tuck*, *Estoc*, *Panzerstecher* or *Hegyestor*.

²⁷ Hauser and Wilkinson 1942 p. 118, fig 45.

²⁸ Stouchine 1966, pl. XII (Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi H. 2134, folio 1), see Alexander 2003, Ill. 2.

²⁹ Quoted in Norman 1980, p. 23.

DESCRIPTION:

The hilt was originally of wood covered with leather and had a rounded pommel cap and a guard with short hilt and scabbard prongs and quillons circular in section with flat tips. These were present in Stöcklein's photograph of 1934 but are now missing. The straight double edged blade is of flattened octangular section engraved with a lobed arch below the tang, a roundel and a rectangular frame extending along the edge and ending with a split leaf arabesque of lanceolate form; within is a cartouche containing an Arabic inscription? The background to the design is covered with spiral cross hatching creating a chircouso effect.

NOTES:

The blade signed by ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Misrī is one of a number decorated in a similar fashion which seem to date from the time of Qānṣawh al-Ghaurī (r. 1501-1516).³⁰ ʿAlī, was probably the brother of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān who signed a saber catalogued below.³¹ the father Muḥammad al-Misrī is variously referred to as *muʿallim* and *Ustādh* both of which indicate that he was a master artisan.³²

In Stöcklein's photograph the sword had a scabbard, apparently covered with leather, with two ovular bracelets which were fitted with rectangular belt rings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Mayer 1952 pp. 24-5; Stöcklein 1934 p. 24, fig. 15, no. 5; Stöcklein 1934 pl. 1423 A; Alexander 1984b, p. 133, pl. 5B; Yücel 1988, cat. no. 65 Yücel 2001 cat. no. 65.

9. SWORD

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk, period of Qāʾitbāy.

Signed by Aḥmad al-Magrabī

T.L. 117.2, L.B. 101.5, W.B. 7.2, W.G. 20.9.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/128 (III 22)

DESCRIPTION:

The grip is of wood covered with black leather and is slightly inclined to one side. It has a flat topped pommel cap of brass (replacement?) and a quillon block of steel with hilt and scabbard prongs and elongated quillons with flat tips. The blade is straight and double edged and ovular in section. It has five thin grooves along its center. It is damascened in gold on either side, on the left with a grid pattern enclosing hexagonal stars and opposed comma shapes and with the makers signature, and the tamga of the Ottoman arsenal; the decoration on the right side is similar but includes octagonal stars. The scabbard is of wood covered with black leather; the lower chape is rectangular in shape and the two bracelets are of the band type with ovular plaques at the front.

NOTES:

The inventory of 1923 lists this as a sword of Qāʾitbāy. It is comparable to several axes also bearing his name, and is probably of the type known as the *saif bedawi*. This example is remarkable both for its quality and for the presence of the comma shape design.

³⁰ Alexander 1984B, fig. 6, p. 133-37

³¹ Cat. no. 20.

³² For other blades by this group in the Livrustkammaren, Stockholm see Cederstrom 1930, inv. nos. 1884-4 and 7230 signed Muḥammad al-Misrī; Alexander 1984B, fig. 1C. Another related group are those signed by Ibrāhīm al-Mālikī (eg. Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi 1/5217 (II 16) who began working for the Mamluk sultan Qānṣawh al-Ghaurī and later for the Ottoman sultan Selīm II.

In addition to the swords catalogued here there is another blade signed by this maker.³³ Yücel's editor thought that the signature indicated that these blades were made in the Magreb or Islamic West, but the signature implies that although the craftsman came from this region he was working in another center; the purely Mamluk style of the design is further proof of this.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Yücel 1988, cat. no. 86; Yücel 2001, cat. no. 86; Alexander 2001, fig. 6.

10. SWORD

Damascus (?), Mamluk, period of Qā'itbāy.

Signed by Maḥmūd al-Magrabī

T.L. 108.2, L.B. 93.6, W.B. 5.8, W.G. 14.5;

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/129

The *hilt* of steel has an octagonal pommel cap with a flat top and a finger rest. The grip has three roundels on either side over the rivets, and a faceted quillon block with hilt and scabbard prongs and faceted quillons that flair towards their flattened tips. The *blade* is straight and double edged with three wide channels along its length, two of which are chiseled with a guilloche design. It is damascened in gold with arabesques in a contour reserve technique and with roundels containing an inner star from which springs an arabesque design. There is a rectangular cartouche containing the makers signature, and is engraved with the *tamga* of the Ottoman arsenal. The *scabbard* is of wood covered with black leather with steel mounts the lower chape cut with a palmette design; the bracelets are of the bar and fan clamp type.

NOTES:

The Topkapı inventory of 1923 lists this as a sword of the caliph ʿUmar.

The design and technique are typical for the period of Qā'itbāy; comparable pieces include an axe in the Bargello Museum³⁴ which has a roundel containing an identical arabesque and a pen box made for the timekeeper of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus.³⁵ The latter has a split leaf design identical to that in the large field on the blade. As the box was almost certainly made in Damascus the blade is tentatively attributed to a workshop in that city.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Yücel 1988, cat. no 84 ; Yücel 2001, cat. no. 84; Alexander 2001, fig. 5.

11. SWORD

Mamluk, 15th century.

T.L. 98.5, L.B. 85.0, W.B. 5.1, W.G. 11.8.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/133 (III 19)

DESCRIPTION:

The hilt of gilded steel is forged in sections and joined together, it is octagonal in section with a flat topped octagonal pommel cap. The guard has hilt and scabbard prongs and quillons that flair slightly towards their flat tips. The straight blade is of a flattened diamond shape in

³³ Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi 1/127 see Yücel 1988/2001, no. 85.

³⁴ Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Bg. M 1227. ill. Florence 2002. cat. no. 17.

³⁵ MMA acc.no. 91.1, see Atıl 1981, p. 104, no. 36.

section and is double edged with a wide central groove. It is damascened below the hilt with an arabesque and palmette design. The scabbard is of wood covered with black leather.

NOTES:

All steel hilts are common on Mamluk swords and the similarity of this hilt with that in cat. no. 10 indicates that this example is also Mamluk.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Yücel 1988, cat. no. 49; Yücel, 2001, cat. no. 49.

12. SWORD

Mamluk?, ca. 1490.

T.L. 100.5, LB. 87.7, W.B. 5.6, W.G. 12.2.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/130 (III 25)

DESCRIPTION:

The *grip* is of wood covered with black leather, octagonal in section and slightly inclined to one side. It is set with ornamental rivet covers of silver. The guard is of steel covered with silver gilt worked with granulations arranged to form floral motifs in *reservé*. The quillons are hexagonal in section and have flat tips. The *blade* is of flattened ovular section. The *scabbard* of wood covered with black leather has mounts en-suite and a bracelet with a band at the back and at the front a polylobed plaque with raised lines of silver crossing in the center and passing through a knot form. The lower chape is decorated with a hexagram in relief.

NOTES:

The granulated decoration is of a type generally attributed to Nasrid Spain³⁶, but it is also found on helmets which are said to be Italian,³⁷ and yet the form of the hilt and guard are typically Mamluk. Consequently, it is difficult to assign this piece to a specific center.

13. SWORD

Mamluk 15th century

T.L. 102.2, L.B. 89.8, W.B. 6.6, W.G. 14.3

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/126 (III 26)

DESCRIPTION:

The *grip* of wood covered with black leather is octagonal in section and slightly inclined to one side. The flat topped pommel cap of silver gilt and niello is decorated around its sides with a guilloche design and on two sides and on the top with Arabic inscriptions in a cursive script. Immediately below the pommel cap is a finger rest and there are ornamental frames over the rivet holes and around the wrist strap hole. The guard of steel has hilt and scabbard prongs and quillons of circular section with flat tips. The *blade* of flattened ovular section shows traces of an Arabic inscription. The *scabbard* is of wood covered with leather with a rectangular bracelet of silver gilt and niello. The faces of the bracelets are decorated with pearl shapes, a circle containing a rosette and with garlands of flowers against a cross hatched ground. The back is decorated with an arabesque and has a swivel ring for the attachment of a baldaric.

³⁶ For a detailed discussion of this type of granulation see Hildburg 1941, also Jenkins and Keene 1983, p. 92.

³⁷ For example the so-called helmet of Boadbil in the Real Armeria, Madrid no. 2356 (D. 12) Its borders have silver granulations in an identical style, Valencia 1898, p. 140.

NOTES:

This sword is typical for the 15th century and the rivet covers on the hilt are of the same type as one of the swords inscribed with the name of Qāʿitbāy.³⁸ The crudely executed decoration on some of the fittings suggests another workshop. The use of a baldaric is the traditional Arab method of suspending a sword, and it is possible that the additional decoration to this Mamluk sword was crafted in Arabia.

14. SABER

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk period, (906-22/1501-1516).

Inscribed in the name of al-Ashraf Abu'l-Nāṣr Qānṣawh al-Ghaurī.

T.L. 103.2, L.B. 89.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi inv. no. 1/186.

DESCRIPTION:

The *hilt* is of iron cast in sections and welded together, its entire surface is pierced with an interlocking foliate design and gilt. The octangular pommel has a rounded top and a small finger rest, the grip is octangular in section and is gently inclined towards the cutting edge of the blade. The quillon block has hilt and scabbard prongs and quillons, slightly squared in section which flair slightly towards their flat tips. The *blade* is slightly curved and single edged with a spatulate double edged section towards the point. It is inlaid in gold on the right side with an Arabic inscription in a cursive script and on the left with an arabesque alternately floral and heart shaped.

INSCRIPTIONS:

Glory to our Lord sultān al-Malik al-Ashraf Abu'l-Nāṣr Qānṣawh al-Ghaurī may he always be victorious.

NOTES:

The heavy open work style occurs on a variety of Mamluk weapons, including maces, lance heads and standards.³⁹

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Yücel 1988, cat. no. 72; Yücel 2001, cat. no. 72.

15. SWORD

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk period.

Inscribed in the name of al-Malik al-Ashraf Abu'l-Nāṣr Tūmān-Bāy?

T.L. 95.7, L.B. 81.2, W.B. 5.66, WG 10.9.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/114 (III 24)

Description:

The *grip* is of wood covered with leather, octagonal in section, slightly inclined to one side and set with a circular wrist strap hole frame of silver gilt and one rivet hole cover cut and pierced with a rosette shape. The pommel cap of brass is ovular in section with a flat top. The guard of steel has traces of gilding and has hilt and scabbard prongs and quillons which flair slightly before their flat tips. The *blade* of diamond shaped section is damascened in

³⁸ Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/180 and for a similar rosette see 1/114.

³⁹ Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. nos. 1/125, 1/187 and 1/617 see Tezcan 1992 cat. no. 9.

gold on the right side crosswise and lengthwise with Arabic inscriptions in a cursive script; on the left side engraved in contour with an Arabic inscription in an angular script.

INSCRIPTION:

The inscription is badly worn but reads in part:
*Glory to our Lord sulṭān al-Malik Abu ?***Tūmān?*⁴⁰

NOTES:

The inscription records the name of Tūmān preceded by Abu...? possibly the name and titles of Tūmān-Bāy II. However, the style of the hilt suggests an earlier dating, probably to the mid-fifteenth century

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Yücel 1988, cat. no. 64; Yücel 2001, cat. no. 64

16. SABER

Probably Mamluk, 15th century.
 T.L. 101.1, L.B. 87.9, W.B. 3.8, W.G. 11.6.
 Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/218

DESCRIPTION:

The grip is of wood decorated with a mosaic of mother of pearl forming a quatrefoil and leaf pattern. The pommel cap is of brass with a flat top and there is no finger rest. The guard is of steel with hilt and scabbard prongs and quillons that flair slightly towards their flat tips. The blade of steel is single edged with a double edged section before its point.

NOTES:

The use of mosaic on weapons is very rare, the only other surviving example is on an Ottoman mace of the early sixteenth century.⁴¹ The only other comparisons are with furniture of the period

17. SABER

Ottoman? late 15th century
 Private Collection, India.

DESCRIPTION:

The grip is formed in three parts, the lower section consists of a plate of wood riveted to either side of the tang, the central section of a plate of ivory similarly attached atop which is a pommel cap of steel. The guard is of steel cut on the hilt and scabbard prongs with lozenge and plume like forms and chiseled on the quillons with floral designs; the quillons are octagonal in section and flair towards their stocky flat tips. The blade is curved and single edged with a double edged section before its tip.

NOTES:

The carved and chiseled quillons and hilt and scabbard prongs are unique however, the construction of the hilt resembles those on certain sabers made for the Ottoman sultan Mehmed I whilst the shape of the hilt is identical to several in the court style of his son

⁴⁰ Translated by Ludvik Kalus

⁴¹ Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. no. C 61, see Riyadh 1996, cat. no. 84 v.

Bāyezīd II.⁴² There is even a parallel in a Timurid painting of 893/1488 for this example (Fig. 7).

18. SABER

Ottoman, late 15th century(?)

T.L. 116, L.B. 98.5, W.B. 95, W.G. 24.7; L.S. 100.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/397.

DESCRIPTION:

The *grip* is of wood covered with black leather inclined towards the cutting edge of the blade and with a flat topped pommel cap of brass below which is a large finger rest. The guard is of steel with quillons that flair very slightly towards their flat tips, the sides of the pierced quillons are decorated with gold inlaid panels forming circles and rectangles, inside the rectangles are steel balls. The large wide *blade* of steel is single edged with a double edged section towards its point. It has two shallow grooves along its length and a series of thin grooves running along middle of the top side terminating before the double edged section and is engraved on the right side with a roundel containing an Arabic inscriptions in a cursive script, and before the grooves a large palmette form. The *scabbard* is of wood covered with leather with steel mounts of the bar and fan clamp type.

NOTES:

Cemal Arseven attributed this saber to Mehmed I but his reasons for doing so are unclear. This is one of a small group of sabers with wide blades deeply engraved with inscriptions and floral forms that contrast with a series of delicately chiseled grooves.⁴³ Many of the other sabers in the group have large spear shape quillon tips in a distinctly Ottoman style. The deeply engraved fleshy leaf forms on one example (1/395) suggest that the craftsman was inspired by Eastern Anatolian carving such as on the facade of the mosque at Divriği (dated 1228-29). Although the carved palmette forms on the blade suggest a Timurid origin, this and the other sabers of the same type were probably produced in an Ottoman workshop.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Arseven nd. fig. 330.

19. SWORD

Ottoman second half of the 15th century.

T.L. 101, L.B. 87.9, W.B. 4.3, W.G. 12.6.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/216 (III 20)

DESCRIPTION:

The *grip* of wood covered with black leather is slightly inclined to one side, it has a finger rest below its flat topped pommel cap of bronze. The guard has quillons which taper towards their flat tips. It is inlaid in gold on the right side with a central medallion within which is a rosette surrounded by an inscription in Turkish in a cursive script. and along the quillons with a symmetrical arabesque of split leaves in contour; the same on the left side but with a centrally organized arabesque within the medallion. The blade of watered steel is for-

⁴² Cf. Yücel, 1988/2001, cat. nos. 87, 88, 97, 98, 99.

⁴³ There are three other examples of this type, two of these have massive quillons with spear shaped tips while the hilt of the third has not been preserved; they are Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. nos. 1/395, 1/396 and 1/398.

ged with a wave like pattern. It is of flattened octagonal section (four facets to each side) and is inlaid in gold on either side with a circular medallion containing a petal form.

NOTES:

The floral design around the inscription is executed in a linear style where the floral forms are outlined in gold but not filled in, a similar linear style was used on manuscripts and book-bindings made in the court atelier of Meḥmet II, such as on a copy of the *Şerb el-Hamase* now in the Topkapı Sarayı dated 869/1466⁴⁴ and a binding made for a *Fewâ'id el-Giyâsiya* dated 873/1468⁴⁵ another example is to be seen on a Qurʾân in the Nour Collection.⁴⁶

20. SABER

Mamluk or Ottoman, dated 889/1484.

Signed by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ustādh al-Misrī.

T.L. 144.8, L.B. 125.8, W.B. 6.5, W.G. 17.6.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/385

DESCRIPTION:

The grip is of wood (the leather worn away) with a rounded and paneled pommel cap of steel, pierced for the wrist strap, it has traces of a gilt arabesque design. The guard of steel has short hilt and scabbard prongs and quillons octagonal in section that flair before their flat ends, it is decorated en-suite with the pommel. The wide and long blade of steel is single edged with a shallow groove along its length, it has a double edged section before its point. It is inscribed in Arabic in a cursive script on the right side.

INSCRIPTION:

Made by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ustādh al-Misrī.

Especially for the power of the house and for the sake of the almighty God in the year 889.

NOTES:

The swordsmith is the son of the Mamluk swordsmith Muḥammad al-Misrī, however, the shape of the hilt is of the type associated with Bāyezīd II and suggests that perhaps he was working for the Ottoman court.⁴⁷

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Yücel 1988 no. 46; Yücel 2001 no. 46

21. SABER

The blade inscribed in the name of Bāyezīd II, dated 896/1490-91.

Signed by Hajī Sunqur.

T.L. 101, L.B. 90.

Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, inv. no. 1/384

DESCRIPTION:

The hilt of this saber is missing thus revealing a slightly inclined tang stamped with a makers mark. The guard has hilt and scabbard prongs and faceted quillons with flat tips. The

⁴⁴ Istanbul 1983, no. E4, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Karaytay A. 8416.

⁴⁵ Istanbul 1983 no. E3 Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Karatay A. 8150.

⁴⁶ James 1992, no. 21. folio 639b.

⁴⁷ See cat. no. 8.

blade is slightly curved, single edged and wedge shape in section, it has a large double edged section towards its point. This is pierced with four splits along the center, the large terminal split is cut away to form a notch. The blade is engraved with Arabic inscriptions in a cursive script. There are also traces of gold in the engraved lines.

INSCRIPTIONS:

On the tang:

made by Haji Sunqur

Damascened on the blade:

made by Haji Sunqur. Property of sultān Bāyezīd Khan ibn Meḥmed Khan

Engraved on the blade with the opening lines of sura 48 and with the names of the first four caliphs.

NOTES:

The blade is inscribed with the name and titles of the Ottoman sultan Bāyezīd II (r. 886-918/1481-1512). The saber is a representation of the Prophet's sword *dhū'l-fāqar*.⁴⁸

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Mayer plate XVII p. 77; Bikkul 1962, p. 27; Yücel 1964, p. 92; Yücel 1988 no. 96; Yücel 2001 no. 96; Alexander 1999, fig. 13.

DAVID ALEXANDER

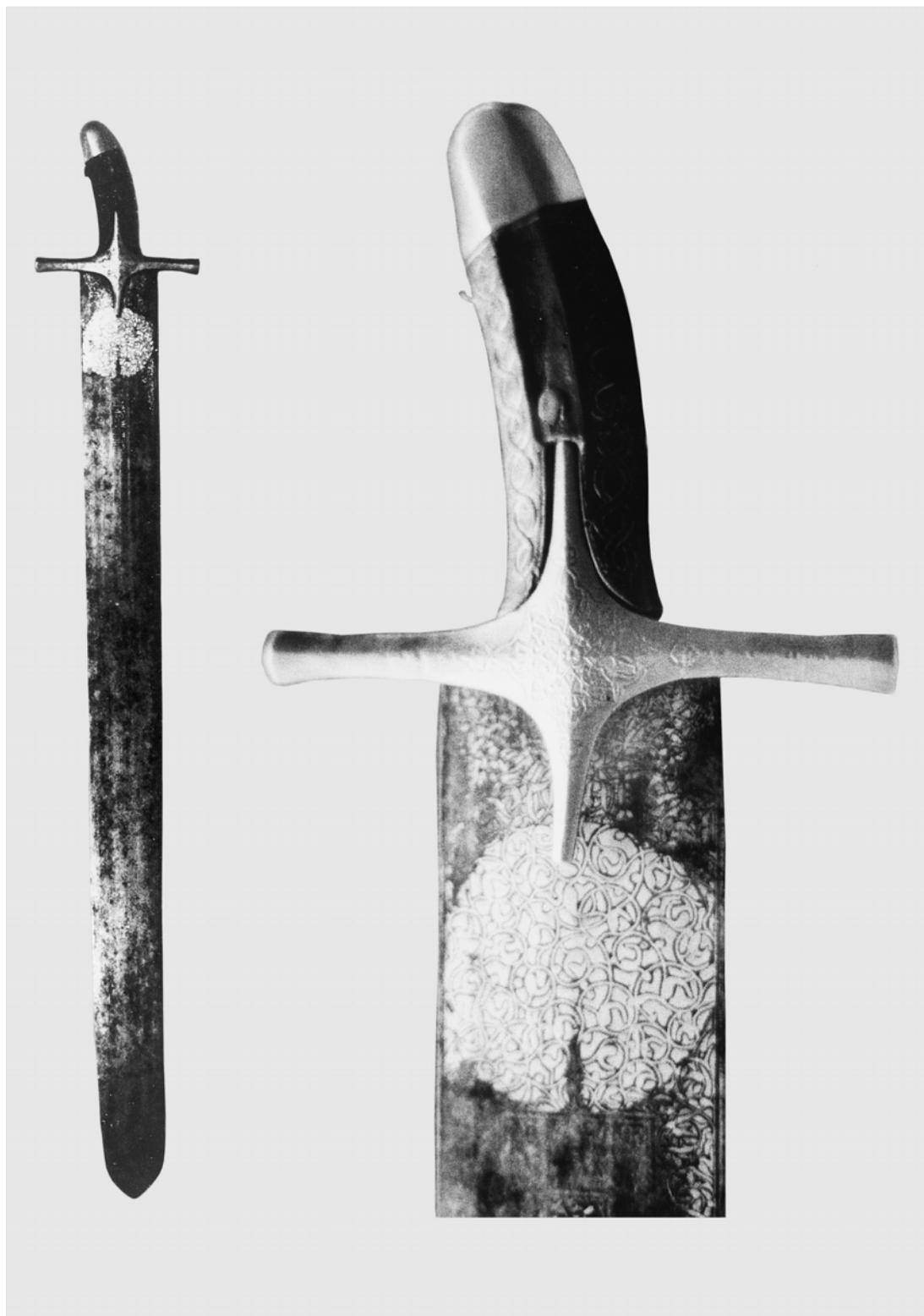
Puycelsi, France

⁴⁸ For a discussion of this sword see Alexander 1999.

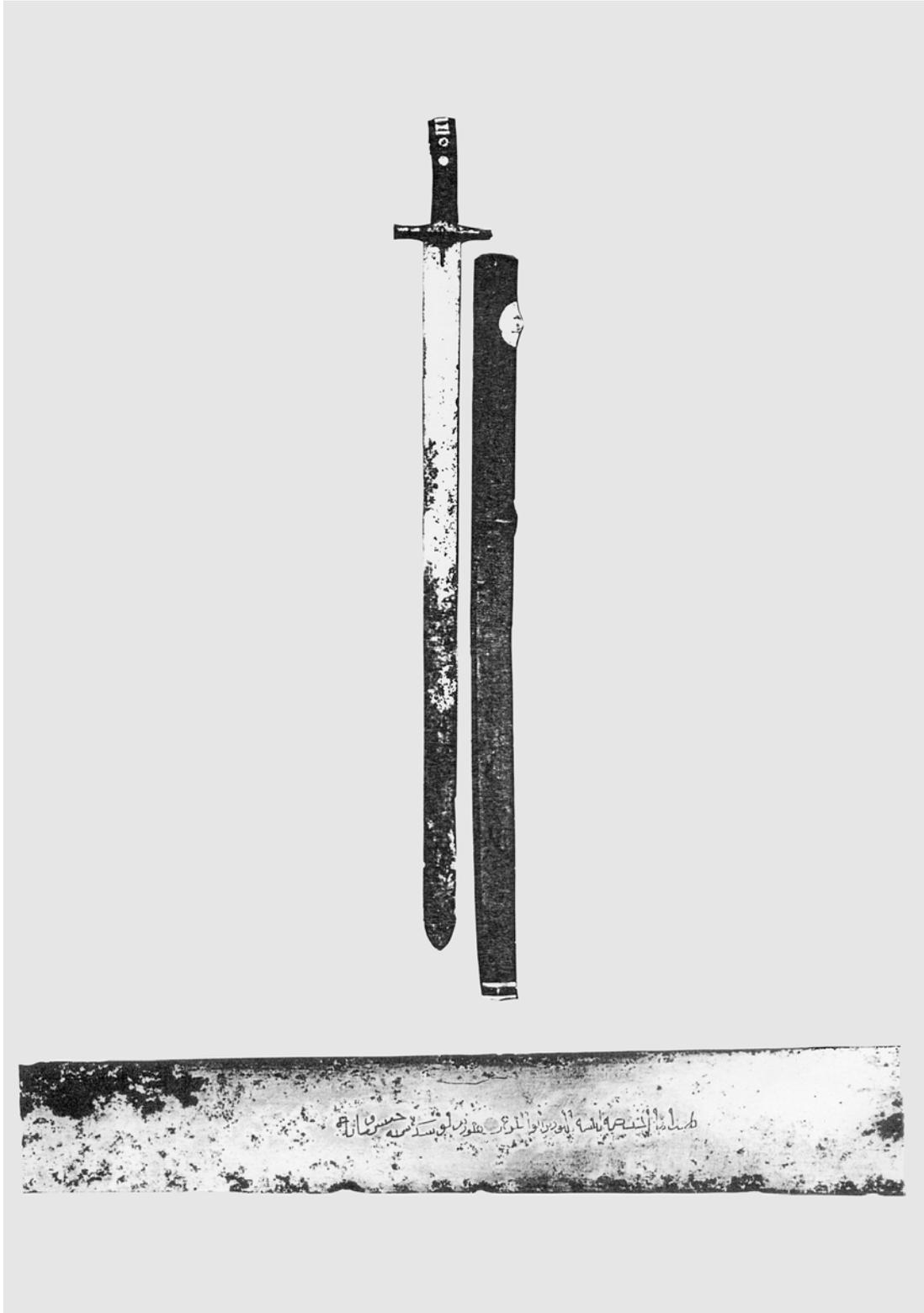
CATALOGUE N° 1



CATALOGUE N° 2



CATALOGUE N° 3



CATALOGUE N° 4



CATALOGUE N° 5



CATALOGUE N° 6



CATALOGUE N° 7



CATALOGUE N° 8



CATALOGUE N° 9



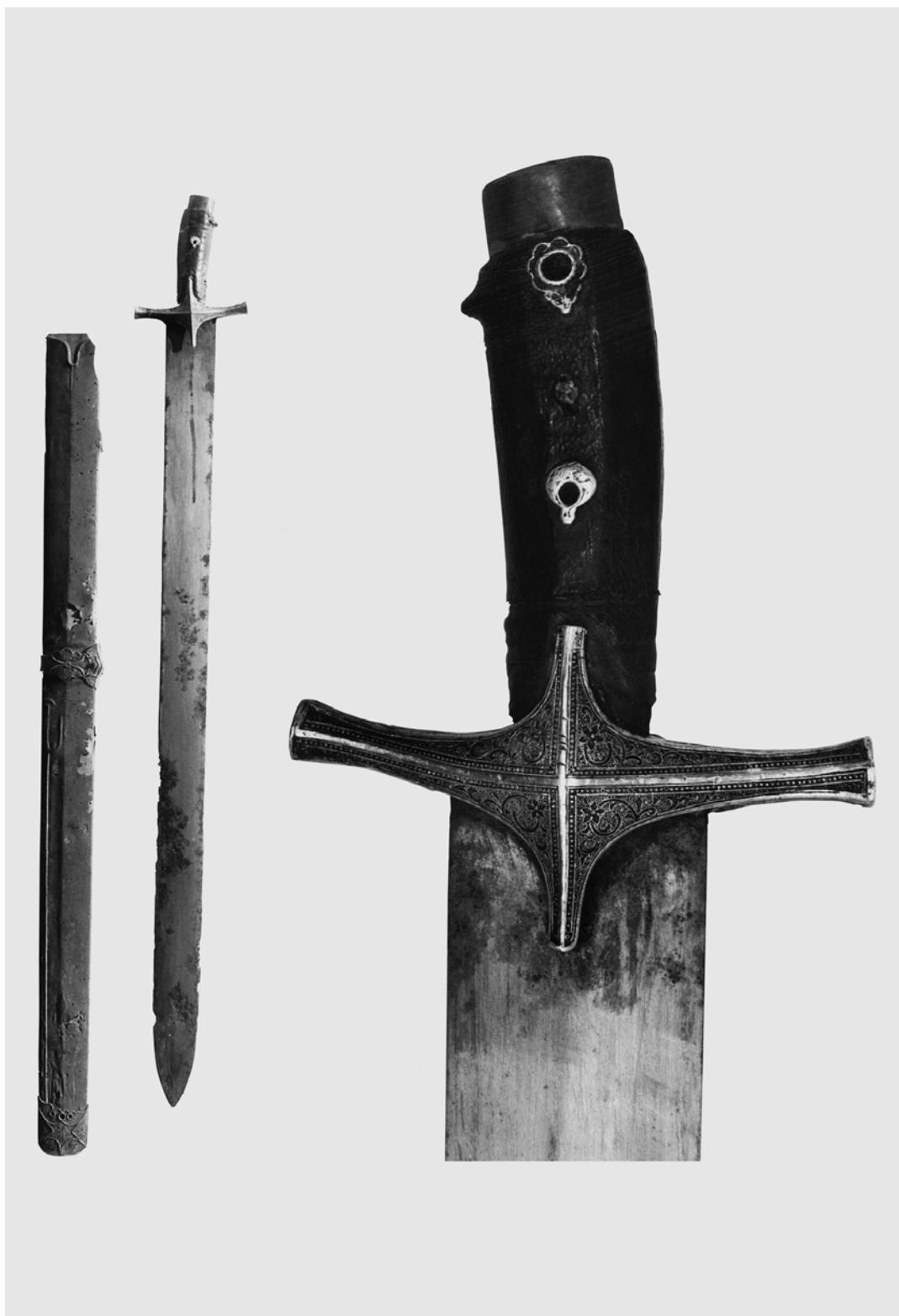
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CATALOGUE N° 11



CATALOGUE N° 12



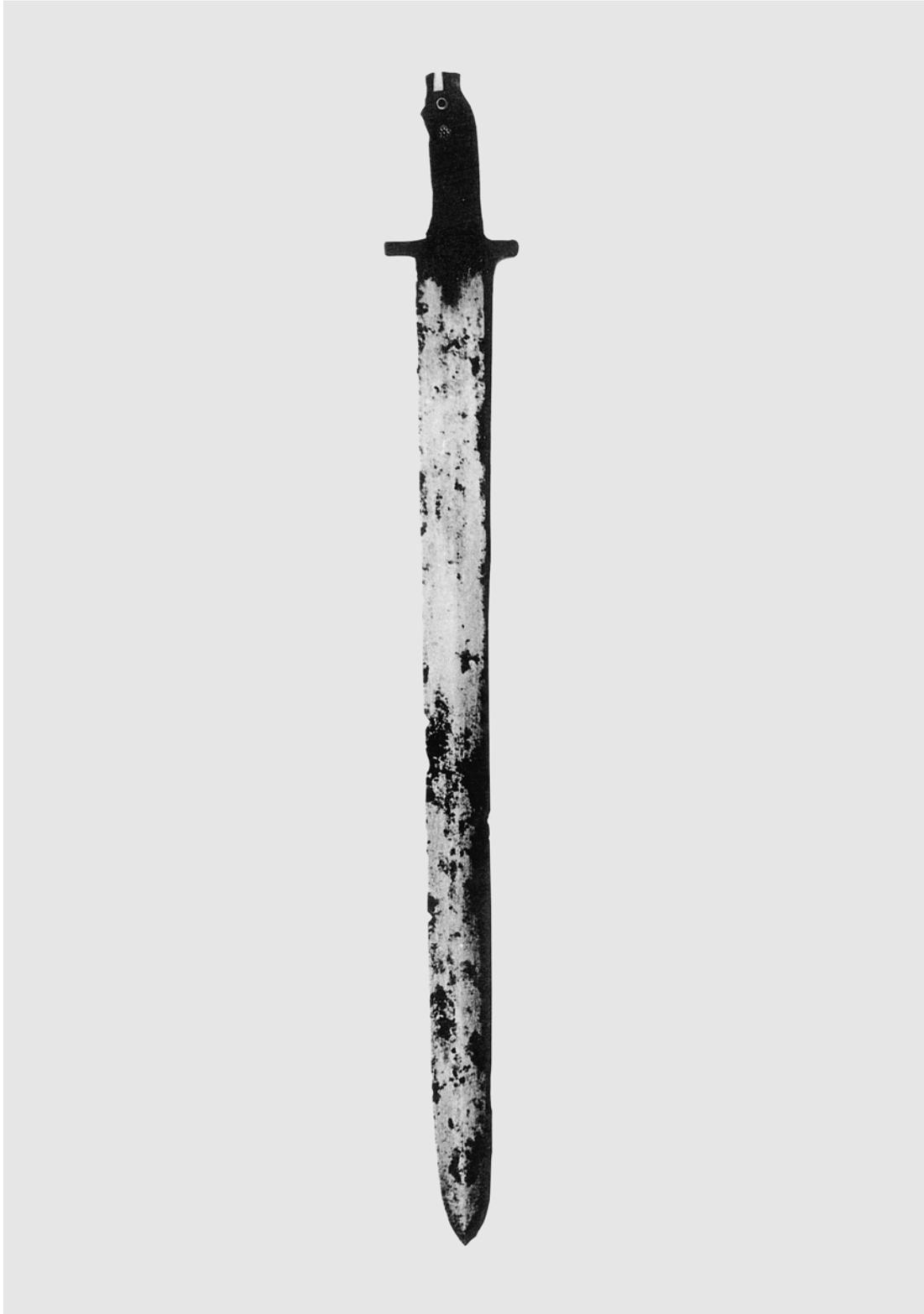
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CATALOGUE N° 14



CATALOGUE N° 15



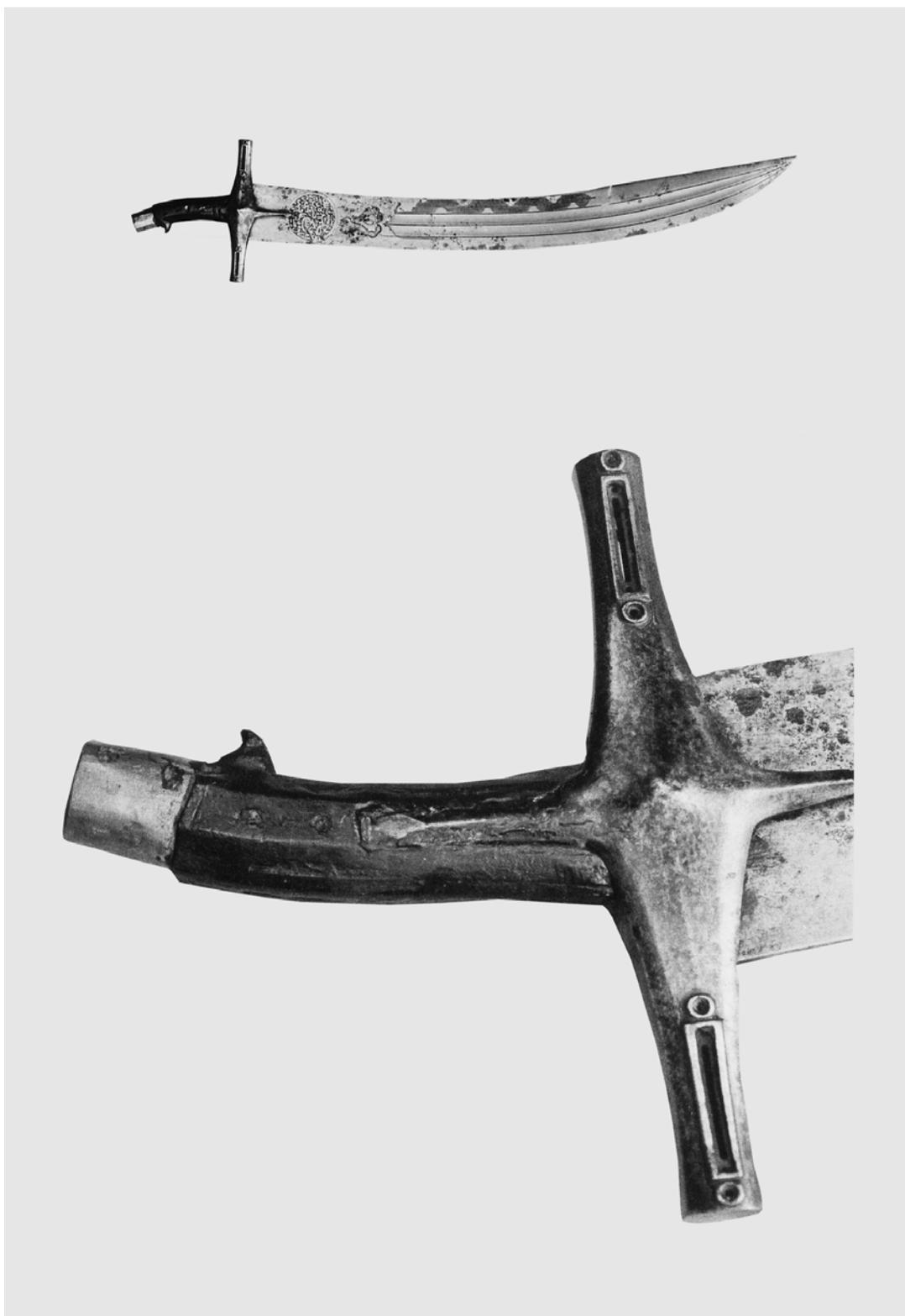
CATALOGUE N° 16



CATALOGUE N° 17



CATALOGUE N° 18



CATALOGUE N° 19



CATALOGUE N° 20



CATALOGUE N° 21



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