

SCOTT REDFORD

HOW ISLAMIC IS IT? THE INNSBRUCK PLATE AND ITS SETTING

The Innsbruck plate, an enameled vessel now in the Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, Austria, has for years held an anomalous place as the only piece of enamelwork in accounts of the history of Islamic art.¹ Two inscriptions in Arabic script proclaim this Islamic allegiance, but its cloisonné enameling implies as strong a link to the Byzantine world,² and the plate's extensive decorative program displays a neutrality of imagery that could place it on either side. Although its place of manufacture has been disputed, the reading of its inscriptions proposed by the Swiss scholar Max van Berchem has not. This reading assigns the plate to the reign of an amir ruling in the first half of the twelfth century.³ Here we propose to review the evidence for that attribution and question some of the corollaries drawn from it over the years.

The plate is five centimeters high and some twenty-five centimeters in diameter. Its profile places it somewhere between a plate and a bowl. The foot, if restored, would give it a slightly higher profile. The handles are a later European addition. The body of the vessel is copper bronze, almost entirely covered inside and out with cloisonné-enamel decoration.⁴ The cloison dividers are also of base metal, and fairly thick when compared to those of works in gold, the favorite medium for cloisonné enameling from the medieval eastern Mediterranean region. Seven colors of enamel decorate the plate: dark red, yellow, white, turquoise, green, blue, and black. The remaining exposed metal was once gilded.

Decorative Program. The interior and exterior are similarly organized. An inscription runs around the rim. Below it, a middle zone is filled with six roundels positioned around a central circle. On the interior of the plate, this circle constitutes another enameled roundel; on the exterior it is blank and forms the interior of the foot. Between the center and surrounding roundels runs a band of stepped geometric ornament. Throughout the three zones spiral vegetal rinceaux; in their interstices perch colorful birds. On the interior (fig. 1), the central roundel contains a seated, crowned figure grasping two

crossed scepters with animals at their ends. On either side of him, rampant griffins twist back towards the bait. This image, not uncommon in medieval art, is usually referred to as the apotheosis of Alexander the Great.⁵ The six roundels in the intermediate zone alternate scenes of animal combat with frontally depicted birds. Clockwise from above the head of the figure in the central roundel are a peacock (fig. 2), a feline and a bovine creature in combat, an eagle grasping a snake, a winged horse fighting a lion-like creature, a peacock, and a winged horse and a lion-like animal in combat. Between these roundels, in the same order, palm trees flanked by birds and animals alternate with acrobats (fig. 3), a dancing lutanist, and a dancing girl.

The intermediate zone of the plate's exterior (fig. 4) consists of the same number of roundels. Two roundels with representations of humans — two embracing (or wrestling) figures and a man offering a cup to a seated lutanist — are located opposite each other. The remaining roundels contain, two each, depictions of eagles grasping animals (fig. 5) and a winged horse and animal in combat. In between the exterior roundels recurs a program of palm trees flanked by birds and animals alternating with human figures. These figures are a dancing flute player, a dancing lutanist (fig. 6), and a dancing turbaned figure (fig. 7).

Inscriptions. The interior inscription,⁶ in Arabic, is a list of titles, epithets, names, and genealogy of a ruler. The poor quality of this inscription seems to have discouraged scholarly attention since its initial (and admittedly provisional) deciphering early in this century by van Berchem. He attributes the titles, names, and genealogy to Amir Da'ud (r. 1114–42), ruler of Hisn Kayfa, an Artuqid principality on the Tigris River in northern Mesopotamia.

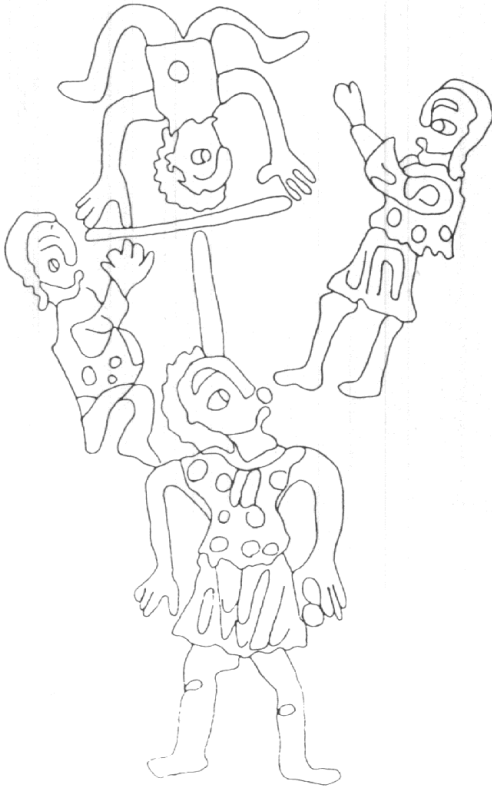
The exigencies of enameling alone cannot explain the poor quality of this inscription. The script is cursive, but the letters are so distorted that it is difficult to assign a particular cursive style to them. The inscription gives the appearance of being a reproduction of a hand-



1. Innsbruck plate, interior. (Photo: Courtesy Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck.)



2. Innsbruck plate, peacock.



3. Innsbruck plate, acrobats.

written copy in naskh by an artisan analphabetic in Arabic script, what the French scholar Sauvaget called “*neskhi informe*.” Van Berchem suggested a series of plausible readings for the majority of its words.

Van Berchem’s tentative readings of the Turkic names are the most doubtful because he had little comparative material to turn to. Each of the thousands of medieval Turkish military officers had several names, Turkish and Arabic (and often Persian), assumed and used at different times, and consequently almost never, all at once.⁷ The multiplicity and mutability of rulers and their names in this period caused Byzantine and Crusader chroniclers to confuse the names of even major rulers.⁸ As read by van Berchem, the plate’s interior inscription proceeds as follows:⁹

الأمير الإسفهلار الكبير المؤيد المنصور ناصر الدين ركن الدولة وصمصام الملّة وبها
الأمّة زعيم الجيوش تاج الملوك والسلاطين قاتل الكفرة والمشركين الب ساوغن (?)
سنقر بك أتا (?) سكمان داود (sic) بن ارتق سيف أمير المؤمنين.

“The amir, chief of armies (*al-isfahsalār*), the great, the fortified by God, the victorious, Nasir al-Din, Rukn al-Dawla, saber of the community, luster of the nation, leader of armies, crown of kings and sultans, slayer of infidels and polytheists, Alp Sawghan [??] Sunqur Bak Atā [?] Sukman Dawud [sic] son of Artuq, sword of the Commander of the Faithful.”

The titles listed are typical of the Artuqids, a minor medieval dynasty that governed territories now in southeastern Turkey.¹⁰ The Artuqids, founded by an amir serving under the Great Seljuq Sultan Alp Arslan in the Levant and eastern Anatolia, held various principalities around the northern Mesopotamian–eastern Anatolian cities of Amid (Diyarbakir), Mardin, Hisn Ziyad (Harpur), Mayyafariqin (Silvan), and Hisn Kayfa (Hasankeyf).¹¹ The titulature employed in the Innsbruck plate inscription follows the general order established in the twelfth century, after titles had proliferated as the caliphate declined in the tenth century.¹²

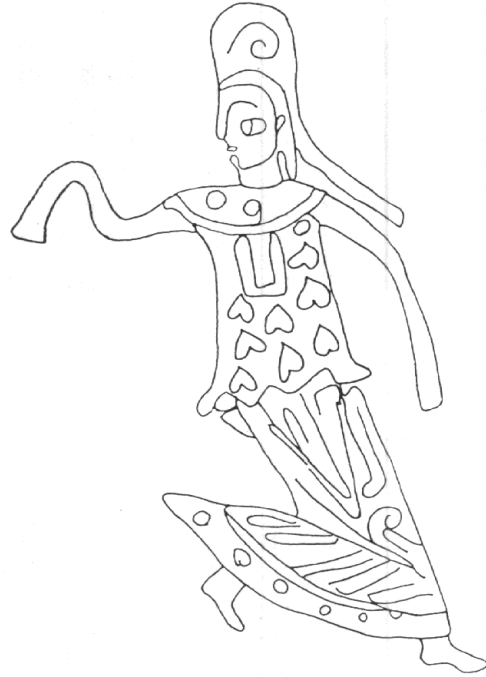
The first Turkic word, *alb* (*alp*), means “hero,” but it is also a medieval Turkic military title.¹³ It is followed by a word that Van Berchem read as the name Sāwghan, but that can be more plausibly read as Sāwinj (Sevinç). A medieval Turkic name, Sāwinj was the name of the brother of Artuq, eponymous founder of the dynasty and military commander for Alp Arslan.¹⁴ Another Sāwinj was Shams al-Din, Artuq’s grandson, son of Siyawush, who ruled the western border region of the



4. Innsbruck plate, exterior. (Photo: Courtesy Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck.)



5. Innsbruck plate, eagle grasping an animal.



7. Innsbruck plate, dancing turbaned figure.



6. Innsbruck plate, dancing lutanist.

Mardin branch of the Artuqids in the 1150's and early 1160's.¹⁵

In Artuqid inscriptions, the place held in the inscription on the plate by Sāwinj is taken by Īnānj (Inanç), translated by Sauvaget as “l'homme sûr.” If we take Sāwinj to be an epithet rather than a name, then the

translation would be “loving.” Although the form of the letters is generally similar, this word cannot be read as Īnānj.¹⁶

Sunqur means “falcon,” but it is also another common Turkic name.¹⁷ Then come two words, *bak* and *ata*, or roughly speaking “prince” and “father.” If we reverse the word order, the more familiar Atabak appears. Atabegs, the more common transcription of this title, which means guardian or regent, were almost without exception members of the same Turkic military class as the princes who were their charges. In Artuq's lifetime, the office of atabeg carried with it less of a suggestion of usurpation of authority than in the mid-twelfth century, when atabegates independent of the Great Seljuqs in Iran appeared in the Levant and northern Mesopotamia. It is these independent atabegs who are best known to the historical record; the development of the institution, an ancient Turkic one, and the origins of the term remain obscure.¹⁸

When we compare the placement of *bak* and *ata* on the plate with Artuqid inscriptions, another possibility presents itself. The common order of the inscriptions has *bak* following the preceding word, which, as we have seen with *sunqur* and *bayghu*, is either the name of a bird of prey or, more commonly, *kutlugh*, meaning “fortunate.” In Artuqid inscriptions, the subsequent name or

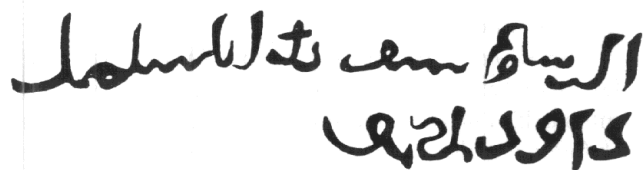
epithet is an Arabic construct that begins with the word *Abu*, Arabic for “father” (as in “Father of Conquest,” *Abu’l-Fath*). Often, this is spelled in the genitive, resulting in the form *Abī*.¹⁹ If this form is written without dots, the form of the letters can resemble that read by van Berchem as *ata*.

If we accept this argument on analogy, we are left, of course, without the second half of the construct. This does not totally rule out its possibility, however, for as we shall see below, arbitrary abbreviation of this kind is found in the genealogical section of the inscription that follows these Turkic names and titles.

Sukmān (*Sökmen*) is only one possible reading of the next word; *Salman* or *Sulayman* are two others. *Sukman* was *Artuq*’s son, and *Sulayman* his grandson, as was *Da’ud*, the name that follows. In order to arrive at his choice of *Amir Da’ud*, van Berchem had to reverse the ordering of *Da’ud* and the putative *Sukman*, and place between them an imaginary *bin*, or “son of” in order to give the genealogy historical credence.²⁰ The actual word order, then, reads *alb sāwīnj sunqur bak atā (abī?) suk mān [?] dawud bin artuq* (fig. 8).

If we agree that both the titulature and the legible name of *Artuq* at the end of the inscription point clearly to the *Artuqid* dynasty, the attribution of this vessel to the reign of one particular *Artuqid* ruler nevertheless seems impossible. Of the names listed and known from the historical record, *Sawīnj* was the name of *Artuq*’s brother and of his grandson; *Sukman* was the name of his son (or, if *Sulayman*, another grandson), and *Da’ud*, yet another grandson. Their juxtaposition on the plate makes no genealogical sense.

Shortening genealogies listed on inscriptions to fit them into the space allotted is not uncommon in medieval Islam.²¹ But the *Innsbruck* plate’s interior inscription does not abbreviate; it confuses. This garbling, taken together with the scrawl in which the inscription is executed, suggests foreign craftsmen, if not also, as van Berchem himself suggested, a place of manufacture foreign to *Artuqid* lands.²²

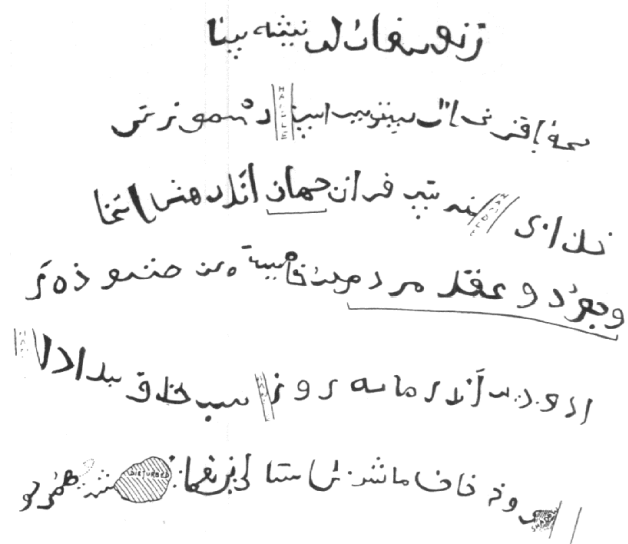


8. *Innsbruck* plate, *Artuqid* genealogy near the end of the interior inscription.

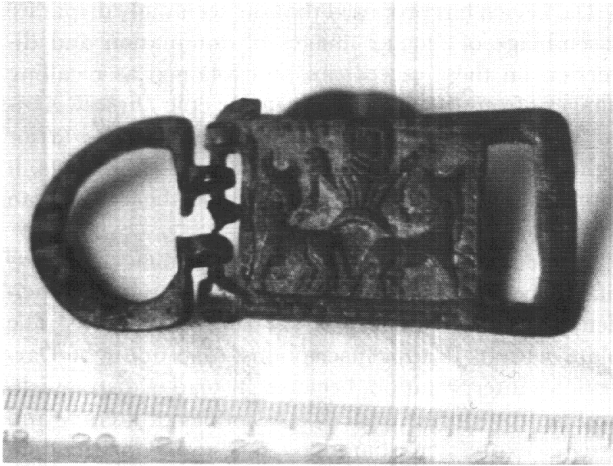
This conclusion is bolstered by an examination of the inscription running around the exterior rim of the plate (fig. 9). It appears to be in Persian, and, although a handful of words are legible, these mark it as perhaps a poetic text. The word *jehān* (world) is followed after three words (on the fourth line) by what appears to read *vojūd va ‘aql-i mardom*, roughly, “the existence and intellect of man.” Again, it is not the presence of an inscription in Persian, but the fact that it is unreadable, that makes this vessel exceptional.²³

Attribution. Despite numerous parallels to works of art from Norman Sicily²⁴ and the Islamic eastern Mediterranean (fig. 10),²⁵ both the imagery and organization of the *Innsbruck* plate are most akin to those on a group of medieval metal vessels that were found in central and southern Russia.

Russian scholars date the manufacture of these pieces sometime between the late eleventh and the early thirteenth century, and attribute them either to Constantinopolitan workshops or to the eastern provinces of Byzantium.²⁶ Three of these pieces furnish close parallels to the organization as well as the thematic content of the decorative program of the *Innsbruck* plate. In one (figs. 11–12), the outside of the bowl is decorated with raised roundels alternating with other figures; around the rim runs an inscription; and in the center of the bowl is a roundel containing a bust of *St. Theodore*. Although the imagery of the bowl somewhat resembles that on the



9. *Innsbruck* plate, exterior inscription.



10. Copper bronze buckle. Eastern Anatolia, 12th-13th century. The Sadberk Hanım Müzesi Büyükdere, İstanbul.



12. Silver bowl with St. Theodore, side view. The Hermitage, Leningrad.



13. Repoussé silver bowl, exterior, side view. Byzantine, 12th century. The Hermitage, Leningrad.



11. Silver bowl with St. Theodore, exterior bottom. The Hermitage, Leningrad.

Innsbruck plate in that it depicts griffins and eagles attacking snakes, that resemblance sharpens in its layout.

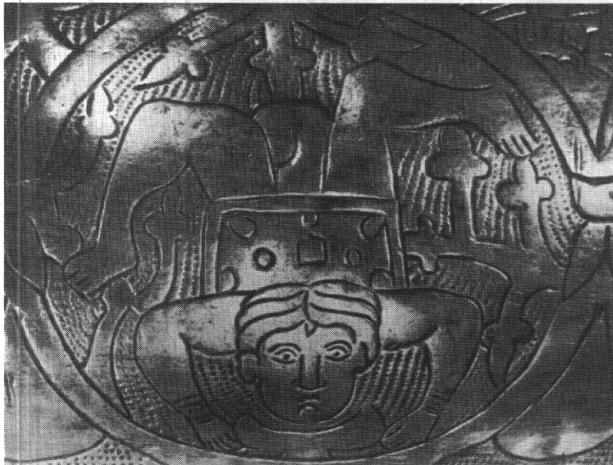
Two other metal objects, a bowl and a lid (figs. 13–14), also preserve a radial decorative scheme with scenes of dancing girls, lutanists, peacocks (fig. 15), eagles, acrobats (fig. 16) and griffins. The bowl even contains a scene depicting the ascension of Alexander.



14. Silver lid, exterior. Byzantine, 12th century. The Hermitage, Leningrad.



15. Silver lid, detail showing peacock. Byzantine, 12th century. The Hermitage, Leningrad.



16. Silver lid, detail showing acrobats. Byzantine, 12th century. The Hermitage, Leningrad.

This vessel is closely paralleled in format by another repoussé gold vessel attributed to late-tenth- or early-eleventh-century Georgia. Within an identical arcaded schema, the Virgin and Child are flanked by saints.²⁷

Darkevich has proposed that the seemingly disparate assemblage of secular images of domination and diversion on these pieces can be explained as recalling imagery from the middle-Byzantine epic *Digenis Akritas*, a series of tales about an Anatolian march warrior fighting the Muslims. As depicted on these objects, it represents Byzantine resurgence under the Comnenian dynasty.²⁸

While the coincidence of this figural imagery to textual tropes is indeed striking, even more so is its coincidence with the imagery of the Innsbruck plate. The plate, with its Islamic inscriptions, casts doubt on Darkevich's interpretation, because, instead of distinguishing foe from foe, it underscores modes of literary and artistic expression shared by medieval Christendom and Islam.

The imagery on the Innsbruck plate had wide currency in the medieval world, both Byzantine and Muslim. The interior inscription places the recipient of the plate in twelfth-century eastern Anatolia or northern Mesopotamia.

To locate the place of production of the plate more precisely, however, its technique of manufacture must be considered. We know that the technique of enameling was essentially foreign to Islamic lands, but Byzantium had developed this craft to a level superior to that of European centers. Although most Byzantine enamel production probably consisted of devotional objects, examples of a princely production have also survived. They were intended for export as gifts as well as for local use.²⁹ The treasury of San Marco contains several eleventh-century examples of domestic Byzantine production, including two small enameled medallions that depict the apotheosis of Alexander as well as his view of the earth from on high (figs. 17–18).³⁰ The crown of the Byzantine emperor Constantine Monomachos (r. 1042–53) is an example of a Byzantine export enamel, in this case most likely sent to a Hungarian princess.³¹ Its side panels contain depictions of dancing girls very similar in pose to the dancers found on the Innsbruck plate (fig. 19).³²

Enameled objects were part and parcel of the legendary repute in which Byzantine crafts were held in the medieval world, and their use as gifts formed an important part of the Byzantine foreign policy of rewarding allied rulers. Manufacturing enamels was difficult and time-consuming, and they were not handed out freely. Often the Byzantines even seem to have kept the best enamels for themselves, presenting works to their allies (the crown of Constantine Monomachos, for example)



17. Plaque depicting abbreviated apotheosis of Alexander the Great. Constantinople, 11th century. Treasury of San Marco, Venice.



18. Plaque depicting the world as seen by Alexander the Great. Constantinople, 11th century. Treasury of San Marco, Venice.

of restricted palette and less than delicate line.³³ Muslim as well as Christian rulers received Byzantine enamels as gifts, although what imagery they contained is uncertain. An Arabic text mentions the bestowing of enameled plates to the family of al-Mustansir (1036–94), the Fatimid caliph in Cairo: “And he told me that Michael [VI], King of Rum [Byzantium], sent the lady

mother of al-Imam al-Mustansir billah five plates full of jewelry with glass through them; deep red, brilliant white, dark black, pure blue, and turquoise of the best making, and the designs on it were done in the best of ways.”³⁴

Still, although they used enameled objects as gifts to the favored, and these might be of less than optimum quality, it seems most unlikely that the Byzantines would have sent a custom-made enamel plate to a minor Artuqid prince with whom they were not allied and by whom they were not threatened.

A more likely place of manufacture for the Innsbruck plate is available, however, and that place is Georgia, a kingdom hard by Artuqid realms and possessed of an enamel-working tradition. Georgia was for centuries either in, or on the fringes of the Islamic world; much of Georgia was ruled at various times by Muslim dynasties.³⁵ More germane to the Artuqid era, Georgia suffered mightily from the Turkic invasions of eastern Anatolia in the late eleventh century. During this period, Artuqid armies invaded Georgia, and Artuqid lands endured Georgian razzias.

In the early twelfth century, however, Georgia recouped its earlier losses at the hands of the Seljuqs and expanded into territories not ruled since the Muslim invasions. This renascent Georgian state went into eclipse just prior to the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, when Georgian armies were defeated by the Khwarazmians, themselves fleeing the Mongols, in 1225. V. Minorsky credits the Georgian expansion in the 1120’s into lands previously held by Muslims with sparking an increase of Muslim influence in many venues, including coinage.³⁶ Perhaps the most significant campaigns in Artuqid-Georgian history occurred in 1120–21, resulting in the defeat of the armies of the Artuqid ruler Il-Ghazi at the hands of the Georgian King David I. Given the names mentioned on its interior inscription, it is possible that the Innsbruck plate is a survivor of the embassies surrounding the intensification of Georgian-Artuqid contacts at this time. However, the similarities between the Innsbruck plate’s interior inscription and Artuqid inscriptions from later in the century, similarities of titulature as well as the cursive style of the inscriptions, argue against a date too early in the century.

Van Berchem realized that his reading of the inscription would make it the earliest cursive inscription known outside of Persia. Certainly it seems more likely to coincide in date with the earliest Artuqid inscriptions in cursive naskh, from 1157–58. The Hisn Ziyad-Har-



19. Side panels from the crown of Constantine Monomachos. Constantinople, mid-11th century. National Museum, Budapest.

put inscription dated 541 (1146–47) has a style characterized by Oral as “simplified Kufic, or put another way, an example transitional between Kufic and Naskh,”³⁷ but it bears little resemblance to the inscription of the Innsbruck plate. The plate inscription parallels more closely the inscription at the base of the dome of the Ulu Cami in Mayyafariqin/Silvan (552/1157–58) and the Amid/Diyarbakir inscriptions of Muhammad bin Qara Arslan (579/1183–84). All three stack letters and words and use an interlace background. Still, the quality of these inscriptions is far superior to those on the Innsbruck plate inscriptions, so the analogy is only of limited value.³⁸

Medieval Georgia possessed a hybrid culture, oriented toward Byzantium by virtue of its Orthodoxy, but partaking of many features of medieval Muslim culture due to its geography. In administrative terms, this

means that several of the Islamic titles found on the Innsbruck plate — *amir*, *isfahsalār*, and *atabak* — were also used in medieval Georgia.³⁹

The importance of metal vessels to Muslim court ceremony and activities is well known; ewers and basins were used for ablution, and monarchs and their courtiers ate and drank from fine plates, bowls, and cups. This significance is underscored by recorded incidents that show that rulers seem to have brought a full complement of vessels with them wherever they went, even while on campaign. To give one example, in 1237 Badr al-Din Lu’lu’, atabeg of Mosul, was defeated by Khwarzmian forces at Sinjar. According to one chronicler, so much booty was collected from this victory that metal basins, *ibriqs*, and pen cases were sold for a fraction of their value.⁴⁰

Likewise, when the Georgian king Georgi II (r. 1072–

89) was out on campaign, a similar calamity befell him: "Comme le roi Giorgi était, dans ce temps-là, au dehors de Qouel, il fût attaqué à l'improviste par un gros corps de Turks. . . . Les Turks . . . mirent en fuite le roi Giorgi, lui tuèrent beaucoup de monde, s'emparèrent d'une quantité d'armes et de vases d'or et d'argent, servant à la table des rois, de coupes précieuses de toutes formes et des tentes de tous les didébouls royaux."⁴¹ Although enameled vessels are not mentioned specifically in either of these accounts, objects such as the Innsbruck plate likely served in just such situations. Whether the so-called Oriental motifs found on the Innsbruck plate would derive from newly intensified relations with the Muslim world, as Minorsky might have it, or whether, as we have seen by examining a series of objects from Byzantium proper, the secular arts of Byzantium had absorbed influences as long ago as the Sasanian era, much of the imagery on the Innsbruck plate can be found paralleled in surviving pieces of medieval Georgian artistic production.

As with Byzantine ceramics, medieval Georgian sgraffiato pottery contained a wide range of imagery derived from textiles or other arts displaying traditional Middle Eastern motifs. Affinities between the designs of the Innsbruck plate and Georgian ceramics have been noted by Soucek.⁴² One well-known dish depicts a mordant lion *sans* prey (fig. 20). With the exception of the frontal depiction of the head, this animal is much like the lion-like creatures on the Innsbruck plate. The pose is the same, as are details such as the stylized band of

ribs and the compartmentalization of body parts.⁴³ Another more recently unearthed example, a Georgian sgraffiato bowl, bears the representation of a sleeve-dancer close in pose and attire to that of the Innsbruck plate (fig. 21). Armbands stripe the upper arms of both dancers' costumes, and both are wearing a kind of headcovering. In addition, the shorthand employed by both the potter and the enameled in depicting eyes, eyebrows, and nose is remarkably similar. The vegetal forms spiraling in the background also recall that of the Innsbruck plate.⁴⁴ This placement of figures in a setting of trilobed vegetation finds another ceramic parallel in a Georgian sgraffiato dish (fig. 22). This dish also contains dots between the scrollwork, as does the Innsbruck plate.⁴⁵

A Georgian textile attributed to the twelfth or thirteenth century has a design recalling both the profusion of imagery on the Innsbruck plate and certain of the images themselves. Its "design is composed of 'trees of life' in vertical succession, flanked by birds . . . large and small medallions in vertical succession, containing representations of the 'tree of life;' in the large medallions the tree is flanked by gryphons."⁴⁶ A Georgian manuscript dated 1188 also contains an image, that of an embracing couple, that recalls a similar scene on the exterior of the Innsbruck plate.⁴⁷ In addition, André Grabar mentions a twelfth-century silver vase from Transcaucasia depicting the apotheosis of Alexander.⁴⁸

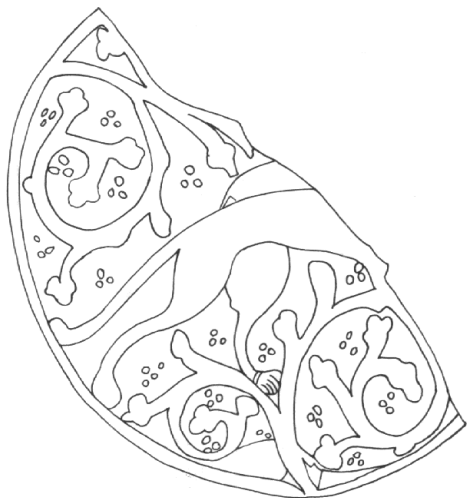
This evidence locates medieval Georgia within the same Byzantine-influenced princely cultural orbit as



20. Sgraffiato ceramic dish, interior, depicting lion. Georgia, 12th-13th century. State Museum of Georgia, Tbilisi.



21. Sgraffiato ceramic bowl, interior depicting sleeve dancer. Georgia, 12th-13th century.



22. Sgraffiato ceramic bowl, interior depicting hunting dog in foliage. Georgia, 12th-13th century. State Museum of Georgia, Tbilisi.

Norman Sicily and Russia; it does not definitively prove that the piece is Georgian. Instead, it is the inscription bearing Artuqid titulature and names that has led us to propose an mid-twelfth-century Georgian attribution for the piece. If we take a look at Georgian enamelwork from the medieval period, certain details of execution sustain this attribution.

First, it must be said that, as with Byzantine enamelwork, very few parallels with the secular imagery of the Innsbruck plate remain. However, what survives of Georgian enamel production, although dependent on Byzantine models, can be said to constitute a local style. One Georgian scholar's characterization of Georgian enamelwork is worth quoting extensively at this point. L. Khuskivadze notes:

La vivacité de l'image que les artistes géorgiens atteignent grâce à des procédés qu'ils utilisaient volontiers, notamment: les dimensions exagérées et expressives des mains, voire de l'oreille, l'assymetrie dans la structure du corps et de certains traits du visage (sourcils, bouche) et la chute — négligée, mais dynamique — des plis du vetement.

Nos compositions se distinguent par un caractère extrêmement libre d'interprétation, le refus de la symétrie, dure et austère par une perception des formes plus vivantes et plus plastiques ainsi que par une manière plus libre, bien qu'un peu rudimentaire, de la technique d'exécution. . . . Le coloris de ces compositions est également différent: sévère, formant un ensemble de tons apparentes dans les oeuvres byzantines, polychrome, vif et local, dans les géorgiennes.⁴⁹

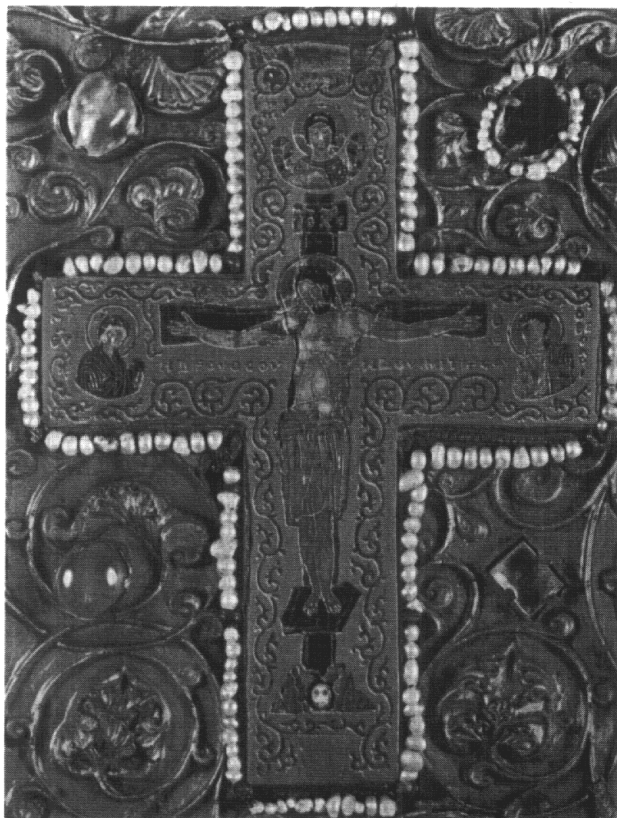
The Innsbruck plate possesses the same freedom of execution, bold colors, and coarseness of technique Khuskivadze describes. Most of the extant examples have religious iconography,⁵⁰ but distinct similarities with them of pose, costume, and patterning can be seen.

Almost all the examples use the same convention for depicting facial features found on the Innsbruck plate. This consists of a small amorphous blob for the mouth, and a single wire enclosing the eyebrow(s) and nose. Eyes are always shifted to one side. To give just one illustration, this convention can be found in a twelfth-century roundel depicting an archangel (fig. 23).⁵¹ Scrollwork around the halo of a twelfth-century icon from Gelathi recalls that of the central medallion of the Innsbruck plate, both in its use of a clumsily executed design based on the split palmette, and in details such as trilobed buds and dots sprinkled throughout the interlace. In addition, the scrollwork on the Innsbruck plate is closely paralleled by that surrounding an eleventh-century Georgian crucifixion scene (fig. 24).⁵²

The costume worn by St. Theodore in a twelfth-century medallion closely resembles those worn by the sleeve dancer, lutanists, and flute player on the Innsbruck plate. All wear garments with ivy-patterned cloth and have striped and/or spotted sleeves and a *maniakion*, or circular collar set with stones.⁵³ The ivy leaves al-



23. Enamel roundel depicting an archangel. Georgia, 12th century. Georgian National Museum of Fine Arts.



24. Enamel and gold crucifixion. Georgia, 11th century. Georgian National Museum of Fine Arts.



25. Enamel and gold crucifixion. Georgia, 12th century. Georgian National Museum of Fine Arts.

ternate with dots, and a band fringes the garments on all the examples.

Likewise, the Roman centurion depicted in a twelfth-century crucifixion scene wears a cloak with the same ivy pattern, and his tunic is edged with a dotted band. Moreover, the shield he holds in his left hand appears to bear a design of a central vegetal motif flanked by long-tailed birds remarkably similar to those found on the Innsbruck plate (fig. 25).⁵⁴ Also on this icon, the knees of the long-robed figures are indicated with a spiral in the drapery, a convention paralleled by the figures of the turbaned sleeve dancer, the lutanist, and the flute player on the Innsbruck plate (compare figs. 6 and 7).

Certain of the details cited above can also be found on Byzantine enamels, such as the crown of Constantine Monomachos. Georgian enamelwork clearly derived from Byzantine prototypes like this crown that were sent to Georgia as gifts, or acquired in other ways. Be that as it may, analysis of contemporaneous objects

similar in technique and iconography demonstrates that the Innsbruck plate was produced in Byzantium or in Georgia, a provincial enamel-working center closely allied with Byzantium. Added to this, the weight of historical circumstance and inscriptional content militate against Constantinople, and for Georgia, as the place of manufacture.

One controversy in Byzantine studies centers on the sources for Byzantine artistic models in the post-iconoclastic period, beginning with the so-called Macedonian renaissance. This debate primarily involves the classical heritage of Byzantium, with "orientalizing" and "classicizing" categories usually placed in opposition to each other.⁵⁵ Extrapolating from one of the lines of argument advanced in this debate, the Innsbruck plate could be seen as the provincial expression of an artistic trend beginning in the eleventh century and

characterized by an increased Byzantine reliance on an Islamic repertory of motifs.⁵⁶ It is also possible to view Byzantine secular artistic production as heavily influenced by Near Eastern sources from its inception,⁵⁷ a point of view supported by the surviving art of Georgia, which was heavily influenced by Iranian art long before Christianity, and itself was geographically intermediate between Caesar and Chosroes.⁵⁸ Still, Georgian religious enamels must be viewed as dependent on Byzantine models, and so, by virtue of its technique of manufacture, must the Innsbruck plate. This parentage is clear, whatever the ultimate sources of its imagery may be.⁵⁹

Therefore, the images on the Innsbruck plate and its enamel technique place it in the cultural orbit of Byzantium in the twelfth century. Its evident reliance on prototypes carrying Byzantine princely themes makes it hard to accept that an avatar of the Innsbruck plate would itself have derived from an Islamic prototype, or even from Islamic luxury products recently introduced into the Byzantine artistic vocabulary. Products of eleventh-century Constantinopolitan workshops like the Alexander reliefs now in San Marco and Hagia Sophia,⁶⁰ the Crown of Constantine Monomachos, and the plaques in Venice all argue for a tradition of Orientalizing secular princely imagery anterior to the eleventh century, one to which the mid-twelfth-century Innsbruck plate belongs.

For many years the inscriptions on the Innsbruck plate have sufficed for an Islamic attribution. *Mutatis mutandis*, the imagery, too, can be found in Islamic contexts, but elements of pose and dress, not to mention technique, clearly separate this piece from Islamic objects with similar iconography. The heretofore unanimous attribution of the Innsbruck plate raises questions of cultural identification — more specifically the role played by Arabic script in “Islamicizing” an object — not only of the Muslims themselves, or of twentieth-century scholars, but also of medieval makers of objects destined for prestigious settings.⁶¹

This was an era when Islamic artistic production was in the ascendant, and Byzantine works from buildings to textiles to vessels — be they glass, metal, or ceramic — carried pseudo-Kufic “inscriptions.”⁶² With the Innsbruck plate, confusion seems to have resulted when this particular exercise — that of endowing a luxury object with prestige by giving it bands of Arabic script — proved, upon examination, to contain not scrawled doggerel, as do many twelfth- and thirteenth-century Persian tiles,⁶³ or the repetition of more-or-less degener-

ated versions of rote words or formulae,⁶⁴ or Arabic pseudoepigraphy, as do a wide variety of works both Islamic and Byzantine, but rather one quasi-historical inscription. That inscription proved legible enough to yield a few names, one of which possibly links an actual historical person with a more-or-less dated reign. This tenuous connection to historical “facts,” instead of being evaluated together with the decoration of the plate, has been accepted at face value, and this has slighted other kinds of information, not only the significance of the plate’s technique of manufacture, but also stylistic points such as way the figures are dressed.

The student of the Innsbruck plate is fortunate to have inscriptions with which to work; they aid considerably in localizing its place of production. Not so lucky are those who study the wide range of portable luxury artifacts bearing similar subject matter, a few examples of which have already been mentioned. These objects, found from Spain to Egypt and from Sicily to Russia, depict variants of a rather ill-defined “princely cycle” of imagery. Given the widespread assumption of this decorative *koine* in the medieval world of Europe and the Mediterranean basin, it has proved difficult to attribute many of these objects, let alone propose specific meanings for their imagery.

Despite a general lack of inscriptions like those on the Innsbruck plate, it is to be hoped that in the future, historians of Byzantine and European medieval art will not categorize objects bearing imagery of this sort as “Oriental” and consequently eccentric. Similarly, historians of Islamic art can learn much from the same class of object, usually called “Islamic” only when, like the Innsbruck plate, it possesses Arabic script in some shape or form.

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NOTES

1. F. R. Martin and Friedrich Sarre, *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst in München, 1910* (Munich, 1912), vol. 2, pl. 159; G. Migon, *Manuel d'art musulman* (Paris, 1927), vol. 2, pp. 20–22; Maurice Dimand, *A Handbook of Mohammedan Decorative Arts* (New York, 1930), p. 105; Janine Sourdel-Thomine and Berthold Spuler, *Die Kunst des Islam* (Berlin, 1973), pp. 503–4; *The Arts of Islam* (London, 1976), p. 201; Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650–1250* (Harmondsworth, England, 1987), p. 362, fig. 384, to cite six of the most prominent surveys of Islamic art. In all of the above, the Innsbruck plate is the only major work of enamel discussed. I would

- like to thank the following for advice and assistance: Julia Bailey, Walter Denny, Oleg Grabar, Nuha Khoury, Hazem Sayed, and Sinasi Tekin.
2. Medieval European enamelwork mixed cloisonné and champlevé techniques; Byzantine artisans used only the first and developed it to a much higher level than the Europeans. See Klaus Wessel, "Email," *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst* (Stuttgart, 1967), vol. 2, pp. 94–129, for an introduction to this topic. Islamic artisans seem never to have developed enamelwork beyond small-scale plaques and jewelry; see Marvin Ross, "An Egypto-Arabic Cloisonné Enamel," *Ars Islamica* 7 (1940): 165–67, also Hugo Buchthal, "A Note on Islamic Enamelled Metalwork and Its Influence in the Latin West," *Ars Islamica* 11–12 (1946): 195–98.
 3. Max van Berchem and Josef Strzygowski, *Amida* (Heidelberg, 1910), pp. 121–28, for van Berchem's epigraphic analysis; pp. 348–54 for Strzygowski's iconographic analysis. All published accounts of the Innsbruck plate rely on van Berchem's reading of the interior inscription.
 4. For examples of Byzantine enameling on a copper ground, see M. Bárány-Oberschall, *The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos* (Budapest, 1937), p. 77.
 5. Van Berchem and Strzygowski, *Amida*, pp. 350–52, for a discussion of this scene in medieval art. See also C. Settis-Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri Elevati per Griphos ad Arem: Origine, Iconografia e Fortuna di un Tema* (Rome, 1973), pp. 174–78. For further examples of this imagery, see Hans Belting, "Eine Gruppe konstantinopler Reliefs aus dem 11. Jahrhundert," *Pantheon* 30 (1972): 267–68.
 6. All figures accompanying the next two sections are inked tracings taken from close-up photographs of the Innsbruck plate inscriptions.
 7. N. Elisséeff, "La titulature de Nur ad-Din d'après ses inscriptions," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 14 (1952–54): 155–166 ff. for the ordering of medieval Islamic titulature as well as the meaning and frequency of individual titles and phrases.
 8. C. Cahen notes the confusion of Muslim names and titles by Anna Comnena and the author of the *Chanson d'Antioche*; see *La Syrie du Nord* (Paris, 1940), p. 254, n. 12.
 9. E. Combe, J. Sauvaget, and G. Wiet, eds., *Repertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (henceforth *RCEA*), (Cairo, 1937), vol. 9, no. 3122; van Berchem, *Amida*, no. 40.
 10. The succession of titles found on the interior inscription duplicates that of Artuqid inscriptions (all of which, interestingly enough, date after the end of the reign of Amir Da'ud), but none reproduces the exact titulature found on the Innsbruck plate. See, e.g., an inscription of Fakhr al-Din Qara Arslan from the Friday mosque at Hisn Ziyad (Harput/Elaziğ) dated 541 (1146–47), an inscription of Najm al-Din Alpi on the tower flanking the east gate of Mayyafariqin (Silvan) from 561 (1165–66), and an inscription of Muhammad, son of Qara Arslan above the Urfa Gate into the city of Diyarbakir from 579 (1183–84); see *RCEA* vol. 9, nos. 3271, 3272, and 3383 respectively; also J. Sauvaget, "Inscriptions arabes," in A. Gabriel, *Voyages archéologiques dans la Turquie orientale* (Paris, 1940) vol. 1, nos. 142, 113, and 66. However, for a summary of the debate surrounding the date of the Friday mosque inscription in Harput, see A. Altun, *Anadolu'da Artuklu Devri Türk Mimarisinin Gelişmesi* (Istanbul, 1978), pp. 29–30. This paper subscribes to the earlier date of 541 (1146–47) proposed by M. Zeki Oral in "Harput Ulu Cami Duvarındaki Vergi Kitabesi," *VI Türk Tarih Kongresi Tebliğler* (Ankara, 1967), pp. 140–45.
 11. For an introduction to the Artuqids, see C. Cahen, "Artukids," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d. ed. (Leiden, 1960), pp. 662–67, and C. Hillenbrand, "The History of the Jazīra, 1100–1250: A Short Introduction," in J. Raby, ed., *The Art of Syria and the Jazīra 1100–1250* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 9–19.
 12. Elisséeff, "La titulature de Nur ad-Din," p. 156, also van Berchem, *Amida*, pp. 76–77. The general order for twelfth-century inscriptions runs as follows: first the title, then epithets, then surnames ending in *al-dunyā* and *al-dīn* followed by Arabic titles, then Persian and Turkish titles, then a *kunya* and proper names, followed by a genealogy and then a title ending in *amir al-mu'minin*. The inscription in Hisn Ziyad/Harput comes closest in actual titulature to the interior inscription on the Innsbruck plate. Both employ the sequences *al-amir al-isfahsalār al-kabīr*, *al-mu'ayyad al-manšūr*, and *qātil al-kafara wa'l-mushrikīn*.
 13. M. F. Köprülü, "Alp," *Islam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1940), pp. 379–84. The use of *alp* to begin a series of Turkic words is duplicated in several Artuqid inscriptions. See, e.g., *RCEA*, vol. 9, no. 3272; and Sauvaget, "Inscriptions arabes," no. 123, from 552 (1157–58). For the dating of this inscription, see A. Gabriel, *Voyages dans la Turquie orientale* (Paris, 1940), vol. 1, p. 226. Arabic orthography is inimical to vowel-rich Turkic words. In addition, Turkic names were often spelled several different ways by medieval Arab chroniclers. In this section the Arabic transcription is given, followed by the modern Turkish spelling.
 14. E. de Zambaur, *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de l'Islam* (Hanover, 1927), p. 230. Van Berchem's suggestion of Alp Sāwghan, or "valiant steed," is implausible on two counts. The first is the common use of *alp* as a military title, the second and more serious objection is to the use of a kind of horse as a Turkic name; this is practically unknown. The name Sāwinj is also spelled Sawinj in Arabic sources.
 15. Carol Hillenbrand, "The Establishment of Artuqid Power in the Diyār Bakr in the Twelfth Century," *Studia Islamica*, 54 (1981): 154; C. Cahen, "Le Diyār Bakr au temps des premiers Urtukides," *Journal Asiatique* 227 (1935): 254, n. 1.
 16. For inscriptions with the word order *alb mānīj*, see *RCEA*, vol. 9, no. 3272 and Sauvaget, "Inscriptions arabes," no. 123, Mayyafariqin, Najm al-Din Alpi, 552 (1157–58).
 17. In one Artuqid inscription, the word *bayghu*, also meaning "falcon," is found at this point: *RCEA*, vol. 9, no. 3383, Diyarbakir, Muhammad bin Qara Arslan, 579 (1183–84), and Sauvaget, "Inscriptions arabes," no. 67, also from Diyarbakir and the reign of Muhammad bin Qara Arslan.
 18. C. Cahen, "Atabak," *EF*, pp. 731–32, and M. F. Köprülü, "Ata," *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1, pp. 711–18. If however, the word is read as *ata* and considered as a title in and of itself, we are left without an explanation. The only other example of *ata* used by itself, an inscription on a box belonging to the atabeg of Mosul in the early to mid-thirteenth century, Badr al-Din Lu'lu', has been deemed a solecism; see D. S. Rice, "The Brasses of Badr al-Din Lu'lu'," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1950): 628–29.
 19. *RCEA*, vol. 9, no. 3383 (Abi'l-Fath) and no. 3573 (Abi'l-Thana') from Diyarbakir, 600 (1203–4), and Sauvaget, "Inscriptions arabes," no. 67 (Abi'l-Fath from Diyarbakir between 562 (1166–67) and 581 (1185–86), and no. 123 (Abi'l-Muzaffar from the Great Mosque at Mayyafariqin and 552 (1157–58)).
 20. Van Berchem and Strzygowski, *Amida*, p. 123.
 21. To give one example from the Artuqid era, an inscription from Diyarbakir dated 595 (1198–99) omits the great-grandfather and

- namesake of Sukman II from his genealogy (see van Berchem, *Amida*, p. 87).
22. Van Berchem, *Amida*, p. 125. By the cursive style of the writing as well as other epigraphic difficulties, van Berchem was led "à chercher l'origine de la coupe d'Innsbruck en dehors de la Mesopotamie et vers l'est ou le nord, plutôt que vers l'ouest ou le sud, c'est à dire vers la Perse ou l'Asie centrale."
 23. It is reproduced here in hopes that someone can eventually decipher it.
 24. Two Norman buildings in Sicily, the Cappella Palatina in Palermo (ca. 1143) and the cathedral of Cefalù (ca. 1140), contain imagery strikingly similar to that on the Innsbruck plate. Paintings on the famous muqarnas ceiling of the Cappella Palatina depict scenes including a turbaned dancer with long sleeves, a lutanist, a peacock, scenes of birds and animals fighting, embracing or wrestling figures, and paired figures, one seated and one standing. Painted beams from the cathedral of Cefalù depict animals and birds in combat and scenes of courtly pleasure. In both cases, the organization of the scenes is similar to that of the Innsbruck plate, with scenes of animal combat alternating with those of human disport. See F. Gabrieli and U. Scerrato, *Gli Arabi in Italia* (Milan, 1979), plates 68, 71, 72, and 82 for the Cappella Palatina, plates 238–41 for the cathedral at Cefalù.

Two other products of medieval Sicily are also worth mentioning. Both are boxes: one is wooden and inlaid with bone; the other is painted ivory. The first, found in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and dated to the thirteenth century, contains panels in which scenes of animals and birds fighting are found in roundels formed by spirals of a repeating vine pattern. The second, attributed to eleventh- or twelfth-century Sicily, has an upper register with roundels containing birds fighting and peacocks alternating with animals. Below this, the space is divided into an arcade in which a seated, cross-legged king is surrounded by courtiers and musicians, including a dancing flute player. For these boxes, see R. Pinder-Wilson, "The Reliquary of St. Petroc and the Ivories of Norman Sicily," in idem, *Studies in Islamic Art* (London, 1985), pp. 234–35, 184–85; also, H. Glück and E. Diez, *Die Kunst des Islam* (Berlin, 1925), pl. 37, p. 592; and A. Terzi, M. Amari, et al., *La Cappella di S. Pietro nella Reggia di Palermo* (Palermo, 1889), pl. 65–66.
 25. Two pieces from twelfth- or thirteenth-century Anatolia bear representations similar to the central roundel of the Innsbruck plate. The first is a vessel published by Eva Baer, "A Brass Vessel from the Tomb of Sayyid Baṭṭāl Ghāzī," *Artibus Asiae* 39 (1977): 323–24 and figs. 4 and 7. The second is a copper-bronze belt buckle located in the Sadberk Hanim Müzesi, Büyükdere, Istanbul, Turkey. I am grateful to Sevgi Gönül and Fulya Bodur of the Sadberk Hanim Müzesi for permission to publish it here in figure 10. In addition, a wooden beam from a Fatimid palace in Cairo preserves scenes of acrobats, dancers, and wrestlers close in pose to those found on the Innsbruck plate. See Richard Ettinghausen, "Early Realism in Islamic Art," *Studi Orientalistici in Onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida* (Rome, 1956), p. 1, fig. 7.
 26. V. Darkevich, *Svetskoe Iskusstvo Vizantii* (Moscow, 1975), 321–25, favors the former explanation; A. Bank, "Monuments des arts mineurs de Byzance au Musée de l'Hermitage," *IX Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina* (Ravenna, 1962), pp. 128, 131, noting a preponderance of so-called Oriental motifs, favors the latter.
 27. R. Mepisashvili and V. Tsintsadze, *The Arts of Ancient Georgia* (New York, 1979), p. 260.
 28. Darkevich, *Svetskoe Iskusstvo Vizantii*, pp. 321–25.
 29. For the place of enamelwork in non-religious aspects of the Byzantine court, see J. Ebersolt, *Les arts somptuaires de Byzance* (Paris, 1923), pp. 69 ff.
 30. W. Volbach and H. Hahnloser, eds., *Il tesoro di San Marco* (Florence, 1965), nos. 148–52. Klaus Wessel, *Die byzantinische Emailkunst* (Recklinghausen, 1967), p. 114, attributes them to the mid eleventh century. See Bárány-Oberschall, *Crown of Constantine Monomachos*, pp. 77–78, for parallels to the griffins on that medallion depicting the abbreviated apotheosis of Alexander. André Grabar, "Le succès des arts orientaux à la cour byzantine sous les Macédoniens," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenen Kunst*, 2 (1951): 47–48, supplies textual evidence linking the dragon-encircled tree with stories of Alexander.
 31. K. Wessel, *Byzantinische Emailkunst*, pp. 98–106.
 32. Bárány-Oberschall, *Crown of Constantine Monomachos*, 75–76, for the use of dancing girls as Byzantine royal iconography.
 33. Wessel, *Byzantinische Emailkunst*, pp. 117–18, also notes the Byzantine export of a second-level plaque to the Georgian monarch Georgi II which commemorated the crowning of Michael VII Ducas (r. 1072–78) and depicts him together with his Georgian wife Maria.
 34. al-Qadi ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-Dhakhā'ir wa'l-Tuhaf* (Kuwait, 1959), p. 81.
 35. For Georgia and its relations with Islamic lands, see V. Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History* (London, 1953), and M. Lordkipanidze, *Georgia in the XI-XII Centuries* (Tbilisi, 1987).
 36. V. Minorsky, "Caucasia in the History of Mayyāfāriqīn," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1949): 31, claims that the key event in this expansion was the capture of Tbilisi in 1122 and the transfer of the capital there, after which Georgian coins lose links with Byzantine prototypes and incorporate Arabic titles. Certainly the expansion of Georgian power at the expense of neighboring Islamic states is partially responsible for this shift, but Byzantine temporal influence must have been weakening ever since the collapse of Byzantium as a power in eastern Anatolia after 1071.
 37. Oral, "Harput Ulu Cami," p. 141.
 38. See above nn. 10 and 13 for these inscriptions. Van Berchem, *Amida*, p. 125, let the existence of earlier cursive inscriptions from Persia influence his attribution of the piece; see n. 22 above.
 39. Lordkipanidze, *Georgia in the XI-XII centuries*, pp. 162–63, 178.
 40. Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzi, *Mir'āt al-Zamān fī Tarīkh al-A'yan* (Hyderabad, 1951), p. 704.
 41. M. Brosset, *Histoire de la Georgie* (St. Petersburg, 1849), vol. 1, p. 346. A *didebul* was a Georgian nobleman.
 42. C. Bornstein and Priscilla Soucek, *The Meeting of Two Worlds: The Crusades and the Mediterranean Context* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1981), pp. 34–35.
 43. Mepisashvili and Tsintsadze, *Ancient Georgia*, p. 295. This piece was found in Kaspi and has been dated to the 12th–13th century.
 44. R. Ramishvili and V. Dzhorbenadze, "Zhival'skaia Ekspedit-sia," *Polevye Arkheologicheskie Issledovaniia V 1979 Godu*, pl. 79, no. 1.
 45. V. Dzhaparidze, *Keramikuli c'armoeba XI-XIII ss. Sak'art'veloshi (ark'eologiuri masalebis mikhedvit)* (Tbilisi, 1956), pl. 45, no. 1.
 46. M. Ketskovieli, "Medieval Georgian Ornamental Fabrics from Upper Svaneti," *Second International Symposium on Georgian Art* (Tbilisi, 1977), p. 4.
 47. D. S. Rice, "Inlaid Brasses from the Workshop of Ahmad al-Dhaki al-Mawsili," *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957), figs. 33 f. Rice calls these figures dancers.

48. A. Grabar, "Succès des arts orientaux," n. 15. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate any other reference to, or illustration of, this piece.
49. L. Khuskivadze, "Émaux cloisonnés géorgiens," *Second International Symposium on Georgian Art* (Tbilisi, 1977), pp. 8–9.
50. S. Amiranashvili, *Medieval Georgian Enamels of Russia* (New York, n.d.), for Georgian accomplishments in medieval religious enamelwork.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
52. A. Dshawachischwili and G. Abramischwili, *Goldschmiedekunst und Toreutik in den Museen georgiens* (Leningrad, 1986), no. 179; Amiranashvili, *Georgian Enamels*, p. 115.
53. Dshawachischwili and Abramischwili, *Goldschmiedekunst*, no. 197.
54. Amiranashvili, *Georgian Enamels*, p. 55.
55. The place of Oriental elements in Byzantine art and architecture is a major one, and as such has been addressed by many scholars. One key article, however, continues to be A. Grabar's "Succès des arts orientaux," cited above. For a more recent discussion, see I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "The Cup of San Marco and the 'Classical' in Byzantium," in *Studien zur mittelalterlichen Kunst 800–1250: Festschrift für Florentine Mutherich* (Munich, 1985), pp. 167–73.
56. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Cup of San Marco," p. 172.
57. See the debate summarized by M. Aga-Oglu in "Is the Ewer of Saint Maurice d'Agaune a Work of Sassanian Iran?," *Art Bulletin* 28 (1946): 160–70.
58. One scholar of Persian art claims that the Georgians and other inhabitants of the Caucasus mountains were the first to monumentalize the Sasanian artistic repertoire and apply it to architecture; see R. Ghirshman, *Persian Art: The Parthian and Sassanian Dynasties* (New York, 1962), pp. 298–300.
59. A similar scholarly battle was fought for the sources of the imagery on the early-tenth-century palace chapel of King Gagik on Akhtamar Island in Lake Van in eastern Turkey. Despite almost contemporary Fatimid and Abbasid parallels, Sirarpie Der Nersessian argued for the non-Islamic origin of the imagery, basing her reasoning on Sasanian precedent combined with a somewhat nebulous quality of "naturalism"; see *Aght'amar: Church of the Holy Cross* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), pp. 34–35.
60. Belting, "Eine Gruppe Konstantinopler Reliefs," A. Erder, "Ayasofya Diş Nartex'indeki İki Kabartma Levha," *Aya Sofya Müzesi Yıllığı* 3 (1961), p. 29, fig. 1.
61. For Islamic contexts, the issue of inscriptional validation of an object has been discussed by Richard Ettinghausen in "Arabic Epigraphy: Communication or Symbolic Affirmation," in D. Kouymjian, ed., *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles* (Beirut, 1974), pp. 297–317.
62. Cf. George Miles, "Classification of Islamic Elements in Byzantine Architectural Ornament in Greece," *Actes du XIIe Congrès international des études byzantines* (Belgrade, 1964), vol. 3, pp. 281–87. On page 282, Miles notes that the earliest known Byzantine imitations of cursive (as opposed to Kufic) Arabic script date only to the thirteenth century. See also the bibliography given in Antony Cutler, "The Mythological Bowl in the Treasury of San Marco at Venice," in D. Kouymjian, ed., *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History*, pp. 235–54.
63. Oliver Watson, *Persian Lustre Ware* (London, 1985), p. 151: "Some hundreds of the quatrains have been read, and they share a common subject matter — the agonies of love — and, in general, a low level of literary accomplishment." Watson goes on to note that some of these verses were composed by the artisans themselves. If ever deciphered, of course, the inscription on the outside of the Innsbruck plate may prove to be of this ilk.
64. For instance, the use of "wa Allāh," on twelfth- and thirteenth-century Syrian ceramics. See, e.g., Ernest Grube, *Islamic Pottery of the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century in the Keir Collection* (London, 1976), p. 270, no. 217.