It is a matter of great satisfaction and fulfillment for me to have been given the opportunity to participate in this celebration of Michael Rogers. His influence has been uniquely important for me; quite simply, it was he who, initially and primarily, introduced me to the enterprise of art-historical work. Even more particularly, my subject relates to an area with which he has long been concerned, and concerning which we have long since had occasion to communicate. I hope that this present effort will find favor.

As the present paper developed, it came to be much too large for inclusion in the planned volume in honor of Professor Rogers. When confronted with the necessity of radically reducing the size of my submission, I found only one viable course of action: that of cutting off and presenting the first part of the work I had written. The larger version naturally dealt with a broad, representative range of the types of pre-Timurid jade objects in the al-Sabah Collection and, in addition to the ancient objects here discussed, covered Islamic jades up through the fourteenth century. The necessary reduction of the present publication is made less painful by the project of a volume on pre-Timurid jades planned for publication by the al-Sabah Collection in the reasonably near future.

FIRST REPORT

In the literature on Islamic art, the first recognition of a pre-fifteenth-century Islamic school of jade carving came in my entry in the 1982 catalogue, *Islamic Jewelry in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, for a belt fitting excavated at Nishapur. I had discovered this piece (which is of the type seen in fig. 9a–d) in the early 1970s, among uncatalogued small finds from the Nishapur excavations in the stores of the museum. I had furthermore exhibited the fitting in the Metropolitan’s Nishapur gallery, which opened in 1975, with the same attribution as in the 1982 catalogue entry: “Iran, possibly Nishapur, 9th–10th century” (an attribution by which I still stand).

In the meantime I had communicated with colleagues about it, both orally and in writing. I quote here a relevant section from the catalogue entry:

Our nephrite belt fitting antedates by five hundred years the earliest previously known groups of Islamic jades...The likelihood of Iranian or even Nishapuri manufacture does not seem remote given the...pictorial evidence cited and the number and quality of what are surely local lapidary objects unearthed at Nishapur. It is probably merely a matter of accident that no other jade pieces were retrieved by the Museum’s excavations there. A mate identical to the present piece was seen on the Tehran art market in 1978.1

Despite all this, the conventional and prevailing picture, often repeated in the literature, has been that jade carving was introduced into the Islamic world only in the fifteenth century, under the Timurids. Thus, as recently as 1996, no less an authority than Robert Skelton stated that “Although the material [jade] was thus known in the Islamic lands before the 15th century, there is no evidence of it being worked by lapidaries under Islamic patronage until Timur’s grandson Ulughbeg (1394–1449...) acquired two large blocks of greenish-black nephrite in 1425... . These were taken to Samarkand to be carved and inscribed for use as Timur’s tombstone in the Gur-i Mir... .”2 Michael Rogers, for his part, on the one hand conservatively stated that the “earliest attributable Islamic jades are Timurid,”3 but also commented that recent “finds of jade (in minute quantities) from Nishapur in a pre-Mongol context...at Siráf on the Persian Gulf and at Madinat Sultán in Libya show it to have been worked fairly widely in the Middle Ages” (my publication of the Nishapur piece being the only citation for the passage).4 From the literary side, Ralph Pinder-Wilson long ago pointed out5 the importance of the section on jade in al-Biruni’s *Compilation on Gemstones,*6 written in the 1040s at the Ghaznavid court. But neither he nor any subsequent scholar whose work I am aware of had properly stressed that the passage in question from al-Biruni’s work makes it perfectly
clear that in his time it was not only the “Turks” who used jade (for their saddles, weapons, belts, etc.), but that “others imitated them in this, making rings and knife handles of it.”

**FILLING OUT THE PICTURE**

Meanwhile, during the decades after the discovery of the Nishapur fitting I noted the existence of more and more jades from the East Iranian world that clearly predated the fifteenth century; and, especially from the 1990s forward, we in the al-Sabah Collection were able to build up a range of such jades that (quite aside from their beauty) can only be described as monumental in scope. Not surprisingly, the more our awareness expanded, the greater the range, quality, and quantity of the material seemed. It became more and more evident that I had indeed, in the work that led to the 1982 publication, been touching only the perimeters or branches of a great corpus. We had engaged something distinctive and previously unsuspected, with enormous implications; subsequent work allows us to largely sketch in a proper if not fully detailed picture of the great industry to which scholarship for so long remained so remarkably blind.

The results of my work with respect to this matter (and subsequent to the 1982 publication) were first publicly presented to the scholarly community in a lecture before the Islamic Art Circle, London, in 1998, giving me, *inter alia*, my first opportunity to dedicate these efforts to Michael Rogers as well as to Ralph Pin der-Wilson and Robert Skelton—all true pioneers in the study of Islamic hardstones, especially jades. The present paper forms part of an outgrowth of that lecture and with respect to the main points and topics discussed in both is largely the same, if considerably amplified in certain areas while bereft of most of the Islamic material presented there.

**SOME DETAIL ON THE LITERATURE**

In the following section, I shall enumerate certain prevalent earlier misconceptions, followed by any commentary that seems to me to be appropriate.

1. That jade carving has a very special status within the art of hardstone carving due to technical differences between carving it and carving the likes of rock crystal and the cryptocrystalline quartzes such as agate. Without going into unnecessary detail, one may simply dismiss this notion. Although modern technical literature on the actual practice of jade cutting often stresses (minor) difficulties associated with producing a mirror polish (especially due to a tendency to develop an undesirable “orange peel” surface), in historical times no jade (jadeite or nephrite) posed any special difficulties for cutters, who seem almost never to have produced or been interested in high-sheen finishes, satiny ones rather having been the norm. Jade (specifically nephrite, the only variety encountered in our material) is slightly less hard than the quartzes but like them requires the same lapidary techniques: using hard grits and powders such as garnet, emery, and diamond, delivered in conjunction with water by tools (usually rotary) of wood, copper, iron, lac, and leather. Indeed, for certain types of work, jade could be less troublesome, due to its toughness, than crystalline materials like rock crystal. Of course, this same toughness could also prove a disadvantage, e.g., when knocking free cylindrical stumps produced by core-drills in the process of hollowing out the interior of a vessel. But as indicated, these are minor details in the overall picture, and any differences bear no relation to the implications encountered, which have repeatedly and grossly misled the uninitiated not merely in a technical sense but with respect to the historical issues involved.

2. That jade carving was not practiced in ancient or earlier medieval times in regions that became part of the Islamic world.

It would be wrong to leave the impression that there has been no publication of jades worked in pre-Timurid (indeed, in pre-Islamic) times in the part of the world with which we are concerned; without any pretense to an exhaustive review, we should try to give a fair impression of the situation. The diligent and learned A. Lucas has cited a number of objects from Egypt that had been reported as jade; and although he retains the scientist’s skepticism (since “it was impossible to examine any of these objects either chemically or microscopically without destroying them”), he does clearly express his opinion that the double-cartouche signet ring of Tutankhamun “is almost certainly nephrite,” adding that the fact “that at the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty a small piece of this material should have reached Egypt from Asia would not be surprising.” Carol Andrews accepted as proven fact (without citation) that Tutankhamun’s ring is “securely identified” as jade, and indicated that it
constitutes the “single instance” of such.  

Two further recently published examples should be mentioned here. The first of these is a late Pharaonic (“after 600 BC”) “two fingers amulet,” which “has been identified as jadeite.”  

The positing of a problem about the presence of jades in the Islamic world (or the parts of the world that became predominantly Islamic) has most peculiarly affected the field of Islamic art scholarship, a “problem” one might even characterize as a kind of mysterious red herring that has resulted in a greatly amount of mischief. Those coming to the issue when focusing on other periods and cultures, on the other hand, have often seen no insurmountable problem with jade turning up practically anywhere or at any time (again, see Lucas’s comment, cited above); this of course reflects the real situation. Aside from the often-mentioned Egyptian case (discussed above), we can (again, without pretense of exhaustiveness), cite some further literature dealing with jades being fashioned where, by the lights of the Islamic art-historical literature, they should not have been:

For what is now Afghanistan, the earliest reported instance of objects thought to be jade that I have come across was for objects excavated in the south, at Mundigak (consisting of beads, period “I–II,” dating to the second quarter of the fourth millennium BC) but not confirmed as jade.

Teng Shu-p’ing relates that there is “mention [in Han-dynasty Chinese historical records] of “a white-jade ‘night-shining cup,’ sent [as tribute] by the people of the western regions [my italics] to King Mu of Chou” in the “10th Cent. B.C.”

William Trousdale reports extensively on jades from Western Asia (including Afghanistan and neighboring former Soviet republics), South Russia, and Europe, dating from a few centuries on either side of the time of Christ, including one example that he has suggested may be of “Roman” origin. (In this connection, see below for a discussion of a series of particularly telling ancient examples from this region.)

Kamal Giri cites an example of what was thought to be jade among excavated ancient Indian material.

This author (in the 1998 London lecture cited above) presented in slides and discussed the Sasanian dish from Susa that is thought to be jade. This had been mentioned earlier, in connection with rock crystal examples, in a Christie’s catalogue, and was published in 2000 by Souren Melikian-Chirvani.  

It is also possible to cite publication of medieval jades from Central Asia (while confessing that others have probably escaped me). A small exhibition catalogue from the early 1980s illustrated a pair of “nephrite” flat-slab earring pendants of peculiar outline and a Nestorian cross-shaped pendant of basically similar character preserved in the Institute of History of the National Academy of Science, Kirghizia, both reported to be from “Krasnorechenskoe settlement” and dated to the eighth or ninth century. A recent catalogue published a set of eight jade belt fittings from the region of Almaty (now in the National Archaeological Museum of Kazakhstan), and dated them to “Inizio XII–fine XIII secolo.” (We may remark in passing that these are more likely to be from the later end of the suggested range, to judge from the form of certain pieces.) Finally, we note the mention of “des perles et des pendentifs de néphrite,” and “une élégante pendeloque de jade en forme de larme,” from excavations at Farab/Otrar, Kirghizia, with respect to which there is no comment about the date.

However, without ignoring the above, it still needs to be reiterated that whenever the subject of Islamic jades was at issue, the almost universal picture conveyed by the literature was that no jade industry existed until the Timurids began one in Samarkand; some conjectured that this happened as a result of the Timurids’ importing Chinese craftsmen knowledgeable in the “mysterious” art of carving jade.

3. That the art of jade carving is represented in the Islamic world only by a small number of objects attributable to the Timurid period (fifteenth century), perhaps a few from the Safavid period (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), a considerable number from the Ottoman period (sixteenth through nineteenth centuries), and
a quite sizeable number from the Mughal period (sev-
enteenth through nineteenth centuries).

The material presented in my 1998 lectures and even
the abbreviated material seen and discussed here will,
I hope, have succeeded in largely disposing of the erro-
neous notions discussed above. To reiterate, the range
and large number of identified Islamic jade objects
that predate the fifteenth century will only be properly
sensed with publication of the jades in the al-Sabah
Collection; the present study can, however, hint at the
voluminous corpus embodied in this collection. The
material (especially when fully presented in the planned
volume) should make it clear that jade use has a history,
sufficiently represented by objects from the Near East
and Central Asia, stretching back for millennia and
continuing through Sasanian and early and medieval
Islamic times.27

SOME GENERAL COMMENTS

I am prone to certain hypotheses about the main cen-
ters of jade working in the medieval Islamic world,
foremost among which, I would suggest, was Balkh.
There are abundant indications that the East Iranian
world was home in earlier medieval times to a proli-
fic and sophisticated lapidary industry, a situation
that is very persuasively represented in the material
excavated at Nishapur alone.28 Additionally (and aside
from other historical, geographical, and art-historical
considerations that will not be explored here), there
are strong indications of this in the art market (espe-
cially in the consistent patterns in stories of putative
origin—see “Addendum: ‘Archeology’ in the Market”
and “List of Objects Appearing in the Illustrations, with
Putative Origins of Each,” below).

A striking aspect of East Iranian medieval jades is the
variety of ways in which many of them parallel those
of the Chinese world, and numerous problems remain
in working out the various relationships, mechanisms,
and directions of transmission involved.

As a better picture is developed of various art indus-
tries in the East Iranian world, we shall surely see more
and more previously undreamed-of interchange between
the art traditions of the Chinese and the Iranian mega-
cultures. Our view into the jade industry reveals that
these interchanges were quite strong during long spans
starting from before the time of Christ and continuing
right through into the period in which they are con-
ventionally thought to have begun in earnest, namely
the later thirteenth and earlier fourteenth centuries, in

the bloom of the Mongol-Islamic school of art. There
is no escaping the fact that a number of jade types
found in the East Iranian region were inspired by Chi-
nese models, but this should not cause us to fall into
the trap of thinking that the ancient Near Eastern and
Islamic industries were essentially dependent upon such
inspiration. The facts are quite otherwise, and indeed
many developments, some of them of importance to
world art history, took place in our region. As indicated
above, detailed presentation of the material and the
issues will have to await the planned volume, in which
it may be seen that this rich, enormously productive,
and highly creative area of the Islamic world had its own
indigenous traditions of jade working. And of course,
as we know in the case of other media and traditions,
not all the influence traveled in the Far East-to-West
Asia direction. A very great deal of work needs to be
done on the history of jades, including those of China,
all of Central Asia, and the Islamic world.

PRESENTATION OF REPRESENTATIVE
EXAMPLES: ANCIENT PERIOD

The attribution given the two pieces illustrated in figs.
1 and 2 will, at least initially, be seen by some as espe-
cially controversial, since it implies that these pieces not
only predate the accepted beginning of jade carving in
the region by approximately one and a half millennia
but also represent a previously unsuspected school of
jade carving that bridges two justly famous art-historical
periods—the Greco-Bactrian and the Kushan—in the
region of what is now Afghanistan.

The jade objects from ancient Egypt29 seem to amount
to a sporadic, opportunistic phenomenon—that is, the
use of whatever attractive hardstones became available.
But it is clear, on the basis of the present pieces, the
very numerous examples of the types seen in figs. 3–5,
and other indications, that the situation in ancient Bac-
tria was one of a consistent taste for, and availability and
use of, jade. This is surely not simply due to the rela-
tive proximity of the region to the source of the mate-
rial in Khotan (and possibly nearer by). Fortunately,
one is able to cite conclusive comparative material for
each of the pieces in figs. 1 and 2; in both cases, the
comparison pieces are from the Soviet excavations in
1978–79 of princely tombs at Tiliya Tepeh, near Shi-
barghan in northern Afghanistan, as published by Vic-
tor Sarianidi in 198530—all dated to the first century BC
to the first century AD. The material from these excava-
tions provides two instances of dragons so similar to
the jade dragon head in fig. 1 as to leave no doubt that they all come from the same cultural milieu.31 In Sarianidi’s catalogue number 4.8 the analogy with LNS 380 HS is most evident, the dragon being one of four fantastic beasts that slither up one side of a fabulous turquoise-set gold dagger and scabbard. The great similarity between the two cited dragons from Tiliya Teppeh is sharpened by Sarianidi’s comments:

In this tomb there was one more plaque, depicting a winged dragon (ill. 98). Its jaws gape, its nose is turned up, and its eyes stare wide open beneath the bulging ridges of eyebrows. Its horns are short, its ears long, and a beard coils out from beneath its neck. Its writhing body rests on bent paws, and its tail is coiled beneath the belly. This iconic posture, as well as the very image of the dragon, bears an amazingly close similarity to the raised representation of the mauling episode on the scabbard found in this same tomb. However, of undoubted interest is the representation of a dragon similar in iconographic type and style that is to be seen on the gold Karagalinka diadem from Northern Kirghizia in the USSR. Apparently, Bactrian craftsmen had developed by that period canonical representations of fantastic creatures of the indicated type of menacing winged, serpentine dragon that had a definite semantic meaning in local legend and mythology; they repeated them time and again in their work, commanding a steady sale throughout neighboring regions.32

The fact that the jade piece is reported to have come from Afghanistan is a matter not to be disregarded with respect to the relationship between it and the pieces from Tiliya Teppeh. And the fact that other instances of very similar monster heads have also been unearthed in Afghanistan further cements the matter. For example, “makaras” on ivory panels from Begram (ca. first century AD)33 are distinctly of the same type, if not quite as strikingly similar to the jade as that cited from Tiliya Teppeh. A larger and older context for the dragon type, which seems to some extent to counter Sarianidi’s suggestions about its nascence, is provided by material said to be of the fourth to second century BC from Inner Mongolia.34 It seems that this general type is in fact another of many elements of old steppe art tradition that impact the art of Bactria and northern India. It seems further that this dragon type bears some relationship with the Greek ketos, a subject that must remain beyond our present scope.

The roundel with a relief-carved head of a mouflon, or wild mountain sheep (fig. 2), is remarkable for its depiction and for its reflection of jade-carving tradition, despite the fact that it is carved from a highly translu-
cent yellowish green material. The full frontal view is one that seems to have been favored over a considerable span of time in Central Asia, but one can match the jade-simulant roundel very closely indeed, again in a marvelous turquoise-set gold scabbard from the Tiliya Tepeh excavations, which features not only the same species and general sort of view, but also very similar stylistic elements and aspect. One remarks particularly the splaying-out of the sides of the head and the horns, with the ears in front of the latter; the prominent ridge down the center of the face; and the diagonally set eyes in the shape of a lens cross section. Although the mountain sheep on the golden scabbard (two instances, flanking either side of the scabbard at the lower end) do not sport beards, it is to be noted that animals’ beards were an artistic preoccupation of the style in question: witness the prominent ones featured on the horned “wolf-dragons” and other monsters engaged in combat on the two scabbards from the same tomb referred to above. The jade-simulant mountain sheep roundel, too, is putatively from Afghanistan, specifically Ghazna.

The sword guard in fig. 3 belongs to a class of object that turns up in sizable numbers in the region that was ancient Bactria. It was in fact a widespread, although not universal, element in a constellation of sword furnishings that accompanied the introduction of the long iron sword and that prevailed practically throughout Eurasia in the last centuries BC and first centuries AD. The system invariably involved the suspension of a straight sword (often but not always a meter or more in length) from a separate, dedicated sword belt by
means of a “slide” in the form of a transversely slotted block or, more simply, an elongated rigid loop, which was mortised into or otherwise affixed to the upper part of the scabbard. This system probably originated with northeast Asian nomads but is thought to have been used in China from at least the fifth century BC. The slides were made of a variety of materials, including (apparently most often) wood, as well as bone, ivory, glass, and a range of stones. Due to their degree of permanence, the hardstone (especially jade) examples, which of course represent the luxurious high end of the scale, have the best survival rates. Trousdale characterizes the phenomenon of the scabbard slide (carrying the obvious implications for the other elements of the system to which it belonged) thus:

The significance of the scabbard slide lies in the implications inherent in its extremely wide distribution and historical occurrence in one or another of its forms in Asia and Europe...the major portion of known slides, over eighty percent, may be ascribed a Chinese provenance. But in lesser numbers they have probably been found in Korea, Inner Mongolia, Viet-Nam, Pakistan, the Crimea, and the lower Volga and Perm regions of European Russia, possibly in Turkey, and, in a related form, in Syria, southern Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Sweden, Norway, Finland, France, and England. This geographical scope may be extended by the addition of regions where no actual examples have been reported, but where their presence may be inferred from representations: northern India, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Soviet Central Asia, southern Siberia, and Italy.

As a minor modification to the above summary, Trousdale’s later work (“Kushan Scabbard Slide”) reports on a scabbard slide from Afghanistan; a representative survey of the numbers of such objects coming out of Afghanistan and Northwest Pakistan in recent decades would decidedly alter the general picture of prevalence of extant examples from the region, as well as the balance of Chinese versus non-Chinese examples. The same applies to the other related sword-fitting types here presented, namely pommels and quillon blocks.

Our jade quillon block LNS 169 HS (fig. 3), then, exemplifies the classic luxury type of one of a narrow range of such fittings associated with the scabbard slides. The type is characteristically pierced by a central vertical slot (through which the sword’s tang extends upward as an extension of the blade) and has a central notch at the top, into which the lower end of the grip nests. The type seems to go back to the beginnings of the sword/belt/fittings nexus (see above) and generally to

Fig. 5. Sword pommel, pale green (fine off-white) jade. Height 3.2 cm; width 5.6 cm; thickness 1.2 cm. East Iranian world, ca. first century BC–third century AD. Al-Sabah Collection (LNS 531 HS). (Photo: courtesy of al-Sabah Collection)
Like the scabbard slides, the quillons and pommels of the types here representing the region of ancient Bactria seem invariably to be plain, whereas in the Far East (China) they classically are decorated, often with elaborate and even high-relief motifs, from geometric designs to prowling ch’ih dragons and the like. Most of the properly excavated and accessibly published, well-placed material is from East Asia (China and Korea), and this naturally has received the greatest amount of attention. But as we have seen above, the soil of vast areas has shown the enormous spread of the types, from northeast to southwest Asia and Europe. Thus the masses of undocumented finds from Afghanistan and neighboring regions should now come as no surprise to us.

Discs of the type seen in figs. 4a and 4b served as the main decorative element of the pommels of many—probably most—swords of the types fitted with quillons like that in fig. 3 (but again, as with slides and quillons, these were most commonly of less valuable materials). Had it been the goal to attach hilt to sword most securely, the disc would have been passed through by the upper end of the tang, the tang then being planished over or fixed by a pin above the disc; but surviving archeological evidence seems to suggest that the disc did not usually serve such a structural role, the grip being affixed to the tang by other means. It seems that both in China (where in any case the disc seems usually not to have had a central hole) and elsewhere, it was most commonly inserted into a larger disc and then topped by some other decorative element, typically of metal and frequently set with stones or glass (which covered or otherwise disguised the hole in the ring and held it down).

The pommel seen in fig. 5 represents an alternative to the disc type exemplified in figs. 4a and 4b. This as well could accompany quillons of the type of LNS 169 HS (fig. 3); like the latter, it has a central notch into which the grip fit to secure its integration with the sword. A central hole running vertically through the pommel allowed the passage of the upper end of the sword’s tang, and one example in the al-Sabah Collection (LNS 231 HS, unpublished) has part of the tang, which broke off the sword and remained wedged in the pommel, still in place.

As shown above, the al-Sabah pieces in figs. 3–5 are far from unique examples of types that originate from the areas of ancient Bactria and its neighbors (chronologically, and for the material in question, Yüeh-chi/Kuei-shang/Kushan territory). Although Trousdale wrote in 1975 that from “within the borders of the Kushan empire only two scabbard slides are known...[having been] recovered at Sirkap in the excavations conducted by Sir John Marshall,” he countered the impression this passage might create in the reader’s mind by unequivocally stating (on the basis of both archeology and representations, especially in sculpture) that the scabbard slide (and attendant long iron sword, with its characteristic type of quillon and disc pommel) arrived in Bactria precisely with the Yüeh-chi/Kushana. Subsequent to this publication, Trousdale himself (in “Kushan Scabbard Slide,” see n. 18) published another (jade) scabbard slide from the region, which had been purchased in the Kabul bazaar and was reported to have come (like so many of the jades in the art market) from northern Afghanistan. As also indicated above, a quite sizable number of additional ones are now known, and we intend to report on these in the planned volume on jades of the West Asian region.

Even more intriguingly, other highly individualistic and rare sorts of pieces from the period and region (in addition to those in figs. 1 and 2) can be cited, which go further to clarify that as in medieval times this part of the world was home to a center of jade carving not only previously unsuspected but sophisticated, significant, and prolific. Three examples will here suffice to indicate the breadth and variety of the story.

The first of these, published by E. V. Rtveladze in “Gopatshah of Bactria,” (see n. 47), is an elongated flat plaque (6.6 x 2.2 x 0.4 cm) of uncertain function, preserved in the Museum of the Peoples of Uzbekistan. It is of rectilinear outline (with straight, parallel sides and pointed, gable-outline ends), and has the image of a couchant mythological “bull-man” or “man-bull” (Gopatshah, or guardian of the waters) engraved in intaglio into its surface on one side, and that of a Bactrian-style helmented king on the other. The author places the origin of this object “in North-Eastern Bactria at the juncture of the Yueh-chi and Early Kushan periods,”
sometime between the first century BC (p. 294) and, possibly, the first century AD (p. 299), arguing the case in detail for the attribution, especially on the basis of numismatic evidence. He also appends a brief excursion on the other finds of early nephrite pieces in Central Asia, citing the following: an example from Uzbekistan of the first millennium BC, “probably the earliest known article fashioned from nephrite to have been found in Central Asia” (p. 304); a seal from Ferghana attributed to the Achaemenian period (p. 305); a small bowl from Kirghizia “dating from between the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD” (p. 305); and the jade dagger quillon block (cited above, being of the type of our fig. 3) as well as the jade scabbard slide excavated together with it in the Samarkand region and “dated by G. A. Pugachenkova to the 2nd–1st centuries BC” (p. 305).

The second object of the ancient Bactrian regional school of jade carving that I wish to discuss here (found in a temple deposit in the vicinity of the probable find spot of the famous “Oxus Treasure” in the British Museum) is very possibly slightly earlier than the “Gopatshah” plaque, being datable not later than the first century AD and possibly as early as the third to second century BC. It is thought to be a pom- mel, and takes the form of an abstract, angularly rendered head of a “wolf-dragon.” The piece is of added interest because it is inlaid with contrasting materials: the spaces between the large triangular teeth visible along the sides of the open lips and the outer circular rings around the eyes are apparently in lapis lazuli, while the eye centers (and perhaps the teeth) seem to have been in glass, now decomposed or lost. Further, the rings intermediate between the outer lapis lazuli (“lasurite”) ones and the eye centers are of a white material that may perhaps be shell, as may also have been the teeth.

While the “wolf-dragon” pommel is in a style issuing from immemorial steppe traditions, our next example (in the Sir Joseph Hotung Collection and published as Chinese) seems to vastly widen the range of ancient Bactrian artistic blendings that impacted objects made of jade. This jade is in the form of a miniature mask of mythological character, which immediately recalls the likes of Central Asian cave paintings and Tang-period guardian figures. It must be admitted, however, that most of the stylistic elements of this remarkable piece can be traced back to classical art and to its variations evolved in the Indian subcontinent and the region of present-day Afghanistan; it is in the latter that the piece seems particularly at home, probably having been carved ca. the first to second century AD. The difficulty of its proper attribution stems especially from the much-cited but still insufficiently understood phenomenon of the blending of styles in the region and the extent to which Greco-Bactrian style influenced the arts of Central and East Asia as well as the Indian subcontinent for centuries after its florescence. This difficulty is aggravated by the prevailing assumptions about the places in which jade, particularly jade as fine as this, was or was not carved. Whether or not the proposed attribution is accepted, the following should be considered: overall, the closest single parallel to the piece is a marble mask found at Shahr-i Gulgula (Bamiyan, Afghanistan); now in the Institute of Fine Arts, Tashkent, it has been dated to the Roman period. In both pieces, despite their anatomically informed character, there is a similar exaggerated treatment of the cranium, eyes, and nose; especially striking and similar is the wildly enlarged, crescent-like mouth. These features, especially the treatment of the mouth, have antecedents in a marble head excavated at the Greco-Bactrian city of Ay Khanum in northern Afghanistan. In this case, the head was a fountain spout, suggesting a possible function of the jade and the just-discussed marble mask as well. In a general way, these objects all reveal relationships with Greek and Roman theatrical masks and representations of satyrs and fauns on the one hand, and on the other with representations from India, Afghanistan, and Central Asia (as well as China) ranging in date from the period of the above examples to the seventh to eighth century AD. One very individualistic feature of the jade mask is the exaggeratedly angular and linear outlining of the upper lip; comparison with a ca. third-century AD stucco “demon” head from Hadda in Afghanistan makes it difficult to posit much distance in time or space between the two. Taking everything into account, I believe that the jade mask must belong roughly to the region of ancient Bactria and to a period not later than about the third century.

FURTHER IMPORTANT ANCIENT BACTRIAN JADES AND OTHER HARDSTONES

In addition to the ancient jades originating from or attributable to Bactria and neighboring territories, there are other unequivocal indications that this region was home to a very highly developed lapidary tradition of long standing.

The manifestations of this tradition include the
appearance of extremely sophisticated faceting of semi-
precious stones over a timespan from as early as the
fourth century BC up into the Islamic middle ages. But
for our present purposes, I should like to enumerate
and briefly discuss, in roughly chronological order,
some other notable objects that are probably products
of the Bactrian lapidary industry in ancient times.

The first of these is a marvelous Hellenistic graychalcedony ram’s head in the al-Sabah Collection. This has
not yet appeared in a publication, but it is included in
the traveling exhibition of the al-Sabah Collection,
“Treasury of the World: Jewelled Arts of India in the
Age of the Mughals” (see n. 60), with the attribution,
“Probably northern Afghanistan (Hellenistic Bactrian),
ca. 3rd century BC.” It is introduced in the exhibition
by the following label text:

Strikingly reminiscent of the well-exampled jade ram’s head-
terminated Mughal-period dagger hilts and handles...this
chalcedony example nevertheless finds its close stylistic
parallels in Hellenistic Greek bracelet terminals. Whether
and to what degree pieces such as this unique Hellenistic
hardstone carving may have stimulated Mughal artists’
efforts along the same line remains an open question.

Although the piece is not illustrated or discussed in
the exhibition catalogue, its inclusion (along with an
extensive amount of other supplementary material)
in the forthcoming large catalogue is planned. It may
have formed the terminal of the handle of a flat dish
(patera) of gold (or entirely of one piece of chalcedony?). Such dishes from Roman times, in bronze and
with comparable ram’s head terminals, are numerous,
and a hololithic alabaster patera of roughly the same
date was excavated at Begram. But the chalcedony
ram’s head finds its closest stylistic parallels in Hel-
lenistic jewelry, for which reason I have dated it to
the same period.

Next among the important and well-known ancient
hardstones that I would attribute to the region of Bactria
and to the Hellenistic period (despite its having been
excavated in Xi’an, apparently in a Tang context), is a
sublime banded brown-and-white agate antelope head
facing a point that is absent from, or rather foreign to the
art—that is absent from, or rather foreign to the spirit
of, this cat. He has a believable flesh-and-bone corpo-
reality and glares balefully with glowing gemstone eyes,
sending a shiver down the viewer’s spine. The practice
of setting eyes with gemstone is not otherwise unknown
in sculpture from Afghanistan, as shown by a beauti-
ful bodhisattva head with garnet eyes, which is thought
to be from Hadda and to date to about the second or
third century AD. (The head is now in the Metropol-
tian Museum of Art.) Of course, the inlaying of the
eyes of sculptures with gemstones (especially rock crys-
tals) is a fairly widespread ancient practice, there being a
particularly sizable number of published examples from
Egypt, but the incorporation of two contrasting gem-
stones to differentiate the iris from the white of the eye,
a feature of the British Museum panther, seems to be
especially characteristic of the Bactrian region during
the period in question.

Aside from the positive reasons to believe that this
would not fit into this period. Although its date could
conceivably coincide with the period of manufacture
(said to be the second century AD) of a silver drink-
ing bowl from the Panjeb on which an antelope-head
rhyton is represented, it seems much more at home
with earlier material, including the just discussed gray
chalcedony ram’s head in the al-Sabah Collection. Both
of the hardstone pieces exhibit a high level of anatom-
ical awareness on the part of their artists, which may
be observed in comparing, for example, the handling
of the eyes and the horns of the two objects. And the
best of comparisons for the rhyton’s antelope head is
again in jewelry of the Hellenistic period, some carved
of hardstones. Also of brown-and-white banded agate, a
powerful and menacing panther head featuring brilliant
foil-backed eyes of rock crystal inlaid with green glass
iris has been an ongoing source of puzzlement. It
continues to be exhibited in the British Museum with
the attribution “Mughal India, 17th century,” although
Robert Skelton in his 1982 publication of it expressed
misgivings: “...the Indian origin of the object is...not
beyond doubt.” He further suggested that its “exhibi-
tion with other Mughal hardstones may help to resolve
the uncertainty of its origin and date.” I have for
some time felt that it must belong to roughly the con-
text here suggested (probably late Hellenistic or early
Kushan), a conviction that has increased with time.
Its handling simply is not consonant with Mughal-era
hardstones; these have a remote elegance and a spirit
of amusing abstraction—partly a heritage from Islamic
art—that is absent from, or rather foreign to the spirit
of, this cat. He has a believable flesh-and-bone corpo-
reality and glares balefully with glowing gemstone eyes,
sending a shiver down the viewer’s spine. The practice
of setting eyes with gemstone is not otherwise unknown
in sculpture from Afghanistan, as shown by a beauti-
ful bodhisattva head with garnet eyes, which is thought
to be from Hadda and to date to about the second or
third century AD. (The head is now in the Metropol-
tian Museum of Art.) Of course, the inlaying of the
eyes of sculptures with gemstones (especially rock crys-
tals) is a fairly widespread ancient practice, there being a
particularly sizable number of published examples from
Egypt, but the incorporation of two contrasting gem-
stones to differentiate the iris from the white of the eye,
a feature of the British Museum panther, seems to be
especially characteristic of the Bactrian region during
the period in question.
piece is Bactrian, made between ca. the third century BC and the second century AD, there is a negative argument: if it is not Mughal, what else can it be? One may entertain the possibility that it is a work from Europe of, say, the sixteenth century, but a study of such material seems to indicate that this piece, with its very real seriousness, is as out of place there as in sixteenth- or seventeenth-century India. Finally, there are other reasons relating to material and technique that also point to the context we have suggested here, the details of which will have to await the forthcoming volume on jades.

The last ancient object mentioned here as a candidate for Bactrian origin is the rock crystal two-handled bowl excavated at Begram, which has been asserted to be of Alexandrian origin. For a variety of reasons, some of which cannot be discussed here, I am strongly of the opinion that this piece was cut in the East Iranian or the northwestern subcontinent region (again, I anticipate presenting the argument more fully in the planned volume on jades outside China). In the meantime, it is interesting to note the following passage by Teng Shu-p’ing, which strongly suggests that Bactria and/or neighboring regions were producing, in the period concerned, noteworthy hardstones, including rock crystals:

The Han (or Six-dynasties) period Hsi-ching tsao-chi...records that during the time of the Han emperor Wu-ti (r. 140–87 B.C.), the state of Shen-tu...[i.e., northwest India, in the heartland of the later Kushan realm] sent tribute-gifts of a bridle made of interlocking rings of white jade, an agate bridle-bit and a lustrous white ‘liu-li...saddle that glowed in the dark.’...The San-fu huang-t’u...another Han work, along with the Tsin-period (A.D. 265–420) Shih-yi chi...both record that Han Wu-ti also received a tribute-gift from the state of Gandhara of a ‘jade-crystal’...bowl for holding ice... [the last italics are mine].

That the same region is recorded as the source in the Tang period for other rock crystal vessels worthy to be sent to the Chinese imperial court seems, along with other indications of the area as a lapidary center (and quite aside from the testimony regarding Badakhshan’s rock crystal mines), to establish the likelihood of a rock crystal industry in the area. If this is the case, the two-handled wine cup from Begram seems to me to be a very good candidate for what we might expect this industry to have produced during the period in question.

IMMEDIATELY PRE-ISLAMIC JADES FROM AFGHANISTAN (FIGS. 6–8)

The pieces illustrated by figs. 6–8 are taken to represent the phase between the ancient and Islamic eras, although there seems a good chance that the piece in fig. 6 is much closer in date to the six objects already discussed than to the medieval period. Its bilaterally symmetrical configuration in the form of pairs of sweeping acanthus fronds has very close parallels in classical art and can, once again, be closely compared with the ornamentation of the gold dagger from Tiliya Tepeh on which there are five lyre-shaped acanthus volutes; three of these (the ones nearest the quillon, at mid-grip, and filling the spatulate pommel) each feature the paired acanthus growing out of a turquoiset collar, with the rest of the encircling “shank” being plain. The use of the paired acanthus fronds on the dagger is strikingly similar to that of the present jade piece. But other material suggests that the jade could instead belong to the late antique to early medieval, pre-Islamic, period in the same region.

That the identical type of buckle mechanism was on the regional scene in early medieval Islamic times is shown by a number of copper-alloy examples, including those excavated at Nishapur and others in the al-Sabah Collection. The Nishapur buckle is, like the present piece, in the simple form of a button, which is retained in a circular “female” half. Probably dating to the eleventh century, several unpublished copper-alloy buckles of the general type (in which the figure of a lion is formed when the buckle is closed) are in the al-Sabah Collection, and a piece of the same type has been published. That the button-and-slotted-circle belt type was in currency in the Mongol period is shown by two complete silver buckles with palmette outlines, which came from the Crimea and are now in the Hermitage. The system is further attested in the same period in the form of two silver button or “male” halves of buckles, each button being decorated in relief with the motif of a sun face above a lion’s back. And of course, a number of examples of the general type are known from later periods in China.

We can state with certainty that our palmette-frond buckle half was made in a major lapidary center in the region, in a workshop with outstanding experience and special equipment. The high tradition embodied in the piece cannot be doubted, given the very evident standard of capability and control; this is especially clear when we envisage the other half, with its void-centered
circle of jade, which would have fitted over the button and into the groove of our preserved half. The circularity and straight vertical sides of this button and groove speak almost as much about the necessarily sophisticated context of the piece as does its artistic form.

Prior to the appearance of the fragmentary hololithic seal-ring in fig. 7, we had considered the form it embodies to be characteristic of the early medieval (tenth-to-twelfth-century) Islamic East Iranian world. The Brahmi inscription of the piece, however, has been considered to date from as early as the fifth century AD, which would indicate that the form had a considerably longer-than-suspected life and a broader cultural context. Its derivation from hollow gold models stretching back into the Sasanian period in the region is, however, entirely consistent with such a finding. In any case, the form type of this piece certainly does not seem to survive beyond the eleventh (or perhaps the twelfth) century AD.

The jade (proper left) hand in fig. 8 surely belongs to a Buddhist milieu; indeed, one might naturally take it to be a "blessing hand" from a small Buddha or bodhisattva statuette. We know from literary accounts that in the centuries prior to the advent of Islam, several regions are recorded as sources of jade statuettes that sound as if they might have been of the sort to which this hand belonged. Teng Shu-p’ing informs us that “the Liang-shu… (History of the Liang dynasty, A.D. 502–557) records that… a jade statue had been sent to the Chinese emperor from the country of Singhala (mod-
ern Sri Lanka) during the Yi-hsi reign-period (A.D. 405-418) of the Eastern Tsin dynasty,” and further cites the
“mention [in Chinese historical records] of tributary gifts of carved jade from the various peoples of these
[western] regions,” including an account of “A.D. 541”
concerning a “foreign carved jade Buddha sent from
Khotan.”86 Schafer, writing of the Tang period, says
that “images of divine beings were sometimes made of
jade: in the Buddhist temple named ‘Exalting the Good’
in Chang’an]...there was a jade statue of the Buddha,
one foot seven inches tall, with bodhisattvas and ‘flying sylphs’ of the same material.”87 Surely some such con-
text must be imagined for our isolated hand.

Despite comments of the prominent authority Wal-
ter Spink that seem to indicate a problem with the left
hand being so used,88 some Buddha and bodhisattva
statues do offer blessings with the left hand. A quick
survey of resources at hand has turned up at least three
instances in Gansu, China’s gateway for Buddhist tra-
dition (and so much else) coming from the West;89
and furthermore, contexts for hands like the one we
are discussing are seen repeatedly in twelfth- and thir-
teenth-century Cambodian and Thai sculptures.90 In
conjunction, the practices in these two important and
widely separated regions suggest that it is hardly far-
fetched to see our hand as having originated from
such a statuette.

EARLIER MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC EXAMPLES

Bringing us full circle, the four T-configuration belt fit-
tings in figs. 9a–9d are of the same general type as that
1982 milestone, the one from the Nishapur excavations
(see the beginning of this article). The form of these
fittings is one that allows for an elegant suspension of
straps from the belt; these pendant straps typically have
further fittings attached to them and may also carry a
warrior’s “necessaries”—small pouches, etc.91

This and numerous other types of Islamic jade fit-
tings of the period, as well as related examples from
China, have pairs of small holes drilled diagonally into
the back (see, e.g., fig. 9b), which meet to give an inter-
nal passage for wires or threads that secure the fitting
to the belt or strap.

The progression seen in figs. 9a–9d from most rec-
tilinear and sober to most elaborate, curvilinear, and
overly “artistic” in outline may perhaps represent a
chronological order of manufacture or may simply
reflect different locales of production or individual
workshop styles. In any case, it is unlikely that a great
span of time is represented by the “progression,” it
being probable that the type did not last much more
than a couple of centuries.

Without drawing specific conclusions, it is worth
remarking that these four fittings exhibit a remark-
able consistency in length and height: lengths of 4.2,
4.0, 4.0, and 4.0 cm; heights of 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7
This is particularly remarkable given the decided
variation in their profiles as well as in their method of
attachment to the belt. For the record, the piece exca-
vated at Nishapur was generally smaller in all dimen-
sions: 3.7 x 3.2 x 0.6 cm.

The al-Sabah Collection preserves an eleventh- or
twelfth-century East Iranian T-shaped copper-alloy pos-
tive matrix for forming fittings of silver and/or gold,
representing what must be the later end of the popu-
larly of the general type and showing its currency in
other media.

In fact, it is likely that the jade fittings of this form
are modeled on metal prototypes in the first instance.
While we imagine sumptuous gold belts in which such
pieces would have been set with large central cabocho-
cut stones (e.g., spinel, turquoise, or white jade), we
know relief-cast gilded silver and copper-alloy examples
with high hemispherical bosses, including one from a
tenth-century northern Chinese context; the al-Sabah
Collection preserves very similar pieces in a belt set that
may be of Islamic Central Asian origin.92

ADDENDUM: “ARCHEOLOGY” IN THE MARKET

As long ago as 1978, during a study trip to Afghan-
istan, I found that the dealers in the Kabul bazaar
often seemed to have specific knowledge about the
find places of objects and no reluctance to share this
information. They also showed no tendency to fabricate
such background nor to cite the names of famous places
in the trade, such as Ghazna or Nishapur. In the early
1990s, as I realized that many archeological art objects
were coming from Afghanistan, it seemed to me that
the correct course of action was to make the best of
a bad situation by trying to gain as much information
as possible about the place of origin of objects that
passed our purview.

Pursuant to this goal, we have over the years col-
lected from a great many owners hundreds of putative
origins for a wide variety of mostly Islamic objects, sys-
tematically soliciting, recording, and following up such
reported origins. With this sizable body of documenta-
tion, it becomes clear that there is a rather high degree
of internal consistency and good reason to give weight to most of these assertions. It should go without saying that we have always tried, in collecting and assessing this material, to intelligently and scientifically “consider the source,” cross-checking what we learn with other collected intelligence or any other knowledge we may already have, and so forth.

There has been a tendency in recent decades on the part of the scholarly and museum worlds to over-compensate by distrusting all assertions of origin but those irrefutably documented. But to discount anything said about origins or find spots by a vendor (or other person with reason to know) is to cut oneself off from this body of “documentation” that has, I believe, considerable weight in a large number of cases, including those here reported.

Therefore, since to do otherwise would constitute the withholding of potentially significant information—would be, in the end, unscientific—I herein append a list of the objects appearing in my illustrations, with the information that we have on the reported origins of each. Despite the severely reduced selection presented, the list will surely still make a powerful circumstantial case for the general picture of the East Iranian world as a major and prolific center of jade carving in the period before the advent of the Timurids. Obviously such a listing cannot be taken as fully representative statistically, not only because of the small sam-

Figs. 9a–9d. Four T-shaped belt fittings. a. (upper left): mottled gray jade, of low translucency (length 4.2 cm; height 3.6 cm; thickness 0.9 cm); b. (upper right): translucent mottled gray jade (length 4.0 cm; height 3.5 cm; thickness 1.2 cm); c. (lower left): translucent pale green jade simulant (length 4.0 cm; height 3.7 cm; thickness 0.8 cm); d. (lower right): translucent light green jade with russet areas (length 4.0 cm; height 3.4 cm; thickness 1.1 cm). All East Iranian world, ca. ninth–eleventh century AD (perhaps in the chronological order here listed). All al-Sabah Collection (LNS 379 HS, LNS 2680 J, LNS 1843 J, and LNS 609 J, respectively). LNS 609 J published in Keene, “Pre-Timurid Islamic Jades,” fig. 2. (Photo: courtesy of al-Sabah Collection)
ple presented, but also because of a myriad of factors that might affect it, including patterns of availability, preferences of sources, etc. Perhaps the most indicative aspect is that, within a sampling that overwhelmingly has an Afghanistan connection, certain localities recur with such regularity.

LIST OF OBJECTS APPEARING IN THE ILLUSTRATIONS, WITH PUTATIVE ORIGINS OF EACH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig.</th>
<th>Inv. No.</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Fig.</th>
<th>Inv. No.</th>
<th>Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LNS 380 HS</td>
<td>“Afghanistan”</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>LNS 334 HS</td>
<td>“Ghazna”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LNS 169 HS</td>
<td>“maybe Ghazna”</td>
<td>4a</td>
<td>LNS 1508 J a</td>
<td>“Peshawar market”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>LNS 2710 J</td>
<td>“Herat”</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>LNS 531 HS</td>
<td>“Mazar-i Sharif” (=Balkh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>LNS 2493 J</td>
<td>“Balkh”</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>LNS 2828 J</td>
<td>“Herat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>LNS 562 HS</td>
<td>“Afghanistan”</td>
<td>9a</td>
<td>LNS 379 HS</td>
<td>“Peshawar market”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b</td>
<td>LNS 2680 J</td>
<td>“Herat or Balkh”</td>
<td>9c</td>
<td>LNS 1843 J</td>
<td>“Mazar-i Sharif” (=Balkh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9d</td>
<td>LNS 609 J</td>
<td>“Peshawar market”</td>
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Examination of our table shows that, of a total of thirteen jades depicted in our nine figures (figs. 2 and 9c are in fact jade simulants), ten have putative origins in Afghanistan, with the remaining three reported to be from the Peshawar market. This is a radically truncated selection, but a generally similar pattern holds for the widest possible representation of pre-Timurid Islamic jades in the al-Sabah Collection. This is likely consistent with an overall picture of jade use in the pre-fifteenth century Islamic world, use that we see to be generally decreasing as one moves westward.93

It should be noted here, in connection with the above, that pieces said to be from the “Peshawar market” are overwhelmingly likely to be from Afghanistan. This allowance is applied on the basis of consistent reports from different sources, as well as the apparently low level of clandestine excavations in Pakistan.

Of our jades (and the simulants) that are reported to be from Afghanistan, three are said to be from Balkh, one from Herat or Balkh, two from Herat, and either two or one from Ghazna. Of those with less precise pedigrees, Afghanistan accounts for two, and (as indicated above) the Peshawar market for three. It should perhaps be stressed that no piece is left out of the putative origins detailed above.

Given the severely restricted range of pre-Timurid jades presented here (especially of those representing the Islamic epoch), it is desirable to suggest the categories of jade objects that are not encountered here (but nevertheless planned for our volume on jades). All the following are represented in the al-Sabah Collection, typically in multiples, belonging to different periods and incorporating different styles, and presenting a panoply of varieties, types, and subtypes. In addition to belt fittings (one type of which is represented by those in figs. 9a–9d), we may mention: strap-end fittings (numerous pieces in jade, as well as analogous silver and gold examples); hololithic buckles (in jade as well as agate, carnelian, rock crystal, and lapis lazuli); scabbard slides; sword pommels and other weapon fittings; other types of strap and harness fittings; other fittings of uncertain context (including larger pieces that appear to belong to architectural and/or furniture settings); a variety of functional items of undetermined purpose; chess and other gaming pieces; vessels (bowls, cups, etc.); pendants of various sorts; beads of different types; hololithic finger rings; seal-stones (for setting in finger rings, etc.); stamp seals; and small animal figurines, including elephants (of which there is also an example in white glass that imitates jade), two probable civets, pigs, rodents, and birds.

Al-Sabah Collection
Kuwait

NOTES

Author’s note of acknowledgment: As ever, I owe more gratitude than I can express to Sheikh Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, who for so many years has patiently patronized my efforts to develop appropriate presentations for the often challenging objects that he continues knowledgeably and excitedly to seek out.

Again as usual, my colleague at the al-Sabah Collection, Salam Kaoukji, has been integral to the development of my manuscript, helping in ways too numerous and too multifarious even to suggest. Her judgment in matters aesthetic, editorial, and art-historical have clarified issues and expression, tempered my excesses, and fed importantly into the accuracy, fullness, and soundness of this effort.

Additionally, I would like to name without further comment a number of individuals who have aided me in a variety of ways with matters directly leading to the result I have submitted. Each of them knows how he or she has helped, and each has my sincere gratitude. Begging forgiveness for any oversights, I list: Adel Adamova, Karl Baipakov, Anna Ballian, Manijeh Bayani, Sophie Budden, Sheila Canby, Stefano Carboni, Sara Clemence, Dominique Collon, Anna Contadini, Giovanni Curatola, Stanislaw J. Czuma, Massumeh Farhad, Christa Fischer, Kjeld von Folsach, Ian Freestone, V. D. Goryacheva, Ernst Grupe, Frances Halahan, Klaus-Peter Haase, Tohfa

**Bibliographical note:** My article, “Medieval Islamic Jades: Pre-Timurid Islamic Jade,” in _Hedeth al-Dar_ 12 (2001), published by the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Ministry of Information, State of Kuwait, unfortunately suffered critical errors in the matter of the illustrations, including the association of captions with individual figures. Therefore I refer herein to pieces illustrated in that article by their figure numbers as designated in the text of the article, not in the captions.

4. Ibid.

Robert Skelton, “Islamic and Mughal Jades,” in _Jade_, ed. R. Keverne (London: Anness Publishing, 1991), p. 369, n. 15, credits Pinder-Wilson with drawing his and other scholars’ attention to the passage in question from al-Biruni’s treatise on gemstones (see n. 6, below). For the record, the passages by Pinder-Wilson are as follows: “…it is al-Biruni who provides us with the most reliable information about jade. According to him, the Turks of the steppes invested jade with magical properties. It was an amulet which served as a powerful protection against attack by robbers. It could ward off thunder and lightning; and the tribal magicians used it to produce rain. He mentions, too, that the Turks carved from it ornaments for belts and saddles.” (“Rock Crystal and Jade,” p. 122); and “Al-Biruni states that jade is obtained from two riverbeds in the district of Khotan. From one of these comes a pure white jade and, from the other, jade of various colours ranging from grey to black. Known as the ‘victory stone,’ jade was used by the Turks to decorate their swords, saddles, and belts in the belief that its presence would aid in achieving victory over their opponents. Jade was also used for its curative properties in treating stomach disorders and eye diseases. Finally, jade was thought to ward off lightning, a claim which Al-Biruni was able to support by his own experiment. In more recent times, travellers in Iran reported that pieces of jade suspended on the outside of castle turrets caused thunderbolts to fall far distant.” (Jades from the Islamic World,” p. 36).


7. Translation by Salam Kaukij, Layla Musawi, and Manuel Keene, from al-Biruni, *Kitab al-jawahir* (1984), p. 198. Note that one here must stress the reading “finger rings and knife handles,” and not “seals and medall,” as Souren Melikian-Chirvani would have it (A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, “Precious and Semi-Precious Stones in Iranian Culture. 1: Early Iranian Jade,” _Bulletin of the Asia Institute_, New Series, 11 [1997, publ. year 2000]: 131). In actuality, al-Biruni’s phraseology, _al-khawātīm wa muwshī bi-sakākīn_, can refer only to finger rings (including seal-rings, from which root meaning the term is derived) and knife handles; and we know in amplitude that these are two of the most typical uses of jade in the Islamic world, early and late. Finally, T. Lentz and G. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles and Washington, DC, 1989), p. 221 include without emphasis a translation of this particular passage that agrees with our translation in its essentials, differing only slightly in choice of words.

8. “Pre-Timurid Islamic Jades,” April 22, 1998. This lecture was subsequently delivered in the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah lecture series (in Kuwait, an outreach activity of the al-Sabah Collection) on November 30, 1998; and a summary version, with thirteen color illustrations, was published in the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah newsletter for 2001: see “Bibliographical note,” above, with respect to this publication.


12. Ibid., caption to fig. 5–7, p. 100. Incidentally, those susceptible of being misled in the matter should ignore the comments of both Andrews and Ogden with respect to the otherwise well-established information on the sources of jade. Critical passages of both (Andrews, *Egyptian Jewellery*, p. 49; Ogden, *Jewellery of the Ancient World*, p. 100) represent misunderstandings of Lucas’s (*Egyptian Materials*, pp. 452–53) careful treatment of this matter.


16. According to Dominique Collon (whose kind efforts I wish to
specially acknowledge here), the British Museum preserves a second-millennium BC Mesopotamian jade seal (inv. no. ANE 89175 [piece cited by Melikian-Chirvani, “Early Iranian Jade,” p. 125 and n. 12]), which she described in her letter to me as “nephrite...First Kassite style...14th century BC.” Dr. Collon has further confirmed that the material of this seal was analyzed in the Department of Scientific Research of the British Museum. It was she as well who informed me that a drawing and a photographic reproduction of the seal’s impression are published in D. M. Matthews, Principles of Composition in Near Eastern Glyptics of the Later Second Millennium BC, Orbis Bibli- cus et Orientalis, Series Archaeologica (Freiburg: Schweitz und Goettingen, 1918), no. 118, but that the material of which the piece is made is not mentioned there. Furthermore, Dr. Collon indicated no awareness of the piece’s having otherwise been published.


24. See Monuments of Culture and Art of Kirghizia: Antiquity and Mid- dle Ages (in Russian), exh. cat. (Leningrad, 1983), nos. 260 and 261a, respectively. The al-Sabah Collection includes several pieces of the earring-pendant type, to be represented in the planned volume on jades.


27. That more parts of the corpus can turn up unexpectedly, previously unrecognized even in distinguished public collections, is shown by my experience of seeing two medieval eastern Islamic jades when, in November 2001, through the courtesy of the curators Anna Ballian and Mina Moraitou, I was taken to the storerooms of the Benaki Collection in Athens. The first (inv. 6128, no. 1) is of the Ilkhanid period and is closely similar to two pieces in the al-Sabah Collection (LNS 1966 J b and 2113 J), to be published in the upcoming jades volume. The second (inv. 6128, no. 2) is particularly interesting: a medieval Islamic jade fitting in the form of a highly stylized elephant, it constitutes for me a thus-far unique example. Incidentally, the piece, which probably dates to the thirteenth century, would be right-side-up for the wearer (but not others) if slid onto the belt with the suspension loop downward; alternatively, it may have been affixed to a sword scabbard with its loop upward to receive the suspension strap coming from another fitting on the belt. It is decorated with an arabesque design in deeply cut lines, which probably were inlaid with gold, although none was visible to me when examining the piece.

28. See especially Manuel Keene, “The Lapidary Arts in Islam: An Underappreciated Tradition,” in Expedition 24, 1 (Fall 1981), passim. On the status of the region as a lapidary center in ancient times, see following sections of this paper, including n. 59.

29. We have discussed above the signet ring of Tutankhamun (third quarter of the fourteenth century BC), as well as other reports of Egyptian objects made of jade.


31. Sarianidi, Tillya-tepe, cat. nos. 4.8 and 4.34, especially color pls. 159, p. 215, and 161, pp. 218–19 (for cat. 4.8); and pl. 98, p. 155 (for cat. 4.34). Note that the caption for pl. 98 is misleading, suggesting that the plaque of interest to us for the sake of the dragon is cat. no. 4.4 rather than 4.34.

32. Sarianidi, Tillya-tepe, p. 42. The reader should be aware that the publication cited here and in nn. 30–31 above is one of two 1985 editions of this work, the other published solely in Leningr- ad. The wording varies between the two editions, such that, e.g., the quotation of the passage about the Bactrian dragon type may appear inaccurate to anyone consulting the Leningrad edition.


34. See Adam T. Kessler, Empires Beyond the Great Wall: The Heri- tage of Genghis Khan (Los Angeles: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 1993), fig. 35, p. 62, where the pierced-work jade earring plaque on the right features a dragon closely related to those of Tiliya Tepeh.

35. No properly scientific determination of the material of the roundel has been carried out, but both its appearance (especially the high translucency) and its softness (well below the hardness of jade) mark it as a simulant. It is quite possibly the material, known locally as “Shah Maqud” stone, that is exploited in the vicinity of Qandahar for Muslim prayer beads.

36. One very early example is a turquoise-inlaid gold roundel with a frontal bearded bull’s head. This is in the Shumei Family Collection; its cataloguers refer to it as a “lid” and attribute it to western Central Asia, late third or early second millennium BC. (See Ancient Art from The Shumei Family Collection, cat. of an exh. in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, June–Sept. 1996, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nov. 1996–Feb. 1997 [New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996], cat. no. 8, with text by Kim Benzol; and Miho Museum: South Wing, exh. cat. [Shigiraki: Miho Museum, 1997], fig. 1, p. 325, with text by Martha L. Carter.) More similar to the depiction on the jade-simulant roundel, and demonstrating the far-flung status of such images, is a silver roundel from Noin-Ula, north-
ern Mongolia, preserved in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. In this Hunnic piece, dated to the first century AD (see Vladimir N. Basilov, ed., Nomads of Eurasia [Los Angeles: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 1989], illustration on p. 52), the treatment of the face and the horns is strongly reminiscent of our roundel. Examples from Afghanistan include two gold elephant-head “spouts of a now lost glass vessel” from Bagram of the same period to which we attribute the jade simulant roundel (see Mortimer Rice and Rowland, Kabul Museum, ill. 79, and Rowland’s comments in the notes regarding the probable “non-Indian origin” of the pieces).

37. See Sarianidi, Tillya-tepe, no. 4.9, and especially color pls. 164–65 (pp. 222–23) and text on pp. 34–44. There is also in the al-Sabah Collection a heavy gold plaque depicting just such a mouflon, set with turquoises; the face is treated in a way highly comparable to that of the jade-simulant roundel. Technically and artistically it is very closely related to a sizable number of the pieces from Tillya Tepe and, especially in the handling of the pieces from Tillya Tepe and, especially in the handling of the “folded” body, reveals its affinities with Eurasian “steppe art.”

38. Sarianidi, Tillya-tepe, cat. nos. 4.8 and 4.9—see color pls. 159–63, 166.

39. See Trousdale, Long Sword and Scabbard Slide, and “Kushan Scabbard Slide,” both passim. It should be noted here that Trousdale’s monumental, densely laden, and enormously useful Long Sword and Scabbard Slide is essential for anyone who would understand the movement of peoples and sword types, and the fittings and methods of suspension of the latter. We should mention here that several examples of sword slides in jade, as well as others in Afghan lapis lazuli and local Afghan jades, are in the al-Sabah Collection, and their publication is planned.

40. Trousdale, Long Sword and Scabbard Slide, p. 2.

41. See Trousdale, especially “Kushan Scabbard Slide,” p. 28 (specifically about the scabbard slide).

42. Two examples of copper-alloy quillons of the type of LNS 169 HS are also published by Trousdale (Long Sword and Scabbard Slide, fig. 37).

43. See Trousdale, Long Sword and Scabbard Slide, p. 114.

44. See, e.g., S. Howard Hansford, Chinese Carved Jades (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), pl. 53B; and Jessica Rawson, Chinese Jade from the Neolithic to the Qing (London: British Museum, 1995), no. 217.

45. See, in Grigore Arbore Popescu, Chiara Silvi Antonini, and Karl Baipakov, eds., L’uomo d’oro: La cultura delle steppe del Kazakhstan dall’età del bronzo alle grandi migrazioni, exh. cat. (Milan: Electa, 1998), no. 387, p. 201, a dagger all of iron (including the downswep, butterfly-like forged guard), from “Pristan’ Baty, kurgan 6,” dated to the fifth to fourth century BC; and ibid., no. 331, p. 187, a dagger and scabbard ornamented with gold, with a forged iron quillon block of “fat” proportions, which is simpler (but unmistakably of the generic type), from “Kurgan Issyk, comprensorio del Semiret’e,” of the same date. The general approach is seen with special clarity in the case of a long dagger from the Varna district in present-day Bulgaria (dated to the seventh century BC), the iron quillon block in question exhibiting pronounced forging marks and having a profile roughly equivalent to the type represented by LNS 169 HS, but vertically flipped (see Ivan Marazov, ed., Ancient Gold: The Wealth of the Thracians, Treasures from the Republic of Bulgaria [New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997], nos. 154–55).

46. Indeed, according to Trousdale (Long Sword and Scabbard Slide), “all known scabbard slides from central and western Asia and Europe...are unornamented” (p. 109). The following are representative examples of decorated Chinese quillons of the type, and may suffice to convey the situation (for brevity I adopt Trousdale’s “class” designations of decoration): “geometric class,” represented in S. Howard Hansford, jade, Essence of Hills and Streams: The Von Oertzen Collection of Chinese and Indian Jades (Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London: Purnell and Sons, 1969), cat. B51; in John Ayers and Jessica M. Rawson, Chinese Jade throughout the Ages, exh. cat. (London: Oriental Ceramic Society, 1975), no. 159; and in Rawson, Neolithic to Qing, no. 217; and “hydra class,” in Ayers and Rawson, Chinese Jade, no. 158 (both sides illustrated, albeit in different places in the volume).

47. From Uzbekistan (ancient Sogdia), for instance, comes the recently published example of a dagger with jade quillon block like LNS 169 HS rusted in place, excavated in a tomb that also contained a jade scabbard slide (see G. A. Pugachenkova, E. V. Rveteladze, and Kyuzo Kato, eds., Antiquities of Southern Uzbekistan [Tashkent and Tokyo: The Ministry of Culture of Uzbek SSR and Soka University Press, 1991], cat. nos. 251 and 253 respectively, attributed to the “1st–3rd centuries”; this find is cited in E. V. Rveteladze, “Gopatshah of Bactria [a Nephrite Plate with Depictions of a Bactrian Ruler and a Bull-Man],” Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia 4, 4 [Dec. 1997]: 305).

48. In this connection, note Trousdale (Long Sword and Scabbard Slide, p. 111), writing about a sword and its fittings found and recorded on the lower Volga in the nineteenth century: “The wooden grip into which the tang was inserted was ornamented at its upper end with a chalcedony disk pommel secured to the grip by a copper nail, the head of which was adorned with a small piece of violet-colored glass paste... The tomb belonged to the late Sarmatian period, that is, third to fourth century.” There were as well (in China at least) iron swords with long narrow tangs that could have served to peg or planish the pommel to the end of the tang (see Trousdale, Long Sword and Scabbard Slide, p. 54, bottom, and fig. 36b). Chinese examples of decorated disc pommels, for comparison with the non-Chinese plain ones, include the following: “geometric class,” represented in Hansford, The Von Oertzen Collection, cat. B41; “geometric class” with a central openwork griffin, in Ayers and Rawson, Chinese Jade, no. 157; “combination grain and geometric class,” in Hansford, The Von Oertzen Collection, cat. B43 and C13; Ayers and Rawson, Chinese Jade, no. 156; and Rawson, Neolithic to Qing, nos. 21.3 and 21.4; “geometric class” with central rosette, in Rawson, Neolithic to Qing, no. 21.5; “hydra class,” in Hansford, The Von Oertzen Collection, cat. B40; and Rawson, Neolithic to Qing, no. 21.6.

49. Trousdale, Long Sword and Scabbard Slide, p. 71.

50. Ibid., especially pp. 68–71.

51. For illustrations, see Rveteladze, “Gopatshah of Bactria,” figs. 1–3.

53. Litvinskiy and Pichikiyan, “Temple of the Oxus,” p. 163, offer only “teeth inlaid in paste, and spectacle-eyes,” whereas the catalogue Oxus, pp. 34–35, describes both the teeth and the eyes as “con incrostazioni di lasurite.” One can see in the catalogue illustration that the centers of the eyes contain decomposed material, and the spaces between the lapis lazuli teeth seem extremely likely to have been filled with a contrasting material, now lost, as are many of the lapis lazuli pieces.

54. For a gold piece of ca. 600 BC that shares aspects of this jade pommel, see Het Rijk der Scythen, cat. of an exh. at De Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam, and the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, 1993 (Zwolle: Uitgeverij Waanders, 1993), cat. no. 3 (Hermitage inv. no. Ku 1909 1/73); and for a steppe-art jade plaque sharing significant elements with the pommel (including the exaggerated round eye and the penchant for displaying large pointed teeth bared along the jaw), see Rawson, Neolithique to Qing, cat. 23.2 (also published by Angus Forsyth, “Post-Neolithic to Han Chinese Jades,” in Keverne, Jade, fig. 26, p. 104). We cite a few more examples in various media of steppe-lands art in which such “toothy side views” are featured, to give a sense of their antiquity and prevalence in this tradition: Véronique Schultz, Les Scythes et les nomades des steppes, VIIe siècle avant J.-C.–Ier siècle après J.-C. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994), fig. 189, a bronze harness plaque in the form of a rolled-up panther, “VIIe–VIe siècle [BC]” (also seen in detail, p. 18, and on front of dust cover); Schultz, Les Scythes, fig. 8, pp. 20–21, a gold plaque in the form of a panther, “VIIe siècle [BC]”; Jenny F. So and Emma Banker, Traders and Raiders on China’s Northern Frontier (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1995), cat. no. 28, a “tinned” bronze plaque, “Northwest China, 5th century B.C.”; cat. fig. 30.2, p. 116, a bronze “tiger yoke ornament...5th century B.C.”; cat. no. 50, a bronze belt plaque, “Northwest China, 4th century B.C.”; Schultz, Les Scythes, fig. 204, a wooden bridle fitting with feline head and a raptor, “IVe–IIIe siècle [BC].”

55. Specifically “Tang dynasty or later”: see Rawson, Neolithique to Qing, no. 28.3.


59. The ancient achievement in this regard is extensively represented in the material from the Taxila excavations (now in the Taxila Museum), for which see especially Horace C. Beck, The Beads from Taxila, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India 65 (Calcutta: Government of India Press, 1941; repr. Delhi: Swati Publications, 1991), to which the citations in this note refer unless otherwise specified. (Curiously, this author does not use the classic mathematical terms for the various regular and semi-regular polyhedra encountered.) From this publication, one may here single out several beads in the form of the icosahedron (one of the “Platonic” solids) and the quasi-icosahedron (these variously of rock crystal, carnelian, agate, and jasper, and dated by Sir John Marshall between the third century BC and the first century AD—see pls. III.28, IV.36, V.19, and VI.37); a bead in the form of the (small) rhombicuboctahedron (one of the “Archimedean” solids)—this of green jasper (but with an exact mate of pale carnelian in the al-Sahabah Collection), dated by Marshall to the first century BC—see pl. VI.40; a bead in the form of a cuboctahedron (one of the “Archimedean” solids), but constituting a unique instance in which the faces have been broken up by deep grooves in such a way as to create the net of the rhombic dodecahedron (the piece reported by Beck as “green glass,” but taken by the present author, on seeing it in the Taxila Museum, as green jasper), dated by Marshall to the third century BC—see pl. IX.11; and several beads in the form of complexly and regularly faceted “barrels” (including garnet, agate, chalcedony, and carnelian), dated by Marshall between the third century BC and the first century AD (excluding an instance in which both the fourth century BC and the first century AD are given for one and the same bead)—see pls. II.41–II.43 and VI.30. The continuing predilection for sophisticated faceting in this milieu is attested as well by representations in sculpture, one particularly remarkable monument of which will have to suffice here. A Gandhara bodhisattva figure in the Peshawar Museum, of “circa second half of second or third century AD” (see Caroly Lyn Woodford Schmidt, “The Sacred and the Secular: Jewellery in Buddhist Sculpture in the Northern Kushan Region,” in The Jewels of India, ed. Susan Stronge [Bombay: Marg Publications, 1995], fig. 12) wears strands of beads that are not simply treated as faceted but that, when studied in detail, reveal themselves to be both perfectly believable and truly remarkable. The most significant individual bead (the upper one of the strand that comes from over the left shoulder and runs under the animal heads of the large chain necklace) is in the form of the great rhombicuboctahedron (or truncated cuboctahedron, an “Archimedean” solid). To my knowledge, no other artifact of this form has been recorded. And finally, architectural forms of the region in pre-Islamic times also exhibit a fascination with polyhedral structures, as seen in the rock-cut “caves” of Bamiyan (seventh–ninth centuries AD): see Deborah Klimgburg-Salter, The Kingdom of Bamiyan: Buddhist Art and Culture of the Hindu Kush (Naples: Istituto Universitario Ori- entale, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici, and Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989), figs. 71, 93, 94, and 96.

50. Most definitively presented in Keene, “Lapidary Arts,” passim. See also Jenkins and Keene, Islamic Jewelry, especially nos. 8a–c, 8a–d, 11, 20b and c; and Manuel Keene and Marilyn Jenkins, “Dhuwal, ii, Jewel, Jewelry,” The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Ed., vol. 7 (Leiden 2004, orig. publ. 1981, 1982), p. 254 and fig. 14. Actually, one sees in the region a continuing awareness and use of such sophisticated polyhedral forms through the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, as exemplified by the following examples: from sixteenth-century India, carved on a tomb in Bidar, published in G. Yazdani, Bidar: Its History and Monuments (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), pl. CXI; from seventeenth-century India, the yellow sapphire of Shah Jahan, represented in a miniature in the Freer Gallery of Art, reproduced in, e.g., Linda York Leach, Moghal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library (London:
Scorpion Cavendish Ltd., 1995), vol. 1, no. 3.67, p. 456; from seventeenth-century India, three of the rock crystal mounts forming the grip of a luxurious ankush, or elephant-goad, in Manuel Keene (with Salam Kaouji), *Treasure of the World: Jewelled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals*, exh. cat. (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), no. 5.7; and from eighteenth-century Iran, an enameled pendant in the al-Sabah Collection, included as a supplementary piece in the al-Sabah Collection’s currently traveling exhibition “Treasury of the World: Jewelled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals” (Section 11, “Gemstone Forms,” S11.48, inv. no. LNS 2233 J).

61. See n. 60, above. The piece is part of the supplementary material to Section 8, “Three-dimensional Expressions” (S8.1, inv. no. LNS 351 HS).

62. See Mortimer Rice and Rowland, *Kabul Museum*, ill. 78.


65. For good color reproduction of a drinking scene in eighth-century painted dadoes from a palace excavated at Panjikent (near Samarkand), in which a seated man drinks an airborne stream of wine that issues from the mouth-spool of an antelope-headed rhyton, see Alexander J. Kossolapov and Boris I. Marshak, *Murals Along the Silk Road* (St. Petersburg: Formica, 1999), pl. 6 and front cover (also illustrated in A. M. Belenizki, *Mittelasiens: Kunst der Sogden* [Leipzig, 1980], fig. 55). The rhyton from the mural is reproduced in Annette L. Juliano and Tiliya Tepe: see Sarianidi, *Tilya-tepe*, cat. no. 2.4 (color pls. 105, 107) and 4.1 (color pl. 124). Incidentally, one may, despite differences of scale, material, etc., profitably compare, for proportions and handling, the agate feline head in the British Museum with the lions of the wonderful belt from Tiliya Tepeh (Sarianidi, *Tilya-tepe*, cat. no. 4.2, color pls. on pp. 151–54).

66. This has generally been thrown in with certain of the glasses found at Begram, and was indeed taken to be glass: see J. Hackin et al., *Mémoires de la délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan 11: Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Begram* (Paris, 1954), no. 121, figs. 270–73—the first publication of the object, and its most extensive illustration—and Madeleine Hallade, review article, “J. Hackin, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Begram (ancienne Képhi)* (1939–1940),” *Arts Asiatiques* 2, 3 (1956), caption to ill., p. 237. Rowland (in Mortimer Rice and Rowland, *Kabul Museum, p. 17*) describes it as “engraved crystal,” and otherwise of “crystalline fabric,” but his discussion still centers on glasses, and he still considers it as a “little masterpiece of Alexandrian workmanship.”

67. For examples carved in carnelian as necklace terminals, see Hoffman and Davidson, *Greek Gold*, no. 48; other good examples of such antelopes similarly handled by artists include nos. 53 and 57. (Hoffman dates none of the comparable examples outside the fourth to third century BC.) My attribution of the Xi’an agate rhyton to the Hellenistic period was reached independently, before I became aware of Parlasca’s publication (K. Parlasca, “Ein hellenistisches Achat-Rhyton in China,” *Arbeiten aus der Kunstsammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin* 37 [1975]), where the same attribution of period if not of region had been proposed.


69. My familiarity with and focus on this object have been greatly aided by kind permission of British Museum curators Sheila Canby and Venetia Porter, and my work has been much enabled by facilities arranged for and studies carried out by Susan La Niece and Ian Freestone of the Department of Scientific Research of the same institution.

70. See Martin Lerner and Steve Kossak, *The Arts of South and Southeast Asia* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), fig. 6, p. 22.

71. On the matter of ancient inlaid eyes, see Lucas, *Egyptian Materials*, chap. 7: “Inlaid Eyes” (pp. 120 ff.) and material there cited.

72. This is done with turquois and carnelian in the material from Tillya Tepeh: see Sarianidi, *Tilya-tepe*, cat. nos. 2.4 (color pls. 105, 107) and 4.1 (color pl. 124). Incidentally, one may, despite differences of scale, material, etc., profitably compare, for proportions and handling, the agate feline head in the British Museum with the lions of the wonderful belt from Tillya Tepeh (Sarianidi, *Tilya-tepe*, cat. no. 4.2, color pls. on pp. 151–54).

73. For accounts of rock crystal and other hardstone objects sent from this area to the Tang court as royal gifts, see Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of the T’ang Exotics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), passim, and see especially p. 227: “This quality [perfect clarity], along with unusually fine workmanship, will have enabled by facilities arranged for and studies carried out by Susan La Niece and Ian Freestone of the Department of Scientific Research of the same institution.

74. Teng Shu-p’ing, *Hindustan Jade*, p. 75.

75. For accounts of rock crystal and other hardstone objects sent from this area to the Tang court as royal gifts, see Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of the T’ang Exotics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), passim, and see especially p. 227: “This quality [perfect clarity], along with unusually fine workmanship, will have characterized the objects of crystal imported into T’ang, such as...drinking cups...which came to T’ang as royal gifts from Samarkand several times in the eighth century…and a crystal cup sent by Kapiša [Begram]...” (my italics).
The availability of raw material in the region is attested by two medieval Islamic authors familiar with this part of the eastern Iranian world. See Yaqtî al-Rûmî (Shihâb al-Dîn Abî ʾAbd Allâh Yaqtî b. ʿAbd Allâh al-Rûmî), Muʾjam al-buldân (Beirut: Dâr Sâdîr, 1395/1977), p. 360: according to this author’s early-thirteenth-century testimony, the rock crystal of Badakhshan was "of great purity." This source of the stone is also mentioned by al-Birûnî in the 1040s (Kitâb al-jawâhir, p. 184); he indicated that the material was plentiful in the Wâkhan Valley-Badakhshan region, but said that it was "not exported." Exactly what "we are to make of the latter comment is uncertain."

See Sarianidi, *Tîlîn-tîpo*, color pl. 158, p. 214 (cat. no. 4.8).

Notably, wooden architectural members documented in the market, probably dating to about the seventh to ninth century AD, which were carved in low relief with a series of column and capital motifs, the latter taking a form quite analogous with that of our buckle half.


See *The Treasures of the Golden Horde* (in Tatar, Russian, and English), cat. of an exh. organized by the Hermitage and the State Historical Museum (St. Petersburg: Slavîa, 2000), cat. nos. 302 and 303—and note that in the color plate on p. 79, there is a mixing of the halves of the two buckles, which are slightly different.

*Golden Horde*, cat. nos. 134 and 135.

See, e.g., Rawson, *Neolidic to Qing*, no. 25.31, attributed to the "Qing dynasty, 18th century AD." This piece works in exactly the same manner as the previously described examples from the medieval Iranian world, the completed "image" here being, rather than a single animal, a rectangular plaque carved in relief with a composition featuring a pair of dragons.

See Jenkins and Keene, *Islamic Jewellery*, cat. no. 1b, of silver set with carnelian, excavated at Nishapur. A beautiful hololithic jade example of this form, dating to the tenth or eleventh century, is in the al-Sabah Collection and was illustrated in color in Keene, *Islamic Jewellery*, cat. no. 12. For in situ views, drawings, etc., of the wall painting, see Charles K. Wilkinson, *Nishapur: Some Early Islamic Buildings and Their Decorations* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), figs. 2.38–2.41.

For the "early Liao" set (from a tomb dated AD 595), see Kesler, *Heritage of Genghis Khan*, fig. 60, p. 97 (representative samples illustrated in line drawings). The al-Sabah set (inv. no. 2860 J a–q) appears in color in the auction catalogue Christie’s London, *Islamic Art and Manuscripts*, May 1, 2001, lot 341, where it is described (without argument or comparison material) as "probably North East Persia, 10th/11th Century.”

This does not indicate that jade use was generally unknown in central and "near-western" Islamic lands. At the beginning of this article we cited reports of jades from Yemen and Libya (see Rogers, *Islamic Art and Design*, p. 149, quoted above). Some sense of the situation to the west of Iran can be gleaned from the eleventh-century Kitâb al-hadîyâ wa ʾl-tuḥaf (Book of Gifts and Rarities). Among a wealth of descriptions of astounding precious stone and hardstone objects are many of objects made of and adorned with, e.g., al-yash b-al-abyad, doubtless referring to white jade rather than to Jasper, the other meaning for the word yashh, but unthinkable in this context. See, e.g., articles 99, 381, 400, 402, and 407, in both al-Qâdî al-Rashîd b. al-Zubayr, *Kitâb al-hâkâhâʾir wa ʾl-tuḥaf*, ed. Muhammad Hamîd Allâh, (Kuwait, 1959, repr. Kuwait, 1984), and Ghâdâ al-Hijjâwî al-Qâdîmî, *Book of Gifts and Rarities (Kitâb al-hadîyâ wa al-tuḥaf): Selections...
Compiled in the Fifteenth Century from an Eleventh-Century Manuscript on Gifts and Treasures (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), the latter consisting of a translation of the former with added introduction, annotations, glossary, appendices, and indices. Many of these descriptions refer to Fatimid royal treasures dispersed in the time of famine and disorder in the reign of al-Mustansir (in the 1060s and 1070s AD). Even here, such material likely represents the influence of Turkic practice, felt either directly due to the large and important contingents of Turkic troops in Egypt, or indirectly, emanating from Persian and Persianized territories. One of the most remarkable of these descriptions (article 99) is that of a saddle featuring heavy cast-gold elements opulently set with fine, gemmy white *yashb*, which, to reiterate, can only be jade, since white was the most desirable color for jade, whereas white jasper is practically unknown and was certainly never prized in the same way; needless to say, the saddle’s claimed provenance from Alexander the Great via the Byzantine emperor is to be regarded as apocryphal, although it is quite possible that Alexander had horse trappings with jade mounts.