



TURKMEN JEWELRY

SILVER ORNAMENTS FROM THE MARSHALL AND MARILYN R. WOLF COLLECTION

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Silver Ornaments from the Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf Collection

Layla S. Diba

With contributions by

Stefano Carboni and Jean-François de Lapérouse



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

DISTRIBUTED BY YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, NEW HAVEN AND LONDON

Published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Mark Polizzotti, Publisher and Editor in Chief

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Jane S. Tai, Image Acquisition and Permissions Specialist

Edited by Kate Norment

New photography of objects in the Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf
Collection and in The Metropolitan Museum of Art is by Anna-Marie
Kellen, The Photograph Studio, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Additional photography credits appear on p. 248.

Book design by Steven Schoenfelder

Typeset in Warnock Pro

Printed on 150 gsm Creator Silk

Separations by Professional Graphics, Inc., Rockford, Illinois

Printed and bound by Graphicom Srl, Verona, Italy

Front jacket illustration: Detail of crown,

late 19th–early 20th century (no. 5)

Back jacket illustration: Teapot-shaped ornament,

late 19th–early 20th century (no. 181)

Frontispiece: Pectoral disc ornament, 19th century (no. 80)

Page vi: Cordiform pendant, mid–late 19th century (no. 47)

Page 2: Triangular amulet holder, late 19th century (no. 129)

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art

1000 Fifth Avenue

New York, New York 10028

metmuseum.org

Distributed by

Yale University Press, New Haven and London

yalebooks.com/art

yalebooks.co.uk

Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-1-58839-415-6 (hc: The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

ISBN 978-0-300-12404-0 (hc: Yale University Press)

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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

It is my great pleasure to introduce this groundbreaking publication on Turkmen silver ornaments from the Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf Collection. This volume significantly advances the scholarship on the arts and culture of nineteenth-century Central Asia and Iran. For the first time, the Turkmen and Kazakh tribal jewelry and ornaments of this region are discussed within the framework of Islamic art history. The breadth and significance of this tradition are examined in detail in the introductory essay and catalogue entries by Islamic art scholar Layla S. Diba, and the visual splendor of the works is fully revealed in more than two hundred color images. A technical essay by conservator Jean-François de Lapérouse is of critical importance in documenting both the techniques and materials employed by Turkmen and Central Asian silversmiths in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Through the Wolfs' generosity and promised gift of more than 250 objects, The Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection of Islamic art will now strongly represent the tribal as well as the urban cultural traditions of Central Asia and Iran in the nineteenth century. With this acquisition, the Museum will also possess the largest holdings of Turkmen jewelry in the Western hemisphere.

This important project was conceived during the tenure of my predecessor, Philippe de Montebello, Director Emeritus of the Museum. It was initiated by Daniel Walker, former Patti Cadby Birch Curator in Charge, Department of Islamic Art, and brought to fruition by the curatorial staff of the department, led by Sheila Canby, Patti Cadby Birch Curator in Charge.

We have greatly benefited from the sage counsel, impressive scholarship, and generous support of Marshall and Marilyn Wolf, and we remain truly grateful for their contribution to this uncharted area of Islamic art and cultural study.

I am delighted that a selection of the works in this volume will be installed in the newly renovated Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia this fall and that these extraordinary objects will remain on permanent view for the Museum's visitors.

THOMAS P. CAMPBELL

Director

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the autumn of 1978 I took what would prove to be an unforgettable trip to Turkmen Sara in eastern Iran. To this day, memories of that journey conjure up images of an arid yet majestic landscape; of magnificent embroidered felt coverings adorning horses and donkeys; of piecework camel coverings for wedding ceremonies; of embroidered legging cuffs treasured as family heirlooms; and, most especially, of dignified women sharing their pride in their heritage by donning the treasured silver ornaments of their ancestors. The research trip was organized in conjunction with an exhibition of Turkmen silver and textiles from Iranian collections that was planned to open in December 1978 at the Negarestan Museum of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Iranian art in Tehran. For those who know their history, you will understand why the exhibition never took place and its accompanying catalogue was never published.

In 2000, during my tenure as Hagop Kevorkian Curator of Islamic Art at the Brooklyn Museum, I was instrumental in securing for the museum a promised gift of Iranian Turkmen silver ornaments and costumes from the collection of Monir Farmanfarmaian in memory of her late husband, Abol Bashar Farmanfarmaian. The Farmanfarmaians were among the original lenders to the Tehran exhibition, and the subsequent generosity of Monir Farmanfarmaian reinvigorated my interest in the subject of Turkmen contributions to the history of Islamic art.

A decade later Marshall and Marilyn Wolf, who were major supporters of Islamic art at the Brooklyn Museum, have given me the opportunity not only to return to this topic but to broaden the field of investigation to include Central Asia and the arts of the Kazakh tribes. The themes I have addressed in this publication and the approach I have adopted emerged in part from my background as an Islamicist and in part from extended conversations with Marshall and Marilyn about their collecting philosophy. The Wolfs are intrepid explorers and collectors, passionately involved in the acquisition and presentation of their collections of Islamic art. They acquired their collection of Turkmen silver ornaments over the course of more than thirty years. Whether traveling to Central Asia and buying directly in the bazaars of Bukhara and Samarqand or bargaining with determined dealers steeped in the local lore and market parlance of Istanbul or Tehran, the Wolfs have brought a broad knowledge of Islamic art and a sophisticated appreciation of the finest traditions

of Islamic design to all aspects of their collecting. I am deeply grateful to them for their encouragement of this publication, which we hope will break new ground in the appreciation of Turkmen and Central Asian art.

The list of acknowledgements for such a project is bound to be extensive. Within The Metropolitan Museum of Art I wish first to express my thanks to Philippe de Montebello, Director Emeritus of the Museum, and Thomas P. Campbell, Director.

In the Editorial Department, thanks are due to the late John P. O'Neill, former Publisher and Editor in Chief; Mark Polizzotti, Publisher and Editor in Chief; Gwen Roginsky, Associate Publisher and General Manager of Publications; Michael Sittenfeld, Managing Editor; Peter Antony, Chief Production Manager; Harriet Whelchel, Senior Editor; Jane S. Tai, Image Acquisitions and Permissions Specialist; Chris Zichello, Production Manager; Elizabeth Zechella, Editor; Robert Weisberg, Assistant Managing Editor; and especially to editor Kate Norment, for her patient, skillful, and devoted shepherding of the publication to its conclusion. In the Photograph Studio, I wish to thank Anna-Marie Kellen, Senior Photographer, for her exceptional images. Steven Schoenfelder's beautiful design for the book provided an understated, elegant showcase for the objects.

Jean-François de Lapérouse, Conservator, Objects Conservation, who wrote the technical essay in this volume, and his colleagues Adriana Rizzo, Associate Research Scientist, and Marco Leona, David H. Koch Scientist in Charge, Department of Scientific Research, have added immensely to our understanding of the technical and material aspects of Turkmen and Central Asian ornaments.

In the Museum's Department of Islamic Art, I wish to recognize the assistance of Sheila Canby, Patti Cadby Birch Curator in Charge; Walter Denny, Senior Consultant; Stefano Carboni, former Curator and Administrator, and now Director of the Art Gallery of Western Australia; Daniel Walker, former Patti Cadby Birch Curator in Charge; Navina Haidar Haykel, Associate Curator and Administrator; Stefan Heide-
mann, Associate Curator; Maryam Ekhtiar, Senior Research Associate; Annick Des Roches, Collections Manager; Michelle Ridgely, Associate for Administration; Melody Lawrence, Assistant for Administration; and Britt Eilhardt, former Assistant for Administration. I would also like to thank Helen C. Evans, Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator of Byzantine Art at the Museum.

For their invaluable research assistance, I am greatly indebted to numerous colleagues and friends, including Michael Bates, former Curator of Islamic Coins, American Numismatic Society; Abdullah Ghouhani, Epigraphy Consultant and former Fellow, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Robert D. McClesney, Professor Emeritus of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University; Morris Rossabi, Distinguished Professor of History at the City University of New York; Brooke Kamin Rapaport, independent curator; Haideh Sahim, Adjunct Instructor, Hofstra University; Hermann E. Rudolph, Senior Counsellor; Michael Franes, Research Associate, Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin, and Research Associate, Textile Museum, Washington, D.C.; Robert Chenciner, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford; Dr. Jon Thompson; Said Amir Arjomand, Distinguished Service Professor of Sociology, Stony Brook University; Peter B. Golden, Professor Emeritus and Academic Director, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Rutgers; and Dr. Allen Frank.

I am equally grateful for the insights of Turkmen silver jewelry collectors Iran Ala and Eskandar Firouz, Monir Farmanfarmanian, and Serga and Daniel Nadler.

Museum colleagues who were generous with their time and knowledge include Barry D. Wood, PhD, former Curator, Victoria and Albert Museum; Na'ama Brosh, Curator, Israel Museum; Ladan Akbarnia, Curator of Islamic Art, The British Museum; Andrzej Wawrzyniak, Director/Curator-in-Chief, Asia and Pacific Museum of Warsaw; Annette Krämer, Linden-Museum Stuttgart; and Nahla Nassar, Acting Curator and Registrar, Nasser D. Khalili Collection.

I would like to recognize with gratitude the tireless efforts of my talented and dedicated research assistant Sarah Malaika, Project Associate, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, as well as those of Caitlin McKenna and, in the early stages of the project, Lain Hart and Karen Lee.

Finally, I wish to thank my mother, Leona, and my son, Ahmad Reza, for their devotion, support, and advice throughout this long and immensely rewarding journey.

LAYLA S. DIBA

Note to the Reader

DATES The system employed for calculating dates, except where exact months and days are specified, is that used in the calendar conversion table in Jere Bacharach, *A Middle East Handbook* (Seattle, 1984). For exact dates (as in dated works of art), we have included both A.H. and A.D. dates.

TRANSLITERATION This publication employs terms from a range of languages. For transliterating Arabic, Persian, and some Turkish words, we have chosen to follow a modified version of the *IJMES* (*International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*) system for the sake of consistency. Diacritical marks have not been used. “Ayn” and “hamza,” both letters of the alphabet, are marked. The transliteration of Arabic words differs from that of Persian words for some letters, such as *dhal* and *waw*, and for a few additional consonants in Persian (see below).

While Arabic and Persian are old standardized literary languages, this is not the case with Turkestan Turkish. Central Asian Turkish languages did not become widespread literary written languages until the twentieth century. In the absence of a standardized language and alphabet for the whole of historical Turkestan, the spelling and transcription of Turkestan Turkish words might reflect—where appropriate—a Cyrillic or Persian-Arabic transliteration, or a modern literature.

Where a word in Arabic, Persian, or Turkish is found in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* with a standard English spelling, this form is generally used.

Vowels

	Arabic	Persian
Long	a	a
	u	u
	i	i
(alif maqsurā)	a	a
Short	a	a
	u	u
	i	i
Diphthongs	aw	au
	ay	ai

Other

The Persian silent “ه” is transliterated “a,” e.g. <i>Shahnama</i> .
The Persian silent “و” following “خ” is transliterated “khw,” e.g. <i>Khwarazm</i> .

Consonants

	Arabic	Persian
ء	,	,
ب	b	b
پ	—	p
ت	t	t
ث	th	s
ج	j	j
چ	—	ch
ح	h	h
خ	kh	kh
د	d	d
ذ	dh	z
ر	r	r
ز	z	z
ژ	—	zh
س	s	s
ش	sh	sh
ص	s	s
ض	d	z
ط	t	t
ظ	z	z
ع	‘	‘
غ	gh	gh
ف	f	f
ق	q	q
ك	k	k
گ	—	g
ل	l	l
م	m	m
ن	n	n
ه	h	h
و	w	v
ی	y	y

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Islamic Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art is one of the great repositories of works of art produced on the African and Asian continents (and the Iberian peninsula) since the seventh century A.D. The consistent focus of the collection, and its display, has been on what is commonly described as “courtly,” “high-end,” or “sophisticated” art made for and enjoyed by the upper echelons of Islamic society. In the storage areas, however, a remarkable percentage of the collection tells a more complete and complex story through a great array of objects from archaeological excavations, including domestic items that were created for the local suqs and acquired by anyone who could afford them, as well as fragments of textiles that once made up tunics, coats, turbans, curtains, covers, and even socks and undergarments.

The same can be said for the Islamic jewelry and jeweled objects in the collection: the use of high-carat gold, of the refined techniques of filigree and granulation, and of precious emeralds, rubies, and diamonds reminds us of the incredible wealth and ostentation of the Fatimid, Mughal, and Ottoman courts, while beautifully constructed silver amulet boxes, seal rings, lapis and carnelian necklaces, and pearl earrings speak to us about everyday life in Islamic society: births and circumcisions, weddings and dowries, trade and the hajj.

More often than not, collecting household objects and jewelry ornaments is a chance process—the latter because silver and gold works have a relatively short life when they are in constant use—and a low priority in the acquisitions policy of an institution. The holdings are inevitably scattered and uneven and do not form substantial groups of academic interest; they are rarely studied and published by curators, and are seldom on public view. The collections of the Department of Islamic Art are no exception.

Opportunities to rectify this situation are few and far between. I am thrilled to witness one stunning example, which has been achieved in a single sweep through the dedicated pursuit over many years, the spirit of adventure, the discerning eye, the impressive knowledge, the loving appreciation, and ultimately the great generosity of Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf. Thanks to their regular visits to Turkey and Central Asia and their avid enthusiasm as collectors, once they chose to focus on urban and tribal Turkmen jewelry they were able to amass an outstanding collection—

mostly silver ornaments, ranging from crowns to temple pendants, from necklets to amulet holders, from plait ornaments to pectorals—that is unrivaled outside the former Soviet republics and perhaps anywhere in the world. In the past few years a selection of more than 250 objects (all types of ornaments and other pieces as well) has been donated steadily by Marshall and Marilyn to the Department of Islamic Art with the specific purpose of filling gaps in the collection and making it more accessible to the public.

The couple's generosity and forward thinking, however, go well beyond their straightforward gift: their goal was to make both the specialists and the general public aware of this fascinating subject through groundbreaking research, scholarship, and presentation. In that spirit the present publication single-handedly brings scholarship in this particular field to a different level. Layla Diba was the ideal choice as the author of the text: her rigorous research is beautifully matched by her interpretive analysis of the historiographic, geographic, and cultural contexts of the Turkmen. A proper understanding of the materials and the technology used in these pieces is offered through her accurate observation and description of the works and the insightful essay provided by Jean-François de Lapérouse, a conservator at the Metropolitan. The photographic documentation of the works by Anna-Marie Kellen reflects the Museum's usual amazing standards.

In the relatively young field of Islamic art studies we continuously witness the progress of scholarship—often by leaps and bounds—in the various individual disciplines that make it such an exciting subject of research. From the point of view of a museum curator, which was my profession for many years, when academic progress in the field is prompted by generous patronage and by the enrichment of a public collection, it cannot get any better.

STEFANO CARBONI

Former Curator and Administrator, Department of Islamic Art,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Director, Art Gallery of Western Australia



RUSSIA

50°E

60°E

Aral Sea

Caucasus Mountains

DAGHESTAN

Ustyurt Plateau

KARAKALPAKSTAN

AZERBAIJAN

Caspian Sea

KHWARAZM

Khiva

Khanat

Khanate of Khiva

Amu Darya

Karakum Desert

TURKMENISTAN

Tabriz

Turkmenbashi

KHURASAN

Göktepe

Ashqabad

Mary (Merv)

Tejen

Gurgan (Astarabad)

Nishapur

Tehran

IRAN

Isfahan

Hera

Central Asia

KEY: • City ○ Modern capital — Silk Road

0
0

200 mi

500 km

Lambert conformal conic projection



70°E

KAZAKHSTAN

area of detail

Syr Darya

Khanate of Khugand

Kyzyl Kum Desert

Shymkent

Tashkent

KYRGYZSTAN

CHINA

XIANJIANG

Khotan

Hindu Kush Mountains

Kabul

Islamabad

Lahore

Multan

INDIA

PAKISTAN

AFGHANISTAN

UZBEKISTAN

Bukhara

Samarqand

Khanate of Bukhara

CONTENTS

vii	Director's Foreword
viii	Preface and Acknowledgments
xi	Note to the Reader
xii	Introduction STEFANO CARBONI
xiv	Map of Central Asia
3	Turkmen Jewelry: A Tradition Rediscovered LAYLA S. DIBA
39	Techniques of Turkmen and Central Asian Jewelry JEAN-FRANÇOIS DE LAPÉROUSE
Catalogue of the Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf Collection LAYLA S. DIBA	
47	Crowns and Headdress Ornaments
83	Dorsal Ornaments
115	Torso and Pectoral Ornaments
191	Armbands and Rings
209	Clothing and Objects
227	Notes
232	Glossary
234	Works Cited
238	Index
248	Photography Credits

TURKMEN JEWELRY