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Horizontal-Handled Mirrors: East and West

JUDITH LERNER

BOTH AS PRACTICAL and symbolic objects, mirrors provide insight into the artistic and religious values of diverse societies. Besides serving as a necessary *article de toilette*, in ancient cultures mirrors are associated with funerary and other rituals as well as with entertainment. Their shapes and decoration partake of the aesthetic developments and preferences of these varied cultures and also reveal interconnections across broad geographic and temporal expanses.¹ Dating to at least as early as the sixth millennium B.C.,² mirrors are in use in all ancient civilizations—from Egypt and Western Asia to China—by the late fourth to the end of the third millennium B.C. They occur mainly in one or both of two basic forms: (1) a polished-metal disc, the so-called “Chinese mirror,” sometimes decorated on the back, held by cupping the hand around its edge or by grasping a cord threaded through a loop-shaped knob or a pierced round boss in the middle of the back; (2) a polished-metal disc with a vertical grip, the disc and handle made of one piece, or a disc with a projecting tang that was inserted into a vertical handle. Variations on these themes exist: the best known appear in the Classical world as the stand mirror, consisting of a disc, a handle, and a base in the form of a standing figure or architectural member that holds the mirror upright; and the box or “compact” mirror, a small disc that was protected by a rimmed cover that fit, like a lid, onto the disc, which typically was handleless but could also have a metal loop on the edge for suspension or grasping.³

The subject of this article is a less known and less numerous mirror of a third form. Also composed of a polished-metal disc—silver, bronze, or silver-plated bronze—its distinguishing feature is a horizontal handle soldered onto the center of the back and thus running across the disc almost from edge to edge. Although the mirror must be held upright to view one’s reflection, and the handle is thus held vertically, the handle is always parallel to the plane of the mirror disc. Many of these mirrors are convex on their polished, reflecting side and have a raised rim around the edge. Both of these features also appear on other disc-

type mirrors; the convexity of the surface serves to produce a smaller but brighter and more intense reflection than one viewed on a flat surface.⁴

The mirror with horizontal handle is an unusual form and a relatively late development. There is hardly any evidence of it before the first century A.D., and it seems to disappear after the ninth or tenth century. The Metropolitan Museum has four examples: three complete mirrors and the last most likely the handle of such a mirror. It is remarkable that all four of them are in the same institution, and that each one has been assigned (on the basis of its style or provenance) to a different department: Greek and Roman, Medieval, Ancient Near Eastern, and Islamic.

As suggested by their respective locations in the Museum’s collections, the geographical diffusion of horizontal-handled mirrors was widespread, extending from Roman Britain to early Islamic Iran; there is even evidence for the mirrors in India and Vietnam. While the basic form remains constant, the treatment of the horizontal handle, as well as that of the back or nonreflecting surface and raised rim, vary from region to region and from culture to culture. In the west, during the Roman and succeeding Byzantine periods, the handle typically is straplike and spatulate in shape, with each end often articulated as a stylized finger; however, the handle can also take the form of a reef, or Herakles, knot. In the east, in such regions as Iran, Central Asia, and Vietnam, the handle is cylindrical and terminates in the foreparts of animals.

The western and eastern versions of the horizontal-handled mirror are well known to scholars, although those concerned with the Roman and Byzantine worlds have concentrated on mirrors of western origin, and those who study the material cultures east of the Mediterranean have written about the horizontal-handled mirrors belonging to these eastern regions. To my knowledge, no one has taken a global view. As a result, these mirrors have not been fully explored as a distinct phenomenon, nor have they been placed in the broader geographic and chronological context that their distribution implies.

In this article, I shall present the western and eastern manifestations of the horizontal-handled mirror and propose an origin for its development and subsequent diffusion. By so doing, I hope to show that

beyond its significance as a widespread mirror type, the specific form and decoration given to its characteristic feature, the horizontal handle, reveal the artistic, religious, and metaphoric themes of the different cultures that produced this type of mirror. I shall begin with descriptions of the three mirrors and mirror handle in the Museum. I shall then discuss the evidence for horizontal-handled mirrors in the west and in the east, along with an anomaly to the basic developmental schema suggested by the evidence. I shall conclude with suggestions about patronage for and use of these mirrors.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM MIRRORS AND MIRROR HANDLE

Mirror with Knot of Herakles Handle (Department of Greek and Roman Art). Ex coll. Norbert Schimmel (1989.281.82): Silver. Diameter 13.2 cm. Hereafter referred to as the Schimmel mirror (Figure 1).

The polished face is slightly convex. The back is edged with a raised beaded rim, and within, an engraved band of feather ornament runs clockwise around the circumference. The horizontal handle is composed of two loops of silver wire that are intertwined to form a reef, or Herakles, knot. Just outside the knot, the wires loop back on themselves to create an elegant figure-eight motif. The wires are soldered to the back by four flattened terminals, shaped as ivy leaves with curved and pointed tips, one at either end of each loop.

REFERENCES: J. Settgast, *Von Troja bis Amarna: The Norbert Schimmel Collection* (New York/Mainz, 1978) Supplement, no. 99a; MMA, *Ancient Art: Gifts from the Norbert Schimmel Collection, MMAB* (Spring 1992) p. 72, fig. 72.

Mirror with Strap Handle Ending in the Shape of Thumbs (Department of Medieval Art). Handle: Gift of F. Kouchakji, 1952 (52.37); Disc: Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.100.35): Silver. Diameter 23.3 cm; length of handle 21.3 cm, height 2.9 cm. Hereafter referred to as the Antioch mirror (Figure 2).

The mirror has been assigned to the collection of liturgical silver pieces (chalices, plaques, spoons, and crosses) identified as the Antioch Treasure, of which six pieces, in addition to the mirror, are in the Metropolitan. Most of the treasure, it seems, had been acquired in 1910 by Constantine Kouchakji, a dealer at Aleppo; it is not known whether the mirror handle and disc were part of that acquisition. The disc was

originally identified as a paten (the plate that holds the bread in the Eucharist), until it was discovered that the handle belongs to it to form a mirror.

The back of the slightly convex disc is edged by an applied rim chased in an overlapping leaf or feather pattern. Just inside the rim two concentric circles are engraved, while a third, lathe-turned circle decorates the center of the disc. The handle is straplike, each end spatulate in shape as it terminates in an incised thumb, the nail and cuticle carefully delineated. A narrow band with a herringbone pattern runs vertically across its wider central section; an elongated leaf is engraved on each side, between the central band and thumbnail. Only one of the original soldering plates of the handle survives; it is spade-shaped with three short spikes that point toward the mirror's rim.

REFERENCES: M. M. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures*, exh. cat. The Walters Art Gallery (Baltimore, 1986) cat. no. 48, pp. 212–215, fig. 48.1–4; M. Mundell Mango, "The Origins of the Syrian Ecclesiastical Silver Treasures of the Sixth–Seventh Centuries," in F. Baratte, ed., *Argenterie romaine et byzantine* (Actes de la Table Ronde, Paris, Oct. 11–13, 1983 [Paris, 1988]) pl. v, 2 and p. 165.

Mirror with Cylindrical Handle Terminating in Leaping Griffin Protomes (Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art). Gift of the Ernest Erickson Foundation (1988.102.21): Bronze. Diameter 12.6 cm (Figure 3).

The edge of the slightly convex disc is raised .5 cm toward the mirror's back. The handle, formed by a cylindrical pole with a spool-like decoration at its center, terminates in the foreparts of leaping griffins that emerge from a rolled collar at each end of the pole. Beneath each collar a pedestal, consisting of a square base and a short cylindrical element, supports the pole; the squares serve as soldering plates for the handle. The mirror is very corroded, but on the open-mouthed griffins with erect ears, details such as their curved beaks, leonine paws, and deep grooves outlining the upward curve of their pointed wings can still be discerned.

REFERENCES: P. O. Harper, "Sources of Certain Female Representations in Sasanian Art," *La Persia nel medioevo*, Accademia nazionale dei Lincei 160 (Rome, 1971) pl. v:2; p. 512, n. 33.

Handle with Animal-Protome Terminals (Department of Islamic Art). Excavated at Sabz Pushan, Nishapur, Iran (40.170.252): Bronze with gilding. Height 3.3 cm; length 8.3 cm (Figure 4).

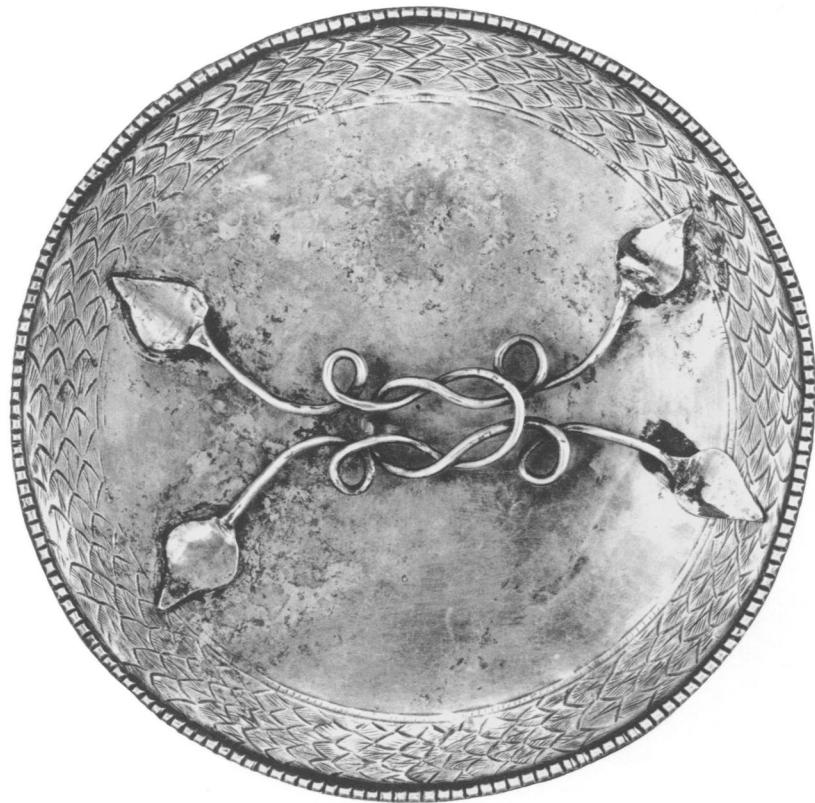


Figure 1. Silver mirror and handle,
4th century A.D. Diam. 13.2 cm. The
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of
Norbert Schimmel Trust, 1989,
1989.281.82

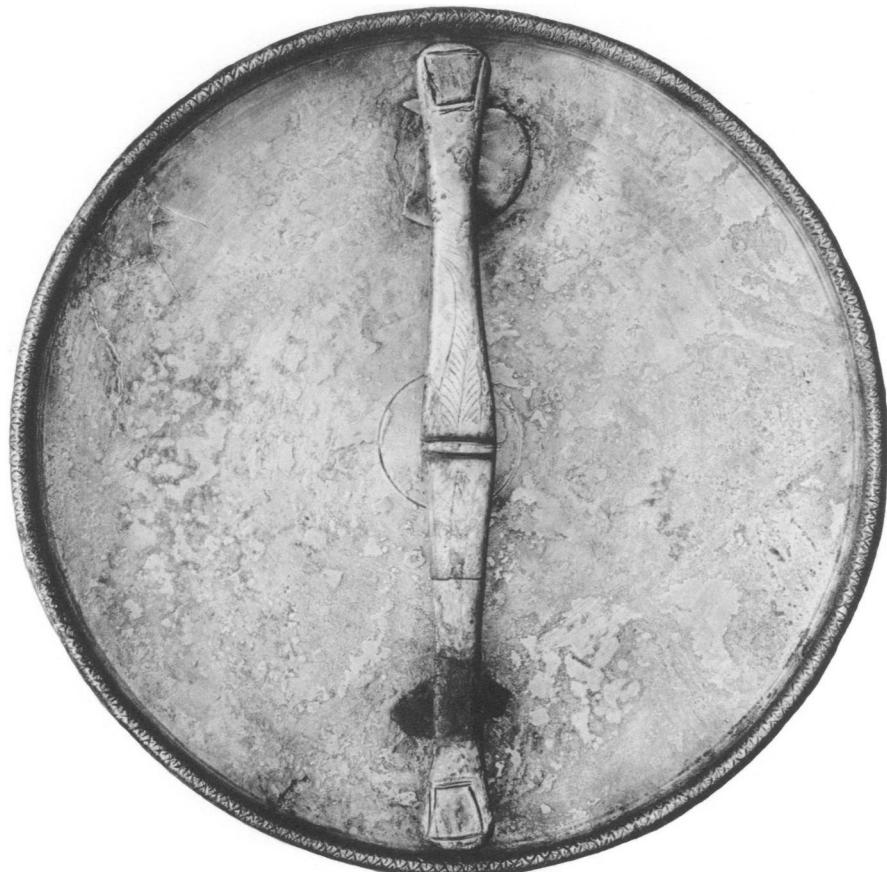


Figure 2. Silver mirror and handle,
4th century A.D. Diam. of disc 23.3
cm, L. of handle 21.3 cm. The
Metropolitan Museum of Art, disc:
Fletcher Fund, 1947, 47.100.35;
handle: Gift of Fahim Kouchakji,
1952, 52.37

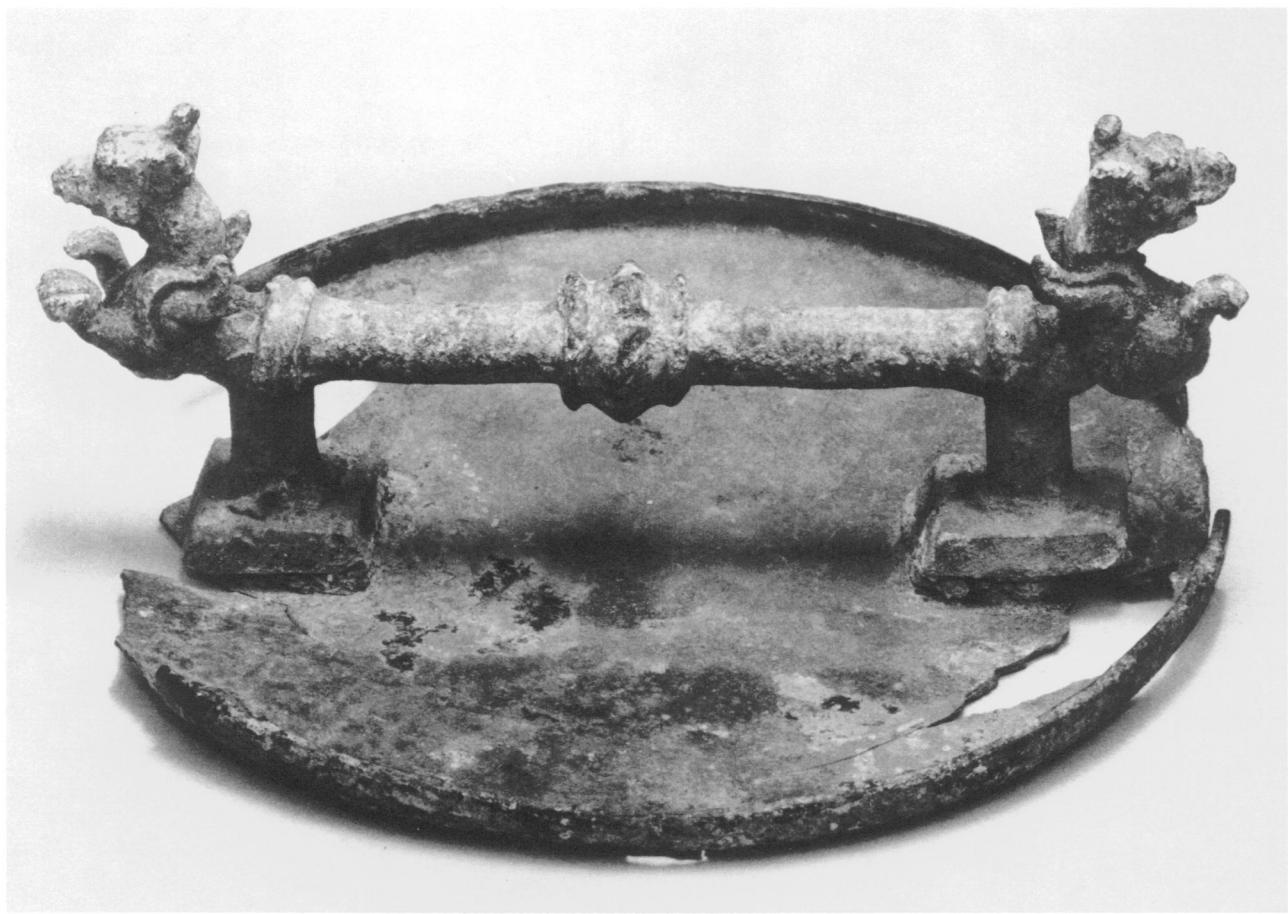


Figure 3. Bronze mirror, 5th–7th century A.D. Diam. 12.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Ernest Erickson Foundation, 1988, 1988.102.21



Figure 4. Bronze and gilt mirror handle from Nishapur, Sabz Pushan, 8th–9th century A.D. H. 3.3 cm; L. 8.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1940, 40.170.252

Rectangular in profile, the two flat feet, or soldering plates, point slightly upward, suggesting that the mirror was convex on its polished face. The stylized animal heads seem to be beaked, with elongated necks and a knob protruding from their foreheads; the spiky protrusion behind each head may be a stylized wing. Traces of gilding on the undersides of the feet suggest that the handle was never attached to a mirror.

REFERENCES: J. Allan, *Nishapur: Metalwork of the Early Islamic Period* (New York, 1982) no. 78, pp. 74-75.

HORIZONTAL-HANDED MIRRORS IN THE WEST

The many mirrors found in parts of the Roman and early Byzantine empires have been extensively documented and classified by G. Lloyd-Morgan⁵ and F. Baratte.⁶ The most simple, and common, have a single horizontal handle soldered at opposite points on the back. Lloyd-Morgan describes the characteristic type as "circular discs, slightly convex on the reflecting side and with a low convex molded border to the rear" which occur "in both undecorated, and decorated forms"; typical decoration is a series of concentric circles incised or lathe-turned. More elaborate variants have border decoration with engraved or molded details, and decoration on the upper surface of the handle. An even more elaborate variant may be described as having a double handle in the form of a reef, or Herakles, knot, its four ends soldered, two each at opposite points, to the back of the mirror disc. The Schimmel mirror, with its Herakles-knot handle, is a prime example of this double-handled variant (Figure 1), while the Antioch mirror, with its strap handle and thumbnail terminals, is an impressive demonstration of the single-handled form (Figure 2). On both mirror variants, the soldering plates are often leaf-shaped; on those with a Herakles-knot grip, they usually resemble ivy leaves.

The earliest mirrors known in the west are of the single-handled form and tend to be less than 10 centimeters in diameter. They occur in Italy, at Aquileia (Figure 23) and Pompeii, in what have been dated as first-century-A.D. contexts;⁷ additionally, two similar mirrors are in the National Museum in Naples.⁸ The Aquileia mirror is said to come from a cremation grave. This type of Roman inhumation is characteristic of the end of the first and the beginning of the second century.⁹ As will be seen in the following discussion of later examples, they, along with other types of mirrors, were popular grave goods. The Aquileia example is

made of silver, with a simple, undecorated handle soldered to the reverse of the disc. This nonreflecting surface is decorated with an engraving of the Three Graces.¹⁰

According to Lloyd-Morgan, in the course of the following two centuries the disc mirror with a handle across the back becomes well established and occurs in a range of sizes, from 5 to over 28 centimeters in diameter. It is especially popular in the northwestern provinces of the Roman Empire, particularly in the Lower Rhine area; but several examples also come from France as well as Roman sites along the Danube and farther east (see map). Lloyd-Morgan has classified these mirrors into two main groups: the one pertaining to our study is her Group W, called the "Simpelveld" type after the silver mirror found in a Roman sarcophagus grave in the Dutch town of that name (Figure 5). These mirrors provide the parallels for the Museum's Schimmel and Antioch mirrors.

Among this group, the single horizontal or strap handle is the most common; several relate directly to the single-handled Antioch mirror. Many of these examples, however, cannot serve our discussion, since the actual handles are lost; only scars or traces of solder at opposite points on the disc indicate that these mirrors had a single handle.¹¹ Of those that have retained their handles, the typical form is that of a strap—wide in the center and narrowing toward the ends, which may then splay outward. A light molding

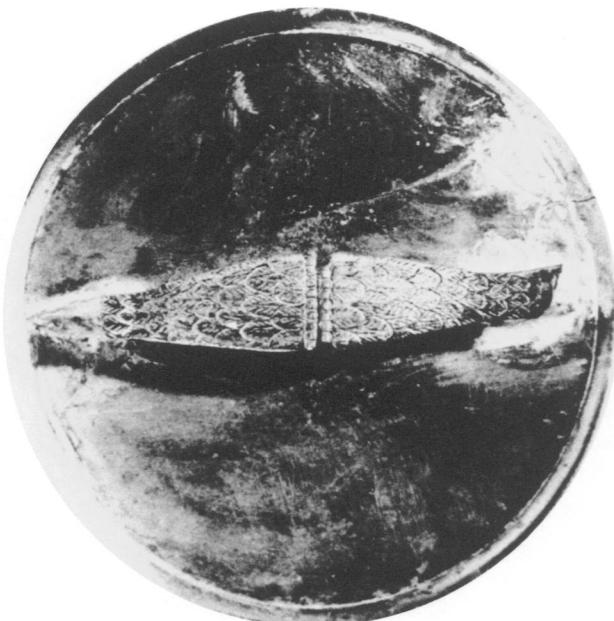


Figure 5. Silver mirror from Simpelveld, late 2nd century A.D. Diam. 9 cm (photo: from G. Lloyd-Morgan, *The Mirrors*, no. 7, fig. 24a)



Figure 6. Silver mirror from Vienne, 3rd century A.D. Diam. 20 cm (photo: from F. Baratte, *Trésors d'orfèvrerie gallo-romains*, no. 182)



Figure 7. Silver mirror from Mtskheta, 3rd century A.D. Diam. 16 cm (photo: V. Nikolaishvili, Center for Archaeological Studies of the Georgian Academy of Sciences)

or collar usually marks the center of the handle. In more elaborate examples (Figure 6), the molding consists of a single or double row of beading. Often, the upper surface of the handle is decorated to either side of the central molding. The feet of the handle are typically molded in one piece with the handle and terminate either in outwardly pointing spear shapes, hollowed out to accommodate the solder, or in flat, circular discs or heart shapes. The back of the disc to which the handle is attached may be completely undecorated, incised with a lathe-turned circle in the center, or engraved with an elaborate feather or scale pattern on its raised rim.

Such decorated mirror handles do not seem to be a later development. Some undecorated examples come from third-century burials in Cologne and Bonn,¹² while one in silver, from a second-century cremation grave group in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, is decorated with v-shaped lines of hatching running away from the central collar of the handle.¹³ The Simpelveld mirror, the eponymous member of Lloyd-Morgan's Group W, has a more ornamented handle than that from Nijmegen and is dated to the latter part of the second century.¹⁴ Although the silver disc is undecorated, the handle is incised with a feather or scale pattern to either side of a double row of ten beads along the center of the grip.

The feather pattern on the Simpelveld mirror stops just before the handle ends break off; these missing

ends may therefore have terminated in thumbnails, as on the Antioch mirror handle. A series of such mirrors with thumbnail-terminal handles have been found in France (Figure 6),¹⁵ Germany,¹⁶ Austria,¹⁷ Hungary,¹⁸ and in eastern Georgia, at Mtskheta, the capital of the ancient Caucasian kingdom of Iberia (Figure 7);¹⁹ two others in all likelihood come from Greek colonies in the Crimea on the Black Sea, Olbia,²⁰ and perhaps Panticapaeum.²¹ Several mirrors without provenance also belong to the series,²² including one that has been attributed with no evidence to "the environs of Constantinople" (Istanbul).²³ Most of the examples cited have the feather or scale pattern engraved to either side of a central band or collar on the handle, and, on the raised rim of the disc, a band of feathers or scales, separated from the rest of the disc by a narrow row of beading.

By contrast, in place of the more usual feathers and beaded central molding, the Antioch mirror handle is engraved with an elongated acanthuslike leaf to either side of a plain central band (see Figure 2). The narrow raised rim of the mirror back, with its single row of overlapping feathers, forms a border that is much narrower than other examples. The only other decoration is the lathe-turned circle in the center of the disc, and the two concentric circles just inside the rim that replace the more usual row of beading. I know of only two other handles that closely resemble it: that in Cologne and the other excavated at Mtskheta (Figure 7);

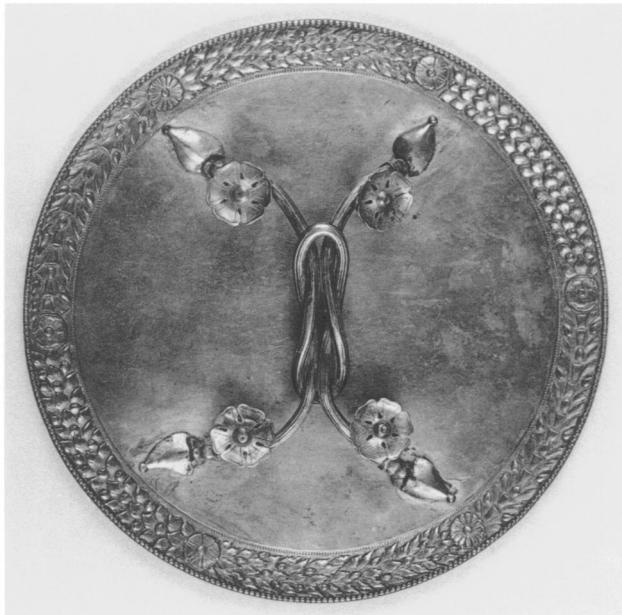


Figure 8. Silver mirror from Wroxeter, 3rd century A.D. Diam. 29.2 cm (photo: permission of Shrewsbury Museum Service)

both handles are decorated with a leaf—more recognizably that of an acanthus—to either side of the handle's central band, although, unlike the Antioch mirror handle, the central band is formed by a row of beading. The opposing leaves on the Cologne handle are simply engraved, but the leaves on the Mtskheta handle appear in relief. The disc to which it is attached is decorated, also in relief, with the figures of Dionysus and the sleeping Ariadne,²⁴ and it was part of a rich burial of two women who were interred at different times. The tomb has been dated to the second or third century; among other noteworthy objects also found in the tomb was a silver dish bearing an Aramaic inscription of a Parthian prince, Tiridat. Depending upon the identification of this personage and the paleographic interpretation of the inscription, the dish may date anywhere from the first to early third century.²⁵

The use of the acanthus leaf on the Antioch, Mtskheta, and Olbia mirror handles instead of a feather or scale pattern might suggest the same region as the place of production. The notion that this might be a marker for east Roman and even Byzantine production is enticing, since all three are associated in some way with an eastern provenance. The thumbnail terminals on all three mirror handles point to a date of at least the second century, if not later; indeed, these are hallmarks of late Roman/early Byzantine work.²⁶ The Antioch mirror is most likely later in date than all the examples I have cited. Although the Antioch Treasure is dated to

the sixth century, the mirror could belong—whether or not it actually forms part of the treasure—to the fourth or fifth century;²⁷ in fact, the most famous of the objects assigned to this treasure, the so-called Chalice of Antioch (also in the Museum collection), may belong to the late fourth or early fifth century.²⁸

Mirrors with the knot of Herakles for their handle may have appeared as early as the second century A.D. and are definitely in production by the third. No complete example has so far been found in a well-stratified or securely datable context. In the simplest example, the back of the mirror is undecorated, and the Herakles knot is formed by two elongated silver wires. A silver mirror of this type was recently on the art market in New York. It is almost identical in size to the Schimmel mirror, 13.3 centimeters in diameter, and also shares with it, and with all others having the Herakles-knot handle, four soldering plates, each in the form of an ivy leaf. A handle found in a family tomb at Weiden, near Cologne, Germany, displays a similarly proportioned knot and simplified ivy-leaf terminals.²⁹ While Lloyd-Morgan dates this handle to the third century A.D.,³⁰ the coins found with it range from 260 to 340. It could, of course, be an heirloom, but the type seems to continue well into the third century, and perhaps into the fourth and beyond, when it coexists with larger, more elaborate examples.

The best known of this mirror type is the spectacular silver example from the Roman Forum at Wroxeter (Roman Viroconium), Shropshire, England. At 29.2 centimeters in diameter, it is one of the largest mirrors of its kind known (Figure 8).³¹ As described by J. M. C. Toynbee, "around the circumference of the mirror's back runs a garland of naturalistic leaves, divided into six sectors—two of oak, two of apple, and two of pine, by six flowers, two fourteen-petaled, two six-petaled and two formed by a plain disc with six petals lightly incised upon it."³² The Herakles-knot handle is formed by two loops of grooved silver wire attached to the mirror by the usual ivy-leaf plates, but the ends of each loop, just before they terminate in the ivy leaves, carry two six-petaled flowers.

Similarly exuberant is a smaller silvered bronze mirror (18.2 cm) that is said to have been found with a jewelry hoard in a tomb at Arsinoë, on Cyprus.³³ The Herakles knot resembles that of the Wroxeter mirror, but its back is decorated with four rows of concentric circles and two rows of palmettes incised around its edge. Acknowledging the Wroxeter mirror as an unstratified find, Lloyd-Morgan dates it to "sometime in the third century,"³⁴ while the Arsinoë mirror has been assigned to the third to fourth centuries on the basis of the accompanying jewelry.



Figure 9. Silver mirror, 4th–6th century A.D. Diam. 34.6 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund, 56.31 (photo: The Cleveland Museum of Art)



Figure 10. Relief from Neumagen, 3rd century A.D. (photo: from W. von Massow, *Die Grabmäler von Neumagen*, no. 184a)

A more restrained interpretation is given to a silver mirror in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg. Only 10.7 centimeters in diameter, the edge of the back is marked by a band of convex moldings; the soldering plates are made of carefully observed and detailed ivy leaves.³⁵ Since it is unexcavated, it is difficult to place this mirror in time. Its smaller size and restraint might suggest a second-century date, but, as Lloyd-Morgan argues, the same work-

shops could be producing both small and larger mirrors.³⁶

A later, possibly fourth-century, occurrence of a mirror with Herakles-knot handle is one of eleven pieces of silver acquired by the Cleveland Museum of Art (Figure 9). Unfortunately, it has no definite provenance.³⁷ The back of the mirror is incised with six concentric circles. The thick silver wires that form the knot terminate in simplified ivy leaves, and the ends of each loop just outside the Herakles knot form an extra loop. This is the largest mirror so far discussed, with a diameter of 34.6 centimeters.

The use of the Herakles knot for a mirror handle continues a Hellenistic Greek decorative tradition for jewelry, such as necklaces, diadems, thighbands, and finger rings. It was believed to be apotropaic, serving to protect those who wear such decorated objects. Accordingly, the knot was associated with the marital rite: it tied the bride's garment that was then untied by the groom to ensure fertility. Perhaps as an extension of this usage, the Herakles knot was also connected with childbirth.³⁸ By Roman times, its protective power had extended to mirrors, thereby seeming to imbue these objects of daily life (which were believed to be magical or amuletic in their own right) with additional talismanic power. The magical nature of the Herakles knot continued into the early Christian era as "a general talisman of security and good luck."³⁹

Further evidence for horizontal-handled mirrors comes not from actual objects but from contemporaneous works of art. Several depictions of mortals as well as divine beings show them using mirrors that are held at the back and that must therefore have a horizontal handle on the reverse side. On a third-century tomb relief from Neumagen, Germany, a Roman matron sits in a wicker chair as two maids dress her hair; another maid holds a mirror before her, grasping it from behind, as if it were a shield (Figure 10).⁴⁰ From the late Roman fort at Kaiseraugst, Switzerland, a silver statuette of Venus, deposited in 350 or 351, raises a mirror in her right hand by grasping it from the back,⁴¹ while on a fourth-century patera (saucepans), a piece in the silver treasure found on the Esquiline Hill, Rome, a Cupid lifts a mirror in both hands toward a preening Venus;⁴² an ivory plaque, stylistically of Alexandrian manufacture, shows Venus between two Cupids, holding a mirror from its back and admiring herself in it: her reflection is carved in relief on the mirror's face.⁴³ Mirrors with handles across the back appear in an identifiably Christian context on the fourth-century Projecta Casket, so called after the woman whose name the casket bears, that is also part of the Esquiline Treasure now in the British Museum.

On the front of its lid Venus is seated on a shell, flanked by sea creatures, Cupids, and Nereids, and holds the mirror; on the back of the lid, in an echo of the goddess's toilet, an attendant holds the mirror from behind toward the seated Projecta.⁴⁴

None of these depictions allows us to see the exact shape of the grip—horizontal strap or Herakles knot. We can only be certain that the mirrors have horizontal handles from the way in which they are held. Only one representation shows the specific handle form. On the painted ceiling of the third-century Constantinian palace found beneath the Trier cathedral, a Roman matron arranges her veil with the aid of her mirror (Figure 11).⁴⁵ Because she holds the mirror toward her face while turned toward us, we can confidently assume that this particular mirror has a knot of Herakles for its handle. Although her clenched hand covers the middle of the handle, the bifurcated ends of the loops that form the knot are plainly visible.

In all of these representations, the mirrors are at least as large as a human head. They thus recall some of the larger mirrors we have mentioned, particularly the Wroxeter and Cleveland mirrors, and might suggest a fourth-century or later date. Yet increased size is not a trustworthy indication of later production. The large scale in these depictions may be for visual clarity. In addition to Lloyd-Morgan's argument that small and large mirrors were produced at the same time and in the same place, there is reason to believe that the Schimmel mirror (Figure 1) is a work of the fourth century. The

beaded rim and imbricated feather band engraved within strongly recall, even though reversed in order, the feathered band and line of beading that decorate the outer edge of a silver platter of unknown provenance (Figure 12).⁴⁶ Such beading and engraved borders have been identified as "distinctive characteristics of Roman silver of the fourth century and later";⁴⁷ as we have seen, a similar combination of beading and imbricated feather border decorates several mirrors with strap handles and thumbnail terminals that are of the third and later centuries. A fourth-century, or even later, date makes sense for the Schimmel mirror when its handle is compared to that of the Cleveland example (Figure 9). Each handle sports an extra curl created by the ends of the loop that form the Herakles knot. Although the Cleveland mirror is without definite context, its association with other, more readily datable silver pieces suggests that a late date is justified.

Additional evidence for the coexistence of different sizes of mirrors comes from Roman North Africa and Coptic Egypt: a fourth- to fifth-century mosaic from Djemila (Cuicul) in which a small mirror is held by an Eros toward Venus, as on the Esquiline patera;⁴⁸ a fifth-century mosaic from Sidi Ghrib, near Tunis, in which a seated matron views herself in a large shield-like mirror held by an attendant (reminiscent of the Trier relief);⁴⁹ and on the lamp- or candle stand, said to come from fifth- or sixth-century Egypt and now in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, depicting Venus and Nereids.⁵⁰ The goddess appears as the



Figure 11. Detail of painted ceiling, Trier, 3rd century A.D. (photo: from E. Simon, *Die konstantinischen Deckengemälde in Trier*, pl. 7)

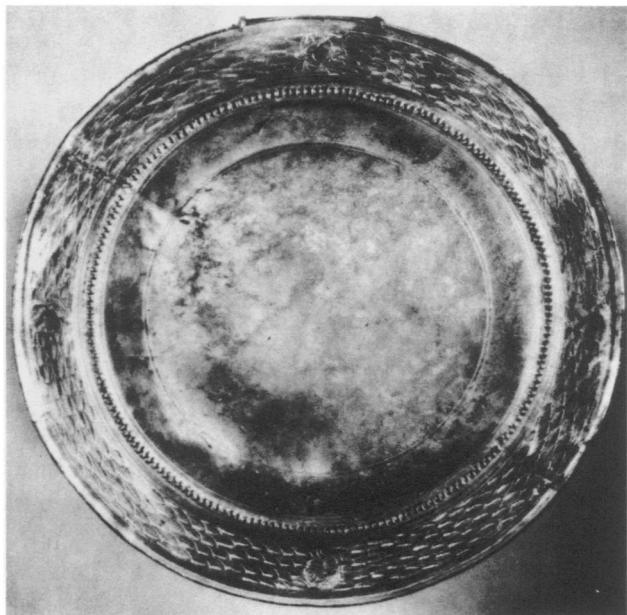
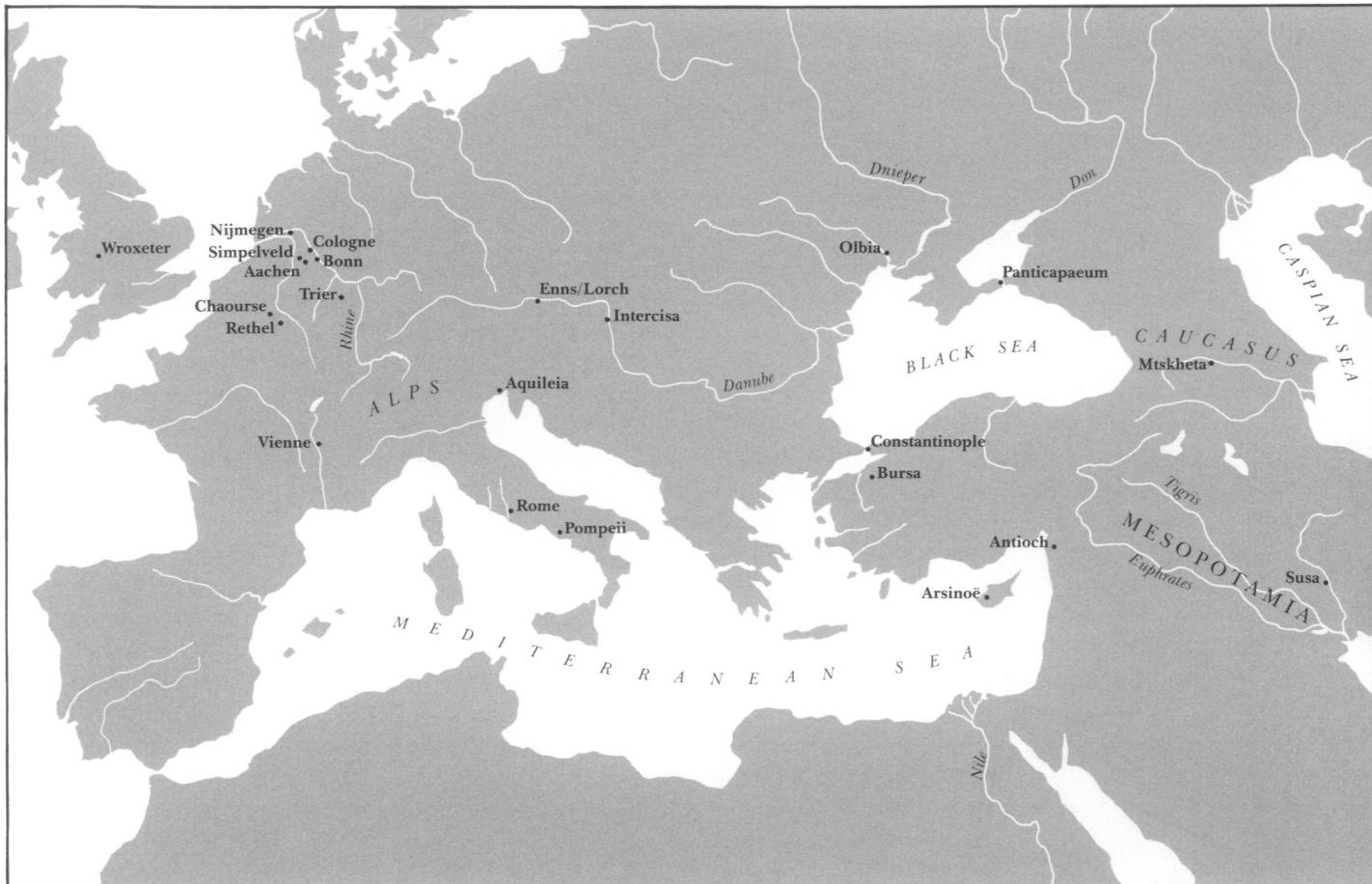


Figure 12. Silver platter, 4th century A.D. Diam. 39.5 cm. New York, Metzger Family collection (photo: from A. Oliver Jr., *Silver for the Gods*, no. 119)



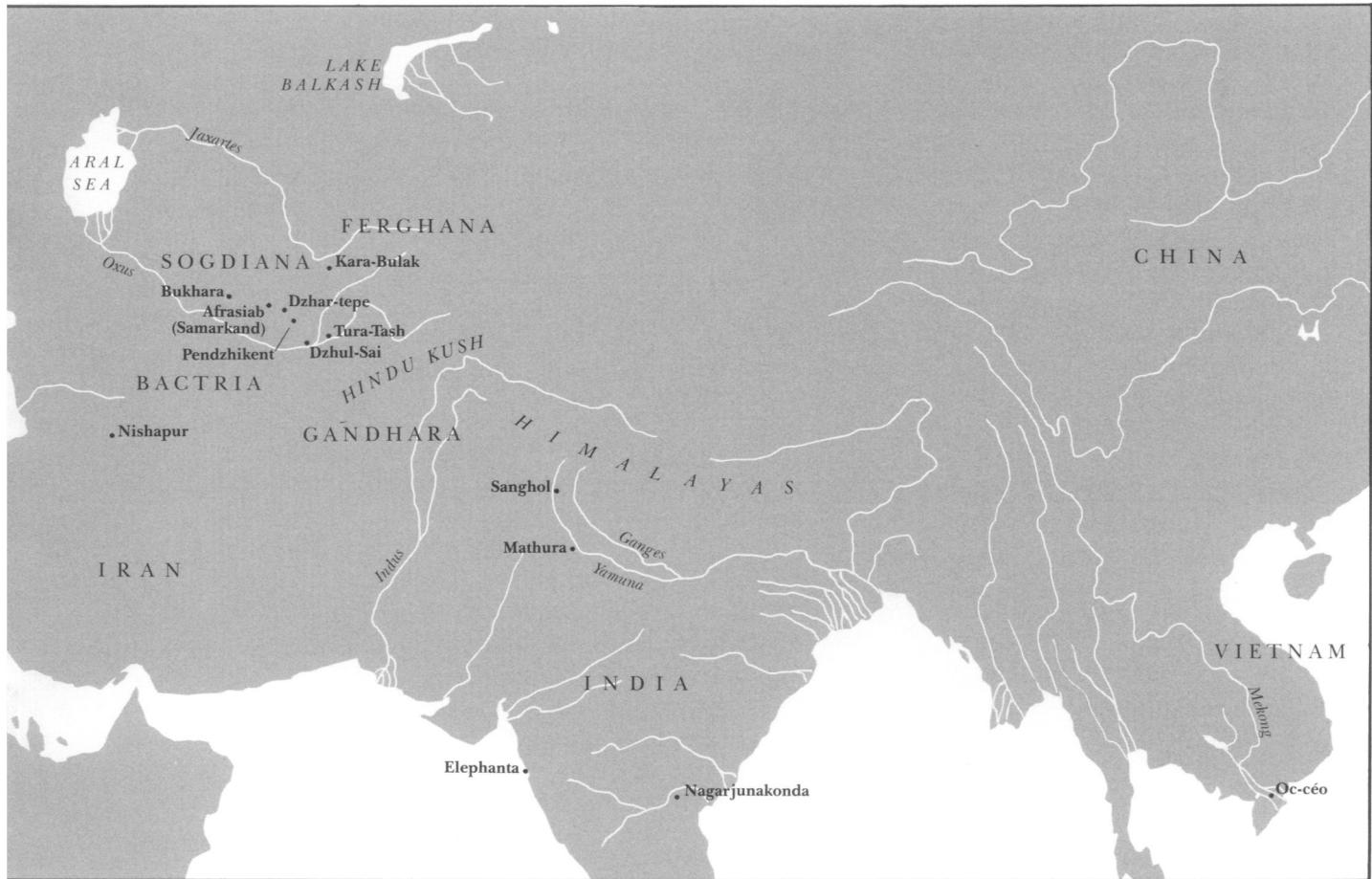
Distribution of horizontal-handled mirrors with known or probable provenance

central support for the stand, holding a small horizontal-handled mirror in her left hand. Each of the three legs of the stand are formed by a composite, fishlike creature upon whose back rides a Nereid; originally, each Nereid bore a gift, but only one gift, a horizontal-handled mirror, remains. This “sea-thiasos” of Venus and gift-bearing Nereids is similar to the scene on the cover of the Projecta Casket.

The evidence suggests that horizontal-handled mirrors originated in the Roman world in northern Italy and Campania. Provincial centers, influenced by imported examples, developed and produced their own variants and exported them to surrounding regions. The numerous pieces documented by Lloyd-Morgan at Nijmegen in the Lower Rhine area, along with evidence for bronzeworking and international trade there and in the vicinity, attest to one such production center;⁵¹ Cologne seems to have been another, and, as she suggested, possibly the source for some of the more elaborate Herakles-knot-handled variants, such as the Wroxeter mirror.⁵² The examples of mirrors with strap handles and thumbnail terminals that are found in France hint at workshops in the

province of Gaul. The distribution of horizontal-handled mirrors from Britain in the west, across Europe, to Cyprus, possibly the Black Sea, but certainly as far east as the Caucasus, is evidence of their widespread manufacture and trade; it also indicates the broad interest in and the ability to acquire such luxury goods as these mirrors, at least through the third century (see chart).⁵³

The evidence for mirrors in the fourth century and later parallels political and economic developments in the Roman Empire. As Rome loses the western provinces to barbarian conquest, mirror production there decreases and then seems to end. From the fourth century on, mirrors become “a luxury and rarity that few can afford. . . . It is not until the Middle Ages that mirrors are again produced in quantity and [then] without any of the characteristics of the Roman pieces.”⁵⁴ But in the eastern half of the empire, in the lands around the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the mirror with horizontal handle, along with other luxury metalwork, continues in production. Thus, mirrors with the Herakles-knot handle, such as the Schimmel and Cleveland ones, and some of those



with thumbnail terminal handles, such as the Antioch and perhaps the Mtskheta mirrors, may well be works from late Roman or early Byzantine workshops of the fourth through the sixth century.

We cannot be certain when production in the west actually ceases, but the latest pictorial evidence for the horizontal-handled mirror comes from the seventh century; like earlier examples it is associated with Nereids. On a silver flask in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, one of the two Nereids riding a sea monster holds a horizontal-handled mirror in the same manner as the matron in the Trier ceiling painting (see Figure 11). The base of the flask bears a control stamp with the bust of the Byzantine emperor Constans II, and is thus dated to A.D. 641–51 (see Figure 13).⁵⁵

HORIZONTAL-HANDED MIRRORS IN THE EAST

In contrast to their occurrence in the west, horizontal-handled mirrors are less numerous east of the Roman/Byzantine Empire. However, as they are

found in Iran, across Central Asia, in India, and into Vietnam, they are more geographically widespread. They also persist for a longer period, from the second or third century to the ninth or even tenth. In further contrast to the western evidence, their scattered appearances in different geographical and temporal settings makes it difficult to see a coherent chronological development. Excavated examples exist, but many are without provenance, although depictions in datable works of art permit us to learn more about the mirror's development and distribution than we could from material evidence.

Second- to third-century sculptures from Kushan India offer us the earliest appearance of the horizontal-handled mirror in a definite eastern context. Of Central Asian origin, the Kushans established an empire over a large territory whose size varied considerably during their rule.⁵⁶ Its two main artistic schools were Gandhara, which flourished in the northwest territories (present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan), and Mathura, the Kushan summer capital, not far from Delhi, the present-day capital of India. From Mathura, at the site of Bhutesvara, the series of railing pillars



Figure 13. Silver flask, A.D. 641–51 H. 25.2 cm. St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum 256

with figures of yakshis, or tree-goddesses, shows one of these deities holding a mirror to her face with the fingers of her left hand curled around the handle on its back (Figure 14).⁵⁷ The sculptures are dated to about A.D. 130. To the north, at Sanghol, in Gandharan territory but apparently reflecting the Mathura school, one of the recently discovered pillars contains a figure of a yakshi holding a mirror in a similar position. To my knowledge, this square mirror is the only one of that shape in our entire corpus.⁵⁸

It is not known how widespread the horizontal-handled mirror is in India. Several hundred miles southeast of Mathura, at Nagarjunakonda in southern India, relief carvings of the late third century show females with mirrors: one of them grasps a mirror from the back while the others hold mirrors with attached vertical grips.⁵⁹ Elsewhere, at this time and into the fourth century A.D., representations of females with mirrors show only those with a vertical

grip, or, less frequently, with a knob on the back that is mounted on a cylindrical base or handle.⁶⁰ However, the horizontal-handled mirror continues to be used. In medieval times, that is, in Gupta India (ca. 350–550) and later, it replaces the grip handle and becomes the “standard” type.⁶¹

Because no actual horizontal-handled mirrors have survived from Kushan India, we cannot know what the handles looked like: Were they a single strap, similar to the Antioch and related mirrors? Or were they double-handled and cast in some figured form, as are the Schimmel and other mirrors with Herakles-knot handles? A mirror with a bronze handle in the form of a female figure was found in a mound burial at Kara-Bulak, in Ferghana (in present-day southern Kirgiziya), and is dated by its excavators to the first to fourth centuries A.D. The style of the figure is Indian, and the details of dress link it to the ivories from Begram, the Kushan winter capital in Afghanistan.⁶² Ferghana lay on the borders of the Kushan empire, so it is not surprising to find an import from the west, the heartland of the empire. That the figurine was a handle is clear from the two prongs behind her head and heels; that it was cast to serve as a mirror handle is not certain. Since it is a standing figure, it was most likely intended as a vertical handle for a vessel⁶³ and was perhaps originally designed as such but later used as a mirror attachment. The secondary use of the figurine to create a handle suggests that by later Kushan times this mirror type was known in the outlying regions of the Kushan empire, beyond Mathura and Sanghol. Mirrors of this type might have been exported from one center of manufacture or produced in several places within Kushan territory; in either case, they must have been of sufficient popularity or interest to be imitated.

As far as I can determine, the earliest material remains of “true” horizontal-handled mirrors—also dating to the latter half of the Kushan period and, like the Kara-Bulak mirror, from Ferghana—are two examples from two separate graves at the burial site of Tura-Tash.⁶⁴ Both consist of a bronze disc with a low, upturned rim, and a strap handle attached to the back by two soldering plates. The larger of the two mirrors (17.4 cm) is decorated on the back with a series of concentric circles. More noteworthy is that its handle is cylindrical in section, splaying out slightly at each end, and decorated by a spool at its center; it is supported by what appear to be two short cylindrical elements resting on circular soldering discs.⁶⁵

The spool and the widening of the ends strikingly recall the Group W (Simpelveld type) mirrors in the west, with their splayed strap handles and narrow molding or collar marking the center (Figures 2, 5–7).

Even more notable is the use of a cylinder for the handle, a spool to embellish its center, and cylindrical supports. These three features are characteristic of all the other horizontal-handled mirrors known to me from the pre-Islamic east.⁶⁶ However, all these handles, unlike the Tura-Tash example, terminate in animal foreparts.

Mirrors with such handles which are found in or can be attributed to Iran, Central Asia, and Vietnam seem to develop after the Kushan mirrors. The Museum's mirror with leaping griffin protomes (Figure 3) is our prime example. In her study of the female figures seen on gilt-silver vessels of the late Sasanian and post-Sasanian period (fifth to seventh century A.D.), P. O. Harper describes the variety of objects held by these figures.⁶⁷ One, a curved object held by a female in her raised left hand, Harper iden-

tifies as a mirror; it appears on the gilt-silver ewer in the Museum (Figure 15a). The figure holds the mirror toward her face by grasping it from behind. It is clear that a horizontal handle is intended. Additional evidence of the mirror's use in Iran by the latter half of the Sasanian period is the gilt-silver vase in the Musée du Louvre, on which one of the dancing females holds an identical object (Figure 15b).⁶⁸ In both representations, the edge of the mirror is raised toward the rear surface; the handle on the back appears as an undecorated horizontal shaft.

Despite the simple rendition it is tempting to assume that the mirrors depicted on these silver vessels were, in reality, the same type as the one in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 3). Like those shown on the vessels, this mirror has a raised rim. That the characteristic feature of this mirror type, the animal-protome terminals, is missing from the representations on the vessels may be explained as being too complex for the silversmiths to execute on such a small scale.

Harper attributes the Metropolitan's mirror to the latter part of the Parthian period in Iran (first to third centuries A.D.) by analogy with the Kushan sculptures from Mathura (Figure 14).⁶⁹ I propose that it belongs to the succeeding Sasanian period (A.D. 224–651) and is probably not much earlier than the fifth century. To my knowledge, there is no evidence as yet for mirrors with horizontal handles at any site or in the art of the Parthian period in Iran, Central Asia, or Mesopotamia.⁷⁰ Griffins from Parthian sites in Iran, Mesopotamia, and Turkmenistan are depicted with elongated heads and beaks, rather than with the more rounded skulls that characterize the Museum's griffins. Another feature that differentiates Parthian griffins from those on the mirror handle is the shape of the creatures' wings. Instead of the short, sicklelike wings of the Museum's griffins, Parthian griffins' wings generally terminate in a forward curl.⁷¹ Nevertheless, a closer parallel to the Metropolitan's griffin protomes exists in a bronze censer handle in the shape of a leaping griffin, with large beak and broad wings. The censer, however, is not from a datable context. It was purchased at the Parthian-Sasanian palace site of Kish, in Mesopotamia, and could as well belong to Sasanian as to late Parthian times.⁷²

Closer in appearance are the griffins that support the throne in the upper investiture scene in the center of a silver plate in the British Museum (Figure 16).⁷³ Acquired in Rawalpindi (in present-day Pakistan) during the nineteenth century, the plate is considered to be a Kushano-Sasanian work of the fourth century A.D.⁷⁴ With their large beaks, prominent brow ridges,

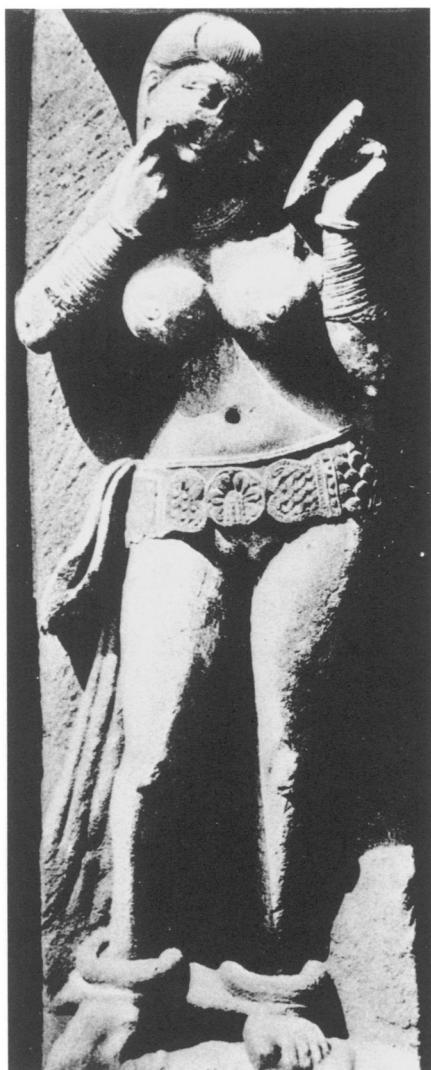


Figure 14. Relief from Mathura, 2nd century A.D. (photo: from J. Ph. Vogel, *La Sculpture de Mathura*, pl. xviii)



Figure 15a. Gilt-silver ewer, 6th–7th century A.D. H. 34.1 cm.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Mr. and Mrs.
C. Douglas Dillon Gift and Rogers Fund, 1967, 67.10



Figure 15b. Gilt-silver vase, 6th century A.D. H. 18 cm. Paris,
Musée du Louvre, Antiquités Orientales, MAO 426 (photo:
Chuzeville)

and jutting ears these griffin throne supports are similar to the griffins of the mirror. A more telling point of similarity is their salient stance, with forelegs raised slightly off the ground. Harper has shown that none of the existing plates with the image of a Sasanian king on a throne supported by animals can be attributed to “royal Sasanian” production. Rather, such plates are likely to belong to the Sasanian period but to have been made in a provincial or Central Asian workshop, or they are post-Sasanian in date. Those with an enthronement scene that can be placed in Sasanian times show the animals standing with all four feet on the ground.⁷⁵ By contrast, on Kushan representations of the sun god, the animals drawing his chariot-throne leap to either side of his seat.⁷⁶

If these analogies hold, then the Metropolitan’s mirror may be a product of the eastern part of the Sasanian realm (an area which bordered on the Kushan empire) that came under Sasanian control by the second half of the third century. The horizontal-handled mirror that we had first encountered in Kushan India and Central Asia may have been taken

up by the Sasanians through contacts along the borders of the two empires. As an “eastern” mirror type, it continues in use after the collapse of Kushan authority in India, as already noted, as well as in Central Asia. From the latter region, among a hoard of silver vessels found at Chilek, near Samarkand (Uzbekistan), a bowl with relief decoration on the exterior shows a frieze of female figures.⁷⁷ Each stands within an arcade and holds some object or arranges a scarf or ribbons over her head. In their general appearance and attitude, they recall the women on Sasanian silver vessels. Two of the females on the Chilek bowl thrust a convex disc, each toward another female (Figures 17a and b). Undoubtedly, these discs are mirrors, held by a horizontal handle at the back; the females toward whom the discs are held turn as if to see themselves in a mirror. The image of one female holding a mirror for another reminds us of the Roman matron and her attendant from Neumagen (Figure 10). Based on stylistic features, the bowl has been attributed to the Hephthalites, Hunnish people from Central Asia, who, in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D., made



Figure 16. Silver plate, 4th century A.D. Diam 23.7 cm.
London, The British Museum, WAA 124093 (photo: courtesy
of the Trustees of The British Museum)

a weakened Sasanian state their tributary. Their domination of Central Asia lasted until the middle of the sixth century, when they were defeated by a coalition of Sasanians and Turks. On the analogy of Hephthalite coins, the bowl can be dated to the middle of the fifth century A.D.

The Metropolitan's mirror is not unique. Harper notes that she has seen "a number of other examples of the same type of mirror, also with griffin handles, on the market," all of which she identified as "evidently from Iran."⁷⁸ It may be that these mirrors with leaping-griffin handles are characteristically Iranian, the main part of the handle with its cylindrical pole, central spool-like decoration, and short cylindrical supports influenced by earlier models of the Kushan period such as the one from Tura-Tash.

Farther to the east and north of the Sasanian empire in Bactria and in Sogdiana, horizontal-handled mirrors with animal-protome handles also occur, but in all surviving examples the animals' forelegs are vertical, replacing the cylindrical pedestals of the Tura-Tash and Museum mirrors and serving as upright

supports for the horizontal grip. Two examples of this type are the bronze mirrors excavated in a multiple burial at Dzhul-Sai (in present-day Tajikistan) (Figure 18).⁷⁹ Both mirrors are formed by a slightly convex disc (one is marked with concentric circles on the back) and a horizontal handle that ends in horse protomes. The grip is a cylindrical shaft with a spool decorating its center. The Dzhul-Sai tomb contained late-fifth-century Sasanian coins, but the burials themselves may date to the sixth or even seventh century A.D., which makes them roughly contemporaneous with the Sasanian vessels with female figures, and thus possibly with the Metropolitan's mirror. At 12 and 12.8 centimeters, the Dzhul-Sai bronze mirrors are comparable in size to the Museum's mirror, but the difference in the animals' stance and the absence of a raised rim around the discs distinguish them sharply.

The Dzhul-Sai mirrors may represent the development of the horizontal-handled mirror as known in Kushan times. After all, except for the mirror from



Figures 17a and b. Silver bowl from Chilek, 5th century A.D.
Diam. 18.5 cm. Samarkand, State Museum of History and
Local Lore (photo: B. I. Marshak)

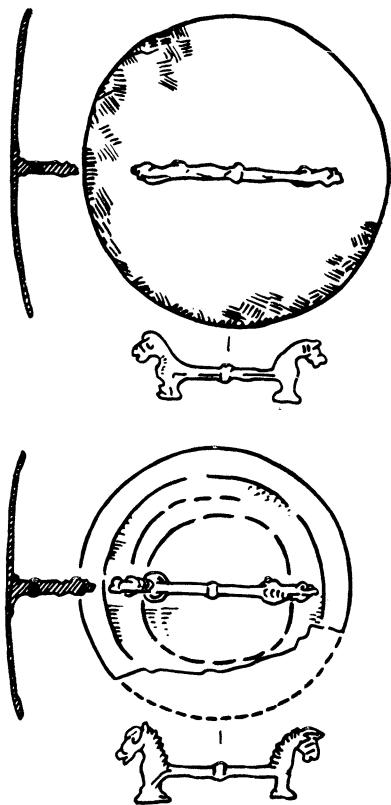


Figure 18. Bronze mirrors from Dzhul-Sai, 6th–7th century A.D. Diam. 12 and 12.8 cm (photo: from B. A. Litvinskii and A. V. Sedov, *Kulty i ritualy Kushanskoi Baktrii*, fig. 27)

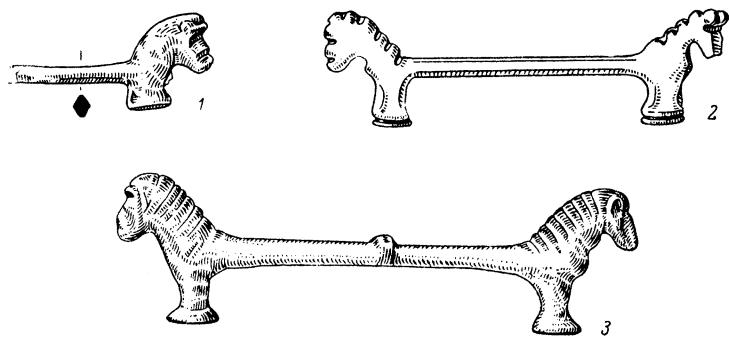


Figure 19.1–3. Bronze handles from Pendzhikent (1 and 3) and Afrasiab (2), late 7th–early 8th century A.D. L. 11.5–12.8 cm (photo: from V. I. Raspopova, *Metallicheskie izdeliya rannesrednevekovogo Sogda*, fig. 79:1–3)

Tura-Tash on the eastern edge of Kushan territory, none of the evidence for these mirrors in Kushan-India shows the handle's *actual* form and decoration; furthermore, Dzhul-Sai is situated in former Kushan territory. If the Dzhul-Sai mirrors develop a Kushan mirror type, then the Metropolitan's mirror may reveal a specifically Sasanian or Iranian interpretation of that type. This version takes the characteristic oriental desire to enliven an object with animals even further—they leap in opposite directions, as if they were breaking out beyond the mirror's circular field.

The more static posture of the Dzhul-Sai animal-protome handles continues into the seventh and possibly the eighth century in Central Asia, at the Sogdian city-sites of Pendzhikent (in present-day Tajikistan), Afrasiab (ancient Samarkand), and Dzhartepa (both in present-day Uzbekistan). At the three sites, the handles, all apparently terminating in standing-horse protomes and certainly meant for attachment to bronze mirror discs, were associated with a temple structure. Of the four handles excavated at Pendzhikent, two were found in what V. Shkoda has identified as a bronze workshop affiliated with one of the temples (Figures 19:1 and 3).⁸⁰ The handles are poorly cast and badly corroded, but a distinctive horselike profile with full mane can be discerned from the drawings

and photographs of these objects.⁸¹ Only one of the four handles sports a spool-like protuberance in the middle of the grip; the others are without any embellishment. Based on coinage associated with the workshop, Shkoda dates the handles to the first quarter of the eighth century.

Another double horse-protome mirror handle was excavated at Afrasiab, again, in a temple context (Figure 19:2).⁸² Nearly identical to those from Pendzhikent, the handle appears to be in even poorer condition. Complete horizontal-handled mirrors, also associated with a temple, have been discovered at Dzhartepa, located on an offshoot of the Silk Road leading from Samarkand to Pendzhikent. Found with them were disc mirrors with a pierced knob on the rear surface, belts, a large mace, and a silver bowl with a Sogdian inscription.⁸³ Like the other two Sogdian sites just discussed, the excavators of Dzhartepa propose a late-seventh- or early-eighth-century date for this phase of the building complex. Their association with temples suggests that these mirrors played some role in the religious practices of the local people; perhaps they were votive objects or even souvenirs of worshipers' visits. The evidence from Pendzhikent tells us that they were produced at the site for religious use.

One additional object from Pendzhikent may relate to this series. Cast in bronze and badly corroded, it is a protome of what may be a bird, with out-thrust breast and raised head. It emerges from a rolled collar at the end of a broken shaft; beneath the collar is a short cylindrical pedestal on a flat base.⁸⁴ The collar that joins the protome to the shaft and the cylindrical pedestal recall the Metropolitan's griffin-handled mirror, and contrasts with the configuration of the Pendzhikent and other Sogdian horse-protome handles. V. I. Raspopova identifies this fragmentary object as the handle of a vessel or lid, but it could as easily have served as such for a mirror.

Beyond the first quarter of the eighth century, the Sogdian archaeological record becomes obscure as individual principalities fell to Arab invaders. At Pendzhikent, the temple workshop was destroyed by fire in 722, the same year that its ruler was taken captive and killed by the Arabs.⁸⁵ No other horizontal-handled mirrors—or even their handles—survive in Sogdiana or elsewhere in Central Asia that can be dated beyond the Islamization of the area. But in Iran such mirrors continue at least into early Islamic times. Evidence for this is a silver vessel decorated with dancing females in the Archaeological Museum, Tehran. One of the figures holds a convex object in her raised right hand, with the convex surface toward her face in the manner of the females on the Metropolitan and Louvre vessels.⁸⁶ Both the rendering of the figures, and, as Harper points out, the vessel's form—actually an amphora-rhyton with two spouts in its base—point to a post-Sasanian date.⁸⁷

It is also to this time that the Museum's fourth example, the gilt-bronze handle of a horizontal-handled mirror, belongs (Figure 4). The handle was found in the course of Museum excavations in the modern-day city of Nishapur, in northeastern Iran.⁸⁸ This residential quarter of the early Islamic city was occupied from the eighth century until its final destruction by the Samanids in the tenth. Long-necked and so abstract that they might be taken for birds, horses, or griffins, their tapered profiles are reminiscent of a bird's or griffin's beak. The knob at their foreheads may represent a crest or a mane, but could be a stylization of the prominent brow ridge observed on the Metropolitan's griffin handle. Certainly, the hooked protrusions on the handle's shaft are meant to be wings. As noted earlier, traces of gilding on the undersides of the feet suggest that this handle was never attached to another object. The slight upward angle of the feet hint that the surface for which it was intended was concave, such as the reverse of a convex mirror disc. The curved "legs" of the protomes repeat the arch of the animals'

necks and distinguish the overall shape of this handle from all the previous zoomorphic ones.

Closer to those handles is one from Susa in southwestern Iran (Figure 20). Rectangular in general outline, this bronze handle consists of a cylindrical grip supported by a pedestal.⁸⁹ The Susa handle, like the Museum's griffin-handled mirror (Figure 3), has a central spool-like element, the animal protomes emerge from a rolled collar at each end of the grip, and are supported below each collar by a pedestal formed by a squarish base and a short cylindrical element. The long, almost serpentine necks of the creatures, the absence of forelegs, and the less defined rendition of all these elements differentiates the Susa handle from the Metropolitan's example.

Like the Nishapur handle, the one from Susa is a surface find and was also discovered in an Islamic area of the site. Despite the absence of a datable context, the cursory nature of the Susa handle and the very abstract character of the Nishapur example place both at the end of the development that we have traced. In the west, the last occurrence of the horizontal-handled mirror was on the silver flask of the mid-seventh-century Byzantine emperor Constans II. In the east it persists in Sogdian Central Asia into the eighth century and in Iran perhaps as late as the tenth. Just as the western mirrors offer two different solutions to grasping the mirror from its back surface—the Herakles knot and strap handles—these eastern mirrors show a variation on the idea of a zoomorphic handle, by using leaping or standing animal protomes as handle terminals.

The development that we have traced from second-century India north and west to Central Asia and Iran appears to end in this region in eighth-century Sogdiana and ninth- or tenth-century Iran. However, it appears to echo in yet another part of the east, Vietnam. There, both variations of the zoomorphic handle occur in four bronze handlelike objects, characterized by L. Malleret as "supports" or "knife rests" (*porte-couteaux*) (Figures 21a and b).⁹⁰ Said to come from Oc-eo in the Mekong Delta, they are probably contemporaneous with the Sogdian and Islamic Iranian handles. Two of the objects depict the foreparts of birdlike creatures, with erect ears and beaklike mouths which stand on a pair of long vertical legs; the central spool found on the Iranian and Sogdian handles is missing here and is replaced by a spool-like protuberance toward each of the animals' foreparts, where it joins the horizontal grip. The other two objects, one showing the remains of gilding, terminate in leaping creatures and recall the Museum's griffin-handled mirror. But in contrast with the griffins on that mirror—and with all the zoomorphic handles

AN ANOMALY

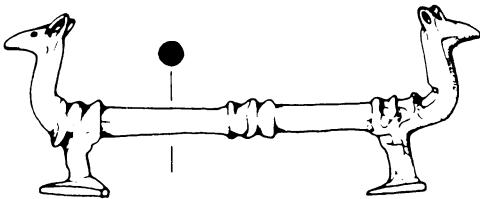
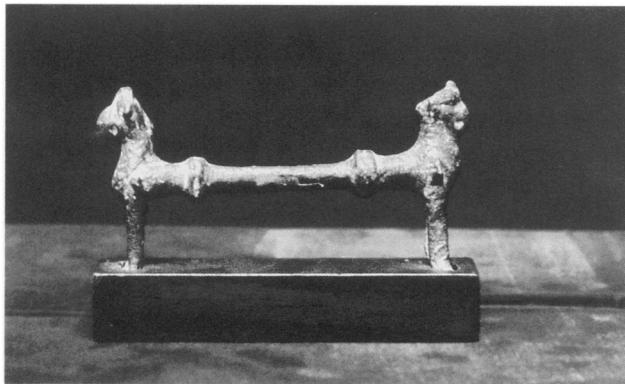


Figure 20. Bronze handle from Susa, 8th–9th century A.D. L. 11 cm (photo: from *Cahiers de la D. A. F. I.* 14 [1984], fig. 15:11)

we have previously noted—in place of a geometric pedestal, a pair of rear legs supports the creatures' foreparts. This transforms them into complete sculptures in the round, poised to leap in opposite directions but each joined to the cylindrical grip at their backs. A spool marks the center of one of the grips; the other grip has no decoration but flares out at the ends, where it joins the animals; these are characterized by an open mouth, short horns, and floppy ears. The other animal pair is difficult to identify owing to the object's poor condition. It is impossible to state definitively that any of these four objects were actually mirror handles. If they were, the distance between the vertical supports that would have been affixed to the mirror disc varies among the four from 10 to 17 centimeters; these measurements accord with the sizes and proportions of the handles and mirrors that we have already discussed. Whatever their function, their resemblance to the Iranian and Sogdian examples is evidence of contacts with Iran or Central Asia in Sasanian or early Islamic times.⁹¹

So far, we have seen that horizontal-handled mirrors occur in significant numbers across a wide geographic expanse—from Roman Britain to India, and on to Central and Southeast Asia—and within a relatively limited period, beginning in the first century A.D. to as late as the ninth or even tenth century, when they apparently went out of fashion. I have suggested first-century Rome for their origin as no examples exist that can be attributed to another center at that time. However, a bronze mirror of unknown, but likely Iranian provenance, with a cylindrical horizontal handle terminating in lions that is now in the Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (Figure 22), confounds this seemingly coherent premise.⁹²

Although its conception as a horizontal-handled mirror links it to the series, its actual execution differentiates it sharply from the others. Larger than all the known eastern mirrors with a diameter of 17.2 centimeters, the handle is riveted rather than soldered to a plain, thin disc. A distinguishing variation is the treatment of the lions, which are not rendered as protomes but as complete beasts. Their torsos, rear legs, and tails appear in low relief on the handle while their shoulders and heads are cast in the round. Their chests rest on a short pedestal which supports each end of the grip, as if that support were the animals' legs; in fact, the base of each pedestal, which puddles out to the edge of the disc to accommodate the rivets, could stand in for the animals' feet. An even more striking difference is that the lions turn their heads back to look at each other. A. and Y. Godard, who first published the mirror in 1954, considered it a bronze from Luristan, a province in western Iran to which is attributed a huge corpus of cast and sheet metalwork of the first part of the first millennium B.C.; their iden-



Figures 21a and b. Bronze handles from Oc-eo, Vietnam, 8th century A.D. or later. No. 4507 L. 14 cm, Ho Chi Minh City, Historical Museum of Vietnam; no. 3578, L. 17 cm, Hanoi, History Museum of Vietnam (photos: A. Robinson)

tification has been perpetuated by later authors.⁹³ However, this attribution is due solely to provenance by association as the mirror was part of the Graeffe collection of identifiably Luristan (though unprovenanced) bronzes and was thus included by the Godards in their publication.

There are actually no features that allow us to associate the mirror with the style of the Luristan bronzes, nor with the ninth to mid-seventh centuries B.C., to which these bronzes have been assigned. The reversed heads of the lions, an unusual element, given the fact that the animals on all the other mirror handles look outward, beyond the mirror disc, recall a characteristic of much fifth- and fourth-century B.C. Achaemenid metal-work: handles in the shape of animals standing on their hind legs and turning their heads 180 degrees toward their bodies, and away from the object.⁹⁴ Further, such details as the lions' muzzles and ears, and the sickle-shaped wings or belly hair traced on their sides, suggest a date in the sixth century B.C. or later, during the Achaemenid imperial period (sixth to fourth century B.C.),⁹⁵ or even a post-Achaemenid date when objects partaking of that period's style may have continued to be made in outlying areas of the former empire.⁹⁶

The handle is attached to the mirror back by rivets; as solder is used on the handles of all other known horizontal-handled mirrors, the rivets might imply an earlier date and perhaps provincial craftsmanship. It certainly appears to be a more expedient, even cruder, method of attachment. However, the choice of rivets or solder to join two pieces of bronze is not a reliable hallmark for dating, since soldering as a joining method was used as early as the third millennium B.C.⁹⁷ In sum, it is not possible at this time to accommodate this mirror in any satisfactory way.

The idea of a horizontal handle terminating in animal protomes or, more accurately, in the necks and heads of animals while the vertical handle supports serve as the animals' forelegs certainly antedates the mirrors we have been discussing. It finds expression in several enigmatic bronzes that have been dubbed, like the objects from Vietnam, "knife rests." Never excavated, they were assembled by scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and dubbed "Cappadocian," that is, from eastern Anatolia and Armenia, or, on no sound archaeological basis, as coming from "Luristan."⁹⁸ Whatever the attribution of these objects,⁹⁹ joined animal protomes have an ancient history in Western Asia, going back as far as the Chalcolithic period.¹⁰⁰

It should also be noted that there are but a limited number of ways to design a mirror. At the beginning of this article, I reviewed the known means for grasping a



Figure 22. Bronze mirror, late 1st millennium B.C.–early 1st millennium A.D. Diam. 17.2 cm. Brussels, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Ir.844 (photo: author)

mirror. Placing a horizontal handle on the reverse side may be a solution that was arrived at spontaneously at different times and in different locations. A stunning illustration of this point is the obsidian mirror found at Kabri, in western Galilee, Israel. Of extraordinary workmanship, it is carved in one piece with a horizontal handle on its reverse, nonreflecting side. Although a chance find, it most likely dates to the middle of the fifth millennium B.C.¹⁰¹ After that time, until the appearance of the sequence of mirrors that we have been discussing, and, with the exception of the Brussels mirror, evidence for horizontal-handled mirrors is lacking in Western and Central Asia.

ORIGINS AND MEANING

Another possibility for the origin of the horizontal-handled mirror must still be explored. A few scholars have sought its origin in the Scythian disc mirror with a loop handle in the center of the reverse side.¹⁰² This type, now recognized as the probable origin of the "Chinese" mirror,¹⁰³ is associated from at least as early as the beginning of the first millennium B.C. with the nomadic horse-riding tribes who inhabited a broad stretch of Eurasia; in the west, they are identified as Scythians. Probably of Central Asian origin, their remains are known mainly from burial mounds (*kurgans*), which are found from the Altai Mountains in southern Siberia, west across the deserts of Central Asia, and into the forest steppes of Russian Europe; by the eighth to seventh centuries B.C., Scythian remains are found in the Caucasus, along the northeast shore of the Black Sea, and as far north as the Kiev area on the Dnieper River.

On some Scythian mirrors from Siberia as well as Europe, the loop has been "exaggerated to make a

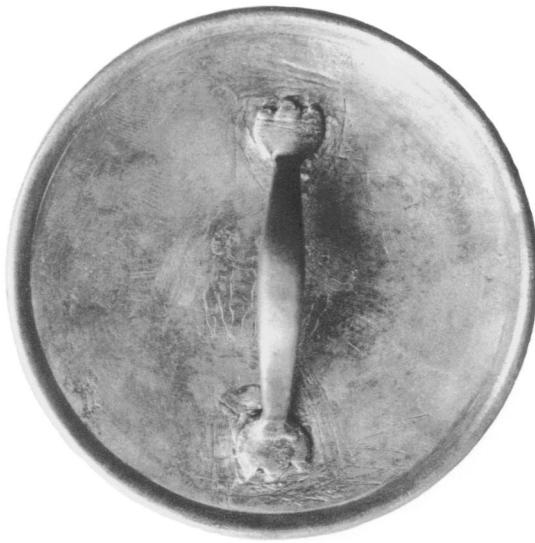


Figure 23. Silver mirror from Aquileia, 1st century A.D., with an engraving of the Three Graces on the non-reflecting side (photo: Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Aquileia, Udine)

kind of handle at right angles to the plane of the back of the mirror.¹⁰⁴ In Siberia the loop is developed further, so that it is formed by two adored animal heads,¹⁰⁵ and there as well as in the west it also developed into a grip in the shape of an animal, “disproportionately raised” on two short posts above the back surface of the mirror.¹⁰⁶ The loop with adored animal heads could have been lengthened and transformed into complete foreparts, while the animal-shaped handle could have been elongated, the hindquarters replaced by a duplicate animal forepart. Either alteration would result in a horizontal handle with animal protomes similar to those of the Brussels mirror.

But even if the horizontal-handled mirror is influenced by these Scythian models, the Brussels mirror remains the lone witness to this phenomenon. The absence of any other instance in the second half of the first millennium B.C., the period of greatest Scythian activity, still leaves us without a means of transition to the beginning of the first millennium A.D., when our sizable corpus of these mirrors appears. This lacuna applies to Scythian-dominated areas in Eurasia, to those regions of the Black Sea coast and the Crimea where Scythian tribes interacted with Greek colonies, and to those parts of northwestern Iran where they came into contact with local peoples.

That fewer horizontal-handled mirrors have been found in the east than in the west is not necessarily an argument for a Roman origin in the early first millennium. The fortuitousness of archaeological finds,

their number and distribution, cannot be ignored, and archaeological investigation in Roman imperial lands has a longer and more intensive history than such investigation anywhere east of the Black Sea. Yet when we look at the distribution of the mirror—the actual objects of known provenance and the representations of the mirror type—I believe that a strong argument can be made for a western, that is Roman, origin (see chart). In Europe, evidence for horizontal-handled mirrors begins in the first century A.D., with the height of their manufacture occurring throughout the third century (Upper and Lower Rhine, Britain, France, Austria, and Yugoslavia); by the fourth century, the centers of manufacture (or at least of their usage) shift to the eastern part of the Roman Empire and to the areas of the succeeding Byzantine realm (Black Sea region, Caucasus, North Africa, and Syria). In the east, the earliest evidence for the horizontal-handled mirror is found in second-century Kushan India (Mathura and Sanghol), and in the following century at Central Asian sites at the easternmost reaches of Kushan territory (Kara-Bulak and Tura-Tash). Under the Hephthalites in the fifth century, the type continues within Central Asia (Chilek and Dzhul-Sai), and then appears in Iran (Metropolitan mirror and ewer; Louvre vase). Prior to the fifth century, or at least not before the Sasanian dynasty, evidence for it is lacking in western Iranian lands.

The appearance of the mirror, first on Roman territory (and in Latium and Campania, the heart of the Roman Empire) and soon after in India, suggests that the type developed in the Roman west and entered the oriental world through trade with India;¹⁰⁷ it then spread across Kushan lands, into Central Asia and west to Iran.¹⁰⁸ While no horizontal-handled mirror of Roman manufacture has yet been found on the Indian subcontinent, there is abundant evidence of a brisk sea-borne trade between Rome and Kushan India. Roman metalwork, including mirrors of the grip-handle variety, has been discovered at several Indian sites.¹⁰⁹

One other piece of evidence also suggests a western origin for this mirror. It will be recalled that it is just one of several different objects held by or associated with the female figures that grace the bodies of the Metropolitan ewer and Louvre vase (Figures 15a and 15b). Harper observes that all the other objects—birds, a panther, a dog, a small nude male child, bunches of grapes, flowers, a jeweled necklace or diadem, pails, pyxides or caskets, and specific forms of fluted bowls and ewers—that appear on these and other Sasanian vessels are either Dionysiac in origin or derived from Roman prototypes.¹¹⁰ I see no reason to exclude the horizontal-handled mirror from the com-

pany of these western-derived elements. As borne by the dancing females, themselves derived from western types, it echoes those held by Venus, the Nereids, and Roman women that we have seen on various pieces of Roman-Byzantine metalwork.

These observations should help to answer the question of where and how the horizontal-handled mirror developed. Other questions remain, however: why this particular mirror form came into being, whether it had a specific purpose or context for use, and why it ceased to be produced after the seventh century in the west and the ninth or tenth century, at the latest, in the east. Its association in the west with Venus and Nereids and with marriage (the Herakles knot, Projecta's Casket) might point to some cultic or religious function, as does its association in the east with semidivinities (yakshis and perhaps the dancing females) and temples (Pendzhikent, Afrasiab, and Dzhartepa). Yet, with the exception of the Sogdian temples, we have no evidence for the horizontal-handled mirror in a votive context. Our archaeological knowledge of this mirror (as well as the disc and vertical-grip-handled mirrors) comes from graves—when the skeletal contents have been identified by their excavators—that are those of females.

As necessary objects in the daily life of women, it is only natural that mirrors would be important in the afterlife. But, rather than being religious or cultic, these mirrors are, first of all, utilitarian: one of the normal household or personal possessions of a woman. Thus, the Antioch mirror (Figure 2), though probably part of a church treasure, originally was a domestic object; likewise, the Cleveland mirror (Figure 9) should be considered an example of fourth-century household silver.¹¹¹ Similarly, the Sasanian silver vessels that display dancing females, as convincingly argued by Harper, warrant a secular interpretation rather than a cultic one. Though not associated with some domestic ensemble but with "royal show or donative plate,"¹¹² the horizontal-handled mirror on these Sasanian vessels is one of the many attributes which, along with the females who hold them, seem to have had some "festal or auspicious meaning."¹¹³

Indeed, we have noted that the embellishments of the horizontal handle—specifically the Herakles knot and the animal protomes—are considered auspicious or even apotropaic in the cultures in which the mirrors are found. It is possible that the connection of these symbols with certain deities made them even more desirable as handle decorations. Thus, Venus may have been associated with the Herakles knot as a symbol of love and fertility. The sun god may have

been evoked in handles from Iran and Central Asia that have a central spool flanked by animal protomes—griffins on the Metropolitan's mirror (see Figure 3) and horses at Dzhul-Sai, Afrasiab, and Pendzhikent (Figures 18, 19)—with the spool perhaps serving as an abbreviation of his chariot.¹¹⁴ In this way, the form or decoration of the horizontal handle would have had significance for the mirror's owner during her lifetime as well as when it was buried with her.¹¹⁵

While its contexts and imagery permit us to draw conclusions about the meaning and use of the horizontal-handled mirror, nothing allows more than speculation about its disappearance. The form may have simply fallen out of favor, or, perhaps because of its associations with pre-Christian and pre-Islamic beliefs, been abandoned for other forms. Even though it was in use for nearly a millennium, this type of mirror seems almost transient when compared to grip-handled and disc mirrors that are still in use today. Not only do the Metropolitan's collections provide us with four examples of this relatively short-lived mirror—the Herakles-knot-handled Schimmel mirror, the strap-handled Antioch mirror with its thumbnail-shaped terminals, and the animal-protome terminals of the griffin mirror, and the Nishapur mirror handle—but each example vividly demonstrates for us how a different period or culture expresses itself through one simple yet profoundly eloquent form.



Figure 24. Fragment of a bronze handle from Pendzhikent, (photo: courtesy V. I. Raspopova)

ADDENDUM

While this article was in the galley stage, V. I. Raspopova presented me with a slide of an unpublished fragment of a bronze handle from Pendzhikent, an unstratified find of twenty years ago (Figure 24), and very gener-

CENTURY	EUROPE	BLACK SEA, TURKEY, AND CAUCASUS	EGYPT AND NORTH AFRICA	LEVANT AND CYPRUS	IRAN	INDIA	CENTRAL ASIA
1st A.D.	Aquileia Pompeii Naples						
2nd A.D.	Nijmegen Simpelveld	Bursa(*)				<i>Mathura relief</i> <i>Sanghol relief</i>	
3rd A.D.	Bonn Cologne Enns/Lorch Intercisa Rethel Vienne Aachen(*) Chaourse(*) <i>Neumagen relief</i> Wroxeter (H) Weiden (H) <i>Trier painting (H)</i>	Mtskheta Panticapaeum Olbia		Arsinoe (H)		<i>Nagarjuna- konda relief</i>	Kara-Bulak Tura-Tash
4th A.D.	<i>August Venus</i> <i>Esquiline patera</i> <i>Projecta casket</i>		<i>Djimila mosaic</i>	"Antioch"			
5th A.D.			<i>Sidi Ghrib mosaic</i> <i>Coptic lampstand</i>	Cleveland (H)			<i>Chilek bowl</i> Dzhul-Sai
6th A.D.					<i>MMA ewer</i> <i>Louvre vase</i>	<i>Elephanta relief</i>	
7th A.D.		<i>Nereid flask</i>			<i>Kalardasht rhy- ton</i>		
8th A.D.					<i>Susa</i>		Pendzhikent Afrasiab Dzartepa
9th A.D.					<i>Nishapur</i>		

DISTRIBUTION OF HORIZONTAL-HANDED MIRRORS WITH KNOWN OR PROBABLE PROVENANCE

Boldface type indicates horizontal-handled mirrors with known provenance; regular type indicates probable provenance.

(H) indicates that the horizontal handle is in the form of a Herakles knot.

(*) indicates that the horizontal handle is missing (see note 11).

Italic type indicates a work of art in which a horizontal-handled mirror is represented.

ously gave me permission to include it here. The forepart of a leaping horse and its now-vanished mate at the opposite end would have formed a complete handle of at least 7.4 centimeters in length. While this is somewhat shorter than the other Pendzhikent handles, it is not much less than the Metropolitan's Nishapur handle (Figure 4). That this protome does not display the static posture of the other Sogdian handles but is closer to what I have suggested is a Sasanian or Iranian interpretation is an eloquent demonstration of how each discovery (newly excavated or recovered in an excavation's or museum's storage) may challenge the theories we develop to understand the objects of the past.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article and the work that preceded it could not have been possible without the generous help, expertise, and encouragement of a number of friends and scholars. Their names and specific contributions have been acknowledged at the appropriate places in the text, but I wish to thank here the four curators at the Metropolitan Museum who allowed me to pursue my study of the relevant objects in their charge: Joan R. Mertens of the Department of Greek and Roman Art, Prudence O. Harper of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, Helen C. Evans of the Department of Medieval Art, and Stefano Carboni of the Department of Islamic Art. I also wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Harper for sparking my interest in the subject through her publication of the Museum's horizontal-handled mirror with griffin-protome terminals and for her comprehensive memory for relevant parallels, both within and beyond her own area of specialization; and to Dr. Mertens for her steady interest in my exploration of the subject.

The current article has evolved from a short paper, "Mirrors of the Parthian Period," presented at the third Merv conference on "Merv and the Parthian Epoch," in Mary (modern Merv), Republic of Turkmenistan, September 28–30, 1992. A portion of an earlier version of the article was read at the Convegno internazionale sul tema la Persia e l'Asia Centrale da Alessandro al X secolo, held in Rome, November 9–12, 1994, and will be published in the *Atti del Convegno. . . Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, Rome, as "The Horizontal-handled Mirror in Iran and Central Asia: Occurrences and Origin."

NOTES

1. For the history and use of mirrors in antiquity and the metaphorical associations of mirrors, see the articles in *Source: Notes in the History of Art* IV 2/3 (1985), a double issue devoted to the theme of mirrors in art. For further discussion of the last topics, see G. F. Hartlaub, *Zauber des Spiegels: Geschichte und Bedeutung des Spiegels in der Kunst* (Munich, 1951), and H. Schwarz, "The Mirror in Art," *Art Quarterly* 13 (1952) pp. 96–118.

2. The earliest identifiable mirrors are highly polished obsidian discs, about 9 cm in diameter, shaped to fit neatly in the hand. They were found in a number of graves, assumed to be those of women and dated to the early sixth millennium B.C., at Çatal Hüyük in Asia Minor (J. Mellaart, *Earliest Civilizations of the Near East* [London/New York, 1965] p. 85 and ill. 54).

3. See the relevant articles in *Source*, and especially that by L.O.K. Congdon, "Greek Mirrors," pp. 19ff. From at least as early as the second century A.D., glass discs also served as mirrors throughout the Roman world. Typically convex and backed with different substances, they were usually set into lead frames (G. Lloyd-Morgan, "Roman Mirrors and the Third Century," A. King and M. Henig, eds., *The Roman West in the Third Century: Contributions from Archaeology and History* (BAR International Series, 109[i] [1981]) pp. 145–157. Small "pocket" mirrors of a convex glass disc set into a small asphalt or painted plaster mount were popular in Mesopotamia and western Iran by the Sasanian period (early 3rd–mid-7th centuries A.D.). For excavated examples, see St.-J. Simpson and G. Herrmann, "'Through the Glass Darkly.' Reflections on Some Ladies from Merv," *Iranica Antiqua* 30 (1995) pp. 148–149.

Another and curious variant may combine a disc mirror with a fibula, the classical "safety pin"; the few known examples are Roman in date: L. Anlen and R. Padiou, *Les Miroirs de bronze anciens* (Paris, 1989) p. 428, with a photograph on p. 427 (the mirror disc is 6 cm in diameter; the length of the pin 11.5 cm); the authors mention a second fibula in their collection that has lost its mirror but retains the "resin" that affixed it. Much more elaborate and considerably larger (22 cm in diameter) is a "highly polished" disc of "speculum metal" with the remains of a fibula on the back, which is attributed to a female grave in Sofia, Bulgaria, and is now in the British Museum. The disc is enclosed in a frame decorated with a grapevine scroll and peacocks; on its back, according to H. B. Walters, are the fibula remains, a bronze spring, spiral hinge, and hook to secure the pin's leg, which has broken away. Walters dates the grave to the 3rd century A.D. (*Catalogue of the Silver Plate: Greek, Etruscan and Roman in the British Museum* [London, 1921] no. 106, p. 28, and pl. xv). As its mass would weigh down the garment to which it was attached, this mirror-fibula was most likely made solely for funerary use. Analogies are the large amber pieces found in Etruscan tombs, one of the most dramatic of which is the sculpture of a (funerary?) banqueting group, ca. 500 B.C., that is in the Metropolitan Museum. Fragments of a bronze pin are embedded in the material and indicate that the sculpture once decorated a brooch intended for a deceased person. The dimensions of this amber piece are 14 cm long and 8.4 cm high. (D. A. Grimaldi, *Amber: Window to the Past* [New York, 1996] figs. on p. 152). I thank Joan Mertens for pointing this out to me.

4. Although the image in a convex mirror is smaller, the field of view is wider than in a flat or concave reflecting surface. One can hold a convex mirror very close to one's face yet see the whole face; thus, by bringing the mirror closer to the face, the entire face is eas-

ier to see (D. Halliday, R. Resnick, and J. Walker, *Fundamentals of Physics*, 4th ed. [New York, 1993] p. 1021).

5. G. Lloyd-Morgan, "Some Bronze Mirrors in the Collection of the Rijksmuseum G. M. Kam, Nijmegen," *Bulletin des Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire, Bruxelles*, ser. 6, 46 (1974) pp. 43ff.; idem, "Mirrors in Roman Britain," in J. Munby and M. Henig, eds., *Roman Life and Art in Britain. A Celebration in Honour of the Eightieth Birthday of Jocelyn Toynbee*, BAR, 41 [1] (Oxford, 1977) pp. 231ff. (Lloyd-Morgan classifies all mirrors of the Roman period into six general types, with Groups W-X representing "mirrors with handles across the back and various related pieces"); idem, *Description of the Collections of the Rijksmuseum G. M. Kam at Nijmegen, IX: The Mirrors, including a Description of the Roman Mirrors found in the Netherlands, in other Dutch Museums* (Nijmegen, 1981); idem, "Roman Mirrors and the Third Century." These last two works treat in great detail "disc mirrors with handles across the back," or "mirror[s] with rear loop handle[s]. I am especially indebted to Lloyd-Morgan's very comprehensive work on Roman mirrors. The present article can only summarize the variations that she discerns within these two groups as they developed through the 3rd century.

6. F. Baratte, in F. Baratte et al., *Le Trésor de la place Camille-Jouffray à Vienne (Isère). Un dépôt d'argenterie et son contexte archéologique* (Paris, 1990) pp. 86–90 of the catalogue raisonné. I am grateful to A. Kaufmann-Heinimann for bringing this important work to my attention.

7. G. Brusin, *Aquileia. Guida storica e artistica* (Udine, 1929) p. 170, fig. 116 (the photograph of this mirror, kindly supplied by the Superintendent of Archaeology, Trieste, Prof. F. Bocchieri, arrived after this article was in page proofs, hence its inclusion here as Figure 24); Pompeii, Antiquarium, no. 2158/4; cited by Baratte in F. Baratte et al., *Le Trésor . . . à Vienne*, p. 86, n. 241.

8. Naples, Museo nazionale, inv. 114295 and 109756 (*ibid.*).

9. J. M. C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1971) p. 40.

10. An appropriate composition for a mirror back, the Three Graces decorate other mirrors, including one in the MMA; see E. J. Milleker, "The Three Graces on a Roman Relief Mirror," *MMJ* 23 (1988) pp. 69–81.

11. Thus, few pieces of Lloyd-Morgan's Type X and only some of Type W retain their handles (*The Mirrors*, pp. 90, 95). Other metal discs without handles, but with the remains of two soldering points indicating that they originally were mirrors with a single, horizontal handle, are those from Chaourse, France (discovered in 1883, and now in the British Museum: F. Baratte et al., *Trésors d'orfèvrerie gallo-romains* [Paris, 1989] n. 86, p. 137); Bursa, Turkey (acquired in 1913, also in the British Museum: *Catalogue of the Silver Plate in the British Museum*, no. 124, p. 32, and pl. xvi); and Aachen, Germany (now in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn: H. Lehner, "Berichte über die Tätigkeit der Provinzialmuseen in der Zeit vom 1 April 1911 bis 31 März 1916," *Bonner Jahrbücher. Jahrbücher des Vereins von Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande* 124 [1917] p. 60, fig. 41).

12. The Cologne mirror was discovered in a cremation grave dated to the 3rd century, in Mehlingerstrasse, Cologne-Bayental (S. Gollub, "Steinurnen in römischen Brandgräbern Kölns," *Kölner Jahrbuch für Vor- und Frühgeschichte* 5 [1960/1] p. 62, fig. 11:3) that from Bonn comes from the grave of a female infant (W. Haberey, "Ein Mädchengrab römischer Zeit aus der Josefstrasse in Bonn," *Bonner Jahrbuch des Rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn* 161 [1961] p. 323, fig. 5, and p. 324, no. 9).

13. Lloyd-Morgan, *The Mirrors*, no. 6, p. 91. It was discovered in 1840 and is now in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden.

14. *Ibid.*, no. 7, p. 92. It was discovered in 1930, also in Leiden.

15. In Vienne: See Baratte, *Le Trésor . . . à Vienne*, no. 25, pp. 86–90, with comprehensive bibliography and a comparative table of the principal mirrors with handles in the form of thumbnails; Baratte et al., *Trésors . . . gallo-romains*, no. 182, p. 223. Two examples from Rethel, one decorated and one plain: (1) Amis du Musée des Antiquités nationales, *Orfèvrerie gallo-romaine. Le Trésor de Rethel* (Paris, 1988) cover and no. 12, pp. 99–102; Baratte et al., *Trésors . . . gallo-romains*, no. 118, p. 173; Baratte, *Le Trésor . . . à Vienne*, p. 90, fig. 64, and (2) Amis du Musée des Antiquités nationales, *Orfèvrerie gallo-romaine*, cover and no. 11, pp. 97–98; Baratte et al., *Trésors . . . gallo-romains*, no. 119, p. 174.

16. Hürth-Hermülheim: see J. Wentscher and J. H. Schleifring, "Aus Hürth-Hermülheim. Zwei Sarkophage aus römischer Zeit," *Das Rheinische Landesmuseum Bonn* 3 (1988) pp. 1–5 (cited by Baratte, *Le Trésor . . . à Vienne*, p. 87, n. 254).

17. Enns/Lorsch (Roman Lauriacum): see *Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum, Oberösterreich—Grenzland des römischen Reiches*, Linz (1986) p. 10 (group photograph of the nine-piece silver hoard, dated to the 2nd–3rd centuries).

18. Dunáujváros (Roman Intercisa): see E. B. Vágó, "Ausgrabungen in Intercisa (1957–69)," *Albia Regia: Annales Musei Stephani Regis xi*, 1970 (1971) pl. XLVIII: 1a–b. I am indebted to F. Baratte for providing me with a photocopy of this reference.

19. A. Spakidze and V. Nikolaishvili, "An Aristocratic Tomb of the Roman Period, from Mtskheta, Georgia," *The Antiquaries Journal* 74 (1994), which is a double burial: p. 27, fig. 12: no. 4 (drawing of mirror) and p. 28, fig. 13 (photograph); see p. 20, figure 5, for the plan of the tomb with the placement of the skeletons and all the objects. See also O. D. Lordkipanidze, "Recent Discoveries in the Field of Classical Archaeology in Georgia," *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia I/2* (1994), where the mirror (p. 164, fig. 21) is described as "a silver casket" (p. 159).

I wish to acknowledge M. Vicker's generosity in supplying me with the photograph of the Mtskheta mirror (Figure 7) and the other photographs and drawings that appear in *The Antiquaries Journal* article. I am also indebted to Prof. Baratte for making the article available to me before it could be obtained here.

20. Now in the Römisches-Germanisches Museum, Cologne, no. 43.55; see Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts and The State Hermitage Museum, *Rimskoe iskusstvo i kul'tura: Vystavka Rimsko-germanskogo. Muzeya gorod Köl'na* (Moscow/Leningrad, 1984) no. 69, p. 122. The mirror was acquired from a private collection along with four other objects; all were claimed to have come from a tomb at Olbia (I owe this information to D. von Boeselager).

21. M. Y. Treister, "Italiiskie i Provintsial'no-rimskie Zerkala v Vostochnoi Evrope," *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya/Soviet Archaeology* 1 (1991) fig. 1:3, p. 91. Made of bronze, it has been known since 1913 and belonged to a private collector in the Black Sea port of Kerch; it is now in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow. It has been attributed to a tomb at Panticapaeum, the ancient foundation of Kerch, perhaps because of the collector's residence. Whether it was found at Panticapaeum can never be known, but it seems likely that it is a Crimean find.

22. One, from a private collection, London, appeared with a silver platter and bowl, dated to the 4th century, in *Apollo* (April 1984)

p. 46, and may be the same one offered by Christie's, London, cat. for Dec. 9, 1992, no. 124, p. 60, identified as "Gallo-Roman" and of the 3rd century. Also, the undecorated silver mirror with spatulate handle but without incised thumbnails; see Anlen and Padiou, *Les Miroirs de bronze anciens*, p. 436, with photograph on p. 437, in the collection of the authors.

23. Gallerie Koller, *The Ernst Brummer Collection, I: Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art* (Zurich, Oct. 16–19, 1979) no. 41, p. 52.

24. Correctly identified by M. Vickers, "Aristokratinnen im Kaukasus," *Antike Welt* 26 (June 1995) p. 190. As can be seen in Figure 7, between Dionysus and Ariadne, but closer to Ariadne, is a diminutive Eros. While the postures of the adult figures leave no doubt that Dionysus' discovery of Ariadne is intended, the Dionysus figure is eccentric in his stance, dress, and the curious staff that he holds (not the characteristic thyrsus). The rendering of this figure, as well as that of the Eros, suggests a provincial origin for the mirror. That this figured mirror back has a handle across its center suggests that the handle is a later attachment; however, the figures are disposed to either side in such a way that the handle may well be original to the design. This attachment of a horizontal handle onto a figured disc is not unique if the 1st–early 2nd century Aquileia mirror is in fact adorned with the Three Graces.

The remarkable collection of grave goods in this Mtskheta tomb (which includes 2nd- and 1st-millennia B.C. Near Eastern stone seals) deserves fuller study.

25. As the excavators acknowledge, there is considerable disagreement among scholars about the exact reading of the inscription and the identity of the prince mentioned. Some believe that the inscription is as early as the 1st century A.D. and may refer to the Parthian prince Tiridates, who, engaged in a struggle for the Parthian throne, sought the support of the Iberian royal house and perhaps gave the plate in gratitude; others see the inscription as a type used as late as the first quarter of the 3rd century, the beginning of Sasanian rule in Iran.

26. Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, p. 48: "Finger-shaped hooks project from many objects of Early Christian or Early Byzantine date."

The soldering plates that join the handle to the disc may or may not be indicators of date and provenance. Unlike most of the horizontal-handled mirrors in the west, with their spear-shaped or rounded plates, the Cologne mirror's soldering plates are described as "in the form of a fishtail," while the one original plate of the Antioch mirror is, as already noted, spade-shaped with three short spikes pointing outward. The soldering plates of the Mtskheta mirror are unique: carefully fashioned bovine hooves that point outward in the manner of the soldering plates of the Simpelveld and other mirrors. This might be further evidence of a late Roman, western, origin for the Mtskheta mirror or at least its handle.

27. For a summary of the controversy over the attribution of the treasure's pieces to Antioch and a solution, see Mundell Mango, "The Origins of the Syrian Ecclesiastical Silver Treasures," pp. 165, 167; also the discussion in J. P. C. Kent and K. S. Painter, eds., *Wealth of the Roman World A.D. 300–700*, exh. cat. (London, 1977) p. 86.

28. *Wealth of the Roman World*, cat. no. 147, p. 87, where it is dated ca. 400. Mundell Mango thinks the vessel is actually a lamp, "Origins," p. 170.

29. Berlin, nr. Misc. I 2955; see F. Fremersdorf, *Das Römergrab in Weiden bei Köln* (Cologne, 1957) pl. 58 (where it is identified as bronze) and p. 48 (where it is mentioned as silver).

30. "Roman Mirrors and the Third Century," p. 151. Baratte dates it later (*Le Trésor... à Vienne*, p. 87).

31. J. M. C. Toynbee, *Art in Britain under the Romans*, Oxford, 1964, pl. LXXVII:c and pp. 334–335.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 335.

33. R. A. Lunsingh-Scheurleer, *Antieke Sier, Goud en zilver van R.A. Grieken en Romeinen* (Amsterdam, 1987) pp. 76–77, no. 50.6; S. M. Lubsen-Admiraal and J. Crouwel, *Cyprus and Aphrodite* (The Hague, 1989) p. 180, no. 230H. The mirror and jewelry, along with clothing, accompanied the remains of a skeleton found in a lead coffin placed within a stone sarcophagus.

34. "Roman Mirrors and the Third Century," p. 151. The Wroxeter mirror had been dated to the 2nd century by Toynbee (*Roman Art in Britain*, p. 335).

35. E. von Mercklin, *Führer durch das Hamburgische Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Griechische und römische Altertümer* (Hamburg, 1930) no. 637; Lloyd-Morgan, "Some Bronze Mirrors," p. 48, fig. 7.

36. "Roman Mirrors and the Third Century," p. 151.

37. W. M. Milliken, "Early Byzantine Silver," *Bulletin of The Cleveland Museum of Art* 45 (1958) photograph after p. 41, where it was originally identified as a "sweetmeat dish(?)"; E. D. Maguire, H. P. Maguire and M. J. Duncan-Flowers, *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House*, exh. cat., Krannert Art Museum (Urbana/Chicago, 1989) p. 194, cat. no. 118. According to a 1956 letter, the mirror and the other pieces were "said to have been made" on the Syrian coast, "south of Latakia, and not far from that town" (I owe this information to S. N. Fliegel of the Cleveland Museum of Art). There is, thus, no true evidence for a Syrian provenance, and, indeed, Baratte questions it (*Le Trésor... à Vienne*, p. 87).

38. H. Hoffmann and P. F. Davidson, *Greek Gold: Jewelry from the Age of Alexander*, exh. cat. (Boston/Richmond) 1965, p. 13; J. Boardman, *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)* (Zurich/Munich, 1988) p. 729; D. Williams and J. Ogden, *Greek Gold: Jewellery of the Classical World*, exh. cat. (London/New York) 1994, p. 44.

39. Maguire et al., *Art and Holy Powers*, pp. 3, 29, 184.

40. *Ibid.*, fig. 46, p. 182 (in the Landesmuseum, Trier). That, and a more fragmentary relief of the same subject, were first published by W. von Massow, *Die Grabmäler von Neumagen* (Berlin/Leipzig, 1932) no. 184a: p. 159, fig. 106, and pl. 34; and no. 314: p. 220, and pl. 60.

41. H. P. Cahn and A. Kaufmann-Heinimann, eds., *Der spätromische Silberschatz von Kaiseraugst* (Derindingen, 1984) I, no. 64, pp. 318–321, and II, pls. 179–182; Kaufmann-Heinimann, in Baratte et al., *Trésors... gallo-romains*, no. 223, p. 261; Kent and Painter, *Wealth of the Roman World*, no. 86, p. 43.

42. Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinimann, *Der spätromische Silberschatz*, II, pl. 183, with commentary, I, p. 400; Kent and Painter, *Wealth of the Roman World*, no. 94, pp. 47–49. It is now in the Petit Palais, Paris.

43. Sotheby's, *Antiquities and Islamic Art* (New York, 1995) no. 91; the plaque, possibly from a cosmetic box, is dated to the 1st to 2nd century A.D. but, on stylistic grounds, may instead belong to the 3rd or 4th centuries.

44. K. J. Shelton, *The Esquiline Treasure* (London, 1981) pls. 10 below right and 11 right; Kent and Painter, *Wealth of the Roman World*, no. 88, p. 44. A bridal casket, the Latin inscription on the lid translates as: "Secundus and Projecta, may you live in Christ."

45. E. Simon, *Die konstantinischen Deckengemälde in Trier* (Mainz,

1986) pl. 7 and pp. 30–33, where she draws parallels with known mirrors (the one in Hamburg) and representations of them (the Augst statuette).

46. A. Oliver Jr., *Silver for the Gods*, exh. cat. (Toledo, 1977) cat. no. 119, in the Metzger Family Collection; the platter is 39.5 cm in diameter.

47. Ibid. Baratte cites feathered borders on metalwork of the second half of the 4th century, but also observes such decoration on late Hellenistic metalwork (*Le Trésor . . . à Vienne*, pp. 87, 89). Feathered borders are also utilized in other media, such as the register dividers for the reliefs on the Arch of Galerius (ca. 298–303) (see D. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* [New Haven/London, 1992] p. 398: southwest pillar).

48. M. Blanchard-Lemée, *Maisons à Mosaiques du Quartier central de Djemila (Cuicul)* (Aix-en-Provence, 1975) frontis. and pl. II: “Toilette de Vénus.” I owe this and the following reference to Prof. Baratte.

49. Musée du Petit Palais, *Carthage: L'histoire, sa trace et son écho* (Paris, 1995) pl. on p. 315.

50. K. Weitzman et al., eds., *The Age of Spirituality*, exh. cat. (New York, 1977) cat. no. 318, pp. 338–339; M. C. Ross, “A Coptic Marriage Lampstand in Bronze,” *The Nelson Gallery and Atkins Museum Bulletin* II (1959) pp. 1–4.

51. Lloyd-Morgan, *The Mirrors*, pp. x–xi.

52. Ibid., p. x. She cites the handle from the Weiden bei Köln tomb in support of this suggestion but does not explain the example from Arsinoë, Cyprus, nor does she mention the Schimmel, Hamburg, and other related mirrors.

53. Lloyd-Morgan reports that D. Strong, shortly before his death, mentioned a fragmentary mirror from excavations in Cyrenaica, Libya, which may belong to this group (“Some Bronze Mirrors,” p. 48).

54. Lloyd-Morgan, in *The Mirrors*, p. xi, notes that “the only mirrors that occur with any frequency are the so-called Sarmatian types [that is, a disc with a broad tang or extension to which a handle is attached], which are found in the middle and lower Danubian regions.” Examples of Sarmatian mirrors from the Sarmatian “heartland” in the Kuban region of the Caucasus are in the exhibition catalogue, *Shedevy drevnego iskusstva Kubani/Art Treasures of Ancient Kuban* (Moscow, 1987) no. 205: fig. 63, p. 138, and their origins are discussed by A. M. Khazanov, “Genezis sarmatskikh bronzovykh zerkal,” *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya* 4 (1963) pp. 65ff. and fig. 4, p. 66. This Sarmatian mirror is also found in south Central Asia and India, as well as Vietnam (Y. A. Zadneprovskii, “Nakhodi kochevнических зеркал на территории Индостана и в южном Вьетнаме,” *Peterburgskii Archeologicheskii Vestnik* 7 (1995) pp. 88–93. I thank Prof. B. A. Litvinskii for this reference.

55. E. C. Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps* (Washington, D.C., 1961) no. 75a and p. 215. As observed by Dodd, it and three other control stamps on the base, to judge by their placement and wear, appear to have been applied before the vessel was finished.

Material evidence of another early Byzantine mirror may be a handle that is associated with the Lampsacus Treasure, a group of objects made in Constantinople that date to the 6th and 7th centuries and are in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities, the British Museum. The handle, which is not exhibited with other pieces of the treasure, is described by O. M. Dalton as being “from a vessel or box, bifurcated at each end, each of the four ends being twisted once upon itself” (*Catalogue of the Early Christian*

Antiquities in the British Museum [London, 1901] p. 86, no. 396, not ill.). While the treatment of the four ends recalls the extra curls of the loops of the Schimmel and Cleveland mirrors’ Herakles-knot handles, the central portion of this handle is an elongated flattened strip, and does not resemble a Herakles knot in any way. Nonetheless, it may have been a mirror handle; at 17.8 cm in length, it would have been attached to a mirror 20.3 cm in diameter. I wish to thank R. Loverance of the British Museum for providing me with a photograph of the handle, and C. Johns, also of the museum, for additional information.

56. The Kushan period encompasses the era named after its most powerful ruler, Kanishka (A.D. 78–176). At its height, in the 1st to early 3rd centuries A.D., the empire stretched across the Hindu Kush, northwest through Bactria to Sogdiana (present-day Afghanistan and parts of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan), southwest through the Kabul region in Afghanistan to Kashmir and the Punjab in Pakistan, and south into the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent, from the Indus River in the west to the Jumna-Ganges Basin in the east (see map). See sections, “The Historical Context,” pp. 4–7 and “Chronology,” pp. 17–18, in E. Errington and J. Cribb, eds., *The Crossroads of Asia. Transformation in Image and Symbol in the Art of Ancient Afghanistan and Pakistan*, Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge, 1992); and S. J. Czuma, *Kushan Sculpture: Images from Early India* (Bloomington, 1985) pp. 2–5.

57. J. Ph. Vogel, *La Sculpture de Mathurā*, “Ars Asiatica” 15 (Paris, 1930) pp. 100–101 and pl. XVIII (photograph taken after its discovery in 1871).

58. S. P. Gupta, ed., *Kushāna Sculpture from Sanghol (1st–2nd C. A.D.): A Recent Discovery* (New Delhi, 1985) p. 61 and cover photograph. I am grateful to Elizabeth Rosen Stone for this and other references for this period of Indian art. See also J. C. Harle, “The Kushan Art of Gandhara and its Relation to Mathura and Satavahana Art,” in Errington and Cribb, *Crossroads of Asia*, p. 40.

59. E. R. Stone, *The Buddhist Art of Nāgārjunakonda* (Delhi, 1994) fig. 200 (female grasping a mirror disc from behind), and fig. 231 (female with a vertical-handled mirror).

60. Thus, the mirrors depicted on the ivories from Begram (Afghanistan) that have been dated as early as the end of the 1st to the beginning of the 2nd century, and as late as the latter 3rd or early 4th century (J. Hackin, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Begram*, “Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan” XI [Paris, 1954] pl. E; and E. S. Rosen, “The Begram Ivories,” *Maryas: Studies in the History of Art* 17 [1974–75] pp. 39–47, for redating the ivories to the later period).

61. For example, in the sculptures of the mid-6th century Great Cave Temple of Shiva, on the Island of Elephanta (S. Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva* [Princeton, 1981] pl. 11), and the Kandariya Mahadeva temple of the 10th–12th centuries (K. Deva, *Khajuraho* [New Delhi, 1987] pl. on p. 117).

62. A. Belenitsky, *Central Asia*, J. Hogarth, trans. (Geneva, 1968) fig. 65; *Pamyatniki kul'tury i iskusstva Pendzhikentii: prevnost' i srednevekoie* (Leningrad, 1983) no. 89, pp. 37–39, fig. on p. 39. The figurine is 16.5 cm high, or long, if considered as a horizontal handle. Its comparison with the ivories in the Begram hoard was made by Rosen, “The Begram Ivories,” p. 48, n. 77: “We wonder if this bronze is not a stray which escaped from the Begram hoard.”

63. As described by B. A. Litvinskii, the mirror disc that was found with the figurine was of bronze, with a central boss surrounded by

concentric circles and a shallow rim around the edge (*Orudiya truda i utvar' iz mogil'nikov zapadnoi Fergany*, Mogil'niki zapadnoi Fergani IV [Moscow, 1978] pp. 94–95, and pl. 20: profile view of the figurine showing the prongs on the reverse). I am indebted to A. B. Nikitin of the State Hermitage Museum for sending me this important work. The mirror disc was 12 cm in diameter. If the figurine had been attached to it, the head and feet would have extended 2 cm beyond the disc on either side. According to E. I. Lubo-Lesnichenko, the mirror disc disappeared shortly after excavation (oral communication, 1994).

Whether it is a “true” horizontal-handled mirror or a pastiche of a standing figure and mirror disc, the mirror is unique among the several found in the Kara-Bulak cemetery: the others are of the Chinese type, with decorated backs and pierced knobs in the center (Y. A. Zadneprovskii, “Rannie kochevniyi Ketmen’-Tyube, Fergany i Alaya,” M. G. Moshkova, ed., *Arkeologiya SSSR. Stepnaya polosa Aziatskoi chasti SSSR v skifo-sarmatskoe vremya* [Moscow, 1992] p. 91 and pl. 34:16–20. No. 19 was found in the same tomb as the figurine-handled mirror).

Another instance of a standing figure serving some function other than that originally intended is the 3rd-century Sasanian bronze statuette of a male personage in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, exh. cat. *Splendeur des Sasanides. L’empire perse entre Rome et la Chine [224–642]* [Brussels, 1993] cat. no. 26). While it has two short horizontal attachments on its back, it is, according to J. Kröger of the Museum für Islamische Kunst, too thin in profile to have been made or used as a handle (written communication, 1993).

64. Y. D. Baruzdin and G. A. Brykina, *Arkeologicheskie pamyatniki Bakhena i Lyalyaka (Yugo-Zapadnaya Pendzhikentiya)* (Frunze, 1962) pp. 17, 21, and 85, pl. xv: 1 and 2; I am indebted to Prof. Litvinskii for a photocopy of this reference. See also Litvinskii, *Orudiya truda i utvar' iz mogil'nikov zapadnoi Fergany*, p. 94, and ill. in his classification table, p. 76.

65. The second mirror, from a different burial at the site, is smaller (13.8 cm) and more cursorily made. Its handle is made from one continuous strip, with the feet formed by doubling back the ends of the grip on itself and then turning them out at right angles, so as to produce a raised horizontal grip above two outwardly pointing feet (the ends of the strip), which are then soldered to the mirror disc.

66. Mention must be made here of two handlelike pieces of bronze, found in a burial stratum at the Buddhist monastery site of Kara-tepe in the northwest corner of ancient Termez (present-day Uzbekistan). Situated in northern Bactria, north of the Hindu Kush, the Kara-tepe shrine complex was founded at the beginning of the second century A.D. and abandoned in the 4th century; it is thus of the Kushan period. Both handles are strap-shaped, terminating, directly above each upright support, in a pierced disc or flat loop. Utilitarian in appearance, they could easily have served as lid handles rather than as grips for mirrors. They seem to date to the very end of the site’s occupation, or even after as some of the burials contained Kushano-Sasanian coins of the 4th to 5th centuries (B. Ya. Staviskii, *Buddiskii kul’toryi tsentr Kara-tepe v Starom Termeze. Osnovnye itogi rabot 1965–1971 gg* [Moscow, 1972] p. 71, fig. 20:5 and 6 [fragment]).

67. “Sources of Certain Female Representations in Sasanian Art,” pp. 503–515, cited in the catalogue entry for the MMA mirror, above. These two shapes, the ewer and the vase, enter the repertory of Sasanian silver vessels only in the second part of the Sasanian period, the 5th or 6th century (P. O. Harper, “Sasanian Silver:

Internal Developments and Foreign Influences,” in Baratte, *Argenterie romaine et byzantine*, p. 154).

68. P. Amiet, “Nouvelles acquisitions: Antiquités parthes et sassanides,” *La Revue du Louvre* 17 (1967) figs. 18, 19 (the female with the mirror, however, is not illustrated); idem, “Orfèvrerie sassanide au Musée du Louvre,” *Syria* 47 (1970) pl. vi:3 (“elle tient dans la main gauche un objet incurvé, à poignée, difficile à identifier,” p. 61). I wish to thank F. Tallon of the Department of Oriental Antiquities, Musée du Louvre, for allowing me to study and photograph the vase.

69. Harper, “Sources of Certain Female Representations,” p. 512.

70. This observation, which can be proved wrong at any future time with the discovery of a horizontal handle or complete mirror in a Parthian-period context, was confirmed for me by Malcolm Colledge (oral communications, 1992 and 1995). Of the numerous mirrors that have been found in excavated tombs of the Parthian period, only two forms occur: the disc mirror and the grip mirror, the handle of the latter often in the form of a female caryatid (for examples of both kinds, see R. Ghirshman, *Terrasses sacrées de Bard-e Néchandeh et Masjid-i Solaiman II. Mémoires de la délégation archéologique en Iran* 45 [Paris, 1976] pls. 1, 14, 29, 42, 57, and 104; for disc mirrors and discs with tangs meant to be inserted into a grip handle, see S. Fukai, *Dailaman III: The Excavations at Hassani Mahale and Ghalekuti, 1964*, “The Tokyo University Iraq-Iran Archaeological Expedition,” Report 8 [Tokyo, 1968] pls. xxxvii, xlvi, lxi, and lxx). On a relief at Hatra, in Mesopotamia, a goddess holds a grip-handled mirror as an attribute (S. Fukai, “The Artifacts of Hatra and Parthian Art,” *East and West* 11 [1960] p. 163), as do the terracotta figurines of female mortals or deities from Göbekly-depe, Turkmenistan, and other Parthian period sites in the Merv oasis (A. Gubaev, G. Koshelenko, and S. Novikov, “Archaeological Exploration of the Merv Oasis,” *Mesopotamia* 25 [1990] fig. 43; and Simpson and Herrmann, “Through the Glass Darkly.’ Reflections on Some Ladies from Merv,” who note the occurrence of only “three distinct types of mirrors” for the Parthian and Sasanian periods: the circular pocket mirror of glass set into a mount [see note 3 above], the small polished bronze mirror “of Chinese inspiration,” and the most widespread type, the circular metal disc with a vertical handle; they do not mention the horizontal-handled mirror [pp. 148–149]).

It should be recalled that along with the silver mirror with horizontal handle and relief of Dionysus and Ariadne (Figure 7; and note 25), the tomb at Mtskheta contained a silver dish bearing the Parthian Aramaic inscription of Prince Tiridat. Clearly Parthian objects are found in tombs in Roman territories—elsewhere at Mtskheta, a “cockle-shell for mixing perfumes, with a representation of a fire temple” in Persian style, was discovered in a burial which may have been that of an Iberian or perhaps a Parthian resident (Lordkipanidze, “Recent Discoveries in Georgia,” p. 159, fig. 18)—while identifiably Roman objects have been found in Iran itself: an example, which is especially striking if indeed it is really from Iran, being a handleless mirror with a portrait bust of the 1st-century Roman emperor Domitian (M. Taddei, “On a Silver Mirror with a Portrait of Domitian from Northern Iran,” *East and West* n.s. 17 [1967] pp. 41–50). But no grave in Parthian-controlled territory has yielded a horizontal-handled mirror.

It is interesting to note that other Iranian metalwork occurs in Georgian tombs. In the second half of the 3rd century, Iberia had become a vassal of the Sasanians, the Parthians’ successors. A grave from this period, also excavated at Mtskheta, contained a silver plate

with a medallion of a male bust on its interior and Middle Persian inscription around its outer rim that can be dated to this time (P. O. Harper and P. Meyers, *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period, I: Royal Imagery* [New York/Princeton, 1981] pl. 1 and pp. 24–25, 37, 89).

71. Thus, the griffin on a stone lintel from Nineveh (G. Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries on the Site of Nineveh during 1873 and 1874* [London 1875] pl. opposite p. 308), the dragonlike griffins at Qal'eh-i Yazdigird, Iran (E. Keall, "Qal'eh-i Yazdigird: The Question of its Date," *Iran* 15 [1977] pl. IIIb), the dragonlike and leonine ones at Hatra (D. Homès-Fredericq, *Hatra et ses sculptures parthes: étude stylistique et iconographique* [Istanbul, 1963] nos. 29, 46), and the horse-like one from Nisa, Turkmenistan, whose long wings gently curve upright (G. A. Pugachenkova, *Iskusstvo Turkmestan* [Moscow, 1967] fig. 49).

72. P. R. S. Moorey, *Ancient Iraq (Assyria and Babylonia)* (Oxford, 1976) pl. XXXVI, on p. 50.

73. O. M. Dalton, *The Treasure of the Oxus, with Other Examples of Early Oriental Metal-work*, 3rd ed. [London, 1964] no. 208, pl. XXXVIII and pp. 62–63.

74. Harper and Meyers, *Silver Vessels*, pp. 108–110 and fig. 35.

75. P. O. Harper, "Thrones and Enthronement Scenes in Sasanian Art," *Iran* 17 (1979) pp. 50–59. Harper concludes that "in the internal dynastic art of Sasanian Iran, the theme of the enthroned ruler was a minor one" (p. 64). The two plates she attributes to the Sasanian period—the one from Strelka, now in the State Hermitage Museum, and the gold, rock-crystal, and glass bowl in the Bibliothèque Nationale—she shows to be not earlier than the 5th or 6th century and to have "links to works of Central Asian origin."

76. Thus, the images of Surya from Mathura (Vogel, *La Sculpture de Mathurâ*, pl. XXXVIIIA) and Khair Khaneh (J. M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* [Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1967] fig. 96; "usually dated in the early fifth century," p. 192).

77. B. I. Marshak, "Chilekskie chashi," *Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* 10 (1969) pp. 65ff. and figs. 6 and 8; idem, *Die Silberschätze des Orients. Metallkunst des 3.–13. Jahrhunderts und ihre Kontinuität* (Leipzig, 1986) pls. 11–13; B. Brentjes, "The Hoard of Hephthalite Silver Vessels Found near Samarkand," *East and West* n.s. 21 (1971) figs. 4, 5. For the Indian connections of this vessel, see B. Gray, "Post-Sasanian Metalwork," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* n.s. 5 (1991) p. 61.

78. "Sources of Certain Female Representations," p. 512, n. 33. One handle, known from the art market, nearly duplicates the features of the MMA griffins as well as the pedestal bases, square soldering plates, and central spool; the spool lacks the encircling knobs and is thus smoother, but this effect may be the result of corrosion. *Collection X . . . (6e vente) . . . Bronzes et terres-cuites Louristan-Amlash . . .*, Nouveau Drouot, Paris (Sept. 24, 1981) no. 156. According to A. M. Kevorkian, the handle was owned by M. Mahboubian between 1960 and 1975 (oral communication, 1993).

Obvious forgeries of these mirrors have appeared in private collections and on the market: L. Malleret, "L'Amphisbène," *Artibus Asiae* 29 (1967) pl. 1 (M. Foroughi collection, exhibited in Paris [1961–62] and Geneva [1966]): the foreparts of horned creatures, the forelegs serving as the handle support, as terminals for a cylindrical shaft that is decorated in its center by a triple molding); *Collection de Son Excellence le Dr. Ing. Franz-Josef Bach . . . Bronzes antiques de la Perse du IIIe millénaire à l'époque romaine . . .*, Hôtel Drouot, Paris (Dec. 12, 1973) no. 186: a figurine of a goat, itself a forgery, attached to a disc; *Collection X . . . (2e vente) . . . Bronzes et*

terres-cuites Louristan-Amlash . . ., Nouveau Drouot, Paris (Sept. 25, 1980) no. 232: the handle a crude copy of the MMA mirror, the griffin protomes clumsy and poorly articulated (I owe this reference to O. W. Muscarella).

79. B. A. Litvinskii and A.V. Sedov, *Kul'ty i ritually Kushanskoi Baktrii* (Moscow, 1984) p. 101 and fig. 27, p. 103.

80. V. I. Raspopova, "Zerkala iz Pendzhikenta," *Kratkie soobshcheniya Instituta Arkheologii* 132 (1972) pp. 67–68 and fig. 1:1–3; Academy of Science, Tajikistan SSR and the State Hermitage Museum, *Drevnosti Tadzhikistana*. (Dushanbe, 1985) no. 536, p. 209 (I am indebted to B. I. Marshak for this comprehensive exhibition catalogue of objects from Tajikistan); V. Shkoda, "Bronzoliteinaya masterskaya na X ob'ekte goroditsa drevnego Pandzhikenta," *Uspekhi i Sredneaziatskoi Arkheologii* (Leningrad, 1978) fig. 14:B and p. 52. Found with the horse-protome handles was a small bronze knob which was set on a circular base and pierced horizontally. Identified by Raspopova and Shkoda as an unfinished seal, it may have instead been intended for the back of a so-called Chinese mirror (the first of the two basic mirror forms described above); such mirrors are common at Pendzhikent and are illustrated by Raspopova (figs. 1:7–10, p. 68).

81. One handle was clearly miscast and found on a rubbish heap.

82. V. I. Raspopova, *Metallicheskie izdeliya rannesrednevekovogo Sogda* (Leningrad, 1980) fig. 79:2, p. 120 (fig. 79:1 and 3 are two of the examples from Pendzhikent of our Figure 19); A. M. Belenitskii, "Raskopki sogdiiskikh khramov v 1948–50 gg." *Materialy i issledovaniya po arkheologii SSSR* 37 (1953) fig. 9, p. 30. (The original publication of the handle by A. I. Terenozhkin, "Raskopi na gorodize Afrasiab," *Kratkie soobshcheniya Instituta Istorii Material'noi Kul'tury* 36 [1951] pp. 136–140, was not available to me.)

83. I owe this information about the Dzhartepa finds to B. I. Marshak and V. I. Raspopova (oral communication, 1992), and to V. Shkoda (oral communication, 1994). For a general report of the excavations, see A. E. Berdimuradov and M. K. Samibaev, "Rezul'taty raskopok khrama na Dzhartepa II," *Istoriya material'noi kul'tury Uzbekistana* (Tashkent, 1992) pp. 77–92. My thanks to Dr. Shkoda for providing me with a copy of this article.

84. *Drevnosti Tadzhikistana*, no. 533, p. 209; Raspopova, *Metallicheskie izdeliya rannesrednevekovogo Sogda*, fig. 82:3, p. 124.

85. For an account of the Islamic conquest of Central Asia, see chap. 5 of R. N. Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia: The Arabs in the East* (London, 1975).

86. Y. Godard, "Bouteille d'Argent sāsānide," *Ā thār-é Īrān* III (1938) p. 296, fig. 201; L. Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie de l'Irân ancien* (Leiden, 1966) p. 6. The bottle allegedly was found in Mazanderan in northern Iran in the 19th century, along with a second gilt-silver bottle. Given to the Shah during one of his trips to Mazanderan, it entered the Archaeological Museum in 1937 as no. 2500. For a view of the female with the mirror, see N. Egami, "On the Figure of the Iranian Goddess Anāhitā as an Example of the Continuity of the Iranian Culture," *Commémoration Cyrus, I: Hommage universel* (Tehran/Liège, 1974) pl. xxv, fig. 18.

87. Harper, "Sasanian Silver: Internal Developments and Foreign Influences," p. 158.

88. C. K. Wilkinson, "The Excavations at Nishāpūr, 1936," *MMAB* 32 (1937) pp. 14ff.

89. M. Kervan, "Les Niveaux islamiques du secteur oriental du tépé de l'Apadana. III. Les objets en verre, en pierre et en métal,"

Cahiers de la délégation archéologique française en Iran 14 (1984) fig. 15:11 and table on p. 232.

90. L. Malleret, *L'Archéologie du Delta du Mékong* (Paris, 1960) II, pp. 214–216: “Supports et lampe à décor zoomorphe,” and pl. LXXXIX; idem, “L’Amphisbène,” pp. 85ff. I wish to thank A. Robinson for locating these handles in Saigon and Hanoi and measuring and photographing them for me under difficult conditions.

91. Thus pointed out by Harper, “Sources of Certain Female Representations,” p. 512, n. 33. A fifth “handle” or “support,” with leaping protomes and an elaborate spool in the center of the grip, appears in the auction catalogue of the Anlen mirror collection (Adar Tajan, *Collection de Monsieur Anlen: Miroirs de bronze anciens*, Paris [Dec. 8, 1992, no. 440]; it is now accepted by some to be a forgery (oral communication, A. M. Kevorkian, 1995).

92. Ir. 844 (formerly O.2360). I am indebted to B. Overlaet for allowing me to study and photograph the mirror.

93. A. and Y. Godard, *Bronzes du Luristan. Collection E. Graeffe* (The Hague, 1954) no. 345 (no photograph); R. Ghirshman, *The Arts of Ancient Iran. From its Origins to the Time of Alexander the Great*, S. Gilbert and J. Emmons, trans. (New York, 1964) p. 76, fig. 100; L. Vanden Berghe, *Het archeologisch onderzoek naar de bronscultuur van Luristan, Opgravingen in Pusht-i Kuh, I: Kalwali en War Kabud (1965 en 1966)* (Brussels, 1968) pp. 20, 47, fig. 10:9; idem, *Drevnosti Strany Lurov. Katalog vystavki* (St. Petersburg, 1992) no. 260, all accept this provenance by association. It is cited as the model for the Central Asian horizontal-handled mirrors by Litvinskii (*Mogl'nikov zapadnoi Fergany*, p. 97, citing Ghirshman) and Raspopova (“Zerkala iz Pendzhikenta,” p. 68, referring to the Godards, Ghirshman, and Vanden Berghe).

94. Examples are the vessels carried by representatives of the Achaemenid empire on the Persepolis reliefs (Ghirshman, *Arts of Ancient Iran*, p. 174, fig. 220, and p. 176, fig. 222). The way in which the animals’ bodies are drawn on the handles and then emerge in three dimensions parallels the treatment of the mirror’s lions, as does an actual silver jar handle in the form of a winged bull, excavated in Babylon; rivets originally secured the base of the handle to the shoulder of the jar (J. Reade, “A Hoard of Silver Currency from Achaemenid Babylon,” *Iran* 24 [1986] p. 80: no. 24, and pl. II). See also the horned lion-griffin handles on the silver vase from Douvanli (The British Museum, *Thracian Treasures from Bulgaria* [London, 1976] no. 171).

95. For example, the lions’ erect ears are echoed by those of the lion-head terminals on two torques from a 4th-century tomb at Susa (E. Porada, *The Art of Ancient Iran: Pre-Islamic Cultures* [New York, 1965] pl. 51, below).

96. On the survival of at least some aspects of Achaemenid metalworking traditions in Sogdiana, see B. I. Marshak, *Sogdiiskoe serebro* (Moscow, 1971) pp. 38ff, 134.

A survival of this lion type may be found on a limestone column or pedestal found by E. Schmidt at Istakhr, near Persepolis, the site of the fire temple tended by the priest Sasan, the eponymous founder of the Sasanian dynasty (E. F. Schmidt, *The Treasury of Persepolis and Other Discoveries in the Homeland of the Achaemenians*, [“Oriental Institute Communications” 21, Chicago, 1939] pp. 119–121 and fig. 87). Uncovered in “mixed Islamic and pre-Islamic, presumably Sasanian, debris,” the column depicts two identical genii and lions in relief. Each lion stands with its foreleg on the bent right leg of a genius and turns its head back, showing its teeth and one upright ear; neither the mane nor the body hair is indicated, in contrast with typical Sasanian representations of lions in rock relief and on metal vessels. While the manes and body hair of the Brussels

mirror lions are indicated by hatching, the general shape of their thick necks and squarish muzzles closely resembles the Istakhr lions. Although Schmidt acknowledges that the find circumstances of the object suggests a Sasanian attribution, the column could predate that period and have been reused. In a recent article, A. D. H. Bivar, however, accords it a Sasanian manufacture as evidence of the survival of esoteric Mithraism into Sasanian times (“The Royal Hunter and the Hunter God: Esoteric Mithraism under the Sasanians?” *Au carrefour des religions. Mélanges offerts à Philippe Gignoux*, Res Orientales VII [Paris, 1995] pp. 35–38).

97. P. R. S. Moorey, *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries. The Archaeological Evidence* (Oxford, 1994) p. 274.

98. Stora Collection: A. Godard, *Les Bronzes du Luristan, “Ars Asiatica”* 17 (Paris, 1931) pl. LVIII:216; M. Rostovtzeff, “Dieux et chevaux: À propos de quelques bronzes d’Anatolie, de Syrie et d’Arménie,” *Syria* 12 (1931) p. 55, fig. 5; Hamburg and Paris “handles”: Rostovtzeff, “Dieux et chevaux,” pp. 55–56, fig. 6 (Paris); J. A. H. Potratz, “Die Luristanbronzen des Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 51 (1955) pl. 3:3 (Hamburg) and 3:4 (Paris), who reattributes them to “Luristan” (p. 205).

99. P. R. S. Moorey suggests that some of the “knife rests” may indeed be Anatolian, but “often” go back no later than “the Roman Imperial or immediately post-Imperial period” (written and oral communications, 1993). I greatly appreciate Dr. Moorey’s sharing his views about these objects with me.

100. For example, the decoration of the copper macehead from Nahal Mishmar, Israel, that may be interpreted as a two-headed horned animal or the joined protomes of two horned animals (MMA, *Treasures of the Holy Land: Ancient Art from the Israel Museum* [New York, 1986] no. 29, p. 82).

101. Ibid., no. 32, pp. 85–86; Anlen and Padiou, *Les Miroirs de bronze anciens*, ill. opp. p. 606, commentary on p. 606. The mirror measures 18 cm in diameter; 1 cm thick. The large obsidian core reported to have been found with the mirror may indicate that it was a local product.

102. Allan, *Nishapur*, p. 36, who follows E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks* (Cambridge, 1913) pp. 65–66.

103. E. I. Lubo-Lesnichenko, *Privoznye zerkala Minusinskoi kotloviny* (Moscow, 1975) p. 8 and English summary, p. 160: “It is possible that mirrors in China owed their appearance to the influence of Southern Siberian examples.” See also A. Juliano, “Possible Origins of the Chinese Mirror,” pp. 36–45, and K. S. Robinson, “Mirrors on the Fringe: Some Notes,” pp. 46–50, in *Source*. Local manufacture in southern Siberia of this mirror type can be traced back to the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C.

104. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, p. 65. Thus, examples from the Tagar culture in the Minusinsk district of Siberia (Moshkova, *Stepnaya polosa Aziatkoi chasti SSSR*, pl. 87:24, and dated to the 7th–6th centuries B.C., p. 216) and from Scythian kurgans in two separate regions near Kiev, two such mirrors dated to the 6th and 5th centuries (P. Reinecke, “Über einige Beziehungen der Alterthümer Chinas zu denen des skythisch-sibirischen Völkerkreises,” *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 29 [1897] p. 144, fig. 3).

105. Moshkova, *Stepnaya polosa Aziatkoi chasti SSSR*, pl. 87:25, belonging to the Tagar culture and dated to the 6th century B.C., and F. R. Martin, *L’Âge du Bronze au Musée de Minoussinsk* (Stockholm, 1893) pl. 27:15, from Bateni.

106. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, p. 66, and p. 193, fig. 85, from Smêla, near Kiev. Recent excavations of Scythian kurgans in Tuva, southern Siberia, yielded a mirror with a loop handle in the form of a moufflon sheep, dated to the 5th century B.C. (V. Semenov and M. Kilunovskaya, "New Archaeological Material of the Early Iron Age from Tuva," *International Association for the Study of the Cultures of Central Asia. Information Bulletin* 17 [1990] p. 46 and p. 54, fig. 2:1).

This type of handle is, in turn, related to another subtype: a circular plaque, typically decorated in relief with the characteristic Scythian motif of the "curled-up animal," supported by two short posts. This subtype occurs in Siberia, but seems more numerous west of the Urals. An example is the bronze mirror from a 6th-century Scythian kurgan at Kelermes, in the northern Caucasus and just east of the Black Sea (M. I. Artamova, *Treasures from Scythian Tombs* [London, 1969] pl. 35, and Rubinson, "Mirrors on the Fringe," p. 46, fig. 1; see her mention of the other findspots on p. 49 and n. 27, p. 50). The well-known silver mirror also from Kelermes, its back secondarily covered with gold sheets decorated in mid-6th-century East Greek style, has the remains of a two-pronged handle which M. I. Maksimova thinks was originally two posts topped with a small plaque: "Serebrianoe zerkalo iz Kelermes," *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya* 2 [1954] pp. 281–305; Artamova, *Treasures from Scythian Tombs*, pls. 29–33).

107. The conduct of trade is recorded in a Greek text of the third quarter of the 1st century A.D. For a translation and commentary, see L. Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei* (Princeton, 1989).

108. Against this hypothesis for the spread of the horizontal-handled mirror from Rome to India and then to Iran, we must raise the possibility that the mirror type entered Iran directly from the west, through such regions as eastern Georgia (Iberia). As already seen, the tomb at Mtskheta held Parthian objects along with western ones (such as the horizontal-handled mirror, Figure 7), and metalwork of the succeeding Sasanian period has also been discovered there and elsewhere in Georgia (see Harper and Meyers, *Silver Vessels*, pp. 24–25 and pls. 1 [from Mtskheta] and 2 [from Sargveshi]). The late-Roman iconographic and stylistic connections of this Sasanian metalwork attest to the region's role as a place of cultural and material exchanges.

109. For example, at Brahmapuri in the Deccan: K. Khandalavala, "Brahmapuri: A Consideration of the Metal Objects Found in the Kundangar Hoard," *Lalit Kalâ* 7 (1960) pp. 29–75; and other sites in western India cited by M. N. Deshpande, "Classical Influence on Indian Terracotta Art," *Le Rayonnement des civilisations grecques et romaines sur les cultures périphériques* ("Huitième Congrès international d'archéologie classique" [Paris, 1963]) p. 604. I owe these references to Elizabeth Rosen Stone. See also R. E. M. Wheeler, *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers* (London, 1954).

110. Harper, "Sources of Certain Female Representations," pp. 505–512. Indeed, Harper develops the idea, first advanced by G. Hanfmann, that, in addition to the more obvious affinities with Dionysiac imagery, "the western representations of the Months and the Seasons are more closely related to these figures on Sasanian vases than any other sequence or group of designs which may be found in the east or the west" (p. 507).

111. Mundell Mango, "Origins," pp. 163, 170.

112. Harper, "Sources of Certain Female Representations," p. 154.

113. M. L. Carter, in P. O. Harper, *The Royal Hunter: Art of the Sasanian Empire*, exh. cat. (New York, 1978) p. 61.

114. In discussing the funerary rites and beliefs of the inhabitants of ancient Ferghana, Litvinskii compares the Sogdian handles to images of the sun god in his chariot, with the circular mirror representing the solar disc; he also links the deity to the Iranian or Mithraic version of the Dioscuroi, the Divine Twins, and notes that in Central Asia the twins are connected with light, and hence with the sun god. He believes that the "Lady with mirror" figurines of Turkmenistan (see note 70 above) represent female devotees of Mithra (*Orudiya truda i utavar' iz mogil'nikov zapadnoi Fergany*, pp. 112–126). For images of the Kushan sun god Surya in his chariot, drawn by one or two pairs of leaping horses, see those from Mathura and from Khair Khaneh, cited in note 76 above; the latter is described by Rosenfield as "rigidly frontal and hieratic," and "so symbolic in nature that the chariot is no longer recognizable as such" (*Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, p. 192).

115. For a similar interpretation of the engraved decoration on Etruscan mirrors, see N. T. de Grummond, "The Etruscan Mirror," *Source* 4 (1985) p. 34.