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CINTĀMAṆI

CINTĀMAṆI, the "wish-fulfilling jewel," a motif consisting of either a single globe with a pointed extension at the apex or three such globes; either version could be surrounded by a flaming halo. In Persian art this motif was borrowed from the art of Mahayana Buddhism, where it was particularly associated with such divinities as Cintāmaṇicakra Avalokiteśvara (Avalokiteśvara with the *cintāmaṇi* in the wheel) and Kṣitigarbha and symbolized both compassion for worshipers and a desire to aid them in attaining salvation. In Buddhist representations the *cintāmaṇi* commonly rests on the palm of an outstretched hand. Both the single and triple forms also had an ornamental function, for example, as finials on stupa reliquaries and as adornments for the canopies and thrones of Buddhist divinities. This symbol was incorporated into the Manichean thought and art of Central Asia as an attribute of Mani the redeemer (Arnold-Döben, pp. 58-60).

The *cintāmaṇi* appears to have entered the repertoire of Persian art during the Mongol period (654-736/1256-1336). If there are textual references to the *cintāmaṇi* in Persian sources they have yet to be identified, but both the single and triple forms are depicted in 8th/14th-century Persian manuscript illustrations. The earliest known occurrence is atop the back of the throne on which Żaḥḥāk is seated in a miniature from the "Demotte" *Šāh-nāma* (Grabar and Blair, p. 59), often dated to around 735/1335. One possible avenue of transmission may have been images of Buddhist divinities on wood-block prints, like those excavated at Karakhoto in Chinese Turkestan, a site destroyed by Čengīz Khan in 623/1226 (Karmay, pp. 35, 36, figs. 16-17, 32).

Images of boddhisatvas from Karakhoto show the *cintāmaṇi* not only held in the hands of the divinity but also on his throne and canopy. It is possible, too, that the depiction of the throne of Żaḥḥāk, as well as other, similar illustrations in detached 8th/14th-century paintings now in albums in Berlin and Istanbul (e.g., İpşiroğlu, pl. 17; Atasoy, fig. 2), were inspired by actual thrones of the Mongol rulers or their successors. If so, then the *cintāmaṇi* may have acquired royal associations in Persia, which would explain the otherwise puzzling appearance of the triple form on the coinage of Tīmūr (Artuk and Artuk, pp. 870-71 nos. 2520-21, pls. civ-cv).

In time the triple form of the *cintāmaṇi*, with the flaming halo reduced to parallel wavy lines, gained wider currency in the decorative repertoire of the Near East. It is best known from carpets and textiles produced in Turkey between the 9th/15th and 11th/17th centuries, but a recently discovered carpet with such a motif has been attributed to Timurid Samarkand (Brend). It is uncertain what, if any, meaning was attached to the *cintāmaṇi* when it was used to fill the central field of a carpet or in similar contexts. The triple form does, however, appear on the back of a wooden and ivory throne constructed for the Ottoman Sultan Solaymān II (Suleiman Kanuni, 926-74/1520-66), whereas paired wavy lines constitute the design on the seat (Atıl, pp. 167-68, fig. 107); this juxtaposition hints at a continuing association of the motif with royal power (cf. Atıl, p. 208, figs. 113, 141, 154, 162).

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