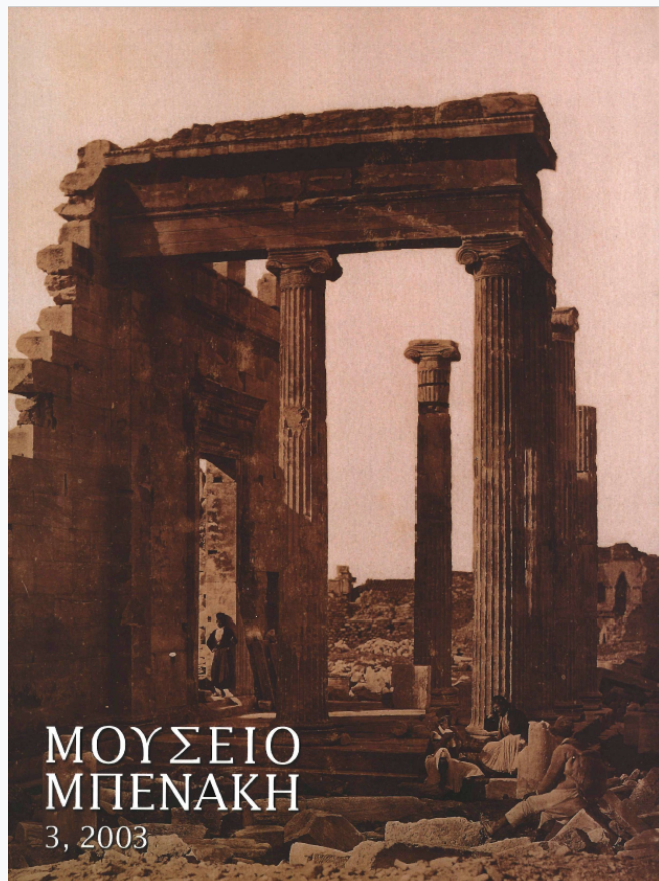


## Μουσείο Μπενάκη

Τόμ. 3 (2003)



### Αντικείμενα ανάρτησης

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## Hanging in suspense

I RECENTLY HAD to catalogue a massive Iznik hanging ornament, which led me to consider afresh what such objects were made for, and indeed whether they had any specific function apart from being simply decorative, which this one certainly was not (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The object in question is ovoid in shape, and 30 cm in diameter at the center, the overall height being 4.5 cm less. Typical of Iznik pottery of the third quarter of the sixteenth century, it is made of white frit ware in two sections luted together, with a slightly raised collar at one end and an open foot ring at the other, unglazed on the bottom. It is decorated in underglaze cobalt blue and viridian green with greenish-black outlines, all diffused in the firing process, with accents of bright red in relief. One half is richly decorated with hybrid flowers and winged palmettes on intersecting stems, whilst the other half is quite plain. This leads one to wonder which way up it was meant to be suspended? If it was indeed meant to be seen from below, then the undecorated half with its foot ring must have been uppermost, the unglazed ring simply serving as a support whilst it was being fired.

Hanging ornaments are commonly found in sixteenth century mosques, usually in conjunction with hanging lamps. The ornaments are used above the lamps, to gather the attachments and suspend them from a single chain. In this instance a richly embroidered tassel emerges from the lower hole, but this may well have been added later after the ornament had been separated from its parent lamp. Although a Turkish manuscript illumination shows both lamps and ornaments with tassels hanging independently from a hoop in a mosque,<sup>2</sup> they were

obviously meant to be paired, and indeed a number of examples can be cited where both elements were clearly the work of the same hand.

Chronologically the first Iznik hanging ornament must surely be an example now in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> Ovoid in shape, it is relatively modest in size and painted in underglaze cobalt blue, in the dark tones associated with the earliest Iznik phase of the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Its ornament also links it to this early group, as well as being entirely in white reserved on a dark blue ground.

Next in the series is an early sixteenth century example in the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 2),<sup>4</sup> ovoid in form and larger in scale. The combination of knotted decoration, flowers with spiral centers and symmetrical panels of interlacing arabesque leaves, again all reserved on a blue ground, link the hanging ornament to hanging lamps of the period, and in particular to one example in the Çinili Kiosk in Topkapı Sarayı<sup>5</sup> with which it may well once have been a partner.

A slightly later combination of hanging ornament and lamp are respectively in Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore and the Çinili Kiosk,<sup>6</sup> where the decoration is virtually identical. Both have inscriptions in the same hand between pairs of concentric blue rings, and the plain white ground of the lamp was once embellished with gold decoration, of which substantial traces remain; the ornament may well have been similarly decorated.

Fifty years later, in the third quarter of the sixteenth century, there are a number of hanging ornaments such as the one already described at the outset of this article<sup>7</sup> and another massive example in the British Museum<sup>8</sup>

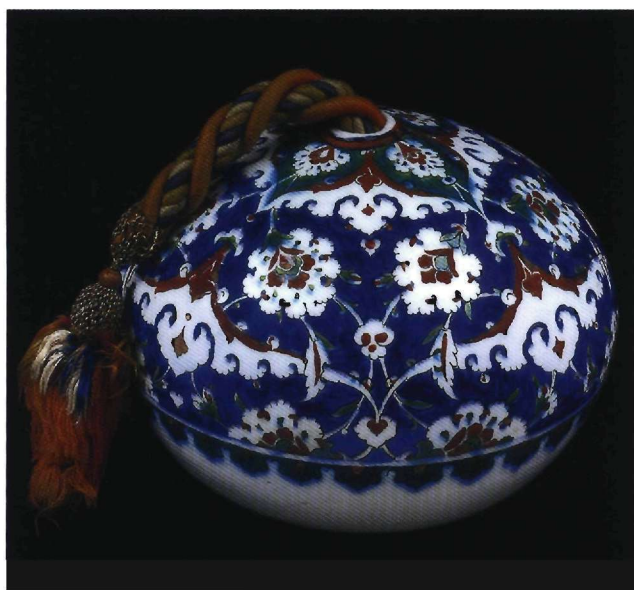


Fig. 1. Hanging ornament, Iznik, c. 1575-1585, d. 30.1 cm, h. 25.1 cm. Qatar, Museum of Islamic Art PO.017.97 (photo: R. Valencia).

Fig. 2. Hanging ornament, Iznik, early 16th century, d. 17.3 cm, h. 13.16 cm. London, Victoria & Albert Museum 337-1903.

of the same diameter, as well as a smaller pointed ovoid specimen.<sup>9</sup> These all belong to the group with cobalt blue, viridian green and relief red decoration, which appears to have come to fruition at Iznik at the end of Sultan Süleyman's reign and flourished during that of Selim II (1566-1574). Here the key evidence for change can be sought in the tiles decorating the mosque of Rüstem Pasha in Istanbul (c. 1560),<sup>10</sup> and a large and ugly hanging lamp<sup>11</sup> destined for the Süleymaniye mosque (1557), now in



Figs 3-5. Hanging ornament, Iznik, c. 1549 AD, d. 27.5 cm, h. 22.5 cm; lower hole: d. 4.4 cm; upper hole: d. 1.4 cm. Athens, Benaki Museum 9.

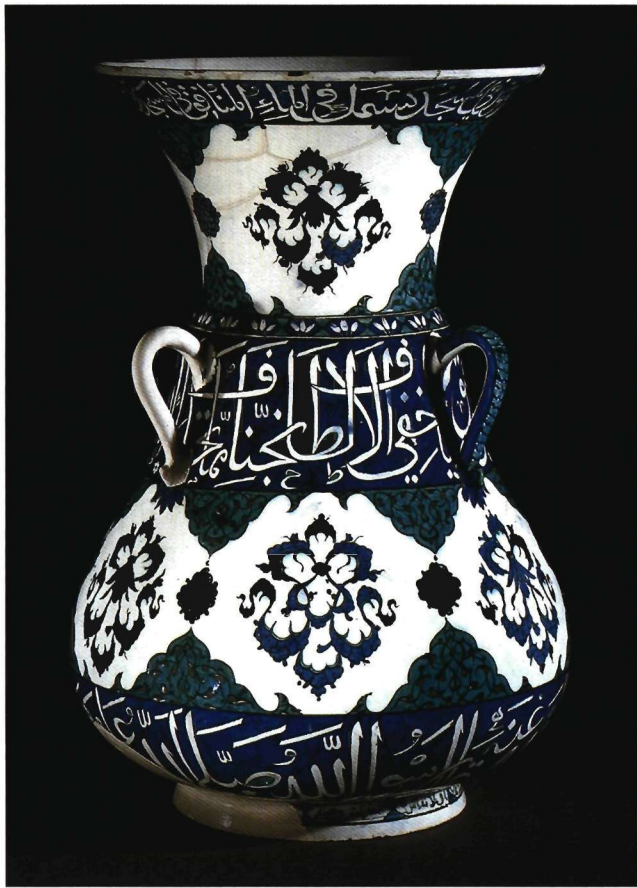


Fig. 6. Hanging lamps, Iznik, dated 956 AH/AD1549, and signed by the potter, Musli, h. 38.5 cm. London, British Museum 87.6-16.1.

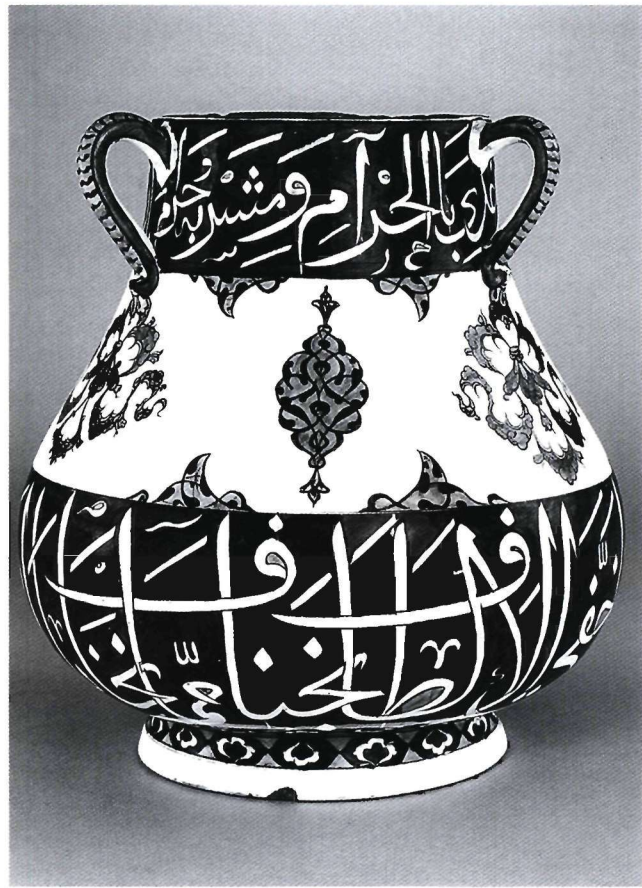


Fig. 7. Fragmentary hanging lamp, Iznik, c. 1549 AD, h. 26.5 cm (broken). London, British Museum G. 1983.57

the Victoria & Albert Museum. In both cases the relief red in these early examples still has a slightly transparent blood-like character. At the same time, some colours survive briefly from the previous Iznik repertoire, such as manganese purple, grey and olive green.

As Iznik declined in the seventeenth century, there appears to have been little demand for either lamps or hanging ornaments, although the Hakim Oğlu Ali Pasha mosque was decorated with the latter, probably made at Tekfur Saray.<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that the practice did not die out, but was vigorously pursued in a non-Moslem context, for the decoration of Orthodox and Armenian churches. Here the demand was supplied not from Iznik but Kütahya, whose independent ceramic industry greatly expanded during the early eighteenth century.

This, then is the social and chronological context to

which the magnificent hanging ornament in the Benaki Museum belongs, which is the focus of this study (figs 3, 4, 5). Not only is it directly linked to the most famous Iznik hanging lamp of all (fig. 6), which is inscribed with the name of the potter, Musli, the date (956 AH/AD 1549), and a direct reference to Iznik.<sup>13</sup> Now in the British Museum, it came from the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem in the mid-nineteenth century. A second, broken example is also in the British Museum (fig. 7), which was formerly in the Godman collection.<sup>14</sup> Of special interest is the date of Musli's lamp, 1549, for this falls within the last two decades of Süleyman's reign. As Caliph he was responsible for the maintenance of the Holy Places such as Mecca and Medina, and during this period the walls of the old city of Jerusalem repaired and the Dome of the Rock was completely refurbished.<sup>15</sup> To this end a band of

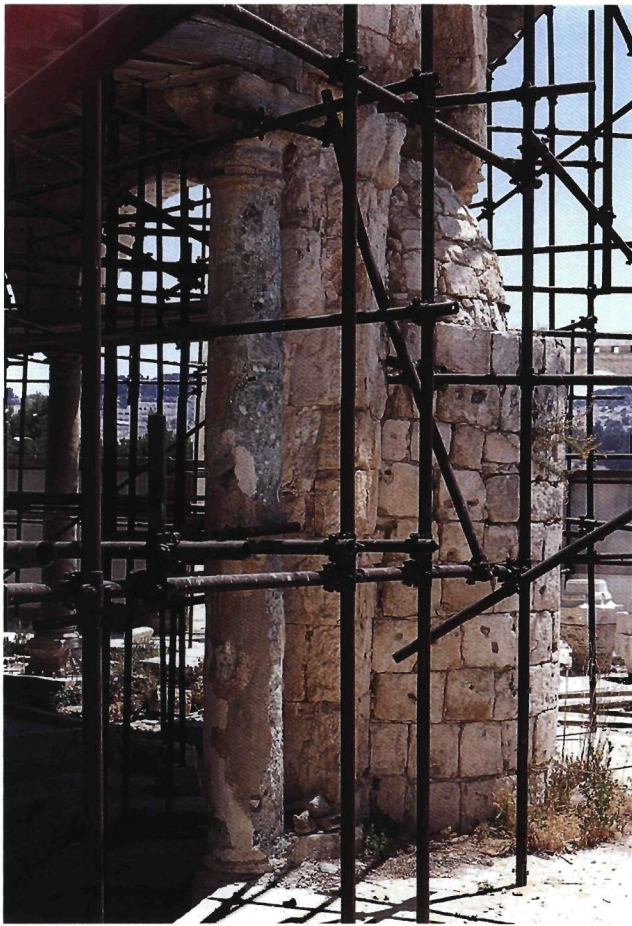


Fig. 8. Jerusalem, Dome of the Rock. Qubbat al-Silsilah, detail of the outside of the mihrab built against the exterior, revealed during the 1966 excavation.

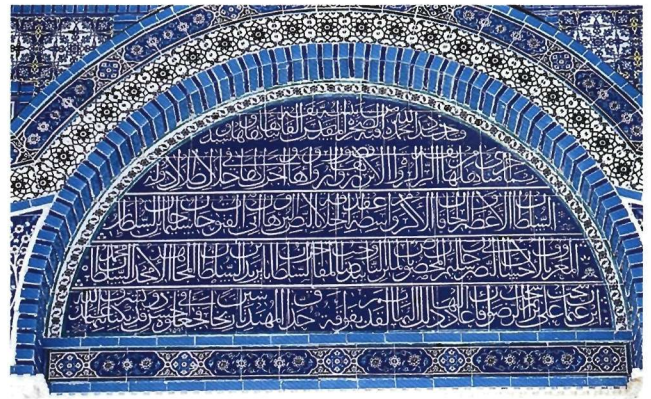


Fig. 9. Jerusalem, Dome of the Rock, north porch. The underline inscription, signed Abdallah al-Tabrizi (bottom left), with cintimani, arabesques and other motifs at the beginning and ends of the lines, and a spray of three tiny tulips on the right end of the fourth row of tiles from the top.



Fig. 10. Jerusalem, Dome of the Rock, north porch; the spandrel to the right (restored).

Persian potters were sent to Jerusalem to tile the exterior. The hanging lamp and ornament can thus be seen as a pious gift associated with this restoration.

That the Benaki hanging ornament was once directly associated with the lamp can be shown by a detailed examination of its form and decoration.<sup>16</sup> It may once have been more truly spherical, for there are the remains of three large kiln spurs on the plain upper surface (fig. 3) indicating that its weight was enough to depress it during firing, and indeed crack it. There are also three unglazed irregular slashes on the body suggesting that there might have also been some kind of cradle-like support. The hanging ornament is of off-white ware covered

with white slip, with a fine transparent glaze inside and out. There is a wide aperture at the top, 4.4 cm in diameter, and a narrower hole at the opposite end, 1.4 cm in diameter. That it was fired upside down and meant to be seen from below is confirmed by the ring of flowers on the upper border, whose stalks point upwards. The hanging ornament is decorated in underglaze cobalt blue, turquoise, olive green, manganese purple and pale grey, with black outlines.

At the top is a ring of fourteen pointed, scalloped cartouches each containing a spray of three daisy-like flowers reserved on a blue ground. Between the cartouches are larger purple flowers on a grey ground. Below the ring

are six half-flowers with elaborately scalloped petals, and between them are pear-shaped pointed medallions each with a finial at the top, framed with arabesque leaves, the center of the medallion with interlacing arabesques with clasps at the top and bottom and the middle, painted in olive green on a pale turquoise ground, with asymmetrical pairs of cloud-scrolls at top and bottom, one of them assuming the form of a bird.

Below the medallions are rosettes with an interlocking design linking them to further medallions of similar design, each with an elaborate finial at the base. In between the medallions are larger scalloped flowers with rosettes at the center and spiralling petals. Between the finials are six smaller rosettes, and the white ground is decorated with cloud-scrolls. At the bottom encircling the narrow hole is a large disc with eight scalloped points filled with interlacing arabesques and clasped leaves, with a purple ring at the center.

The connections with Musli's hanging lamp (fig. 6) in the British Museum are obvious, with both sharing the same finely painted decoration and colour scheme, including the use of olive-green arabesques on a turquoise ground. The half-medallions on the lamp are linked by similar rosettes with an interlocking design, and both have bands of cartouches with tiny flowers, three tulips on the lamp and three daisies on the hanging ornament.

Whilst the hanging lamp was acquired from the Dome of the Rock and entered the Museum collection in 1887,<sup>17</sup> according to the Benaki records the hanging ornament was purchased for £1,600 from Stora in Paris on October 10, 1929, with its provenance given as the Peytel collection. The origin of the slightly smaller fragmentary lamp in the British Museum, once in the Godman Collection, is not known (fig. 7). It is in similar style to the Musli lamp but is less elaborately painted.

Apart from reuniting the lamp and the hanging ornament, what is particularly intriguing is the provenance of the lamp and its date. The restoration of the Dome of the Rock was in full swing in 1549, and the final act of the band of Persian craftsmen was the tiling of the Qubbat al-Silsilbah, the little structure situated on the *haram* immediately to the north resembling a miniature Dome of the Rock. Once an open arcaded building surmounted by a cupola, a *mihrab* was added later, probably in the medieval period (fig. 8).<sup>18</sup> The tiles are dated 1555 by an inscription above *mihrab*, which provides a terminal date



Fig. 11. Bowl, Iznik, c. 1550, d. 42.5 cm, h. 28 cm. London, British Museum G.1983.66. Detail of the central design of flowering cherry blossom, tulips and carnations.

for the potters' activities in Jerusalem. From there they moved to Syria, not as previously conjectured to Damascus, but first to Aleppo. Here the tiles in the Beit Janblat are clearly their work, even to the extent of designs and inscribed panels in the main *iwan* identical to those on the Dome of the Rock.<sup>19</sup>

Could there be any link between Musli and the craftsmen in Jerusalem? The Iznik tile industry had barely got off the ground by the mid-sixteenth century, the output having previously been concentrated on the production of pottery. The craftsmen sent to Jerusalem were an independent band of Persian tile-makers who worked in the *cuerda seca* technique on a series of buildings in Istanbul under royal patronage. In Jerusalem, they began tiling the Dome of the Rock from the top downwards, initially using tile mosaic for the inscription on the drum, with *cuerda seca* panels below. For the octagon they used underglaze tiles, a technique they developed *in situ*; evidence is kiln debris from the *haram* area.<sup>20</sup>

There is no doubt of the mastery of the overall design of the tiles on the Dome of the Rock, and the sophistication of the patterns. The most prominent feature is the manner which they are scaled up, to read well from a distance. The dominant colours are blue, turquoise, amber, green and black. Is there anything to suggest Musli's hand in all this? A clue may be sought in the two

underglaze panels above the entrances on the north and south sides of the octagon. These arched panels contain lengthy inscriptions, and one of them bears the name of the master craftsman, Abdallah al-Tabrizi (fig. 9). Careful inspection reveals at the end of each line is a space where the vertical strokes of the calligraphy intersect with the arched frame. These are filled with a number of tiny details, including cloud-scrolls, arabesques, tulips and *çintimani*. And there is even a bouquet of three tiny flowers very much in Musli's style. Further, the two irregular panels flanking one of the arches painted with

white flowering cherry-blossom on a blue ground (fig. 10) echo precisely the same motif at the center of a bowl in the British Museum (fig. 11). This poses a further question, which is whether the two panels might have been specially made at Iznik, like the hanging lamp. Slender evidence, perhaps, but it does suggest a distinct connection, in which the spectacular hanging ornament in the Benaki Museum has a leading role to play.

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#### NOTES

1. J. Carswell, with a contribution by J. Henderson, *Iznik, Pottery from the Ottoman Empire* (London 2003) 100-03 no. 29; the writer has revised his opinion – the bottom is obviously the decorated half.

2. N. Atasoy, J. Raby, *Iznik* (London 1989) fig. 34. The illustration is from the *Siyer-i Nebi*, circa 1595, in the Topkapi Library, inv. no. H.1223.

3. Atasoy, Raby (*op. cit.*) fig. 277; L. A. Mayer Memorial Institute for Islamic Art, Jerusalem, inv. no. C108-69, d. 12 cm, h. 15 cm.

4. Atasoy, Raby (n. 2) fig. 280, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, inv. no. 337-1903, d. 17.3 cm, h. 13.6 cm (the illustration only shows the underside). The two chain bands and the triangular-shaped leaves reserved on a blue ground are very similar to those on the Abraham of Kütahya lamp (fig. 96) dated 1510, and a jug (fig. 282) with curious twin-towered structures on the body, amongst hillocks and rocks surmounted by tiny crosses. Could this be a stylized representation of Kütahya itself?

5. Atasoy, Raby (n. 2) fig. 283, Çinili Kiosk, Istanbul, inv. no. 41/1431, h. 27.2 cm.

6. Atasoy, Raby (n. 2) figs 305, 306, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, inv. no. 48.1022, h. 13.4 cm; Çinili Kiosk, Istanbul, inv. no. 41/7, h. 36.5 cm.

7. Atasoy, Raby (n. 2) fig. 1 n. 1

8. Atasoy, Raby (n. 2) fig. 380, British Museum, inv. no. G.1983.120, d. 30 cm.

9. Atasoy, Raby (n. 2) fig. 378, British Museum, inv. no. G.1983.55, h. 19 cm.

10. J. Carswell, *Iznik Pottery* (London 1998) 75-76 figs 50, 51.

11. Atasoy, Raby (n. 2) fig. 377, Victoria & Albert Museum, inv. no. 131.1885, h. 48.2 cm.

12. J. Carswell, *Kütahya Tiles and Pottery from the Armenian Cathedral of St. James, Jerusalem II* (Oxford 1972) Appendix B ("Hanging Lamps and Ornaments") 63. At the rear of the Hakim Oğlu Ali Pasha mosque is a rail of hanging ornaments, some with tassels. Some are undecorated ceramic globes, either white, turquoise, yellow or cobalt blue with wooden mouldings at top and bottom. Some are all turned wood, painted with flowers. There are also glass lamps, a corn dolly, and two models of miniature ploughs with double yokes (about 60 cm in length) hang suspended at either end. More lamps and globes are suspended in front of the *mihrab*. See Carswell (*op. cit.*) 63-69 for a general discussion of the subject, with a catalogue of numerous examples; see also Carswell (*op. cit.*) I, frontispiece and pls 25, 26.

13. Carswell (n. 10) British Museum, inv. no. OA1887.5-16.10 figs 39, 40, 66-70, h. 38.5 cm.

14. Atasoy, Raby (n. 2) fig. 355 inv. no. 87.6-16.1.

15. M. van Berchem, *Materiaux pour un corpus inscriptionum arabicum*, II: *Syrie du Sud – II. Jerusalem, 'Haram'* (Cairo 1927); M. Meinecke, *The Restoration of al-Quds, Jerusalem by the Ottoman Sultan Sulayman Qanuni* (Damascus 1987); *id.*, Die Erneuerung von al-Quds/Jerusalem durch den Osmanensultan Sulaimān QānAnī, in: *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Palestine. Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Palestine Antiquities 3* (Aleppo 1988) 257-83, 338-60; S. Auld, R. Hillenbrand (eds), *Ottoman Jerusalem, the Living City: 1517-1917* (London 2000). A number of contributors in the latter mention Süleyman's restoration programme: R. Hillenbrand, Structure, style and context in the monuments of Ottoman Jerusalem, 8-9; A.-K. Rafeq, The political history of Ottoman Jerusalem, 25-26; M. Bernardini, Popular and symbolic iconographies related to the Haram al-Sharif during the Ottoman period, 97-98; K. Salameh, Aspects of the *sijills* of the of the shari'a court in Jerusalem, 103-04; M. Atallah, Architects in Jerusalem in the 10th-11th/16th-17th centuries:

the documentary evidence, 170-71; P. Cuneo, The urban structure and physical organisation of Ottoman Jerusalem in the Ottoman urbanism, 211-12; D. Myers, An overview of the Islamic architecture of Ottoman Jerusalem, 326-30; B. St Laurent, The Dome of the Rock: restorations and significance, 1540-1918, 417-19; J. Carswell, The deconstruction of the Dome of the Rock, 425-29; F. Flood, The Ottoman windows in Dome of the Rock and the Asqa Mosque, 433-40; Y. Nat-sheh, The architecture of Ottoman Jerusalem, 587-93.

16. Carswell (n. 1) 66-68 figs 39, 40, 42.

17. The hanging lamp was the gift of C. Drury Fortnum F. S. A. to the British Museum in 1887. He recounts how it was discovered by a friend of his in 1865, from whom he subsequently acquired it, in a lecture to the Society of Antiquaries in 1868: *"It remains for me to state the history of the discovery and acquisition of this lamp. In the year 1865, a friend of some influence, then residing at Jerusalem, obtained permission to explore and make sketches in the more remote corners of the mosque of Omar [the Dome of the Rock], and was soon enabled to make himself esteemed by the guardian of the building, from whom he obtained information and opportunities of observation.*

*A long-neglected lumber-room was entered, and there, in a corner, veiled by the accumulated dust of years, was the lamp; two of the handles broken, and a piece from the lip, told why it had been stowed away, but when no one could answer; the sequel is natural – it came into the light of day, and was kindly ceded to me by my friend."* C. Drury Fortnum, F. S. A., "On a Lamp of 'Persian Ware' made for the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem in 1549; preceded by some Remarks on the Pottery and Porcelain of Egypt, Persia, Damascus, etc.", paper read on April 30th, 1868, and published in *Archaeologia* 42 (1869) 387-97.

18. The three key dates for the Dome of the Rock tiles are: the inscription on the drum, 952/1545-6; on the porch tiles, Abdallah al-Tabrizi, 959/1551-1552; and the Qubbat al-Silsilah, 1561-1562.

19. Carswell (n. 1) 112 fig. 89.

20. J. Carswell, J. Raby, *The Tiling of the Dome of the Rock* (forthcoming). We are deeply indebted to A. S. Megaw, who generously allowed us to use his unpublished survey of the Dome of the Rock (1947, revised 1952). We have been most fortunate in being able to draw on his meticulously recorded evidence and conclusions.

## JOHN CARSWELL

### Αντικείμενα ανάρτησης

Πρόσφατα είχα την ευκαιρία να καταγράψω ένα ογκώδες σφαιρικό αντικείμενο ανάρτησης κατασκευασμένο στο Ιζνίκ, το οποίο με έκανε να αναρωτηθώ για τη χρήση αυτών των αντικειμένων. Συχνά συνδέονται με κρεμαστές καντήλες της ίδιας τεχνοτροπίας, και έχουμε μαρτυρίες ότι κατασκευάζονταν από την πρωιμότερη παραγωγή των κεραμικών Ιζνίκ των χρόνων γύρω στο 1580. Αυτό διήρκεσε όλο τον 17ο αιώνα και όταν εξέλιπε η συνήθεια να διακοσμούνται τα τζαμιά με αυτά τα αντικείμενα, συνεχίστηκε και από τους Χριστιανούς τον 18ο αιώνα για τη διακόσμηση των ορθόδοξων και των αρμενικών εκκλησιών. Τόσο για τους ορθόδοξους όσο και για τους μουσουλμάνους φαίνεται ότι υπήρχαν συγκεκριμένες παραπομπές σε έναν πολύ παλαιότερο συμβολισμό που συνδεόταν με αγροτικές και γονιμικές τελετές.

Ένα από τα πλέον εντυπωσιακά σφαιρικά αντικείμενα ανάρτησης βρίσκεται στο Μουσείο Μπενάκη. Συνδέεται άμεσα με την τεχνοτροπία και τη διακόσμηση μιας παρόμοιας καντήλας, άλλοτε αναρτημένης στο Τρούλο του

Βράχου της Ιερουσαλήμ (σήμερα στο Βρετανικό Μουσείο). Η καντήλα είναι υπογεγραμμένη από τον κεραμέα Μουσλί και χρονολογείται το 1549. Το αντικείμενο ήταν κατασκευασμένο αναμφίβολα την ίδια εποχή. Αυτό που κεντρίζει το ενδιαφέρον είναι ότι πρέπει να κατασκευάστηκαν την εποχή που ο σουλτάνος Σουλεϊμάν επισκεύαζε τον Τρούλο του Βράχου. Θα μπορούσε ο Μουσλί να είχε κάποια σχέση με την επένδυση με κεραμικά πλακίδια της εξωτερικής όψης που κατασκεύασε αυτήν την εποχή ο Αμπντουλάχ από την Ταμπρίζ; Ορισμένες λεπτομέρειες, όπως τα σχηματοποιημένα σύννεφα και μια μικρή δέσμη με τρεις τουλίπες που χρησιμεύουν ως γέμισμα του βάθους στην επιγραφή της βόρειας εισόδου του Τρούλου του Βράχου, ίσως να δηλώνει ότι αυτό το πλαίσιο μαζί με εκείνο πάνω από τη νότια είσοδο σχεδιάστηκαν από τον Μουσλί. Πιθανότατα έγιναν στο Ιζνίκ για την αναστήλωση του σουλτάνου Σουλεϊμάν, αντίθετα με την υπόλοιπη κεράμωση, για την οποία υπάρχουν πληροφορίες ότι κατασκευάστηκε στην Ιερουσαλήμ.