

ISTITUTO ITALIANO PER L'AFRICA E L'ORIENTE
CENTRO SCAVI E RICERCHE ARCHEOLOGICHE
IRANIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TOURISM
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI ROMA "LA SAPIENZA"
DIPARTIMENTO DI STUDI ORIENTALI

DARYOOSH AKBARZADEH, CARLO G. CERETI
FABRIZIO SINISI

**GLYPTIC ANTIQUITIES FROM THE MUSEUM
OF KHOY, WESTERN AZERBAIJAN, IRAN**

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3. ISLAMIC OBJECTS

by Roberta Giunta

The collection kept in the Museum of Khoy contains six Islamic objects in moulded unglazed earthenware (Nos. 4, 9, 65, 68, 123, 145). In addition, the back of a Sasanid bulla (Nos. 66/67) features an Arabic inscription in cursive script, within a linear frame outlined by a sequence of small dots.

Objects Nos. 4 and 9 are circular jug lids (diam. max. 71.3 and 58.6 mm) coming from Iraq or Iran, datable to a period between the 11th and the 13th centuries.

Lid No. 4, provided with a hole allowing the passage in the handle, shows an elaborated decoration covering the entire external surface. A quadruped with long horns and facing left stands out in the centre. The animal has a double dotted collar and the body is decorated with narrow vertical incised bands, each further adorned with a row of small dots. A palmette, hanging from the mouth of the quadruped, runs along the left and low sides of the lid. A sequence of holed pearls, decorated at the centre by a big dot, partially adorns half of the upper margin. Four specimens — very similar to these ones with regard to shape and decoration (though bigger since their diameter oscillates between 7.2 and 7.8 cm), equally from Iraq or Iran and dated between the 11th and the 13th century — are kept at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris (inv. Nos. AI86-07/2, AI94-09/09-11; Jeanne Moulhierac, ed., *Céramiques du monde musulman*, Paris 1999, p. 23 with ill.). About ten other holed lids (diam. 5.5-11 cm) in moulded unglazed earthenware with vegetal and geometric decoration, coming from Samarkand and dated between the 9th and the 10th centuries, are located at the Arkheologicheskij fond Gosudarstvennogo muzeja istorii kul'tury i iskusstva narodov Uzbekistana at Samarkand (inv. Nos. A-555-1, A-408-7, A-38-21, 20, 10, 9, 8, 1; G.V.

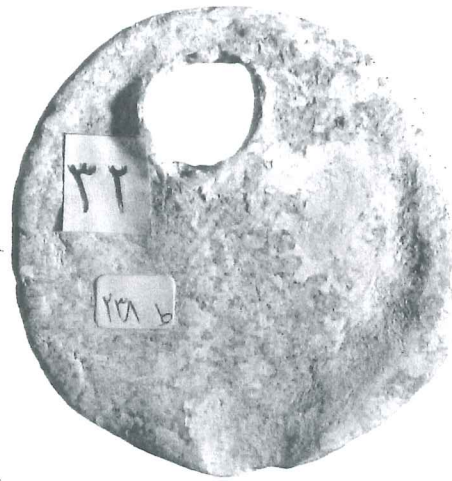
Shishkina & L.V. Pavchinskaja, *Terres secrètes de Samarcande. Céramiques du VIII^e au XIII^e siècle*, Paris-Caen-Toulouse 1992, Cat. Nos. 78, 79, with ill. p. 61).

Lid No. 9, with no hole, is convex on both sides, with the only exception of a small area of the rim. An elaborated decoration is moulded on the two sides: two quadrupeds with long horns are set back to back on the two sides of a tree of life, against a background of vegetal elements. The lids of jugs or ewers, convex and not provided with a hole, seem to be equally distributed in some Islamic pottery production (see O. Watson, *Ceramics from Islamic Lands*, The al-Sabah Collection, London 2004, p. 152).

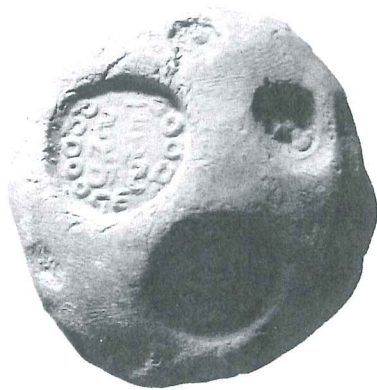
The remaining four objects (Nos. 65, 68, 123, 145), which compared to the two mentioned above are similarly round but with a smaller diameter (diam. max. 26.4 mm), show a flat surface and a relief border on one only of the two sides. Each exemplar features an Arabic inscription in Kufic script, composed of two or three words and divided in two or three horizontal lines. In no case was it possible to propound a deciphering of the texts; the latter on exemplar No. 65 and No. 68 are absolutely identical. The form and dimension of the objects allow to advance the hypothesis that they are tokens, quite unusual objects in Islamic contexts, produced by merchants or money changers to provide change for small purchases. Worthy of attention is, however, the recent discovery of a hoard of small tokens (diam. about 10-14 mm) which includes a number of different types, featuring various Islamic inscriptions (all of them still to be deciphered), produced in the Persian Gulf area around 11th-12th centuries (see <http://www.joelscoins.com/mideast.htm>).



No. 4
Diam. max. 71.3×69.1mm
Holed lid of jug
Moulded unglazed earthenware



Iran or Iraq, 11th-13th cent.
Decoration in relief on one side:
a) horned quadruped to l. with vegetal element hanging from the mouth



No. 5 (= MOT 22?) (1)
Diam. max. 52.3mm
Bulla with 7 impressions:
a) administrative impression
center, on two lines:
1. ḥwnʾn
2. mgwḥ
along the rim:
ooooo ld(2-4h) ooooo
'Maguh of Hōnān, Ray'
18.6×18.9mm
GAES: 57, 117 fig. 8.3, 133; Saeedi: 64, 147-48
Same as 12a, 69a, 84a, 94a, 97a, 101a, 104a, 146a
b) ribboned ram walking to r.

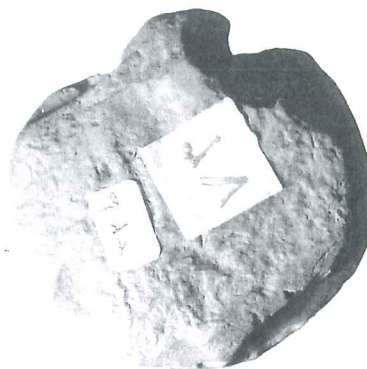


along the rim late style inscription (5-8h):
plḥwdʾt Y ʾpʾndʾtʾn
'Farrox-dād, son of Ābān-dād'
16.2×15.8mm
Same as 84b, 101b
c) lion recumbent to r., circular frame
12.8×8.2mm
d) wolf/dog walking to r., on r. star
8.6×5.7mm
e) ram to r.
6.3×6.3mm
f) ram to r.
6.3×6.6mm
g) illegible (lightly impressed)

(1) Taking into account only Gignoux's description of the administrative imprints (Gignoux & Gyselen 1987: 76), MOT 22 could be identified either with Khoy 5 or with Khoy 84, the other one corresponding to MOT 19. However, it seems likely that Khoy 5 is MOT 22, since here the personal seal with the ram (our 5b), which has been catalogued by Gignoux only on bulla MOT 22, appears clearly detectable. The same seal is found also on bulla Khoy 84, but there it is quite worn, and this may well be the reason for its absence from Gignoux's description of the impressions of MOT 19, given that he only saw the collection for a very short time.



No. 8
 Diam. max. 55.4mm
 Bulla with 6 impressions:
 a) administrative impression (lightly impressed)
 center, on four lines:
 1. tswk' Y
 2. gw.....
 3.



4. QDM'P'n.....
 along the rim:
 ..gl..h oooooo..
 'Tasōg of ... Abarārān...' (?)
 21.1×19.8mm
 b) winged male bust to r. (lightly impressed)
 23.2×22.1mm
 c-f) illegible (lightly impressed)



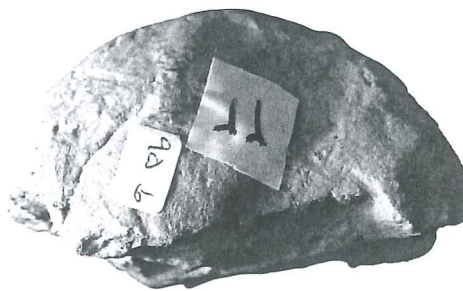
No. 9
 Diam. max. 58.6×58.4mm
 Lid of jug or bottle
 Moulded unglazed earthenware



Iran or Iraq, 11th-13th cent.
 Decoration in relief on two sides:
 a) & b) vegetal elements and a pair of horned quadrupeds set back to back



No. 10
 Diam. max. 74.8mm
 Bulla with 6 impressions and one fingernail imprint:
 a) administrative impression
 center, on three lines:
 1.

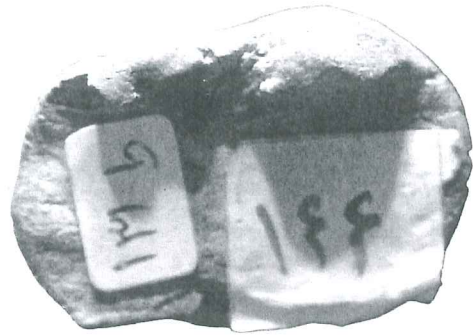


2.
 3. mgwḥ
 along the rim (9-9h):
 (kw)st (ZY) QDMḥwn ... QDM
 'Maguh of, ... district of ...'
 22.2×22.4mm

(?) The term *tasōg* 'district' is attested for two bureaus of the *Maguh*, both in Abaršahr: Nēw-Šābuhr and *Aspās and *Warsyāw, cf. GAES: 18 and 43.



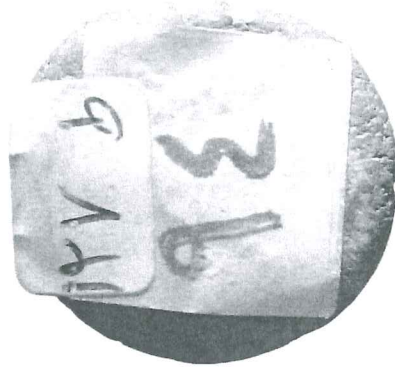
No. 64
 Diam. max. 33.4mm
 Bulla with two impressions:
 a) horse to r. (quite worn)



9.6×9.6mm
 b) animal recumbent to r. (quite worn)
 8.8×8.8mm



No. 65
 Diam. max 23.1mm
 Unidentifiable circular object (token?)
 Unglazed earthenware



Iran or Iraq, 11th-12th cent. (?)
 Indecipherable Arabic inscription in Kufic script on
 one side, on three lines
 Same as 68



No. 66/67
 Diam. max. 14.4mm
 Bulla with two impressions on opposite sides:
 66) monogram
 67) inscription in Arabic language in cursive script, on



one line, within beaded and linear frame
 محمد بن علي بن احمد
 'Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Aḥmad'
 10.4×5.5mm



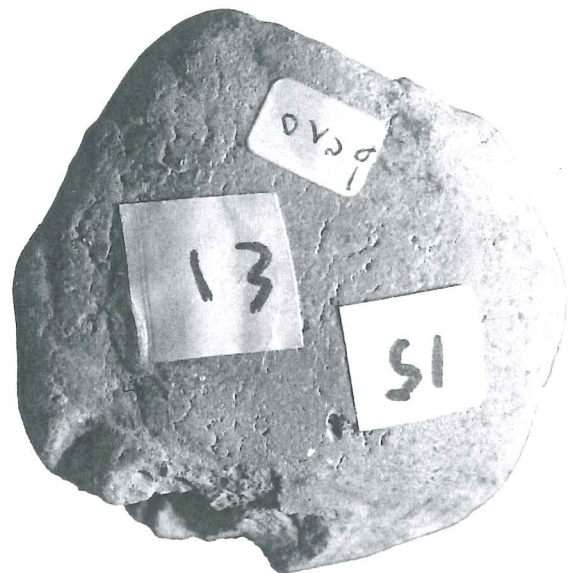
No. 68
 Diam. max. 23.9mm
 Unidentifiable circular object (token?)
 Unglazed earthenware



Iran or Iraq, 11th-12th cent. (?)
 Indecipherable Arabic inscription in Kufic script on
 one side, on three lines
 Same as 65



No. 69 (= MOT 21)
 Diam. max. 69mm
 Bulla with 5 impressions:
 a) administrative impression
 center, on two lines:
 1. ḥwn'n
 2. mgwḥ
 along the rim (2-4h):
 ld oooooooooo
 'Maguh of Hōnān, Ray'
 17.9×18.5mm
 GAES: 57, 117 fig. 8.3, 133; Saeedi: 62, 64, 164-65
 Same as 5a, 12a, 84a, 94a, 97a, 101a, 104a, 146a
 b) ribboned ram to r.
 along the rim partially worn late style inscription



(3-7h):
 ...m...'whrmzd'n
 '... , son of ...-Ohrmazd'
 20.1×19.3mm
 Same seal as 12b
 c) monogram, on r. star on crescent
 along the rim illegible late style inscription (10-8h):
 .z...
 7.8×7.6mm
 d) ram to r.
 along the rim illegible late style inscription (?)
 9.7×9.3mm
 e) bird to r., on l. crescent
 6×5.8mm

'Bīšābuhr, Šahrab'

20.4×19.3mm

GAES: 45, 119 fig. 11, 144

b) bird to r., circular frame, at 12h letter: p

10.3×7.9mm

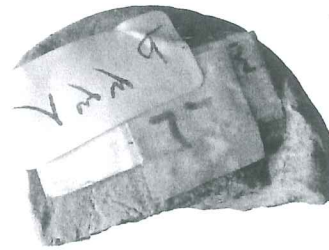


c) lion recumbent to r., circular frame
along the rim late style inscription (2-1 lh):

..(šn)sp.....

'.... <Gu>(šn)asp.....'

12.3×9.9mm



No. 121

The diameter of this bulla is not available

Bulla with 2 impressions:

a) administrative impression

center, on two lines:

1. kwhk

2. mgwḥ



along the rim (7-6h):

ldoooooo

'Maguh of Kōhag, Ray'

18.9×18.2mm

GAES: 57, 117 fig. 8.3, 133

b) unidentifiable subject (animal to r.?), circular frame
(fragmentary)



No. 122 (= MOT 38, 39, 40 or 41) ⁽²⁰⁾

Diam. max. 37.2mm

Bulla with 3 impressions:

a) bear head to r.

along the rim late style inscription (3-6h):

mtr't Y m'hwhn

'Mīhrād, son of Māh-weh'



16.2×15.3mm

Same seal as 99a, 102a, 125a

b) bird walking to r.

7.3×6.1mm

c) illegible

10.5×7.1mm



No. 123

Diam. max. 20.1mm

Unidentifiable circular object (token?)

Unglazed earthenware

Iran or Iraq, 11th-12th cent. (?)

Indecipherable Arabic inscription in Kufic script on
one side, on two lines

⁽²⁰⁾ See note 16.



No. 145
Diam. max. 26.4mm
Unidentifiable circular object (token?)
Unglazed earthenware



Iran or Iraq, 11th-12th cent. (?)
Indecipherable Arabic inscription in Kufic script on
one side, on two lines



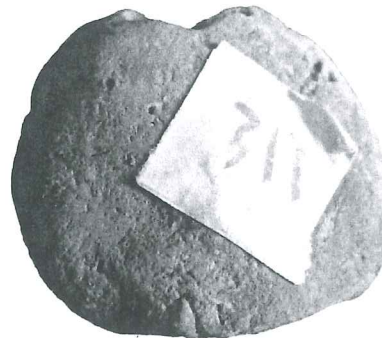
No. 146
Diam. max. 56.6mm
Bulla with 3 impressions:
a) administrative impression
center, on two lines:
1. ḥwnʿn
2. mgwḥ
along the rim (2-4h):
ld oooooooooo
'Maguh of Hōnān, Ray'
18.4×18.5mm



GAES: 57, 117 fig. 8.3, 133; Saeedi: 62, 64, 164-65
Same as 5a, 12a, 69a, 84a, 94a, 97a, 101a, 104a
b) male bust to r.
along the rim late style inscription (4-8h)
d'tplḥw' 'pzwn'
dād-farrox abzōn
'Dād-Farrox, increase'
19.9×18.9mm
c) winged horse (?) to r., circular frame
12.7×10.2mm



No. 147
Diam. max. 34.8mm
Bulla with 2 impressions:
a) ribbed ram recumbent to r. (quite worn)
along the rim barely legible inscription (11-9h):



(m)t(r)
'*Mihr'
15.4×14.8mm
b) bear head to l., beaded border
8×8mm