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BRAZIER
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BRAZIER (Pers. *ātašdān* "receptacle for fire," Ar. Pers. *manqal*, lit. "means of carrying or transporting"), a "pan or stand for holding lighted coals" (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 6th ed., London, 1976, s.v.).

i. In Early Iran

The term "brazier" covers two distinct types of utensil traditionally used in Iran. One type is a closed container on legs, a kind of stove that holds slowly burning coals for heating. It can be made of metal, ceramic, or a combination of materials. The second type is a flat-bottomed metal receptacle with low vertical walls and crescent-shaped supports on opposite sides to hold spits (*sīḵ*); it can be round, square, or polygonal. The term *ātašdān* appears to have been used in early times. The earliest dated mention of it in Iranian lexicography occurs in *Ketāb at-balāḡa*, an Arabic-Persian dictionary compiled in 438/1046-47 by Adīb Kordī Nīšābūrī (p. 165), where it renders Arabic *kānūn*. In the 6th/12th century *kānūn* was translated by Meydānī (p. 528) as "an iron or bronze (*rūʾīn*) *ātašdān*." Regrettably, no early author defines the shape or elaborates on the function of the *ātašdān*. The glosses on *kānūn* in *Lesān al-ʿarab*, the great Arabic dictionary compiled in the 6th/12th century by Ebn

Mokarram (Ebn Manẓūr) in Cairo, far from Iran, do not include any such meaning. A line by Amīr Moʿezzī suggests, however, that in the 5th/11th century the *ātašdān* was equivalent to the modern *manqal*; the setting is a festive gathering, no doubt held during the bitterly cold Iranian winter: "Two gems are indispensable conditions to our *majles* (gathering) at this moment/The [wine] flask is the mine of the one and the oven [*tanūr*] the abode of the other/The one is like liquid gold in our beaker and bowl/The other like a rose petal (*barg-e gol*, metaphorically a glowing coal) in our *ātašdān*" (Dehḵodā, s.v. *ātašdān*). A century later Neẓāmī definitely used the term *manqal* in the same sense. Describing the royal banquet (*majles-e bazm*) given by Ḵosrow in the royal court, the poet notes "A golden (*zarrīn*) *manqal* was set, full of fire" (Neẓāmī, p. 96.4). *Zarrīn* probably indicates that brass (*berenj*), praised in literature for its golden color, was also used for making *manqal*s, though the use of gold for a royal item must not be ruled out. In the 11th/17th century *manqala*, vocalized as *monqola*, was defined in *Borhān-e qāṭeʿ* (ed. Moʿīn, IV, p. 2044) as *angeštdān* and *zoḡāldān*.

Hardly any brazier of either type is known to have survived from before the late 13th/19th century. The author did see one piece in the Tehran art market, however; it was rectangular, with low legs, and displayed the characteristics of 6th/12th-century metalwork from Khorasan. As for braziers used for roasting kabobs outdoors, surviving Andalusian examples of the 5th/11th and 6th/12th centuries seem to be based on Middle Eastern prototypes. One fragmentary "bronze" object has been dated to the late 9th/15th or early 10th/16th century (Harari, p. 2514, XIII, pl. 1379A); judging from photographs, however, the bronze strips that hold the supposed side wall, an openwork panel, are part of a later repair. The openwork need not have been part of a brazier. It could just as well have been originally intended for a low piece of furniture, perhaps a hexagonal stand for holding wine flasks, of the kind so often depicted in miniature paintings (see, for example, *Survey of Persian Art* IX, color pl. 900). No other brazier from Timurid or Safavid Iran can be identified beyond reasonable doubt.

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(Asadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani)

ii. In Modern Times

The modern *manqal* is a utensil of metal, unbaked clay, or ceramic (the last two types may also be called *kalak*). It consists of a base of sheet iron standing on legs 2-4 inches above the floor, the surrounding wall, and finials, which are extensions of the legs. The interior is always lined with plaster (*gač*) for insulation, as well as to fill in the corners and provide a rounded depression for the coals. The wall can be round, oval, square, rectagonal, or polygonal. The most common type is made of sheet metal: tin, iron, brass, bronze, nickel silver, pure silver, or even gold.

The brazier is used as a stove for cooking and broiling and for keeping the tea kettle hot, as a receptacle for burning charcoal for the water or opium pipe (*qalyān* and *vāfūr* respectively), or as a censer for *esfand* (seed of wild rue, used as incense). In particular, people gather around it for warmth or place over it a low platform (*korsī*) covered with quilts and mattresses, on which they sit or sleep during the cold season.

A more primitive type of fire receptacle, most often found in villages, is the *čāla korsī*, a shallow round cavity in the floor, lined with clay. A *korsī* is placed above it, usually with the teapot on one side and sometimes a simmering

stewpot (*dīzī*) suspended from a hook on the *korsī*.

In former times every household had at least two braziers, one for normal household use and one for burning *esfand* on such occasions as exorcising the evil eye, greeting a woman returning from her first visit to the bath after childbirth, welcoming a loved one home from a journey, or receiving a guest come to make peace after a dispute. This latter type of brazier was usually part of the bride's dowry and was highly ornamental. Opium smokers, too, preferred ornamental braziers, called *manqal-e moḥabbat* (brazier of love), and the wealthy often ordered expensive sets including trays and tongs. Some are even said to have been studded with jewels. On the other hand, braziers used for broiling and those used in tea houses were invariably made of plain sheet iron. Large plain braziers were also used in the temporary kitchens set up for weddings, mourning visits, and religious functions.

Some beggars carry burning charcoal in a special type of brazier, a small tin can perforated on the sides and provided with a wire handle. In the old days the beggar would throw a pinch of *esfand* on the coals and swing the smoking brazier around the bead of a passerby or of his mount, pretending thus to drive off evil influences. Today this device is still in use, but the incense is burned for the benefit of motorists stopped at traffic lights.

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