

The exterior frieze

Rider A medallion

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The exterior frieze comprises twenty characters walk and four riders in the medallions. All are haloed .

Riders all have a business, a suit and a different physical type. By cons, their horses are harnessed in the same way: a net, a saddle with stirrups, blanket or longer on the rump, a martingale and ornate buttocks. A scarf is knotted with a tassel on the neck. Their tail is sometimes tied (inset B and D), sometimes left open.

A medallion: the rider is a hunter who kills a bear with a spear. He wears a chinstrap hat, long-sleeved and tight coat. A scarf or cape flying behind him. Her face is elongated, hairless, with a protruding chin marked by a point.

Locket B: the jumper is turbaned and wearing a coat with short sleeves and a cane polo. The face is missing. A bird with pointed beak and a long neck looped - perhaps a stork - takes place in his back.

Medallion C: The jumper is a hunter, who thrusts his spear into the open mouth, lips found, a serpentine dragon forged body. The man wears a hat, short-sleeved coat and a cape, closed on the chest and flutters behind him. His long face is bearded.

Medallion D: the rider seems to be a knotted behind his skull cap and topped with a pompom. His features reminded the Iranian representations of conventions: a very round face, a mustache and a goatee. His garment, decorated with geometric motifs, is largely missing, but was to be a long-sleeved coat. His seat is decorated with a bird. The man is an archer: he wears a quiver full of arrows and four uncheck comes from a fifth in the shoulder of a lion.

Characters E1 band and rider medallion B Characters E1 band and rider medallion B

Headband characters E4 Headband characters E4

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The characters walk , in the same way, are distinguished by the diversity of their postures, their clothing, their accessories.

E1 Headband: Five characters, who wear a cape on the chest, hair tied in a bun and a tripartite chinstrap hat, except the central character, who appears bareheaded. All more or less wear long beards have two arms crossed in the back, one at the left end, seems tied to a stake which we see the base in the ground between his feet. The second from the left is holding a cup and placed a bottle with a long neck. The central figure wears a quadruped in his arms. The rightmost figure holds a registered cutting; his hat is adorned with a feather.

E2 Headband: Six characters, three looking to the left, three to the right, but the central character looks the left. Among the characters turned to the right, one is smaller than the others, carries a cane polo, a coat and boots, and seems driven by a man leaning behind him. The five characters are large turbans, hair falling freely and unobstructed ears; they carry a sword belt and boots sometimes marked by symbols, one point, two points and one drop, two points around a vertical line, three vertical lines. Their round faces, marked with a mustache and a goatee, sometimes by a monosourcil and pickets on the cheeks, could resume Mongolian guns. Both carry an ax blade half moon, another arc, fourth a quadruped ( evening primrose ?) on his shoulders.

E3 banner: Four characters, dressed in a way quite similar to those of the E1 band: a closed cape on the chest, a tripartite hat (whose end is flattened, unlike those of the E1 panel), low shoes. Three appear to have a three-day beard [ 20 ] ; the fourth has a long beard. The third character from the left wearing a different headdress, Rice interprets as feather bird [ 21 ] . The leftmost character has his arms behind his back, the second holds the leash of a cheetah, the third carries a falcon on her gloved hand. The rightmost figure holds a crane in the right hand and the leash of a dog in the left hand; his hat is decorated with a feather, and it seems to look up to see a duck.

Headband E4: Like those of E2 band, the five characters of the headband E4 wear long coats, boots marked symbols (blazon scutiforme a fascia , round shield a fess, two points, two points and one drop) and swords . However, their hairstyles are varied: three have headbands knotted behind the head, another, a sort of turban, a final hat similar to those of E3 headband. All have knotted hair and head to the left. To the right, one wearing a towel adorned with flowers with five petals and peonies on the left arm, and retains the other hand a large bag he carries on his back; he wears a mustache and goatee, a point on the cheek, and a three-feather hat. Before him, a man with a long beard turns his head; he holds a club. Ahead, another whose beard is shorter, carries a bow and arrow. At the left end, two characters with the goatee, mustache and a monosourcil, are arranged next to one another; one, standing, holds a sword that marked an indecipherable inscription. He presses his hand on the back of the other, who kneels by seeming to ask the elbow to the ground [ 22 ] . Unlike other characters, one who kneels not wearing boots. The gun faces is thinner than that of the characters E2 band.

The inner frieze

The medallions of the inner frieze work in pairs. Medallions I and III each have at their center a shield left blank until 1821, and then covered with a coat of arms of France [ 23 ] and surrounded by plant motifs where there are five five-petalled flowers inlaid 'gold. A plant pattern frieze encircles the whole. The medallions II and IV present a scene similar throne: a character, wearing a crown and a tripartite registered cup, sits at the east on a striped throne, registered at the top and supported by two lions with gold collar; on either side of the throne sits a man standing holding to the left, a registered inkstand, and the right one, a sword. These standing figures are dressed in a long coat, and probably received a headdress shaped headband, disappeared; their boots are symbols: two points and a drop. One of them (inset II, left, wears a mustache, a goatee and points on the face); others are hairless. The face of a sovereign (inset II) disappeared; the other (inset IV) also wears a mustache and goatee, and a monosourcil.

From right to left, headband I1, I2 and II medallion banner From right to left, headband I1, I2 and II medallion banner

from right to left, medallion and band III I4 from right to left, medallion and band III I4

From right to left, I4 frieze, medallion IV and I3 headband From right to left, I4 frieze, medallion IV and I3 headband

I3 headband I3 headband

Warrior armor I3 headband

Warrior armor I3 headband

Between the medallions, take place four sets of three riders: two hunting scenes (I1, I4) and two war scenes (I2, I3). In all cases, the harnessing of horses that takes riders external medallions.

The headband I4 shows a lion hunt by three turbaned riders. On the left, the hunter his bow toward a lion biting the breast of his horse; the center one attack to the sword the animal burst upon his horse forced to turn his head; at the back, the last brandished a weapon sickle against the lion perched on the rump of his horse.

On the I1 band, both side are turbaned fighters, while the middle one wears a headband. The first, whose boots are adorned with two points and a drop, kills a cat with his spear while above him, a hawk attacking a duck. The middle of his sword strikes a bear above him. The latter, whose seat is decorated with a bird, a hawk made to rest on her gloved hand.

I2 band shows three warriors whose two left wear turbans, and one on the right is wearing a hat. The central character, who on his boots, wearing a vertical line and two points seem to be attacked by the other two. He shoots an arrow towards the figure on the left, who attacks with a spear, but he was struck by the sword of the figure on the right, to boots adorned with two points and a drop which also holds a stick in his other hand [ 24 ] . On the ground, severed limbs (an arm, a hand, a head with a hat with pompom) bear witness to the violence of the scene.

In the center of the headband I3 character completely covered with armor to strip the head protected by a carmail leaving only see his eyes and topped with a hat, shoots an arrow to a character in front of him, sword raised , wearing a simple cloak, a headband around his head. At the rear, a third rider seems neutral, also wearing a hat, he holds a spear in the back left and right hand on his chest.

Registrations

Several inscriptions take place in this basin. The largest inlaid silver is below the lip. Others are hidden in the scenery on different objects [ 25 ] . All are in cursive calligraphy ( naskhi ).

Main signature Muhammad ibn al-Zayn

Main signature Muhammad ibn al-Zayn

Inscriptions Baptistery of Saint Louis

Location Reading Arabic Transcription Translation Link to an image

In silver letters under the lip, above the A medallion عمل المعلم محمد ابن الزىن غفر له Amal [ 26 ] Muhammad ibn al-mu'allim al-zain ghufira lahu Work of the master Muhammad ibn al-Zayn, be forgiven Image

Engraved on thrones and cups in internal II and IV medallions

engraved on the cup carried by the character in the bottle in the E1 band عمل ابن الزىن 'Amal ibn al-zain Work of Ibn al-Zayn Image E1

On the flat run by a character from the E1 band انا مخفيى احمل الطعام Ana makhfiyya lki-haml al-ta'am I am the flat to carry food Image

On the desk carried by the character left of the medallion IV دواه Dawah Writing case -

On the desk carried by the character to the left of the medallion II دوه daw [â] h Inkstand misspelled -

Heraldry

The Baptistery of Saint Louis has six circular medallions bearing coats of arms in the indoor and outdoor animal friezes. These coats of arms have been modified at an unknown date and replaced a lily, which could make you think that it was a French correction; However, DS Rice believes that this is a lily of oriental type of furniture used both Dynasty Ayyubid by the house of Qala'un [ 27 ] . He also identified the two furniture that were originally on the coats of arms: a rampant lion to the right (now on half of the outer coats of arms) and an element composed of a circle topped by a rod, on which s' cling to right two rectangles, and top left, a slash. DS Rice speaks of an element shaped tamga , that is to say an identifying symbol used since ancient times by the Turko-Mongol peoples [ 28 ] . Rice picks up the identification LA Mayer [ 29 ] , but the form does no equivalent and its owner has not been identified [ 30 ] ; E. Knauer offers to see a tamga specially created for Berke son of Baybars , but without providing any evidence to move beyond the assumption [ 31 ] . Sophie Makariou prefer to see a key, it binds a coat of arms to a cross between four keys present on a lintel Nicolas-des-Cats monastery in Akrotiri (Cyprus) [ 32 ] . The lion is also problematic by its shape, since it is never represented crawling, but always passing in Islamic heraldry; it questioned his identification as the emblem of the sovereign Baybars [ 28 ] ; S. Makariou interprets it as the coat of arms of family Lusignan [ 32 ] .

Emblazoned lily with underlying shaped pattern "key" Emblazoned lily with underlying shaped pattern "key"

Emblazoned on the boots dignitaries and lily on an underlying lion Emblazoned on the boots dignitaries and lily on an underlying lion

The passing lion, emblem of Baybars, on one of its dinars The passing lion, emblem of Baybars, on one of its dinars

Lily on a fals (copper coin) of the Mamluk Sultan Kitbugha Lily on a fals (copper coin) of the Mamluk Sultan Kitbugha

Other heraldic elements present on the subject: besides the two scutiformes elements left blank until 1821, the boots dignitaries wear emblems that may be identified. DS Rice has refused to recognize, in the round shield a fess worn by the characters in the E1 band emblem of the Salar emir, and assign the order of the work [ 33 ] . However, this attribution is disputed [ 34 ] . Other items on the boots were not the object of identification. One can also wonder if it is indeed heraldry, or simply dress unimportant details; thus, the vertical line marked on some boots, also shown on textbooks Furusiyya , is rather a sewing a coat of arms element [ 35 ] .

Flora and fauna

Fish round the Baptistery of Saint Louis the bottom

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The animal motifs are extremely present in the Baptistery of St. Louis . They take many forms:

animal friezes of continuing;

animal elements in the narrative scenes, participating or not to the narrative;

a complex composition to the pond bottom with a round of fish decorated with other aquatic animals.

Apart from the round fish, most animals belong to the world of hunting, whether they prey (gazelles, ibex, hares, wild boars, lions, bears, foxes, wolves, cheetahs, ducks, waders) or auxiliary (tame cheetahs, dogs, hawks). Others are familiar mounts (camels, elephants, horses) or imaginary creatures (griffins, sphinxes, unicorns, dragon).

The round fish is rigorously organized: in the center, six poisons radiant form a pattern around a point. Five concentric circles around the fish. However, the general impression is that of a disorder, for fish between the circles, the artist slipped a varied fauna and disorganized: ducks, eels, crabs, frogs, a crocodile, a pelican, two harpies [ 36 ] .

Detail of the exterior upper animal frieze

Detail of the exterior upper animal frieze

The overall decor, with the exception of the ornament of the portion of the basin can be removed on a plant tracery background. In animal friezes, foliage organize rigorously, into cylindrical windings; on the contrary, in the main registers, the vegetal ornament seems freer, aiming to fill each space left for other reasons. The scrolls are punctuated with small palms and palmettos divided into three parts. Leaves, deriving perhaps the model of fig leaf, are present in indoor medallions badges, as well as five flowers inlaid gold petals. On the main registers, also found large plant stems ending in a flower and wearing rows of leaves. a plant with big flower and indistinct plant, consisting of two intersecting fins, are also found between the legs of the characters E2 band.

Manufacturing: technology and work organization

The manufacturing technique for this purpose is that of embedded metal, still practiced in Cairo today [ 37 ] . The artist, or his workshop, first developed the shaped hammering the brass on a wooden core, then the polishing. Later, he created the decor, by dividing the surface of the pond in decorative divisions (registers, medallions ...) then drawing figures and scrolls. The patterns are then notched with a punch, the artist removes a thin layer of the metal surface and the edges of bowl dots for better fixation inlays. Then begins the work of precious materials: the artist must penetrate the leaves of copper, silver and gold in the hollow hammering the serious details. The final step is coating a bituminous black material, which enhances the engravings, highlights the contours and contrasts with the precious metals [ 18 ] .

This technique appears in Islamic lands during the XII th century , probably in eastern Iran, before spreading quickly to the Syrian world [ 38 ] . The Ayyubid, especially the artists of the "school of Mosul," some of whom worked in Damascus had brought this technique to a climax, achieving real pictorial creations [ 39 ] ; came to power in 1250, the Mamluks resume this tradition to produce, at the Bahri period (1250-1382) luxury works.

Despite its good state of conservation, the Baptistery of Saint Louis has lost some of its inlays, either due to the wear of time (which is probably the case for the round fish, used by water) or by vandalism, to recover the precious metal. This phenomenon recovery was mainly felt at the end of the XIV th century , when the monetary metals were lacking [ 40 ] . However, désincrustées works thus are often totally and not partially as in the case for the Baptistery.

The organization of work in the workshops is hard to understand, lack of sources. While copperware appear more often than others artists sign their work in Islamic lands, they remain artisans secondary status unlikely to attract the attention of scholars [ 41 ] . The Baptistery is signed by one person, Muhammad ibn al-Zayn, who also put his name on a bowl, smaller, in the Louvre museum [ 42 ] . Yet LA Mayer points out that work is rarely alone: ​​some metal double signature and show that there is usually at least one artist putting the work into shape, and another, the Naqqash realizing the décor [ 43 ] . Muhammad ibn al-Zayn, who claims al-mu'allim , that is to say "master", is rather the inserter, since his name is inlaid in silver letters [ 44 ] . The use of the term al-mu'allim occurs on other Mamluk inlaid metal works as a piece of furniture in the name of al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qala'un kept at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo [ 45 ] or a mirror kept at the Topkapi Museum [ 46 ] .

Form and Style

Basin on behalf of Hugh de Lusignan, Paris, Louvre Museum, MAO 101

Basin on behalf of Hugh de Lusignan, Paris, Louvre Museum, MAO 101

The ponds have existed since the flared edges Ayyubid period: witness, for example, the Bassin d'Arenberg , datable to 1247-1249 and preserved at the Freer Gallery of Art [ 47 ] , or the pelvis in the name of Salih Najm al -DIN Ayyub preserved at Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo [ 48 ] . However, these basins, a copy is dated 1285 [ 49 ] often have a gentle transition zone and curve. With its highly streamlined profile, very angular and with its remarkable dimensions, the Baptistery of Saint Louis away from this guy. It belongs to a form of group and basins of comparable size [ 50 ] , two of which carry the name of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qala'un [ 51 ] , one is dedicated to a sultan of Yemen [ 52 ] and another was made ​​for Hugh IV of Lusignan [ 53 ] . A work also very close in form and in its decor, but remained unfinished probably due to a technical accident (a slot in the background) is preserved at the LA Mayer Memorial in Jerusalem and was attributed to Muhammad ibn al-Zayn Jonathan M. Bloom [ 54 ] .

Unicorn pursuing an elephant, Outdoor upper frieze Unicorn pursuing an elephant, Outdoor upper frieze

Griffon pursuing a sphinx, Outdoor upper frieze Griffon pursuing a sphinx, Outdoor upper frieze

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The overall style of the basin is in line with previous works. Thus, the animal friezes continuing exist since the first centuries of Islam, and from the XII th century , friezes where animals are of different species predominate in Islamic art [ 55 ] . All animals are friezes of traditional species in the arts of Islam: all are found, for example, in the copies of al-Manafi Hayawan Ibn Bakhtishu. In particular, the unicorn pursuing the elephant is a recurring theme of art in Islam, which echoes to legends reported by al-Jahiz and Al Qazwini particular; is found on glossy tiles XIII th century in Iran and on relief in Konya in the same period [ 56 ] . Similarly, the association between the griffin and the sphinx is well established at the time of creation of the Baptistery [ 57 ] . Only the serpentine dragon could be a new arrival in Egypt with the Mongol invasion; However, we find in the Syrian area from the Seljuk period. The round fish including other animals peak, according to E. Baer early XIV th century , as shown by an Iranian bowl inlaid brass, dated 705H / 1305 [ 58 ] . For her, these motfs "evoke - it would seem - dreams about distant and foreign seas whose waters bring wealth and good fortune. "

Rider on a Syrian chandelier thirteenth century, Paris, Louvre, 6035 OA

Rider on a Syrian chandelier of XIII th century , Paris, Louvre, 6035 OA

Similarly, decorative scrollwork find parallels in older works. The spiral pattern is very early in Egypt is found for example on Fatimid ivories and wood [ 59 ] , even if it is then vine foliage. In the Ayyubid metals, as on the Basin al-Adil II Sultan signed by al-Dhaki [ 60 ] , the foliage - as well as calligraphy signature - are very close to those of the Baptistery. High flower stems with leaves of rows are parallel in Baghdad paint the XII th and XIII th century, as the Book of antidotes Pseudo-Galen, dated 1199 [ 61 ] . We do not find, in the Baptistery of new ground brought by the Mongol invasions, while the other group metals (except that of the LA Mayer) have a particularly large number of peony flowers. The only peonies Baptistery are present on the towel worn by a character, which could demonstrate his Mongolian origin. The flowers have five petals surrounding the shields in internal medallions are immediate parallel in the medallions group's other basins.

But the element that most contrast between the style used on the Baptistery and that of the Mamluk metal works of the second quarter of the XIV th century is the absence of large-character inscription in thuluth , characteristic of the art of this period. Other Basins of the group, except that of the LA Mayer, incomplete and undated, bear this type of decor. JM Bloom as R. Ward and S. Makariou fall this incongruity [ 62 ] ; for R. Ward and S. Makariou, that could be explained by the fact that control of the Baptistery would have been due to a Christian. However, the basin in the name of Hugues de Lusignan doing well at the Louvre a large inscription in calligraphy Thuluth .

Several elements would denote a sense of humor on the part of the artist, as the absurd inscription on the flat, or the presence of a small rabbit represented face, foreshortened, which seems to take the witness spectator .

Interpretations of the iconography

The interpretation of the iconography of Saint Louis Baptistery ready to much controversy since the XIX th century. Most researchers, including DS Rice, agree to see in the scenes depicted specific events, focusing the fact that some elements, such as genuflection or little character, have no equivalent in the Islamic art or purely decorative nature. However, Rachel Ward contradicts this interpretation by pointing out that the Mamluks have no portrait tradition or 'history painting' in their art metal, and that such representation would be inconceivable without an inscription that identifies the scene [ 63 ] . It also believes that searching dating from suits represented is absurd, because the Mamluk artists relied more on artistic sources on the observation of everyday life.

If Makariou S. considers the assumptions R. Ward as valid, other researchers oppose and seek to understand the iconography of the Baptistery in the detailed analysis of its iconography. DS Rice is the pioneer of this type of study. From the clothing and physical characters unlike external friezes, it overlaps with the traditions of Mamluk costume, it identifies two distinct groups: the E1 and E3 panels, Turkish emirs dressed according to dress code introduced by Qala'un (1279-1290); the panels E2 and E4, Arab servants [ 64 ] . Among the emirs, one could recognize Salar in its image, but also certain costs, such as Huntsman (fahhâd) for the associated character cheetah and falconer (bâzyâr) [ 65 ] . The medallions throne scenes, for him, have no particular meaning [ 66 ] ; by cons, there would be a continuity between the narrative battle scenes, the severed head being that of the character hit in the previous headband [ 66 ] .

In 1984, in an article devoted to the representation of the Mongols in painting trecento, E. Knauer offers to see in the baptistery "a testimony of heated exchanges between Berke Khan and Baybars I er , culminating in the circumcision of the son of Baybars September 3, 1264, attended by the representative [of the Golden Horde]. ". E. Knauer argues his point by looking at the unusual double crest; it identifies the lion-shaped to Baybars, and evokes the idea that shaped tamga would be that of the young circumcised Berke. It primarily identifies as Mongolian hats hats, and believes that their physical type would be one of the Caucasian Emirates [ 67 ] .

Doris Behrens-Abouseif in 1989, calls these assumptions into question. She insists that the types identified as those of the servants by Rice are sometimes associated with horses, aristocratic privilege. For her every rider in the medallions represents an aspect of furusiyya , equestrian art very highlighted in the Mamluk period; all the Baptistery would be a tournament evocation ( Maydan ) occurring during ceremonies at the time of Sultan Baybars [ 68 ] .