

The Pisa Griffin and the Mari-Cha Lion

Metalwork, Art, and Technology in the Medieval Islamicate Mediterranean

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3.3 - The Pisa Griffin and the Mari-Cha Lion: History, Art and Technology

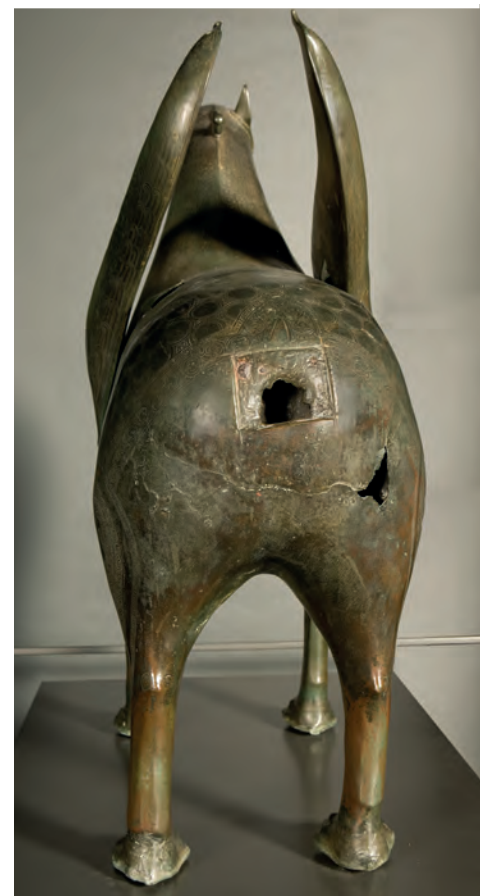
Anna Contadini

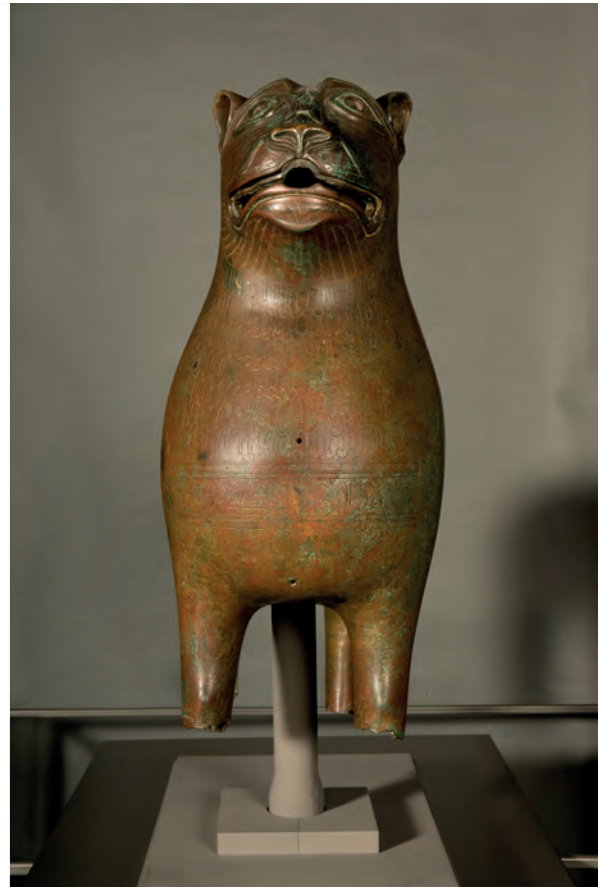
Why study the Pisa Griffin and the Mari-Cha Lion? Early scholarship grappled with questions of identification and origin, while later art-historical investigations attempted to establish date and provenance and ponder related questions of stylistic affiliation. Beyond these obvious concerns, however valid, more recent scholarship has begun to engage with questions of a different order that constitute, perhaps, a more urgent imperative: how to come to grips with them as conveyors of meaning according to the changing positions they occupy within a landscape of transculturation, and hence to understand concomitant transformations of agency as the function of each has mutated, generating different sets of reactions at different moments in time. Involved, therefore, are also questions of the symbolic significance ascribed to them according to the profound cultural metamorphoses that have affected, and continue to affect, the horizon of interpretation. They relate to frameworks that span power relations, religious affirmations, visions of antiquity and, eventually, with both pieces now settled into museum environments, the post-colonial transcultural problematic, with its attendant discourses of appropriation and dispossession.

The Griffin and the Lion are unique pieces, the biggest bronze sculptures known from the pre-modern Islamicate Mediterranean, and they are also related in significant respects, for in addition to their comparable dimensions¹ (Fig. 1) they have various design features in common. Both have shield-like panels on the upper part of the legs with, on the Griffin, lions portrayed on the front ones and birds, possibly eagles (or doves), on the hind legs, while the Lion has griffins on the front legs and birds of prey on the hind legs (Fig. 2). Both have a benedictory and augural, Arabic inscription in an angular script running along three sides of the body, expressing good wishes for an anonymous owner (Fig. 39), and in addition the decoration is in general very similar, made with the same range of tools, and done cold on the surface of the bronze. At the same time, the differences between them are sufficient to cast doubt on the notion that they might have been twins, conceived and cast at the same time and location for the same patron: they are not made of the same alloy, and there are differences of quality in the carving of the decoration and the inscriptions.

As a pair they are thus intrinsically problematic: their provenance and date have long been a worrying concern for scholars, their stylistic affiliations have been variously assessed, and their original function has for a long time been a subject of conjecture. The Griffin, for which there is a much longer history of enquiry, has continued to puzzle western scholars, who have gone around in circles in the quest to ascertain its identity, eventually to arrive at confident but disparate period attributions, to the ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth or thirteenth centuries, and to ascribe to it areas of provenance that encompass a vast geographical territory, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, North Africa, South Italy, and Spain. They raise, consequently, numerous questions, whether singly or together, and it is to the further exploration of these that the current project is dedicated.

Next pages:
1. a-d) The Pisa Griffin; e-h)
the Mari-Cha Lion
(Photos: Museum of Islamic
Art, Doha; g: Peter Northover)







2. Animal decoration on the Griffin: a) lion above front right leg; b) lion above front left leg; c) eagle above back right leg; d) eagle above back left leg

Next page: animal decoration on the Lion: e) griffin above front right leg; f) griffin above front left leg; g) bird of prey above back right leg; h) bird of prey above back left leg (Photos: a-d: CNR, Pisa; e-h: Matthew Hollow)



This chapter will begin by dealing with historiography (for the Griffin especially) before going on to discuss, among many other topics, new findings about the decoration and style of inscriptions that help to revolutionize our understanding of them within the broader context of metalwork production around the Mediterranean. Consideration of morphology and script style leads on to conclusions concerning function and agency, first in their original settings and then in their radically new environments brought about by European acquisition and translocation.

3. Next page: the Pisa Griffin on the Pisa Cathedral
(Photo: © Opera della Primaziale Pisana)

Historical enquiries and attributions

One major contrast is external: they have vastly different histories, in the sense that whereas the Griffin has been known since its installation on the roof of Pisa Cathedral, and has long been the object of both speculation and serious scholarly enquiry, it is only recently that the Lion has emerged from obscurity to become an object of study. We do not know where the Lion comes from, and although we may assume that it was part of the collection of a patrician European family we cannot trace its history back beyond the modern era.² The discussion in this section must, perforce, concern itself primarily with the fascinating development of conjecture and scholarship surrounding the nature and origins of the Griffin.

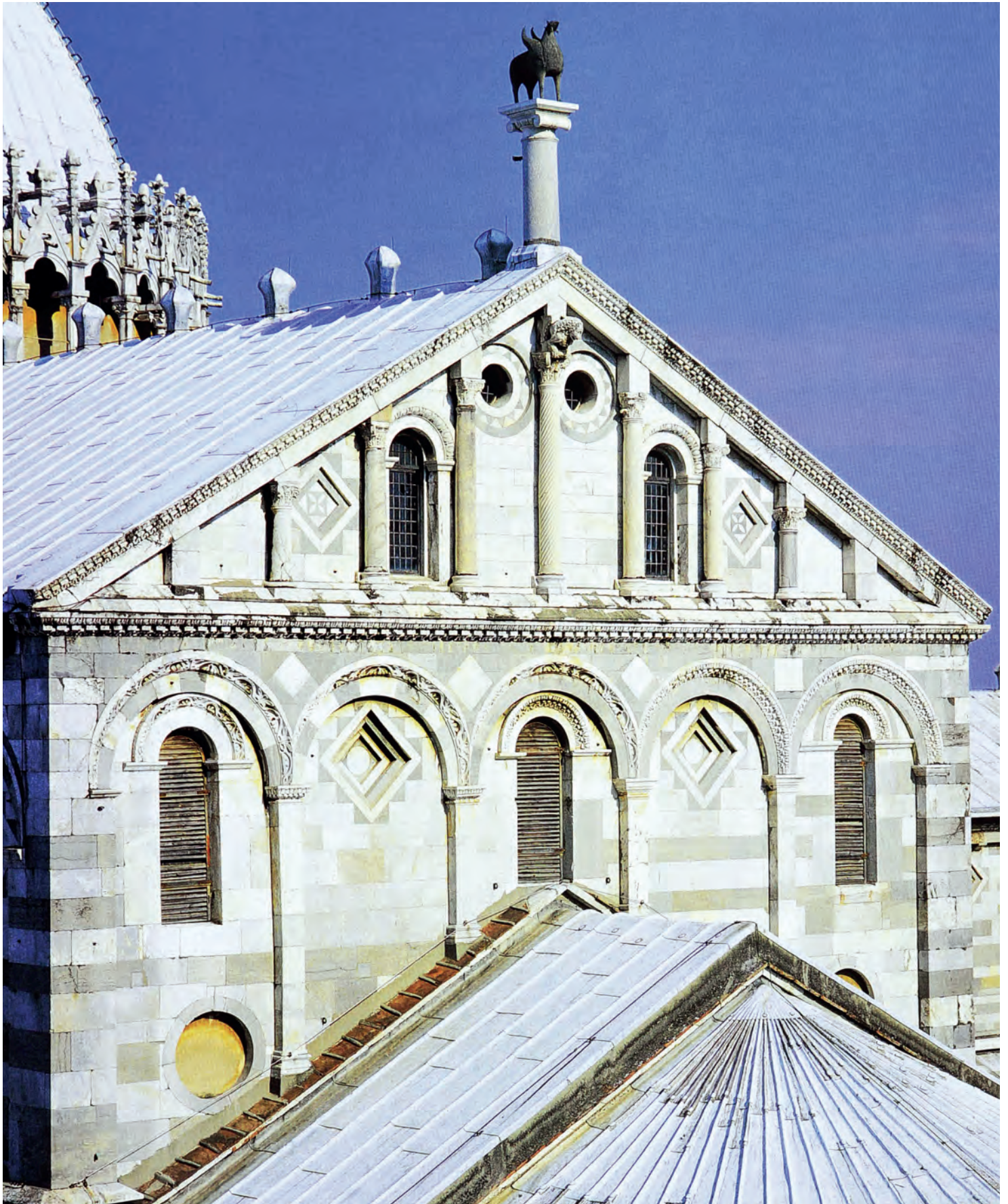
It is associated, most obviously, with Pisa and in particular Pisa Cathedral, where it sat on top of a short column positioned at the top of the roof of the apsidal area, looking east, until 1828.³ It was then taken down and placed in the Camposanto, where it stayed until 1986, when the Museum of the Opera del Duomo was created, and it is there that the original is housed. The Griffin now on the roof is a bronze copy, installed in 2015, to replace the cement copy which was first put in place in 1934, as this is the date incised on the present, replacement marble column that supports it (Fig. 3).⁴

That the original was placed on the top of the roof as part of the completion of the cathedral during the early twelfth century is a reasonable assumption, but one for which there is no direct textual confirmation, and it is not until the late fifteenth century that we have iconographical evidence for its presence there, provided by a panel on the underside of a cathedral choirstall that I noted in 1992 (Fig. 4).⁵ It depicts the Leaning Tower as well as the Cathedral, and the Griffin is positioned at the centre, on the roof, but given both its minute size and the nature of the medium, marquetry, which requires a simplification of details, it is shown sideways on, in silhouette, as a stylized bird.

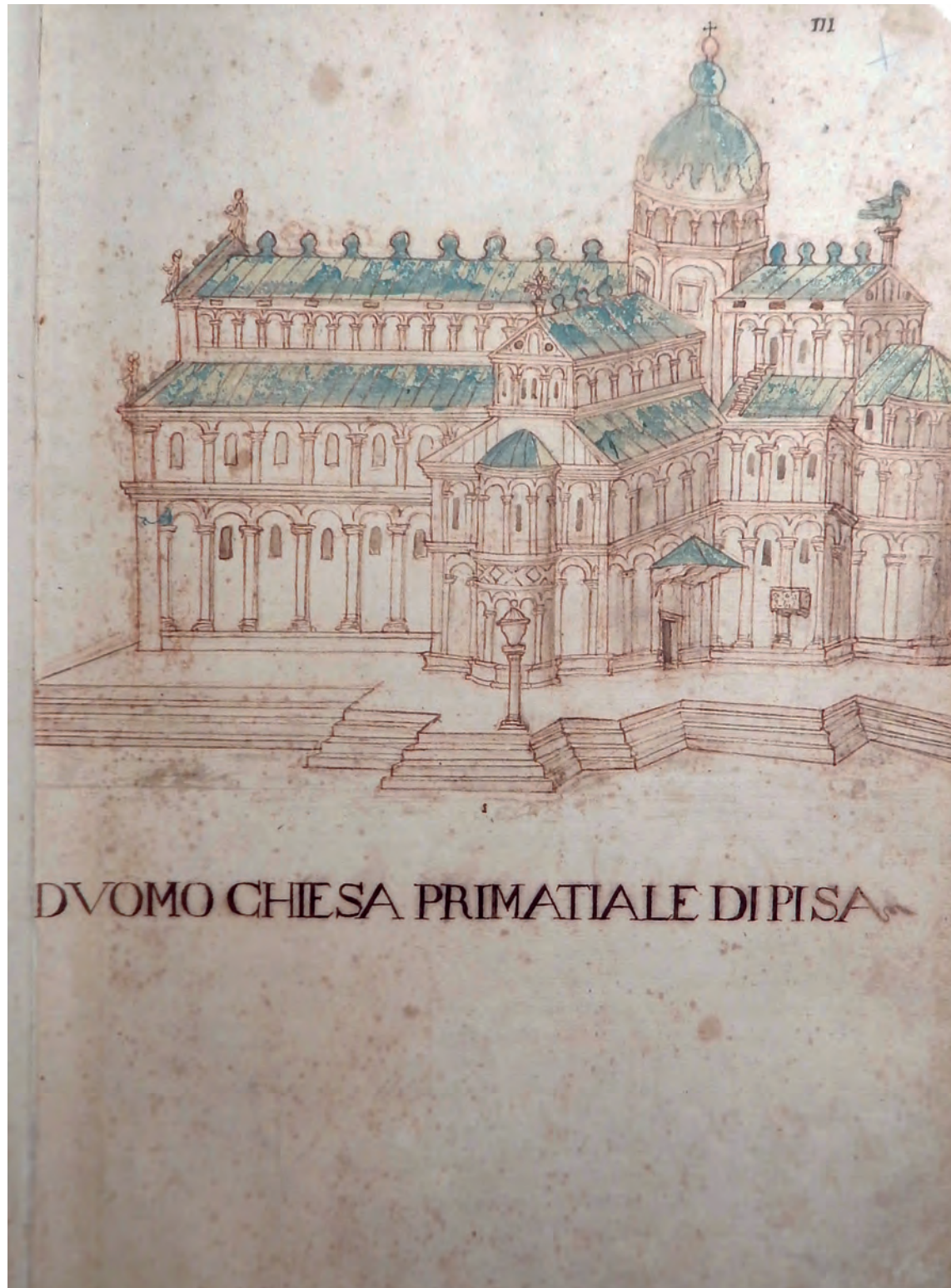
The next visual record to have survived dates from over a century later: it appears in a water colour of c. 1643 by Paolo Tronci included in his manuscript treatise on the churches and other buildings of Pisa. Here it is still represented as a large bird standing on a column, but with both legs visible, and wings extending at the back, and it is now less stylized (Fig. 5).⁶ Tronci also provides the first example of description and speculation, reporting that it is a bronze statue of a monstrous and ferocious serpent that was captured nearby, and although his original text is no longer extant,⁷ it seems to have inspired a mid eighteenth-century drawing of the serpent (also no longer to be found).⁸

4. Marquetry panel on the underside of a choirstall of the Pisa Cathedral; and detail
(Photo: Anna Contadini; detail: Peter Northover)





5. Pisa Cathedral. Paolo Tronci, *Descrizione delle chiese, monasteri e oratori della città di Pisa*, ca. 1643. Archivio Storico Diocesano di Pisa, Archivio Capitolare, ms. C 152, fol. III (Photo: Diego Guidi)



The earliest written record of the Griffin I have been able to locate precedes Tronci by a century and is a factual payment note. It occurs under the year 1543 in relation to work done to the fabric of the Cathedral for a new column being made to support it on top of the roof: *et per un chapitello di suo marmo et fatura et una pietra che va sopra della tribuna di duomo di su cui va sopra lo grifon di bronzo.*⁹



6. Representation of the Griffin on Pisa Cathedral (After Martini, *Theatrum*, tav. 7. Photo: Diego Guidi)

Towards the end of the sixteenth century or early in the seventeenth we arrive at the next and more interesting stage of speculation concerning origins, which integrates the Griffin within a wider set of assumptions about cultural relationships and derivations. In his *Istorie Pisane*, Raffaello Roncioni provides no illustration, but describes the “Hippogriff” as a beautiful bronze with Egyptian characters inscribed on its body, a clear indication that for him the Griffin was to be assigned to the exotic world of pre-classical antiquity,¹⁰ being seen through the lens of the European fascination with the “myth of Egypt” and Egyptian hieroglyphs that comes to the fore during the Renaissance, and particularly in the early seventeenth century.¹¹ Hesitation as to which mythical beast it was is reflected in the terminology used: in the document of 1543 it is called a *grifon*, but thereafter, in the literature of the end of the sixteenth century onwards, the term “hippogriff” is often used, leaving Ciampi to distinguish between the two: a griffin, he says, is not to be confused with the hippogriff, for – and here he cites Ariosto – it is a *grifo* combined with a mare (*giumenta*), having plumes and wings like the *grifo* father and the rest of the body like the *giumenta* mother.¹²

In 1705, with Giuseppe Martini,¹³ we arrive at greater visual specificity. In three engravings that form part of his treatise on the Pisan Basilica, he represents the Griffin, set on a short column, as a four-legged animal with upright wings and no tail, thereby establishing a more accurate iconography (Fig. 6). Closer examination of the Griffin was then done at the end of the eighteenth century by Alessandro Da Morrona who, in his work on the city of Pisa published in 1789,¹⁴ relates that he was able to go up on the roof on the apsidal part of the Cathedral and establish that the “Hippogriff” was a bronze statue resting on a column with an Ionic capital (Fig. 7). He was able, he continues, to make a clay model of them and to design them in the engraving that accompany his description, where the Griffin is represented again with four legs, no tail, and upright wings. He says that it has incisions of lions and eagles, surrounded by arabesques, and that what Roncioni thought were Egyptian hieroglyphs are instead decorative motifs. He thinks that these arabesques are similar to those on works of antiquity, Etruscan in particular, and remarks on the ancient use of griffin iconography on sarcophagi as symbols of protection. He also notes that the statue has holes, evidence that some or all of the damage done to the Griffin that we see today goes back at least to the end of the eighteenth century.

It was found, he reports, among the remains of (a legendary) Hadrian’s palace, uncovered while laying the foundation of the Cathedral.¹⁵ Da Morrona thus agrees with Roncioni that it is a work of antiquity, but having dismissed the Egyptian hieroglyphs opts for the more lo-



7. Pisa Griffin (After Da Morrona, *Pisa illustrata*, vol. I, tav. 2. Photo: Diego Guidi)

8. Head of the Griffin with a triangular protrusion on the neck (Photo: ISCR)



cal pre-Roman Etruscan civilization. However, a possible Egyptian connection is readmitted in relation to the *globetto*, the little round knob at the top of a triangular protrusion, integral to the body, on the back of the neck, although he admits that it is mysterious. (Fig. 8. See also Camber and Contadini, Chapter 1.1) Like the triangular protrusions on the back of the neck of the thirteenth-century Perugia bronze griffin (Fig. 46a),¹⁶ it could possibly be a prolongation of an iconographic tradition that goes back in time, as a stylized remnant of part of the plumage or dragon-like scales as seen on ancient Egyptian, Etruscan or Sasanian griffin-like creatures.¹⁷

These widening interpretative ripples also extend to the inclusion of an alternative provenance, for Da Morrona mentions in addition the possibility that the Griffin was *da Pisani trasportato ... da esteri paesi con altre anticaglie, di che adornarono il Tempio*. Yet the difference between this and a local, Etruscan origin is not of great significance for him: the Griffin, he states, is surely of great antiquity and all its decorative incisions are a surprise to those who dare – as he had done – to come close to it. However, it is so far away from our sight, he adds, that its merits are related more to its size than its form.

Thus up to the end of the eighteenth century one may note an increasing diversity of views as to the origin of the Griffin and, by implication, its cultural resonance, but despite agreement as to its antiquity, no attempt is made to hazard even an approximate date. With the nineteenth century this changes, as two significant inter-

pretative developments occur: it is suggested that the Griffin is, rather, a medieval piece; and that it has an Arab connection. Sebastiano Ciampi reproduces a drawing of the Griffin that he says was done by Carlo Lasinio (1759-1838), a famous engraver who was made conservator of the Camposanto in Pisa, and also addresses the question of its possible origins (Fig. 9). Given similarities with other animals, both on the bronze doors of the cathedral and, more generally, in depictions of the end of the twelfth century, he concludes by putting forward the hypothesis that it is a medieval work, one that may actually have been done in Pisa.¹⁸ The same suggestion of a medieval dating will be made a year later, in 1813, by Cicognara,¹⁹ for whom the “Hippogriff”, rather than being a work of antiquity, was possibly to be associated with the building of the Cathedral and thus contemporary with it.

In 1828 the Griffin was taken down from the roof for restoration and conservation, following a general tendency to which statues were subjected at the time.²⁰ It was housed in the Camposanto, together with many other sculptures and works of art, and mounted on a pilaster of white marble, thus allowing not only for closer inspection but also for the first serious attempt to decipher its inscription. The results appear in a work by Serri, published in 1833, who mentions that there are various ideas about the date and origins of what he still calls a bronze “Hippogriff”, before coming to the prescient conclusion that it is most likely an Arab work of art, possibly transported by the Pisans to their city after their conquest of the Balearic Islands,²¹ thus anticipating by over a century Monneret de Villard’s advocacy of a Spanish provenance.²²



9. Drawing of the Pisa Griffin by Lasinio, as reproduced in Ciampi, *Osservazioni*, Tav. IV (Photo: Diego Guidi)

In addition to its prior publication by Valeriani²³ and Serri, the inscription was published in 1839 – without acknowledgment – by Jean-Joseph Marcel, causing an academic dispute.²⁴ Marcel, who published the inscription (if with some mistakes) and also an engraving of the Griffin, put forward the hypothesis of a southern Italian provenance, considering it an object produced by Muslims under the Normans. For Rohault de Fleury, on the other hand, writing in 1866, it is the type of sculpture that Muslim merchants would order for a Christian or Jewish market, and is to be dated, according to the character of the letters of the inscription, to between the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century (Fig. 10).²⁵

As for the inscription, Serri says that there are signs all around the Griffin that were once considered Egyptian letters, but which have been recently examined by the Professor of Oriental Languages in Rome, Abbot Michelangelo Lanci, who identified them as “Arabo-Kufic” characters and provided a translation: *Benedizione perfetta, e grazia copiosa – Beatitudine*



10. Pisa Griffin (After Rohault de Fleury, *Les monuments*, pl. XLVI. Photo: Farouk Yahya)

perfetta, e grazia perpetua – Salute perfetta, e felicità perpetua a chi lo possiede (Fig. 11).²⁶

The Arabic identification obviously meant that ideas of relating the Griffin to antiquity had to be abandoned, but at the same time it opened the door to the various other hypotheses about its provenance advanced in nineteenth- and, especially, twentieth-century scholarship. These were to range from a southern Italian one, proposed by Marcel in 1839, to a Fatimid one, proposed by Migeon in 1907 and reaffirmed by Jenkins in 1978, to the Spanish one proposed by Monneret de Villard in 1946, to an Iranian one, suggested by Souren Melikian-Chirvani in a substantial study of 1968.²⁷ However, in 1973 Melikian-Chirvani changed his attribution to Spain, having been persuaded by the observation (published a little later, in 1975) made by Antonio Fernández Puertas of the similarities between the style of the script on the Griffin and that on the metal lamp of Montefrío found in Spain (Fig. 12)²⁸ – and I can now confirm that the two are not just similar in style but identical.²⁹ Given this palaeographical connection, Fernández Puertas concluded that the Griffin should be attributed to Spain, and it is a Spanish provenance that has become increasingly accepted, as, for example, by Almut von Gladiss in the catalogue of the 1989 Berlin exhibition,³⁰ and by Cynthia Robinson in the catalogue of the 1992 *Al-Andalus* exhibition.³¹



11. Pisa Griffin (After Lanci, *Trattato*, vol. III, T. XXVII. Photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, 4 A.or. 1142-3, T. XXVII, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10219187-2)

Prior to this detailed examination of the script, the arguments put forward about origins were based upon stylistic similarities. Thus in 1907 Migeon classified the Griffin as Fatimid on rather generic stylistic grounds, while Monneret de Villard, in rejecting this hypothesis, cited the deer found at Madinat al-Zahra' (Fig. 13)³² and the Monzón lion (Fig. 14),³³ found at Monzón de Campos in the province of Palencia, to arrive at the conclusion that it was a Spanish piece: he highlighted the similarities of the decoration, especially that on the back, which recalls the decoration of a textile terminating in *ṭirāz* bands, and also noted parallels with the decorative schemes of another Spanish bronze, the Bargello quadruped (Fig. 15).³⁴

12. The Montefrío lamp. Spain, eleventh century. Granada, Museo de la Alhambra, inv. no. 002828
(Photos: Mirco Bassi)





13. Cordoba deer. Spain, Madinat al-Zahra', second half of tenth century. Museo Arqueológico de Córdoba. inv. no. CE000500 (After Dodds, *Al-Andalus*, 210, cat. 10)



14. Monzón lion. Spain, twelfth century. Paris, Musée du Louvre inv. OA 7883 (After Dodds, *Al-Andalus*, 271, cat. 54)

15. The Bargello quadruped. Spain, eleventh century. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, inv. no. 63c. (After Curatola, *Eredità dell'Islam*, cat. 41)

16. Hare. Fatimid Egypt, eleventh century. Private collection deposited at Harvard University Art Museum, Cambridge (Mass.), inv. no. 326.1983 (After Barrucand, *Trésors fatimides*, cat. 51)



17. Deer. Fatimid Egypt, eleventh century. Naples, Museo di Capodimonte, inv. no. A.M. 138798 (Photo: Gregory Bilotto)





18. Deer. Fatimid Egypt, late tenth – early eleventh century. Munich, Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, inv. no. 26-N-1; and detail of incised decoration on the head and neck (After Barrucand, *Trésors fatimides*, cat. no. 49)

That the Griffin and Lion differ from Fatimid metal animal figures is clear. Quite apart from their size, they are distinguished by their imposing and rather stylized posture, which contrasts with the more “naturalistic” one of Fatimid zoomorphic metalwork, such as the deer in Naples (Fig. 17) and that in Munich (Fig. 18).³⁵ Also distinctive, importantly, is the approach to decoration, where it is Spanish parallels that can readily be observed. The Griffin and the Lion, the Bargello quadruped, the Monzón lion and other pieces all have decorative motifs similarly organized in areas that correspond to and help delimit various anatomical parts of the animal. These are the backs, usually “covered” by a textile-like ornamentation terminating in calligraphic *ṭirāz* bands; the upper thigh areas, which contain shield-like forms containing floral decoration or, in the case of the Griffin and Lion, images of other animals; and the chest and front and back of the neck, decorated or delimited by either inscriptions (the Bargello quadruped) or plumage-like decoration, often mixed with other floral or geometric elements (Cagliari peacock (Fig. 19),³⁶ Furusiyya peacock (Fig. 20),³⁷ Monzón lion (Fig. 14)). To this may be added that the organization of the decoration on the body of the Griffin, the Lion and the other pieces, which includes the *ṭirāz*-like bands of inscriptions, is close in concept and design to Spanish textiles such as the pillow of María de Almenar, datable to around 1200, and the tunic of Don Rodrigo Ximenez de Rada, datable around 1247 (Fig. 21).³⁸



19. Cagliari peacock. Bronze. Spain, eleventh-twelfth century. Cagliari, Pinacoteca Nazionale, inv. no. 1445 (Photo: Damiano Anedda)



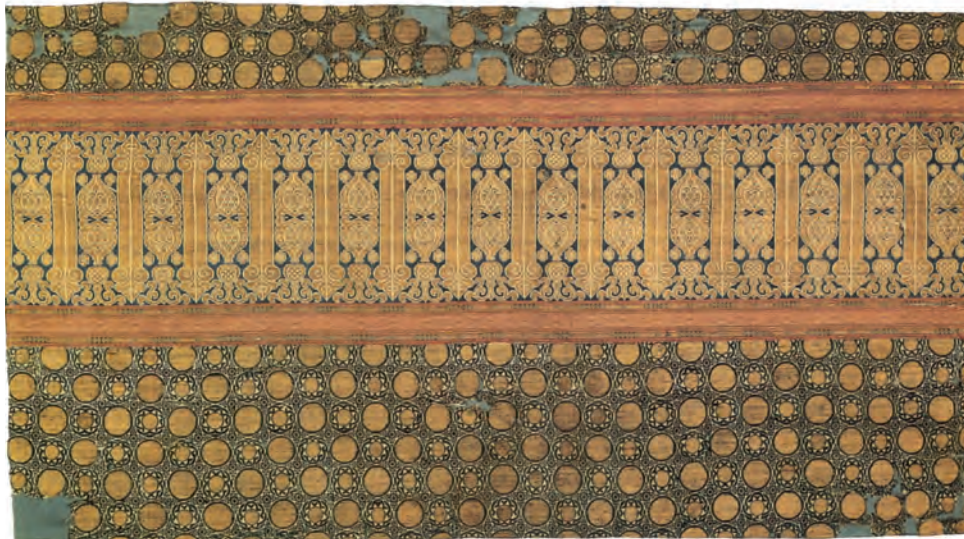
20. Fursiyya peacock. Bronze. Spain, eleventh-twelfth century. Vaduz, Fursiyya Art Foundation (After López and Vallejo, *El esplendor*, 48)

The roughly contemporary animal figures attributed to Fatimid Egypt, instead, have a very light (even accounting for wear) incised floral decoration. It is not so starkly incised, and there is no trace of the use of a particular decorative tool, the five-dot punch that we have identified on the Griffin and Lion and on other Spanish metalwork (see below). Further, the decoration covers the whole surface of the animal, as for example on the Munich deer and the Harvard hare (Fig. 16),³⁹ rather than being divided into distinct areas, and usually there are no inscriptions. The conclusion is inescapable: the decorative vocabulary and technique of the Griffin and Lion is distinct from the Fatimid, and aligns itself with that of pieces of Spanish provenance.

The Spanish connection is reinforced by the similarities with the decoration on two ewers and a globular fitting of Spanish origin: one ewer with a peacock spout in the David Collection in Copenhagen (Fig. 22);⁴⁰ one with a lion spout in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (MAN) in Madrid (Fig. 23),⁴¹ and a globular fitting also in the MAN (Fig. 24).⁴² All three objects have roundels on their bodies containing incised images of lions which have short noses resembling those of the lions incised on the front legs of the Griffin (Figs. 25a-d).



21. a) Pisa Griffin; b) Tunic of Don Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada, Spain, ca. 1247. Monasterio de Santa María, Santa María la Real de Huerta, Soria; c) Pillow of María de Almenar. Spain, ca. 1200. Museo de Telas Medievales, Monasterio de Santa María la Real de Huelgas, Burgos, inv. no. 011/002 M.H. (Photos: a: CNR Pisa, b and c: After Dodds, *Al-Andalus*, 331, cat. 94 and 322, cat. 90 respectively)



Next page:
22. Ewer. Spain, late tenth-early eleventh century. Copenhagen, David Collection, inv. no 5/1990 (Photo: Pernille Klemp, courtesy of the David Collection)





23. a) Ewer with a lion spout;
b) detail. Spain, eleventh
century. Madrid, Museo
Arqueológico Nacional
(MAN), inv. no. 1966/10/1
(Photos: a: Miguel Angel
Otero. CER.es, MECD; b:
Mirco Bassi)



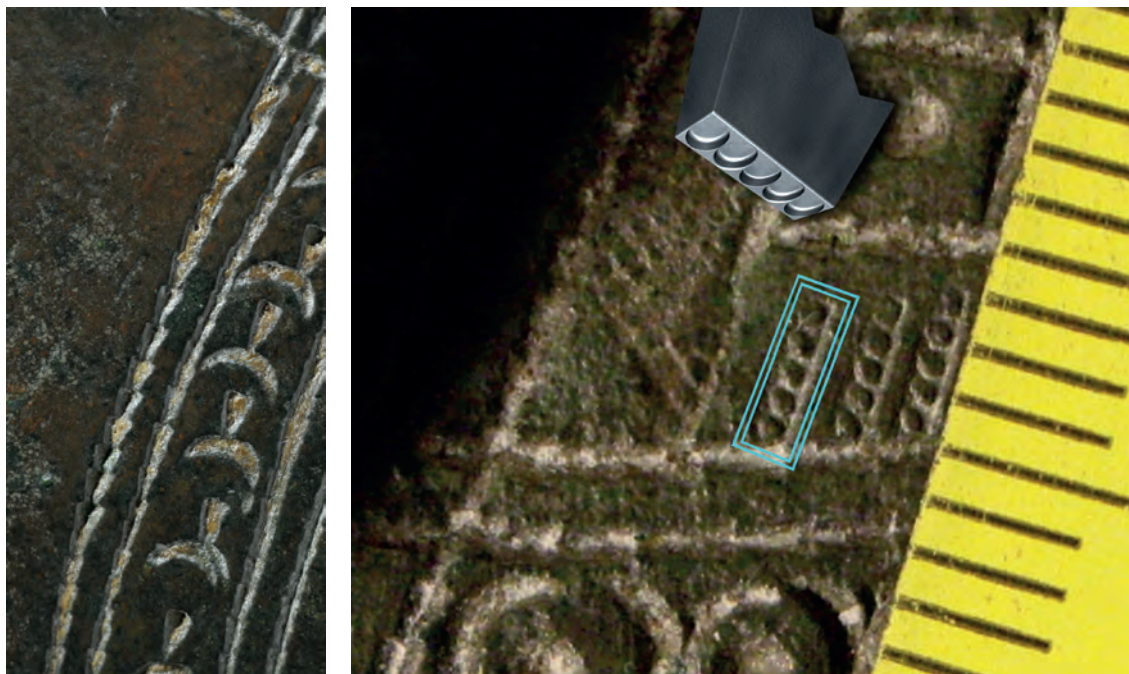
24. Globular lamp fitting.
Spain, early twelfth century.
Madrid, Museo Arqueológico
Nacional, inv. no. 1925/35/2
(Photo: Ángel Martínez Levas.
CER.es, MECD)



25. Incised lion decoration on: a) Pisa Griffin; b) MAN ewer with lion spout, inv. no. 1966/10/1; c) David Collection ewer, inv. no. 5/1990; d) MAN globular lamp fitting. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 1925/35/2 (Photos: a: Edoardo Loliva; b: Mirco Bassi; c: Pernille Klemp, courtesy of the David Collection; d: Mirco Bassi)

New findings regarding decoration

The decoration on both Griffin and Lion was done by incision on the cold surface of the bronzes. For this, several tools were used, and the same tool was exploited at different angles. Close examination of the Griffin has also revealed the probability that different hands were involved, as series of repetitive marks, for example the arrow-shaped marks seen on various parts, will be consistently of a certain depth and spacing in one area, while elsewhere both the degree of incision and the spacing are different (Fig. 26). This significant observation allows us to hypothesize with a degree of confidence that the decoration was done in a workshop with more than one artist at work.



26. Arrow-shaped marks on the Griffin
(Photo: Edoardo Loliva)

27. Reconstruction of the “five-dot punch” tool
(Reconstruction and Photo: Mirco Bassi)

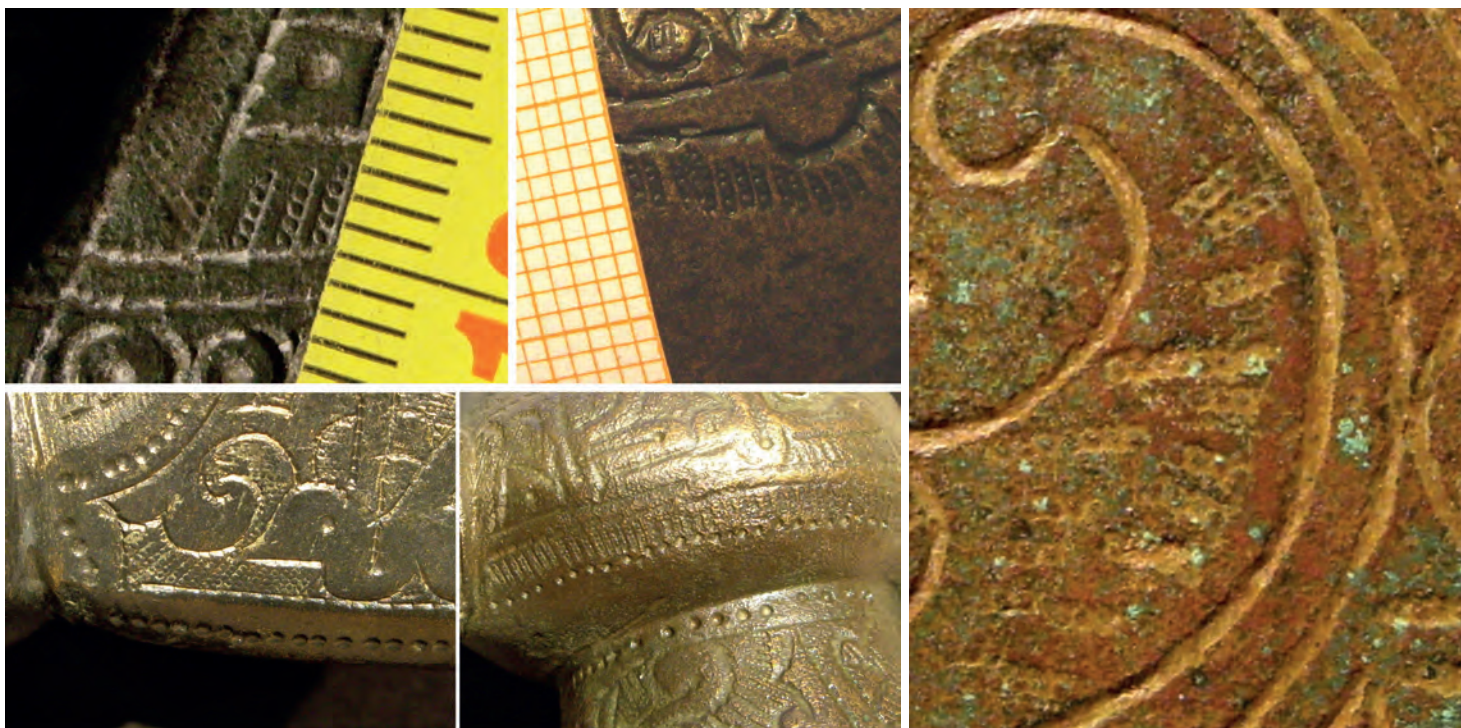
In the course of closely studying the decoration, we made another, major, discovery: a peculiar decorative tool used on the Griffin was identified, and then thoroughly researched by Mirco Bassi (see Bassi, Chapter 1.3). I was quite excited to find that it was also used on the Lion, albeit in a less consistent way. It is a rectangular tool, measuring 3mm x 1mm, with five dots, one that I called a “five-dot punch” (or *punzone a cinque punti*) (Fig. 27). It is applied to create closely packed lines, and its use on both bronzes is very significant, as it points to a common workshop practice. The investigation I conducted on metal objects attributed to the Fatimid territories and period (with the caveat that not all are of certain attribution) revealed no trace of this particular punch, and the same negative result was yielded by an examination of some Iranian material. As noted, the overall decoration of Fatimid metal objects is in any case quite different, and to this may be added that Iranian metalwork belonging or attributed to the same period as the Griffin, although more varied in its decorative motifs, also has a different approach both to the spatial organization of the decoration and to the selection of motifs.

Given the lack of any trace of the five-dot punch elsewhere, together with Julian Raby and Mirco Bassi I organized a research trip in April 2014 to search for examples on metalwork in Spanish collections,⁴³ and it was exhilarating to find instances of its use on metalwork attributed to eleventh- to twelfth-century Spain. They include the MAN ewer with a lion spout (Fig. 23) and two lamps from Montefrío and Jimena de la Frontera, both now in the Museo de la Alhambra in Granada (Figs. 12 and 28).⁴⁴ Indeed, on the MAN ewer and the two lamps the tool was employed in the same way, with its incisions having exactly the same measurements as those on the Pisa Griffin (Fig. 29a-d), and in the case of the Montefrío lamp the connection is reinforced by the presence of the identical angular script referred to above.⁴⁵ The five-dot punch was also found to have been used on the Monzón lion but it does not, though, appear to have been used on earlier or later material attributed to Spain, such as the Caliphal deer in Madinat al-Zahra’ (Fig. 13) or the Almohad incense burner in the Museo de la Alhambra in

28. Candle-holder from Jimena de la Frontera. Spain, first half of twelfth century. Granada, Museo de la Alhambra, inv. no. 002827 (Photo: Mirco Bassi)



29. The “five-dot punch” tool on: top left: a) the Pisa Griffin; top middle: b) MAN ewer with lion spout, inv. no. 1966/10/1; bottom left: c) Montefrío lamp, inv. no. 002828; bottom middle: d) candle-holder from Jimena de la Frontera, inv. no. 002827; right: e) Mari-Cha Lion (Photos: Mirco Bassi)



Granada (Fig. 30)⁴⁶ or the Nasrid bucket in the MAN (Fig. 31),⁴⁷ a pattern of use that supports an eleventh- to twelfth-century dating for the Griffin and Lion.

The punched decoration on the Griffin and Lion has worn down considerably, and especially so on the Griffin, given its centuries-long exposure to the elements. Indeed, the appearance of the beast as it is now can be rather misleading, as its heavy green patina obscures or has even deleted many of the details of the decorative motifs. As a result, it took a long and

thorough direct investigation, with macro lenses and microscopes and with the help of macro and raking-light photography as well as images from the 3D scanning (see Vidale, Ferrari and Bassi, Chapter 1.2 and Callieri, Scopigno and Dellepiane, Chapter 2.7), to reconstruct exactly what is there in terms of decorative motifs, how they were done, and what their significance is within the overall concept of the bronze in visual terms.

What the investigation has revealed is that the layout of the decoration on the Griffin is of an unexpected sophistication: it must have been resplendent in its original goldish/bronze colour, with its decoration carefully planned to create a chiaroscuro effect as well as a three-dimensionality of lower and higher levels (Fig. 32). At the same time, the results allow closer comparisons to be made with the decorative repertoire of the Lion and its organization, revealing the extent to which they are related (see discussion below).

Damage

A further feature common to both is that they are, unfortunately, variously damaged. They have both been perforated by shots, with the damaged areas on their flanks probably resulting



30. Incense burner. Spain, first half of twelfth century. Granada, Museo de la Alhambra, inv. no. 003805 (Photo: CER.es, MECD)



31. Bucket. Spain, Nasrid, fourteenth century. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional (MAN), inv. no. 50888 (Photo: Anna Contadini)



from musket shots (or, on the Lion, blows from a sharp implement). It is interesting to notice that on the Griffin these perforations only occur on its right flank, the one that, when it was on the roof of the Cathedral, was exposed to the wider area towards the city, while the other flank, which is not similarly damaged, faced the narrower area towards the river and the sea⁴⁸ (Figs. 1c and 1a respectively). The first written record of this damage I could find is the 1789 account by Alessandro Da Morrona noted above (although the fact that it is not mentioned in the scanty earlier literature is not proof of absence). From the angle of the trajectory of the possible shots it seems clear that they were fired from well below, confirming that the damage was inflicted while the Griffin was on the roof. But the date is uncertain: it could have occurred at any time between the end of the fifteenth century, when muskets appeared in Europe and in particular Italy, and the late eighteenth century, when we have our written source, and quite possibly during the fierce conflicts between Pisa and Florence in the sixteenth century.⁴⁹

The damage to the Lion, in contrast, appears rather to have been inflicted by a blunt instrument, and although less serious occurs on both sides, more especially the left (Fig. 1g). But a more drastic form of damage is the loss of the lower parts of all four legs. We cannot establish why, but we can at least say that metallurgical analyses have established that fire was not the cause. The Lion also suffered lesser damage at the rear, so that we can still see the site of attachment for the tail, which, however, has not survived (Fig. 1h). On the Griffin the same area is more seriously damaged (Fig. 1d), but it is safe to assume that it too originally had a tail (Fig. 33), as the iconography of griffins on other

Previous page:
32. Decoration on the shield-shaped panel on the front left leg of the Griffin. The background produced by the five-dot punch has been removed to show the parts of the decoration that stands out, therefore giving an impression of relief
(Photo: Mirco Bassi)



33. Rear of the Griffin where the tail would have been attached
(Photo: CNR Pisa)



34. Lustreware plates with griffins: a) Egypt, eleventh century. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art, inv. No. 14938; b) Signed by Muslim ibn al-Dahhan. Egypt, eleventh century. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art, inv. no. 14930 (After Seipel, *Schätze der Kalifen*, cat. 56, 59)

metalwork and other materials of the period indicates. On the ewer with lion spout in the MAN, for example, there is a griffin with the same shape and direction of the wings as the Pisa Griffin, upright and pointing towards the front, and with a long tail. Similarly with ceramics, as on two beautiful Fatimid lustre painted bowls (Figs. 34a and b) depicting a griffin that again has the same shape and direction of wings as the Pisa Griffin, and a long tail.⁵⁰ Even more pertinently, we have the mutually reinforcing internal evidence of the tails on the griffins represented on the Lion and on the lions represented on the Griffin (Figs. 2a-b, e-f).

Griffin versus Lion

Although the similarities between the decorative scheme of the Lion and that of the Griffin would point to it being produced in the same Arabo-Spanish tradition, and possibly in the same environment as the Griffin, there are a number of complicating factors that give pause. There are, first, evident differences with regard the articulation of the hind legs and the shoulders: the stark demarcation we find on the Lion is absent on the Griffin; and there are also differences in the decoration and inscription. As well as drawing from the same lexicon of benedictory and augural phrases, the inscription on the Lion is in a very similar script to that on the Griffin. However, the letters are neither defined as precisely nor, unlike those on the Griffin, do they fill their frames. Some also have unusual curvatures or endings, and the overall execution is clearly not as accomplished (see Inscriptions, below). Similarly, although the overall decorative scheme on the Lion is similar to that on the Griffin, with nicely executed details (such as that just

above the site of attachment of the tail), the tooling is less precise and the five-dot punch is used randomly rather than consistently and in a precisely planned way, as on the Griffin (Fig. 29e).

On the other hand, if this suggests a generally less careful standard of execution in the final stages, the opposite applies to what preceded, for the quality of both the metal alloy and the casting is superior to that of the Griffin. Its metal composition, Northover has argued (see Northover, Chapter 2.2), is of new raw materials, in contrast to that of the Griffin, possibly from scrap (see also Ponting, Chapter 2.4). The more carefully controlled casting process has resulted in fewer breakages and the vessel inside is also better cast.

This points to the Lion being cast in an environment with a strong tradition of casting big objects. Apulia, as Camber has shown, is one such environment, and in support of a South Italian provenance he adduces the resemblances between structural elements of the body of the Lion and those of Apulian animal sculptures. Although nothing remains in bronze, we have ample documentation in stone, and in addition comparisons have been drawn with a metal parrot attributed to Sicily (Fig. 35).⁵¹ There are, though, resemblances to Spanish metal animal objects also: the same conceptualization of the articulation of the haunches may be observed in the hind in MAN (Fig. 36),⁵² and to that preliminary observation, made during the “Griffin and Lion” seminar back in 2013, I would now add that the modelling of the features of the head too, with high relief contours for the eyes, the ears, the area of the mouth, etc., is similarly conceived not only on the Lion and Griffin but also on the Monzón lion (Figs. 37a-c). In addition, the moulding of the Lion’s nose can be related to the similarly sculpted treatment of the head of the Griffin, while at the same time this and the triangle on one of the ears can be related, as Camber has shown, to a Byzantine-Norman tradition, thereby providing another potential link to Southern Italy.

Moving to looking at the two beasts together, it may be helpful to adopt a different approach, or ask different questions, ones that take them into consideration holistically. From a visual point of view, it is clear that the emphasis and agency of the Lion reside in its strong sculptural features and, for those aware of it, its metallurgical quality. It is a powerful animal, with markedly sculptural features of the head and of the articulations of both the hind and front legs (hips and shoulders). Its decoration, in contrast, although generally made of pleasing designs, is not particularly accomplished when considered in detail. Further, the bands containing the inscriptions and floral elements disregard the anatomical boundaries of the flanks and encroach on the legs (Fig. 38a). On the Griffin, in contrast, the anatomical articulations are not as pronounced, but the bands on the flanks containing the inscriptions fit the space in between perfectly (Fig. 38b). Also, although the flared wings make its structure more complicated and add to its imposing stance, there is as much emphasis on décor as on size: its decoration is a stronger element, and it coheres better with the whole sculpture.

That the Griffin is relatable to a tradition of metalwork and zoomorphic figures in al-Andalus that goes back to the Caliphal period is readily demonstrated by similarities to the technical, visual and organizational approach found on objects of that period. The evidence

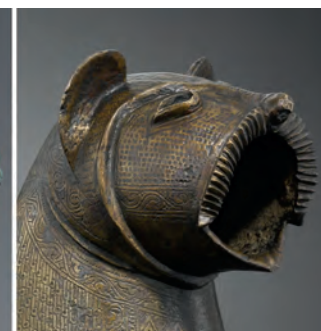


35. Bronze incense burner in the shape of a bird. Spain or North Africa, early twelfth century. Copenhagen, David Collection, inv. no. 10/2005, height: 35.5 cm (Photo: Pernille Klemp, courtesy of the David Collection)

36. a) Madrid hind. Bronze. Cordoba, second half of tenth century. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 1943/41/1; b) haunch; c) belly (Photos: a: Anna Contadini)



37. Close-up of heads: left: a) Pisa Griffin; middle: b) Mari-Cha Lion; right: c) Monzón lion (Photos: a: Anna Contadini; b: Matthew Hollow; c: © Musée du Louvre, dist. RMN / Hughes Dubois)





of the MAN hind, and further similarities with the Madinat al-Zahra' deer in stance and decoration, suggest that the Lion, too, might have emerged from that environment. What appears unlikely, though, given both the metallurgical contrasts and the inequalities in the decoration and lettering, is that they were conceived and created as twins. The decoration of the Lion seems to have been done in emulation of the Griffin, and there are also significant factors that point to separation, to different locations and/or times for their casting: composition of alloy and quality of production process. Others, in contrast, suggest proximity: design features, the nature of the decoration and script, and the use of same five-dot punch tool. Accordingly, various and conflicting conjectures may be entertained about the relationship between them, each setting the two in a different light.

Inscriptions

Perhaps the most obvious link between the Griffin and the Lion is provided by their inscriptions. These have long been a concern of mine, with regard to the shape of the letters and

38. Details showing inscription bands on the sides of top: a) the Mari-Cha Lion; bottom: b) the Pisa Griffin
(Photos: Museum of Islamic Art, Doha)

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39. Inscriptions on the Griffin:
a) left side; b) front; c) right
side. Inscriptions on the Lion:
d) left side; e) front; f) right side
(Photos: a-c: Museum
of Islamic Art, Doha; d-f:
Matthew Hollow)

how they fit within the overall design on each, and how their style and contents relate to the wider world of inscriptions (Fig. 39).

Inscriptions on the Griffin:

بركة كاملة ونعمة شاملة
غبطة كاملة وسلامة دائمة وعافية
كاملة وسعادة وعيدة لصاحبه

1. *baraka kāmila wa ni ‘ma shāmila* (perfect blessing, complete favour,)
2. *ghibṭa kāmila wa salāma dā’ima wa ‘āfiya* (perfect felicity, lasting peace, good health)
3. *kāmila wa sa ‘āda wa ‘īda li-ṣāhibihi* (in full and the promise of happiness to its owner)

Inscriptions on the Lion:

نعمة وبركة وعافية
وسلامة وسعادة ويمن
وكرامة ويقا لصاحبه

1. *ni ‘ma wa baraka wa ‘āfiya* (Favour and blessing and good health)
2. *wa salāma wa sa ‘āda wa yumn* (and peace and happiness and prosperity)
3. *wa karāma wa baqā li-ṣāhibihi* (and honour and long life to its owner).

They have been studied and reported in the literature, but it is only recently that I was able to read one hitherto elusive word on the Griffin, for which the versions previously proposed failed to make good sense and also failed to conform to the rhythmic pattern of the previous phrases. Interpretation was rendered difficult by a small tassel (from the casting process) situated in the middle, but by taking the *wāw* after the preceding word not as a conjunction but as part of the word itself I arrived at *wa ‘īda*,⁵³ which together with *sa ‘āda* makes “promised happiness” (Fig. 39c). I should like to interpret it as meaning that in addition to the perfect good things in this world there is also, for the owner, the promise of happiness in the next.⁵⁴

But that owner is not specified, and likewise on the Lion: both inscriptions belong to the benedictory and augural class, occurring in all media, that expresses a series of good wishes for fortune, success and well-being to their owner.⁵⁵ They thus provide no information concerning the identity of the commissioner or, if different, the eventual owner; what they do provide is information about the relationship between the Griffin and Lion, and their cultural affiliations. In both, the letters are of a type of angular (or *kufic*) script that is quite peculiar, although they clearly belong to a family of angular scripts used during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. On the Griffin they are sharply incised and the shapes fit the space allocated precisely, but on the Lion they do not fit the space between the upper and lower frame, so that they often hover over the base frame or do not quite reach the upper one, while in the Griffin the letters fit perfectly within the base and upper frames.

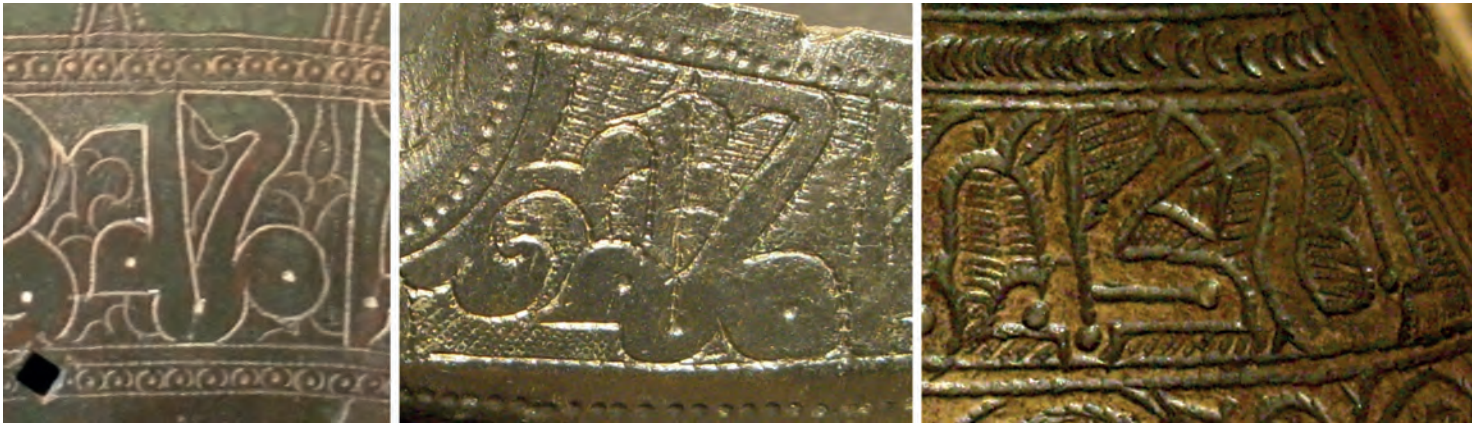
Moreover, some letters in the Lion have unusually accentuated curvatures, as in the case of the *wāw* between *salāma* and *sa'āda*, which goes into a “pear shape” by having accentuated the curved lower part (Fig. 39e). Further, the endings of the letters at times open up in unusual curvy lines. The overall execution is less accurate than that on the Griffin.

For both, the inscriptions were most probably drawn on a flat surface (paper?) first and then transferred onto the surfaces of the bronze. That on the chest of the Griffin appears to be at a slight angle, but this is a distortion due to the fact that, although horizontal, it faithfully follows the asymmetrical bulge of the chest. That on the Lion, instead, is horizontal in appearance, given that the Lion's chest has a symmetrical curvature.

On both animals, the three compartments of the inscription constitute the lower section of the decoration on the upper body. The two side ones come beneath the concentric circles that cover the backs and are, in effect, like *ṭirāz* bands at the end of a textile-like pattern. The one on the chests likewise comes beneath an area of decoration, this time in the form of plumage (Griffin) or curls of the mane (Lion).

As expected, both draw from the common pool of phraseology that characterizes benedictory and augural inscriptions, but that is not sufficient to explain the degree of similarity between them. Thus both consist of a series of nouns (the wish list) before the final *li-sāhibihi* (‘for its owner’), six on the Griffin, eight on the Lion, of which five are common to both, with four of them arranged chiasmatically:





40. The 'mila' in *kāmila* on the: a) Pisa Griffin; b) Montefrío lamp, inv. no. 002828; c) *kāf* on the MAN ewer with lion spout, inv. no. 1966/10/1 (Photos: a: Anna Contadini; b and c: Mirco Bassi)

Griffin: *baraka ni'ma ghibṭa salāma 'āfiya sa'āda*
 Lion: *ni'ma baraka 'āfiya salāma sa'āda yumn karāma baqā*

There is, though, the difference that the higher total on the Lion is compensated for on the Griffin by the addition of adjectives, *kāmila* (three times), *shāmila*, *dā'ima* and *wa'ida*, while none appear on the Lion. Nevertheless, on both we find a pattern of overlap in lexis and morphology that is the result of the same stylistic choices: we thus repeatedly encounter the word shapes *CāCiCa* (seven times), *CaCāCa* (five times) and *CiCCa* (three times), and it is difficult to regard this concentration on a narrow range of commonalities as random.⁵⁶

The content of the inscriptions, the type of script, and the nature of the decoration thus provide close links between the two, but at the same time they are differentiated by the execution of both script and decoration. From this the conclusion may be drawn that the Lion was decorated by less skilled artists who took the Griffin as their model but could not quite emulate it; and it is probable that the conception of the inscription on the Lion was done by artists who, in addition to being conversant with Arabic benedictory formulae, were also aware of that on the Griffin. That still leaves unresolved, however, their identity and the location, for itinerant workers may have been involved. Workers, artists or even whole ateliers from al-Andalus might have travelled to Southern Italy or Sicily, given the connections between the two regions, particularly close during the twelfth century.⁵⁷

To be added is that the 'mila' of *kāmila* on the Griffin is identical to that on the Montefrío lamp (Figs. 40a and b). As for the ewer with a lion spout in MAN, while the style of the script is not identical to that of the Griffin and the lamp, it nevertheless has a family resemblance to it (Fig. 40c).

Function, location and period

A further major issue concerns the function they were designed to serve. Could the Griffin have been a piece for a fountain, as Monneret de Villard thought and Scerrato later proposed?⁵⁸ I have always doubted this: there is no trace of a hydraulic system inside, or of a spout having been placed in the mouth. Its shape, moreover, with the upper mandible curving down over the lower, is unsuitable for a jet of water, as might have gushed from the wide-

open mouth of the Monzón Lion, and it is also dissimilar to the rounded open beaks of the Louvre and Cagliari birds, which might have been used as aquamanilia. The same problem is posed by the shape of the mouth of the Lion, although the possibility of a spout being inserted there cannot be discounted. And how can we account for the vessels inside? They are neither watertight nor set at an angle suitable for retaining a liquid. Instead of water I then thought of fire and smoke, and the possibility that the vessels might have been containers for burning incense. But the incense burners we know are very different, crucially with the body pierced to allow the smoke and scent to come out, even in the case of the large ones like that in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 41),⁵⁹ and analyses of the interior of the vessels have revealed no trace of incense, or any other substance.⁶⁰

Instead, I started thinking about the possibility of sound, and of these animals being automata. Could they have been pneumatic, noise-making animals? This idea opened up a whole world of sound-making mechanisms, many in the shape of animals, from the Byzantine to the Islamic.⁶¹ We have numerous accounts related to the Byzantine world, one of the most famous being the description of the throne of the emperor by Bishop Liutprand from Cremona, in which he tells not only of bronze birds emitting different sounds according to species, but also of lions that beat the ground with their tails and gave a dreadful roar with open mouth and quivering tongue. For the Islamic period we have accounts as early as the eighth century, including Yuhanna ibn al-Bitriq (d. c. 815/200), who briefly mentions a hydraulic organ used in warfare to create fear among the enemy.⁶²

The two animals have a relatively large opening in the belly, and while investigating that of the Griffin in 1992 I found that it had a ‘womb’ inside, a vessel attached to the back of the sculpture (Figs. 42a and b). This was a major discovery, as such a vessel had never been reported before in any of the literature on the Griffin, and it had therefore never been taken into consideration in discussions of function. When the Lion came up for auction a year later I was able to examine it before the sale and I was astonished that it too had a vase-shaped vessel inside.⁶³ That in the Griffin is c. 24 cm in length, with an opening of c. 9.5 cm, and that in the Lion has similar measurements. They are attached to the rear of the animals, but there is no opening at the back: as shown by this drawing of a cross-section of the Lion, the vessel is of a vase-like shape, open at the front and angled slightly downwards towards the opening of the belly (Figs. 42c and d). As discussed in Camber and Contadini, Chapter 1.1, different conclusions have been reached as to whether the metal used for the vessel in the Griffin is the same as that of the body, but on balance this seems likely. The analyses of the Lion demonstrate that the metals are identical and hence that the vessel was cast with the body: it is evidently an integral part of the whole, and this fact supports a similar procedure for the Griffin.

Given the presence of these vessels, I then hypothesized that the sound-producing mechanism resembled a bagpipe, with the vessel having an inner receptacle, either an air-tight ceramic (as it was found in the Griffin), or an airbag for which it would function as a rigid container holding it in place and helping maintain pressure. The beasts could have been set on plinths containing bellows, as shown in a fourteenth-century miniature of the Horn of Themistius (Fig. 43)⁶⁴ and also in a wall painting in the so-called Gothic Hall in Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome, dateable to between 1245 and 1251 (Fig. 44).⁶⁵ Air would be pumped through a tube set in the opening of the belly up into the receptacle and from this it would

Next page:
41. Bronze incense burner
in the shape of a lion, Iran,
dated 577/1181-2. New York,
Metropolitan Museum, Rogers
Fund, 1951, 51.56
(Photo: Metropolitan Museum
of Art)



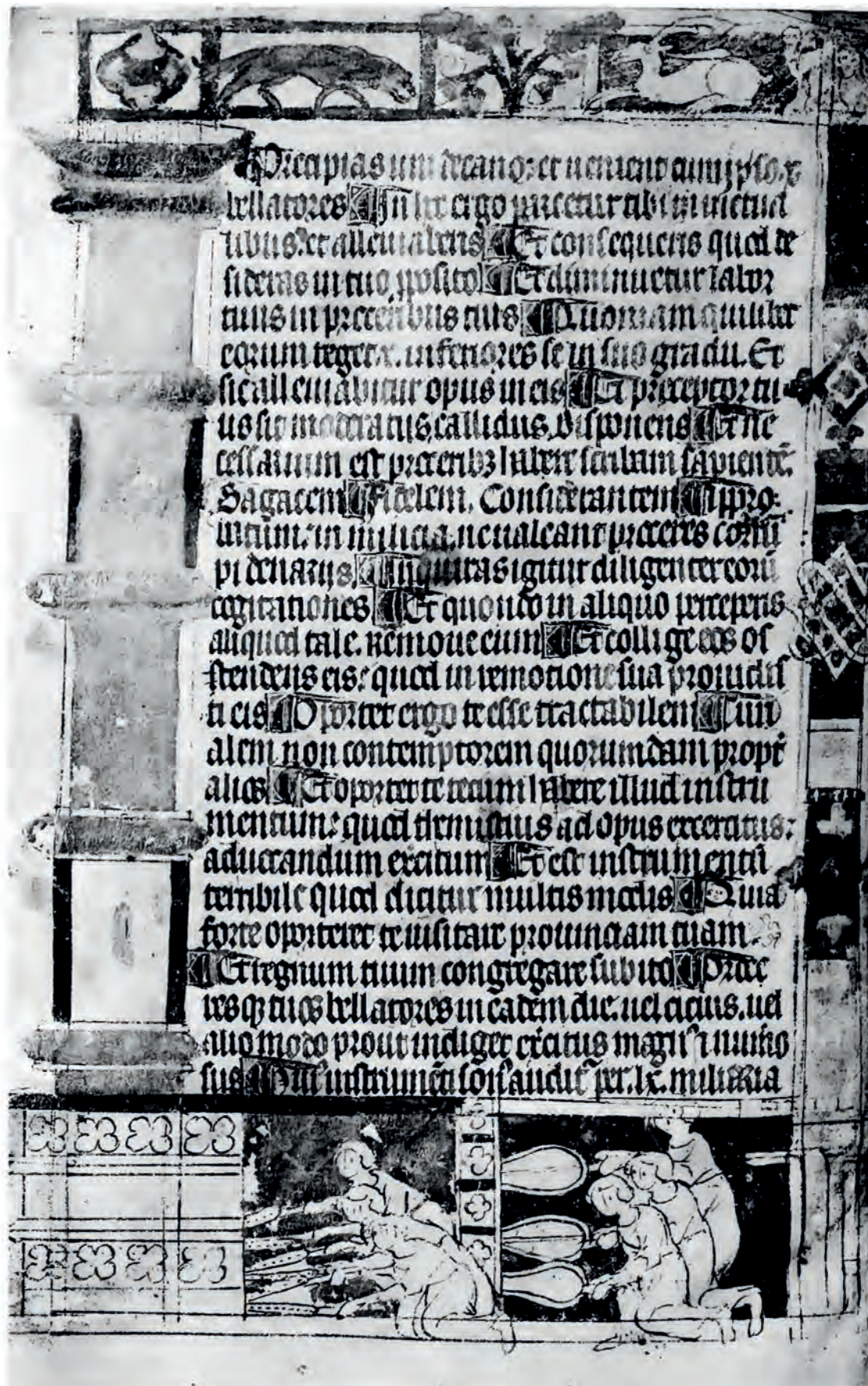


42. Vessels inside: top a and b) the Pisa Griffin (Photo: ISCR; drawing by Owen Wright); bottom: c and d) the Mari-Cha Lion (Photo: Anna Contadini; drawing by Kikar Singh, Museum of London)

be forced out through a reedpipe leading towards the mouth. The opening of the receptacle would have to be sealed around both pipes and the reed would have to be placed at the beginning of the sounding pipe to make the column of air vibrate. The longer the reedpipe, the lower the sound, hence the position of the vessel at the back of the belly. This hypothesis would also account for the fact that the vessel is not a perfect cast, as the inner receptacle would not require a perfect seal around it. In short, the two bronzes could have been part of the world of automata, big, sound-producing beasts placed in a palatial setting, either around a throne or perhaps in a garden. Richard Camber asked the organ builder Maurice Merrell to reconstruct a similar mechanism for us, and in a visit to his workshop Merrell confirmed that the sound hypothesis was highly likely, and gave us a demonstration with an air-pumping machine (nowadays actioned by electrical means) to which organ pipes of various sizes could be attached to produce different pitches according to length (see Merrell, Chapter 1.4) (Fig. 45). He agreed with my proposed reconstruction of the mechanism, but commented that it could have functioned with linked pipes and without a bag (Fig. 42b).

The investigations conducted in Pisa on the Griffin with the collaboration of Massimo Vidale and the Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione ed il Restauro of Rome, revealed that its internal vessel contained not only organic material (as reported in Galotta, Appendix 5.3), the result of

43. The Horn of Themistius.
Pseudo-Aristotle, *Secretum
Secretorum*, made by Walter
de Milimete for Edward III,
1326-1327. London, British
Library, Add 47680, fol.
42v (After James, *Walter de
Milimete*, 178)





44. Wall painting in the so-called Gothic Hall in Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome, between 1245 and 1251 (Photo: Courtesy of SSPSAE)

its centuries-long exposure to the elements, all contained within a terracotta inner vessel with precise grooving produced by turning that must have been integral to the casting process (Fig. 42a). It is difficult to interpret this other than as an internal seal supporting the function of the not well-cast metal vessel as a container for a bag forming part of the sound-producing mechanism.

In the Lion, in contrast, the vessel is better cast, without the breakages of the one in the Griffin, and consequently has a better-defined shape (one that resembles Apulian terracotta vases, as Richard Camber has pointed out – see Camber and Contadini, Chapter 1.5). It contains no terracotta “lining” and the interior was found to be clean, with no residues (Fig. 42c). Access is provided in both cases by a relatively large aperture in the belly, and on the Lion, but not on the Griffin, this contains a square recess into which a plate of some sort might have been fitted. It may, though, be the result of later manipulations.

Whatever the differences in chronology and, possibly, the location of the casting, the similarities in the decorative scheme and the common presence of an internal vessel point to a clear conceptual and functional relationship between the Griffin and Lion. One possibility,

45. Organ pipe with resonator connected to a bellows machine in Maurice Merrell's workshop
(Photo: Farouk Yahya)



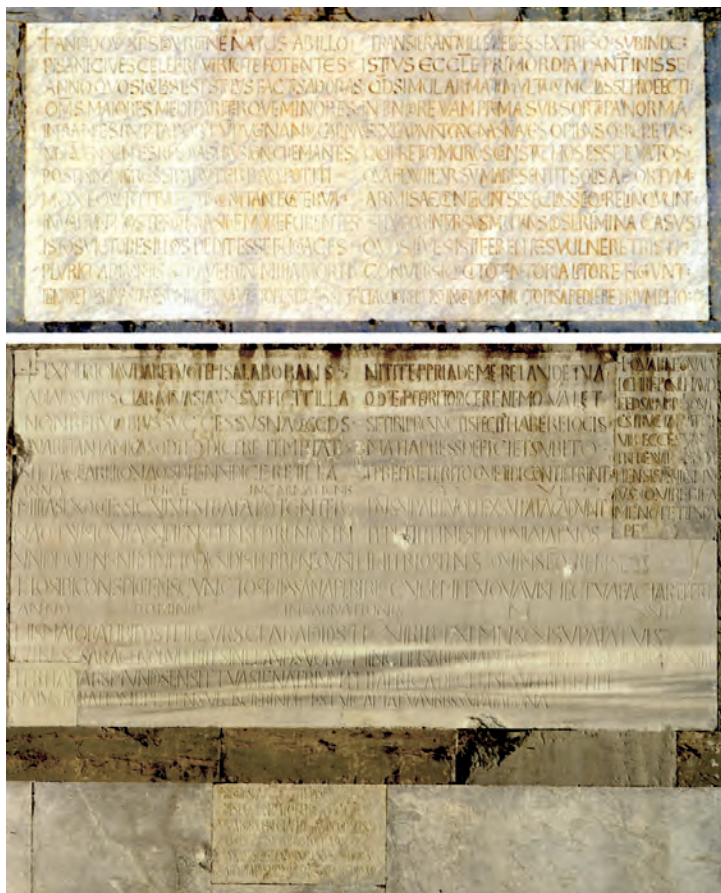
therefore, is that the Lion was commissioned for a rival court; another that it was intended to complement the Griffin, thus forming a pair – just as griffins and lions are often represented together in Medieval art, and just as, later, a griffin and lion constituting a pair were installed in Perugia, even having at a one stage a ceremonial role (Fig. 46).⁶⁶ Two likely hypotheses may be put forward for a setting in which the Griffin and Lion might originally have functioned, whether separately or together, one that they were part of a palace setting, flanking a throne, the other that they featured in a garden setting, perhaps alongside other animal pieces. As imposing sound-producing beasts, the first hypothesis has the attraction of Abbasid precedent and Byzantine parallels, and they would fit perfectly within the impressive palace ceremonies described by Andalusí historians (see Camber and Contadini, Chapter 1.5). In relation to the



46. Griffin and lion, thirteenth century. Perugia, Palazzo dei Priori, Sala del Consiglio Comunale (Photos: After Cuccini, *Il Grifo e il Leone Bronzei*, figs. 86 and 87)

second hypothesis these same historians also provide numerous accounts of animal figures in gardens, albeit usually ones from which water gushes forth. Although the Andalusí sources fail to make specific reference to sound-making automata in either context, we do have confirmation that the appropriate technology was known in Spain.

In relation to a Spanish provenance for the Griffin, now viewed as increasingly likely, the possible dates suggested in the past range from the late tenth to the early twelfth century. Migeon had proposed the eleventh century, while Monneret de Villard preferred the late eleventh to early twelfth century. Umberto Scerrato, however, suggests a date to the early eleventh century, the end of the Caliph period.⁶⁷ This was even pushed back a little further in the catalogue of the 1989 Berlin exhibition by Almut von Gladiss, who attributed the Griffin to the latter part of the Caliph period, late tenth- to beginning of the eleventh century,⁶⁸ whereas in 1992 Cynthia Robinson put forward the suggestion of an attribution to the Taifa period, dating it to the late eleventh century.⁶⁹ Such lack of unanimity is attributable to a lack of firm evidence: scholars have had to rely upon the traditional art-historical tool of stylistic comparison, fitting the results within a framework set by politics and warfare. Accordingly, with close analyses of the decoration and its technical aspects added to more general stylistic considerations, my own conclusion has been that a late eleventh- to early twelfth-century date is the most probable for the Griffin,⁷⁰ and this has now been supported by carbon dating by high-resolution spectrometry of two organic samples taken from the inside of the tips of the wings of the Griffin (see Calcagnile, Appendix 5.2). These have yielded four ranges of dating with a high level of probability (up to 95.4%) with the indicative mid points of 1085, 1100, 1115 and 1120.



47. Marble inscriptions on the façade of Pisa Cathedral (Photos: AFO)

captured during one of the battles won by the Pisans against the Arabs in Palermo, North Africa, Andalusia and the Balearic Islands. Such victories are recorded not only in literary accounts, such as the *Liber Maiorichinus*, the *Gesta triumphalia per Pisanos facta* and Maragone's *Annales*,⁷¹ but also on the marble plaques on the façade of the cathedral (Fig. 47) (see Garzella, Chapter 3.1). Their dates range from 1005 to 1115.

Such possibilities were to be reviewed in 1946 by Monneret de Villard in his brief but cogent study of both the Griffin and the marble Andalusian capital that was also placed on the roof of the cathedral (Fig. 48).⁷² He observed that the Griffin could have been traded, being brought by one of the numerous merchants who frequented Pisa, but concluded that it would be more logical to think of it as booty, for example from the sack of Palermo, or that of Almeria in 1089 or from the war of the Balearic Islands, and in particular Mallorca, in 1113-1115. Among these various Pisan raids he singles out that on the port of Almeria in 1089 as the most likely, regarding as significant the fact that Fath, the craftsman whose name appears on the capital, worked in Andalusia.⁷³ His proposed dating of the Griffin to the late eleventh or early twelfth century would not exclude the Pisan raid on Almeria in 1089, but it also accommodates the Balearic campaign of 1113-15, and the recent carbon dating makes 1089 less likely.

One likely prize of the 1113-15 campaign⁷⁴ is a funerary marble slab with an Arabic text in angular (or *kufic*) letters (Fig. 49), now in San Sisto in Pisa.⁷⁵ It was only fairly recently translated and correctly dated by José Barral, who pointed out that it is for al-Murtada ('Abdallah al-'Aziz ibn Aghlab, r. 468–486/1076–1094), Taifa prince of the Balearic Islands.⁷⁶ It would make perfect sense for the Griffin

Given the obscure history of the Lion prior to its sale at Christie's in 1993, the sudden appearance of such an imposing piece inevitably provoked speculation. How, if at all, was it related to the Griffin, and what might its origin be? The obvious similarities to the Griffin in dimensions and in the decorative repertoires pointed to a connection – later confirmed by the internal vessel – and by association to a likely Spanish provenance, while features of structure could be interpreted as related to Southern Italian statuary and hence a different environment. However, irrespective of where the casting was done, the lack of material that could be similarly analysed by high-resolution spectrometry means that for dating we have to rely on the broad framework provided by stylistic comparisons, which point to it being close in time to the Griffin but, given that was decorated in emulation of the Griffin, probably a little later.

Acquisition

Given the above date range, the Griffin was not allowed to fulfil its function for long before being uprooted and transplanted, for the hypothesis that, from Serri on, begins to be accepted during the nineteenth century is that it was booty

Next page:

48. Marble capital, Spain, Madinat al-Zahra', tenth century. Pisa, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo (Photo: © Opera della Primaziale Pisana)

49. The Arabic marble inscription in San Sisto Church (Photo: Gabriella Garzella)

and the capital, as Scalia has hypothesized,⁷⁷ and even the Lion too, to have formed part of the booty from this raid along with the slab. Whether the metal tray that is also part of the Cathedral's objects, and now in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, was part of one of these booties is not known and more research is needed (Fig. 50).⁷⁸

Further evidence is provided by near contemporary sources such as the chronicle by Bernardo Maragone.⁷⁹ Here we find various accounts of Pisan naval expeditions, and I would like to draw attention to two. One relates to a campaign conducted jointly with the Genoese against the African coast in 1087. It involved raids upon Mahdiyya and Zawila in Tunisia, from which they seized rich booty, and it has been suggested that it could have included the Griffin, which would consequently be an eleventh-century Fatimid work.⁸⁰ Part of the argument concerns Maragone's reference to *aeramentorum* among the booty, but this does not necessarily refer to large pieces of bronze, and it is in any case only one of three possible readings, for other compilations of Maragone's text have *ornamentorum*, which can be translated as "pieces of jewellery", and *ferramentorum*, which can be translated as "arms".⁸¹

The other relates to the more likely source, the Balearic conquest of 1115, which is also referred to on the façade of the Cathedral. For this we have two important accounts, one in the *Liber Maiorichinus*, written by a prelate of the Pisa cathedral called Enrico who himself participated in the expedition,⁸² and the other, which is the one that Maragone bases his account on, is in the anonymous *Gesta triumphalia per Pisanos facta*, whose author might similarly have been part of the Pisan church and a direct witness of the assault.⁸³ Both highlight the richness and magnificence of the Balearic booty, described in some detail, and, interestingly, also talk about the division of the spoils, with the best and most precious objects being reserved for Pisa Cathedral. This is the passage from the *Gesta triumphalia*:

Destructo itaque cassaro, omnique Maiorice munitione in ruinam data, Pisani cives campum faciunt et destructe urbis grandia et innumera spolia inter se dividunt, preordinatis et constitutes ecclesie Pisane maximis et pretiosis muneribus in palliis et vestibus et vasis argenteis et eburneis quampluribus atque cristallinis, adiunctis super h[a]ec regalium ornamentorum insignibus. His itaque peractis omnibus, Pisani cives et totus exercitus captis spoliis naves onerant et in eas intrantes cum omni prosperitate ad sua loca remeant.

With the citadel destroyed and all the fortifications of Mallorca reduced to rubble, the Pisans make camp and divide among themselves the great and countless items of booty, it having been agreed that the



50. Metal tray once used in the sacristy of Pisa Cathedral, but that was probably originally placed underneath a lamp. Egypt (?), fourteenth century (?), Pisa, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo (After Burrese and Caleca, *Arte Islamica*, fig. on 79)



grandest and most valuable items should be presented to the Pisan Cathedral. These consisted of fabrics, vestments and numerous silver, ivory and crystal vessels, added to which were the accoutrements of royal insignia. With all this once done, the Pisans and the whole army load the captured spoil aboard their ships, embark, and return home with great riches.⁸⁴

We thus have useful mention of various generic categories in this passage but none of individual objects, so that although its failure to refer specifically to the Griffin or the capital is not decisive, we are in the end left with only circumstantial evidence, however persuasive. For the identification of specific items we have to await later and unfortunately unreliable sources such as the fourteenth-century *Cronaca di Pisa* by Ranieri Sardo, a Pisan merchant and judge, which states that in the year 1116 (=1115) the Pisans took wooden doors and columns from Mallorca;⁸⁵ the doors, according to Sardo, were installed on the façade of Pisa cathedral, on the left side of the main entrance, and a small column on top of the main entrance, while two further beautiful columns were given by the Pisans to Florence as a reward. However, the *Cronaca di Pisa* is not to be trusted for the period in question,⁸⁶ and its account of the doors and columns is probably an invention similar to others that surface in the late fourteenth century,⁸⁷ so that, again, no weight attaches to the absence of any mention of the Griffin.

For the Lion, likewise, there is no specific reference in the historical literature. If we wish to entertain the attractive assumption that they formed a pair and were installed in the same location it would be reasonable to hypothesize that the Lion also was booty from the same raid but, not being kept in the public realm, simply disappeared from sight until recently. If, however, they were not made as a pair, as is likely, but separately, any number of hypotheses might be concocted to explain its change(s) of location.

Translocation and Transculturation

How was the Griffin perceived by its captors? Most obviously, it might have been put on top of the cathedral as a victory trophy to mark the power of the maritime republic of Pisa (Fig. 51). But one may also take into consideration its agency: it looks down upon the



homogeneous mixture of classical and medieval elements within the precincts of the Church but, as a large bronze with great material value, also forms part of the whole, providing a connection with the famous Bonanno bronze doors and other bronzes around the Piazza dei Miracoli.⁸⁸ Further, it could have been seen as analogous to the bronze statues that survived in Rome and were appropriated during the Middle Ages as signifiers of the imperial past, as expressions, indeed, of neo-Roman imperial pretensions.⁸⁹

It is also fruitful to consider the association with royalty that griffins share with lions, one of considerable antiquity in the Near and Middle East. The arts of the medieval Mediterranean are full of representations of griffins and lions, and it seems that griffins were used and understood as royal symbols in a secular environment. In the religious sphere, on the other hand, they were used and understood as apotropaic symbols, so that the Griffin might have been thought to have value as a guardian figure positioned over a most holy area of the cathedral. The double nature of the Griffin, combining lion and bird, is reinforced by the animals designed on the shields-like medallions in the transition area of its legs and body, which are also lions and birds (Fig. 52). In a Christian context, this double nature could be thought of as referring to earth and sky, and by extension to the double nature of Christ, and its recipients may have entertained such an analogical understanding before installing it on the roof.

51. Location of the Pisan cross (left), Pisa Griffin (middle) and (once) Andalusian marble capital (right) on the roof of the Pisa Cathedral (Photo: © Lawrence Jones, 2012; after <http://lawrencejonesphotography.com/galleries/italy/pisa-duomo/index.html>)

52. Details of lion and bird on the shield-shaped panels on the Griffin
(Photos: CNR, Pisa)



When the Griffin arrived in Pisa it acquired new sounding properties, for when the wind blew through its open belly it emitted eerie sounds amplified by the resonance of its interior,⁹⁰ giving it the symbolic attributes of a terrifying guardian. I was fascinated to read the descriptions given by al-Hamadani, tenth century, and Yaqut, twelfth century, of the imposing (but sadly no longer extant) Ghumdan palace in San‘a’: “on each of its corners a statue was set, of yellow bronze (?) of the biggest size of lions there is. When the wind blew in the direction of one of these statues it would go through its posterior and come out through the mouth and make the sound of a wild beast roaring”.⁹¹ The architectural parallelism with the Griffin is striking.

The above attributions of meaning are culturally founded, but remain, in the absence of documentary confirmation, assumptions. That the Griffin was probably war booty may soon have been forgotten, but even if memory of its origin persisted there is nothing to indicate that it retained the semantic value of the victory of Christianity over Islam.⁹² It is, in fact, not until the early nineteenth century that we encounter specific references to how the Griffin was perceived, and they include a Christological hermeneutic approach, exploring the notion that given its dual nature, of lion and eagle, the Griffin is a symbol of Christ. It is Sebastiano Ciampi who, in 1812, in a long review of Da Morrona’s *Pisa illustrata nelle arti del disegno*, first refers to this Christological symbolism, at the same time reminding the reader that the dual nature of griffins had already been commented upon by classical authors, for whom, however, the combination of two animals lies within the realm of “mythical” beasts.⁹³ A year later, though, a decidedly more prosaic view is put forward by Cicognara, who states that rather than having any particular symbolic significance, the Griffin may have been placed on the roof of the Cathedral simply as a precious ornament.⁹⁴

If such scholarly comments seek to interpret reception in the past, from current post-colonial and post-Orientalist perspectives both beasts have acquired a quite different symbolic value. The art-historical literature surrounding the Griffin, from its beginnings in the nineteenth century, was dominated by the standard obsession with taxonomy, with stylistic groupings and issues of provenance, but more recently it has gradually become integrated into the intercultural discourse on art and cultural exchanges between East and West, with an emphasis on the Mediterranean.⁹⁵ The Griffin and Lion thus now stand as representatives of the Mediterranean world

of cultural exchanges and of changing balances of power, and as tokens of the attempts to encapsulate its cross currents in scholarly discourse and museum exhibitions.

Conclusion

Such cross currents are, indeed, encapsulated in their dramatic translocations, modern as well as mediaeval. The Griffin is an Islamic artifact, captured, mounted on a Christian cathedral and eventually placed in a related and still not culturally neutral environment of a museum, whence it has been occasionally loaned out to the international exhibition circuit; the Lion, equally an artifact coming into European ownership, has latterly been conveyed by the art market to the Arab world, even if at the other extreme to Spain.⁹⁶ But the two were also brought together, temporarily, in an exhibition to mark the opening of the new Museum of Islamic Art in Doha in 2008, where I could finally see, facing one another, the two beasts that I had had to study for so long separately. The juxtaposition allowed the onlooker not just to be duly impressed but also to reflect upon the implications of their complex histories (Fig. 55).⁹⁷

The nostalgic resonance they so powerfully embody can also be seen as a motivating factor behind the creation by the Egyptian artist Moataz Nasr of a larger than life-size replica of the Griffin in leather (Fig. 53).⁹⁸ It was the subject of an exhibition in 2013 which also made use of videos of the Pisa Griffin.⁹⁹ The choice of material relates to the traditional craft production of leather in Tuscany, thereby establishing a link with the current location of the Griffin. Further, as the Tuscan leather industry has historically employed immigrants from many parts of the world, the material provides a further trans-Mediterranean reference that chimes with the trans-Mediterranean attributes of the Pisa Griffin.

Wherever they are housed, separately or together, the Griffin and Lion remain both symbolically potent and aesthetically powerful – and also enigmatic, given the uncertainties that still surround their origins and early histories. Among the various hypotheses that have been proposed for them both, I consider the most likely one for the Griffin that it was made in Andalusia during the late eleventh – early twelfth century, and more specifically between 1085 and 1110 (based on carbon dating as discussed above), before being captured by the Pisans in 1114/5 from Mallorca. Although we do not have Spanish bronzes comparable to it in size and complexity (but then this is true for the whole of medieval metalwork production in the Islamicate world: the Griffin and Lion are exceptional), we do have a centuries-old tradition



53. Leather Griffin. Moataz Nasr, *The Return of the Griffin*, 2013
(Photo: Ela Bialkowska, OKNO Studio)

54. Bronze doors and detail of the Mausoleo Di Boemondo in Canosa, Bari, twelfth century (After Gabrieli and Scerrato, *Gli Arabi*, nos. 337 and 338)



of metalwork, including bronze pieces, being produced in Andalusia, many of them zoomorphic. The decoration of the Griffin was done in Spain and is contemporary to its manufacture, and the internal vessel was most likely part of the original concept (even in the possibility of it being inserted in the belly after the casting). It was Pisan booty, most probably from the 1114 campaign against Mallorca, which was at its peak at the time and had become wealthy and powerful. It was to be expected that such a splendid and amazing piece would be reserved for the Cathedral, and as an imposing bronze that could be associated with others in the Piazza dei Miracoli it complemented the overall conception of *romanitas* that the Pisans intended to give to the Piazza. Given its symbolic value as a dual animal representing the dual nature of Christ, and also being invested with apotropaic value, the Griffin was assigned to the most important project of medieval Pisa, the Cathedral, and placed on top of the apsidal area to guard its most sacred part.

For the Lion matters are not quite as clear. Considered in isolation, it seems most likely that it was cast either in Spain (there is enough supporting comparative evidence) or in Southern Italy (as argued by analogy with Romanesque sculpture), and during the same period as the Griffin. The decoration was done in emulation of that of the Griffin, either at the same time as its casting or somewhat later. The artists involved could have been Andalusian, but were not those who decorated the Griffin, although possibly belonging to the same workshop, and as well as Spain the work could have been carried out in Southern Italy: there are surviving examples of Southern Italian work that include Arabic (or pseudo-Arabic) inscriptions, such as those on the bronze doors of the Mausoleo Di Boemondo in Canosa, Bari (Fig. 54), which, according to a recent suggestion, are the word *yumn* (good fortune), repeated.¹⁰⁰

But by whom were they commissioned? If they were not a pair from the beginning, designed to function together, was the Lion an addition designed to complement the Griffin, or was it meant to emulate and compete with the Griffin? If it is assumed that the Griffin and Lion came

together and that the Lion was not made in Spain, under what conditions might this have happened? As evidence shrinks the possibilities proliferate, to be tempered only by their degrees of plausibility. The appealing notion that the two were commissioned as a pair runs up against the problems posed by metallurgical and casting differences and by the variable execution of the decoration. Accepting that the Lion was decorated at a later stage, the similarities in design imply that the artists must have been familiar with the Griffin or at least with the workshop tradition of those that decorated it, probably, indeed, belonging to it. As craftsmen were frequently itinerant such familiarity does not necessarily imply physical proximity, thus allowing the interpretation that the two were cast in geographically distant locations.

There are difficulties attending each hypothesis, to which may be added the further complication of the identity of function. The concept of acoustic automata and the associated technologies were widely known, and could certainly have inspired unrelated pieces made at a geographical distance, but the similarity in size and, above all, the identical presence of an internal vase and the technological parallelism that it implies, must surely mean that there is a significant even if not definitively explained connection between the two. We can at least say that the decoration of the Lion was done in full awareness of that of the Griffin, and that, even if not cast in the same foundry, it was designed as a complementary or competing creation to fulfil the same function.

There are, evidently, various questions relating to the origins and subsequent fortunes of these two enigmatic beasts where certainty still eludes us. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that significant advances have been made, and for these we are indebted to the generous support given for a project that has enabled us to discuss these questions in a more informed way and, especially, to study both bronzes in greater detail and complement art-historical approaches with various revelatory scientific techniques of analysis.



55. The Pisa Griffin and the Mari-Cha Lion displayed opposite each other in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha in 2008 (Photo: Museum of Islamic Art, Doha)

APPENDIX

Islamic metalwork studied in Spanish collections

The following is a list of Islamic metalwork studied in collections in Spain: the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, the Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba, the Museo Arqueológico de Madinat al-Zahra' and the Museo de la Alhambra in Granada.

The pieces examined are of different types, sizes and uses, most of them bronze, or copper alloy, and some brass (but metallurgical analyses for many of them are still lacking). The objective of our research was to see whether this representative and comprehensive range of metalwork would provide a more precise context into which the Griffin and Lion could be placed. Research on Iranian and Fatimid production demonstrates different stylistic approaches and different decorative technologies, which help confirm that this corpus is of Andalusian production.

A major finding was the discovery on some objects of impressions made by exactly the same “five-dot punch” instrument used on the Griffin and the Lion. This helps us to relate the decoration of the Griffin and Lion to a Spanish environment or Spanish-related workshops or craftsmen. These objects date from the late eleventh and the early twelfth century, and similar tools, but of a different size, were found to have been used on other objects of similar dating. In addition, there are resemblances between the decorations they help form, thus demonstrating a degree of coherence in decorative style among Spanish-related objects of this period. Research carried out on objects from earlier and later periods revealed no similar impressions, thereby confirming the period-span of the use of that particular tool and, consequently, the period-span date of the Griffin and the Lion.

At the same time, study of both earlier and later objects helped us contextualize the Griffin and the Lion and other similarly decorated pieces within the broader production of metalwork in Andalusia, and particularly Cordoba, over at least two centuries, from the tenth to the twelfth. This allowed us to revise the idea of a low level or even an absence of metalwork production in Spain over that period, and recognize that in fact production continued from the Caliphal period, usually considered the high point of artistic production, into the Taifa period and beyond.

The list below details the objects investigated.

Section A lists objects marked by exactly the same “five-dot punch” used on the Griffin and Lion;

Section B lists objects on which variations of the “five-dot punch” were used;

Section C lists earlier and later material that show the absence of the “five-dot punch”, therefore confirming the date span when this particular tool was used.

Also, this material provides context for metalwork production in Andalusia, and in particular Cordoba, over a longer period than hitherto considered, a period of two centuries, from the tenth to the twelfth.

All readings are mine unless otherwise specified.

Specification of leaded gunmetal material follows Marc Gener and Ignacio Montero's Chapter 2.6.

A. Objects marked by the “five-dot punch” used on the Griffin and Lion

1. Ewer with lion spout

Spain, eleventh century

Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 1966/10/1

Leaded gunmetal. Maximum diameter: 12.1 cm; Diameter of the base: 11.4 cm; Diameter of the mouth: 6.9 cm; Maximum width: 21.5 cm; Maximum height: 27.2 cm

Decoration:

Under the handle: eagle with spread wings looking to the left; flower with six pointed petals; lion looking back; lion moving left looking forward; hare moving left looking back; hare moving left looking forward; eagle with spread wings looking left; eagle; eagle.

On the body: peacock, lion.

This ewer presents the “five-dot punch” decorating instrument that one finds on the Griffin and Lion, in exactly the same size: 3mm x 1mm.

Inscriptions:

Left of the handle: *Baraka wa yumn wa* and *wa sa'āda wa 'āliya ('āfiya?)*

On the front, in a small section under the spout: *Baraka min Allāh wa yumn*



(Photo: Miguel Angel Otero. CER.es, MECD)

2. The Montefrío lamp

Spain, Almoravid, 1076-1125

Found in Montefrío, Granada

Granada, Museo de la Alhambra, inv. no. 002828

Bronze. Height: 10.9 cm; Length: 16 cm. This lamp presents the “five-dot punch” decorating instrument that one finds on the Griffin and Lion, in exactly the same size: 3mm x 1mm.

Inscriptions:

On spout: *Baraka kā / kāmila*

The script is identical to that on the Griffin.



(Photo: Mirco Bassi)

3. Lamp from Jimena de la Frontera

Spain, late eleventh century - first half of twelfth century

Found in Jimena de la Frontera (Cádiz)

Granada, Museo de la Alhambra, inv. no. 002827

Bronze. Height: 10.3 cm; Length: 16.5 cm. This lamp presents the “five-dot punch” decorating instrument that one finds on the Griffin and Lion, in exactly the same size: 3mm x 1mm.

Inscriptions:

On the body: *Baraka kāmila*

Around the foot: *Baraka kāmila*

The epigraphy is identical to that on the Griffin.



(Photo: Mirco Bassi)

B. Objects marked by a similar dotted punch**4. Globular fitting for a lamp**

Spain, early twelfth century

Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 1925/35/2

Leaded gunmetal. Height: 9.5 cm; Diameter: 12 cm

Decoration:

The decorating tool used here has a rectangle of the same size as that used on the Griffin (3mm x 1mm), but the circles inside are bigger, and number only three (instead of five).

Inscriptions:

Baraka repeated.

The script is similar to the one on the Griffin.

(Photo: Ángel Martínez Levas. CER.es, MECD)

5. Brazier

Spain, Almohad(?), c. 1144-1212

Found in Plaza de Chirinos, Cordoba

Cordoba, Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba inv. no. DO000092/2

Brass. Height: 25 cm; Width: 32 cm.

Decoration:

The tool has the same dimensions (3x1 mm) as that used on the Griffin. However the circles are slightly bigger, and there are four (instead of five).

Inscriptions:

Lower band: *Baraka kāmila*

Cartouche in lower band: *'āfiya dā'ima wa ni'ma*

Middle band: *Barakat al-ḥamīd li-mālikihī* (The blessing of the Exalted One on its possessor) (reading by Rafael Azuar Ruíz, "Brazier," in Dodds, *Al-Andalus*, 274-275, cat. 56)

(Photo: Álvaro Holgado Manzanares. CER.es, MECD)

6. Brazier

Spain, Almohad(?), c. 1144-1212.

Found in Plaza de Chirinos, Cordoba

Cordoba, Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba, inv. no. DO000092/1

Brass. Height: 25 cm; Maximum width: 42.5 cm in the interior and 46.5 cm in the exterior

Decoration:

The tool has the same width (1 mm) as that used on the Griffin but the circles are much smaller, and higher in number, probably amounting to ten. The surface is badly worn, and therefore it is difficult to count the number of circles precisely.

Inscription:

Worn down and difficult to read but it seems to belong to the benedictory and augural types.

(Photo: Mirco Bassi)



7. Perfume burner

Spain, Almohad(?), c. 1144-1212

Found in Plaza de Chirinos, Cordoba

Cordoba, Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba inv. no. DO000092/6

Brass. Height: 13.7 cm; Diameter: 10 cm

Decoration:

The tool has the same width (1 mm) as that used on the Griffin but the circles are much smaller, and higher in number, probably amounting to ten. The surface is badly worn, and therefore it is difficult to count the number of circles precisely.

Inscriptions:

The inscription is badly worn but it seems to belong to the benedictory and augural types. The script alternates between *kufic* and *naskh*.

(Photo: Mirco Bassi)



8. Lampstand

Spain, twelfth century

From Cordoba

Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 62329

Bronze. Height: 14 cm; Diameter of base: 11.9 cm; Diameter at top: 5.7 cm.

A lantern (inv. no. 50825) has been placed on top of this object, but it is doubtful that they originally belonged together.

Decoration:

The tool used on the Griffin is not present here, but there are bigger dots “scattered” in the background, pointing to a similar approach to decoration.

Inscriptions:

Baraka repeated.

Although not the same as that on the Griffin, the style of the inscription could be considered as belonging to the same “family”.

(Photo: Mirco Bassi)



9. Razor

Spain, twelfth century

From Campiña Baja, Cordoba

Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 50868

Steel, brass, iron. Maximum height: 5.7 cm; Maximum length: 17.7 cm; Maximum thickness: 0.3 cm

Decoration:

Like the lampstand (no. 8), there are bigger dots “scattered” in the background.

Inscriptions:

Baraka min Allāh, and on the other side *li-ṣāhibihi*

The style of the inscription is similar to that on the Griffin and the globular fitting (no. 4).

(Photo: Ángel Martínez Levas. CER.es, MECD)



C. Other objects**10. Deer**

Madinat al-Zahra', second half of the tenth century
 From the Monasterio San Jerónimo de Valparaiso, Cordoba
 Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba, inv. no. CE000500
 Bronze. Height: 61.6 cm

(Photo: Manuel Pijuán)

**11. Hind**

Cordoba, second half of the tenth century
 Found in Cordoba
 Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 1943/41/1
 Leaded gunmetal. Height: 32.3 cm; Length: 31.5 cm; Width: 10 cm

(Photo: Ángel Martínez Levas. CER.es, MECD)

**12. Lamp**

Spain, dated by inscription to 962
 Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 50857.
 Leaded gunmetal. Height: 8.9 cm; Length: 2 cm; Width: 9 cm

Inscription:

Opus Salomonis Era T

(Photo: Patricia Elena Suárez. CER.es, MECD)

**13. Casket**

Spain, twelfth century
 Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 51051
 Brass. Maximum height: 15.5 cm; Length: 36 cm; Width: 10.7 cm.

(Photo: Ángel Martínez Levas. CER.es, MECD)

**14. Perfume burner**

Spain, twelfth century
 From Cementerio de Ntra. Sra. de la Salud, Cordoba.
 Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba, inv. no. CE030146a
 Bronze. Maximum height: 14.7 cm; Maximum length: 24 cm; Maximum diameter: 13.2 cm

(Photo: Silvia Maroto Romero. CER.es, MECD)

15. Incense burner

Spain, twelfth century

Granada, Museo de la Alhambra, inv. no. 003805

Brass. Height: 15.5 cm; Diameter: 8.8 cm

Inscription:

Baraka kāmila wa ghibṭa wa ‘izz. Baraka kāmila wa ‘izz. Baraka.

(Photo: CER.es, MECD)

**16. Aquamanile in the form of a dove**

Spain, eleventh - twelfth century?

Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 2005/72/1

Leaded gunmetal. Maximum height: 20.3 cm; Maximum length: 27.4 cm; Maximum width: 8.4 cm

Inscription:

HOLOCAVS EST.ET.OBI / SUAVES.ODORES.DOMI (He was sacrificed and died / The odours of the Lord are sweet).

(Photo: Mirco Bassi)

**17. Bucket**

Spain, Nasrid, fourteenth century

From La Alhambra, Granada

Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 50888

Leaded gunmetal. Height (body): 16.3 cm; Maximum height: 31.2; cm; Diameter (base): 9.9 cm; Diameter (rim): 20 cm

Inscription:

On the body: *Al-yumn wa al-iqbāl* (Good fortune and prosperity); *wa bulūgh al-āmāl* (and the fulfillment of all desires)

On the rim: *Al-ghibṭa muttaṣila* (Continued happiness) repeated

(Photo: Anna Contadini)



Notes

- 1 The Griffin is 107 cm high to the top of the ear, 90 cm long and has a maximum width of 46 cm measured at the base of the wings, while the Lion is 45 cm high and 73 cm long.
- 2 Christie's 1993, 124-27, lot 293; Anna Contadini, "Il grifone di Pisa," in *Eredità dell'Islam. Arte islamica in Italia*, exh. cat., Venice, Palazzo Ducale, 30 October 1993 - 30 April 1994, ed. Giovanni Curatola (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 1993), 126-131 and figs. 43a and b.
- 3 Archivio dell'Opera della Primaziale, Busta 143, no. 116 (Carlo Lasinio, *Inventario del Campo Santo Insigne di Pisa dall'anno 1810 al 1831*, ms., 1831, Archivio dell'Opera della Primaziale, Busta 143).
- 4 For the Griffin and its cement copy see Antonio Milone, "Grifone," in *I Marmi di Lasinio: La collezione di sculture medievali e moderne nel Camposanto di Pisa*, ed. Clara Baracchini (Florence: S.P.E.S., 1993), 143-44; and "Scheda 1864," "Scheda 489," in *Il Duomo di Pisa*, ed. Adriano Peroni (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1997), vol. 3, 612-3 and 402-3 respectively, the latter on the cement copy. G. Tedeschi Grisanti conducted a detailed study on the present column and ionic capital on the roof, and discovered the inscription with the date 1934 ("Note sul grifone del Duomo di Pisa," *Bollettino Storico Pisano*, LXV (1996): 189-193). Tedeschi Grisanti also mentions that the protruding metal rod visible in the middle of the capital, between the legs of the Griffin, was to support the metal cross erected there between 1828, when the Griffin was taken down, and 1934, when the copy was mounted.
- 5 Anna Contadini, Richard Camber, and Peter Northover, "Beasts That Roared: The Pisa Griffin and the New York Lion," in *Cairo to Kabul: Afghan and Islamic Studies Presented to Ralph Pinder-Wilson*, ed. Warwick Bell and Leonard Harrow (London: Melisende, 2002), 65-83, at 66 and pl. 6.5.
- 6 Archivio Storico Diocesano di Pisa, Archivio Capitolare, ms. C 152; Paolo Tronci, *Descrizione delle chiese, monasteri e oratori della città di Pisa*, ca. 1643.
- 7 Bacci, in Tronci, *Il Duomo di Pisa*, ed. P. Bacci (Pisa: Tip. F. Mariotti, 1922), states that under the year 1210 (although the episode is documented as happened in 1109) Tronci has a drawing of a monstrous figure with two legs and two wings called *serpente* which is reported to have been killed by a certain Nino Orlando in the Migliarino woods. From it, a bronze statue was made (i.e. the Griffin). However, the extant manuscript of *Descrizione delle chiese, monasteri e oratori* contains neither the drawing nor the story: they must have been added in the manuscript, now lost, consulted by Bacci.
- 8 The inventory of the Archivio di Stato of Pisa, Busta 86-109, fascicolo 93, c 3, lists a single-leaf drawing, dated 1756, stated to be a *vero e fedele disegno [...] come appare nel Libro delle Storie del Capitolo dei Canonici a c. 26*. The drawing no longer appears to be there, although it was published in Mario Noferi, *Il castello di Santa Maria a Vecchiano* (Pisa: Felici, 2009), 22, together with the claim, from an anonymous source, Archivio di Stato di Lucca, cod. 54, that the beast was embalmed and put in the "soffitta" of the Duomo. There is no mention of the serpent story in the early Pisan chronicles of Maragone and Sardo. I am grateful to Gabriella Garzella for this information.
- 9 The document is in the Archivio dell'Opera della Primaziale, *Primaziale/ Ricordanze*, years 1543 to 1552, fol. 106v. See Contadini, "Beasts That Roared," 66. Tanfani Centofanti, *Notizie di artisti tratte dai documenti pisani* (Pisa: Enrico Spoerri Editore, 1898), 469 also reports that: *Delle molte opere di minore importanza che egli [Stagio Stagi] eseguì in quell'anno [=1543] e nei successivi ricorderò soltanto [...] un capitello sulla tribuna della primaziale per collocarvi il grifone di bronzo [...]*. See also detailed discussion in Tedeschi Grisanti, "Note sul grifone," 192-3.
- 10 Raffaello Roncioni, *Delle Istorie pisane libri XVI di Raffaello Roncioni*, ed. Francesco Bonaini, Archivio Storico Italiano VI, part 1 (Florence: Pietro Viesusseux, 1844), 114: *fu collocato dai Pisani per magnifico ornato del loro Tempio un Ip-pogrifo di bronzo tutto intagliato a lettere Egiziache*.
- 11 Erik Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
- 12 Sebastiano Ciampi, *Osservazioni sopra l'opera del sig. Alessandro Da Morrona che ha per titolo Pisa Illustrata nelle Arti del Disegno* (Pisa: Presso Ranieri Prospero, 1812), 58-68: 58-9.
- 13 Giuseppe Martini, *Theatrum Basilicae Pisanae* (Rome: De Rubeis, 1705), nos. 10, 13, figs. 4, 5 and 7. Notwithstanding its shape and four legs, Martini suggests that it may be an Eagle, one of the four animals of the Apocalypse. See also Valerio Ascani, "Prede - reliquie - memorie d'Oltremare e la loro ricezione nella Toscana romanica," in *Medioevo mediterraneo: l'Occidente, Bisanzio e l'Islam, atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Parma 21-25 Settembre 2004*, a cura di Arturo Carlo Quintavalle. (I convegni di Parma, 7. Milano: Electa, 2007), 639-647, 637 ff.
- 14 Alessandro Da Morrona, *Pisa illustrata nelle arti del disegno*, 2 vols. (Pisa: Francesco Pieraccini, 1787-93; second edition Livorno: Presso Giovanni Marenigh, 1812), I, 190-5.
- 15 One of the many legends about Roman Pisa, according to Gabriella Garzella it is probably to be linked to a highly visible fragmentary inscription on a wall of the cathedral containing the name Hadrian. See Bacci (in Tronci, *Il Duomo di Pisa*, 2, note 3).
- 16 Gustavo Cuccini, *Il Grifo e il Leone Bronzei di Perugia* (Perugia: Guerra Edizioni, 1994).
- 17 For a Sasanian example, see Jessica Rawson, ed., *Animals in Art* (London: British Museum, 1977), fig. 109.
- 18 Ciampi, *Osservazioni*, 66-68.
- 19 L. Cicognara, *Storia della scultura*, 3 vols. (Venice: Picotti, 1813-1818; 2nd ed. Prato: Giachetti, 1823-5).
- 20 Lasinio, *Inventario*.
- 21 Pietro Serri, *Nuova Guida per La Città di Pisa* (Pisa: Ranieri Prospero, 1833), 153: *... lavoro Arabo, forse trasportato dai Pisani nella loro città dopo il conquisto delle Isole Balearidi*.
- 22 Ugo Monneret de Villard, "Le chapiteau arabe de la cathédrale de Pise," *Comptes-rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 90, no. 1 (1946): 17-23.

- 23 D. Valeriani, "Notizia d'una iscrizione araba," *Antologia. Giornale di Scienze, Lettere e Arti* 35, no. 105 (1829): 142.
- 24 Jean-Joseph Marcel, "Sur un monument conservé à Pise," *Journal Asiatique* IIIe série, 7 (1839): 81–88.
- 25 Georges Rohault de Fleury, *Les monuments de Pise au moyen âge* (Paris: A. Morel, 1866), 42 and 122–124, pl. XLVI.
- 26 Serri, *Nuova Guida*, 154. Lanci's translation of the inscription had already been published in Valeriani, "Notizia." Lanci himself only published it, with amendments, in 1845–46 (Michelangelo Lanci, *Trattato delle simboliche rappresentanze arabiche e della varia generazione de' musulmani caratteri sopra differenti materie operati*, 3 vols. (Paris: Dondey-Dupré, 1845–46), vol. II, 54–58, pl. XXVII).
- 27 Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Le griffon iranien de Pise: matériaux pour un corpus de l'argenterie et du bronze iraniens, III," *Kunst des Orients* 5 (1968): 68–86.
- 28 Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Greif," in *Die Kunst des Islam*, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte, vol. IV, ed. Janine Sourdel-Thomine and Berthold Spuler (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1973), 263.
- 29 Anna Contadini, "Volando sopra il Mediterraneo: il Grifone di Pisa e aspetti della metallistica Islamica medievale," in *Genova, una Capitale del Mediterraneo tra Bisanzio e il Mondo Islamico. Storia, Arte e Architettura*, ed. Alireza Naser (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2016), 75–88, figs. 17a and b.
- 30 Almut von Gladiss, "Greifenfigur," in *Europa und der Orient 800–1900*, ed. Gereon Sievernich and Hendrik Budde (Berlin: Berliner Festspiele, Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1989), 592–3, no. 4/83.
- 31 Cynthia Robinson, "Pisa Griffin," in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, exh. cat., edited by Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Madrid: Viso, 1992), 216–218, cat. 15.
- 32 Museo Arqueológico de Córdoba, inv. no. CE000500. See Cynthia Robinson, "Córdoba Stag," in Dodds, *Al-Andalus*, 210–211, cat. 10; Sophie Makariou, "Bouches de fontaine en form de cerf," in *Les Andalousies de Damas à Cordoue*, eds. Martha Bernus-Taylor and Éric Del-
- pont, exh. cat. (Paris: Hazan, Institut du monde arabe, 2000), 114, cat. 90.
- 33 Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. OA7883. See Claire Déléry, "Monzón Lion," in *Islamic Art at the Musée du Louvre*, ed. Sophie Makariou (Paris: Hazan, 2012), 184–186 and Delery, Chapter 4.3 in this volume.
- 34 Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, inv. no. 63c. See Anna Contadini, "Quadrupede in Bronzo," in Curatola, *Eredità dell'Islam*, 124–125, cat. 41.
- 35 Naples, Museo di Capodimonte, inv. no. A.M. 138798. See Francesco Gabrieli and Umberto Scerrato, *Gli Arabi in Italia: Cultura, costumi, e tradizioni* (Milan: Garzanti-Schewiller, 1979), no. 383. Munich, Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, inv. no. 26-N-1; see Marianne Barrucand, ed., *Trésors fatimides du Caire*, exh. cat. (Paris: Institut du monde arabe; Gand: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1998), cat. no. 49; Wilfried Seipel, ed., *Schätze der Kalifen: Islamische Kunst zur Fatimidenzeit*, exh. cat., Vienna, Künstlerhaus (Milan: Skira, 1998), 112, cat. 67.
- 36 See Damiano Anedda's essay in this volume (Chapter 4.1).
- 37 See Sophie Makariou, "Les paons, aquamaniles ou bouches de fontaine?," in Bernus-Taylor and Delpont, *Les Andalousies*, 112–113, cat. 88; Sophie Makariou, "Aguamanil en forma de pavón," in *El esplendor de los omeyas cordobeses: La civilización musulmana de Europa occidental. Catálogo de piezas*, ed. Rafael López Guzmán and Antonio Vallejo Triano (Granada: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura a través de la Fundación El Legado Andalusi, 2001), 47–48.
- 38 The connection with the textile of Don Rodrigo was first noticed by J. Michael Rogers, "The Art of Islamic Spain. Granada and New York" (review of the exhibition), *The Burlington Magazine* 134, no. 1073 (August 1992): 549–552. See also Contadini, "Il grifone di Pisa," 130. The textile of Don Rodrigo Ximenez de Rada is in the Monasterio de Santa María, Santa María la Real de Huerta, Soria, while that of María Almenar is in the Museo de Telas Medievales, Monasterio de Santa María la Real de Huelgas, Burgos, inv. no. 011/002 M.H., for which see Cristina Partearoyyo, "Tunic of Don Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada," and Concha Herrero Carretero, "Pillow of María de Almenar," in Dodds, *Al-Andalus*, 330–331, cat. 94; and 322–323, cat. 90 respectively.
- 39 The deer in the Museo di Capodimonte (similar to the Munich one) is without decoration: it may have been obliterated, however, by wear and subsequent restorations. Hare: Private collection deposited at Harvard University Art Museum, Cambridge (Mass.), inv. 326.1983. See Barrucand, *Trésors fatimides*, cat. no. 51; Seipel, *Schätze der Kalifen*, 112–114, cat. 69.
- 40 Inv. no. 5/1990. See Sophie Makariou, "Aiguière," in Bernus-Taylor and Delpont, *Les Andalousies*, 151, cat. 168; Kjeld von Folsach, *Art from the World of Islam in the David Collection* (Copenhagen: The David Collection, 2001), no. 457.
- 41 Inv. no. 1966/10/1. See Sophie Makariou, "Aiguière," in Bernus-Taylor and Delpont, *Les Andalousies*, 152, cat. 169.
- 42 Inv. no. 1925/35/2. See Claire Déléry, "Pied ou support de lampe (?)," in *Le Maroc medieval. Un empire de l'Afrique à l'Espagne*, ed. Yannick Lintz, Claire Déléry and Bulle Tuil Leonetti (Paris: Musée du Louvre and Hazan 2014), 250–251, cat. 147.
- 43 For a list of objects studied in Spanish collections see the Appendix at the end of this article.
- 44 Inv. nos. 002828 and 002827 respectively. See Antonio Fernández Puertas, "Candiles epigrafiados de finales del siglo XI o comienzos del XII," *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos (sección Árabe e Islam)* 24 (1975): 107–114; Bulle Tuil Leonetti and Claire Déléry, "Lampe à huile," in Lintz *et al.*, *Le Maroc medieval*, 252, cat. 149.
- 45 As Antonio Fernández Puertas had already observed in "Candiles epigrafiados."
- 46 Inv. no. 3805. See Antonio Fernández-Puertas, "Incensario de época almorávide," *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos (sección Árabe e Islam)* 25 (1976): 115–122; Claire Déléry, "Brûle-parfum," in Lintz *et al.*, *Le Maroc medieval*, 251, cat. 148.
- 47 Inv. no. 50888. See Rafael Azuar Ruiz, "Bucket," in Dodds, *Al-Andalus*, 280–281, cat. 59.
- 48 For the geographical configuration of Pisa and the area of the Duomo, or

- Primaziale Pisana, up to the twelfth century, when the river Auser ran close to the northern side of the Cathedral and the sea was much closer than it is now, see Gabriella Garzella, *Pisa com'era: topografia e insediamento dall'impianto tardoantico alla città murata del secolo XII* (Napoli: GISEM-Liguori Editore, 1990).
- ⁴⁹ John Smythe, *Certain Discourses* (London: Printed by Richard Johnes, 1590), 11-14.
- ⁵⁰ Both in Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art, inv. nos. 14938 and 14930 (the latter with the maker's name Muslim Ibn al-Dahhan on its left). See Barrucand, *Trésors fatimides*, cat. 42 and 39 respectively; Seipel, ed., *Schätze der Kalifen*, 107-108, cat. 59 and 56 respectively. As often in Fatimid art, the tail is transformed, in its final section, into a vegetal motif that becomes part of the overall vegetal decoration.
- ⁵¹ Copenhagen, David Collection, inv. no. 10/2005. See Joachim Meyer, "The Body Language of a Parrot: An Incense Burner From the Western Mediterranean, with a note on the inscription by Will Kwiatkowski," *Journal of the David Collection* 4 (2014): 26-49.
- ⁵² Inv. no. 1943/41/1. See Leopoldo Torres Balbás, "Un nuevo ciervo califal de bronce," *Al-Andalus* 9 (1944): 167-171.
- ⁵³ The *wāw* in *wa'īda* lacks the curved tail of all the other *wāws* except that before *'āfiya*. Both precede *'ayn*, and here the aspect of visuality, an important element in Middle Eastern objects, comes into play: the truncated *wāw* is almost a mirror image of the following *'ayn*.
- ⁵⁴ Lanci's pioneering *felicità perpetua a chi lo possiede* can accordingly be adjusted to *la promessa di felicità a chi lo possiede*. My new reading and translation of the whole inscription was first published in Anna Contadini, "Griffon de Pise," in Lintz et al., *Le Maroc medieval*, 254-5, cat. 151.
- ⁵⁵ See Anna Contadini, "Text and Image on Middle Eastern Objects: The Palmer Cup in Context," in *A Rothschild Renaissance: A New Look at the Waddesdon Bequest in the British Museum*, ed. Pipa Shirley and Dora Thornton (London: British Museum Research Publications 212, 2017), 124-145.
- ⁵⁶ For a similar result of the analysis of the augural inscription to an anonymous owner on the base of an inlaid brass candlestick, early thirteenth century, North Jazira/Syria, British Museum, OA 1969.9-22.1, see Contadini, "Text and Image," 137, and fig. 13a-e.
- ⁵⁷ Lev Kapitakin, "The Daughter of al-Andalus': Interrelations Between Norman Sicily and the Muslim West," *Al-Masāq* 25, no. 1 (2013): 113-34: 133 (and footnote 131), which also mentions the reverse scenario of a metalworker from Sicily producing a metal finial for the minaret (the "Giralda") of the Great Mosque in Seville in 589/1193. For movements of metalworkers in other areas of the Islamic world in the middle ages see Julian Raby, "The Principle of Parsimony and the Problem of the 'Mosul School of Metalwork'," in *Metalwork and Material Culture in the Islamic World. Art, Craft and Text*, ed. Venetia Porter and Mariam Rosser-Owen (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 11-85.
- ⁵⁸ Umberto Scerrato, *Metalli islamici* (Milan: Fabbri 1966).
- ⁵⁹ Inv. no. 51.56. See Francesca Leoni, "Incense Burner," in *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Maryam D. Ekhtiar et al. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 129-131, no. 85.
- ⁶⁰ Done by Peter Northover, *Analysis of an Islamic Copper Alloy Figure of a Lion*, unpublished report, Metallurgy and Archaeology, Oxford, 1993.
- ⁶¹ See the wider treatment of acoustic automata in Camber and Contadini, Chapter 1.5.
- ⁶² For the Arabic sources, which go back to the eighth century, see Henry George Farmer, *The Sources of Arabian Music*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 1, no. 7. Other accounts include Banu Musa ibn Shakir (d. 873/259), who wrote a treatise on an automatic hydraulic organ (Farmer, *Sources*, 7, no. 43), A'yrun (Hero), translated in the ninth century, who wrote a treatise on pneumatic machines (18, no. 110), and Muristus (Moristos or Myrtos), translated in the ninth century, who wrote a treatise on the construction of the reed-pipe pneumatic organ "the sound of which may be heard sixty miles" (18, no. 113). See also Henry George Farmer, *The Organ of the Ancients from Eastern Sources (Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic)* (London: William Reeves, 1931), 60-73 and fig. 1, which is a diagram of the Muristus pneumatic organ. See also the treatise on Automata by Ibn al-Razzaz al-Jazari (early thirteenth century), *Kitāb fī ma'rifat al-ḥiyal al-handasiyya*, see Donald R. Hill, ed. and trans., *The Book of Ingenious Devices (Kitāb al-ḥiyal)* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1979), especially 170. According to the various descriptions in both Western and Arab sources, the driving mechanism could have been either pneumatic or hydraulic, see Gerard Brett, "The Automata in the Byzantine 'Throne of Solomon'," *Speculum* 29, no. 3, July (1954): 477-487 for Byzantine sources. For both Byzantine and Arabic sources, see Reinhold Hammerstein, *Macht und Klang: Tönende Automaten als Realität und Fiktion in der alten und mittelalterlichen Welt* (Bern: Franke, 1986), chapters 3 and 4 respectively.
- ⁶³ The presence of the internal vessel in both beasts was then mentioned in Contadini, "Grifone di Pisa" as well as in the Christie's catalogue under the Mari-Cha Lion entry: Christie's, London, *Islamic Art and Indian Miniatures*, October 19, 1993, lot 293.
- ⁶⁴ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Secretum Secretorum*, made by Walter de Milimete for Edward III, 1326-1327. London, British Library, Add 47680, fol. 42v. See Montague Rhodes James, *The Treatise of Walter de Milemete* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1913), 178.
- ⁶⁵ Contadini, "Volando," fig. 15. I am grateful to Richard Camber for pointing out this wall painting to me.
- ⁶⁶ Being "dressed" for the occasion in luxurious textiles cut by the best tailors: see Cuccini, *Il Grifo e il Leone Bronzei*. Given the connection, and frequent rivalry, between Pisa and Genoa, it is also worth adding that in 1227 we have mention of a bronze griffin in Genoa, placed in the Cathedral of San Lorenzo. It was probably destroyed in the fire of 1297, but a marble griffin was then made, although its location in the church is not known: see Enrico Castelnuovo, *Niveo de marmore: l'uso artistico del marmo di Carrara dall'XI al XV secolo* (Genoa: Colombo, 1992), cat. no. 75.
- ⁶⁷ Scerrato, *Metalli islamici*.
- ⁶⁸ Gladiss, "Greifenfigur."
- ⁶⁹ Cynthia Robinson, "Pisa Griffin."

- 70 First published in Contadini, “Il grifone di Pisa.”
- 71 Carlo Calisse, ed., *Liber Maiolichinus de gestis Pisanorum illustribus*. Fonti per la storia d’Italia 29 (Roma: Forzani e C. Tipografi del Senato, 1904). Giuseppe Scalia, ed., *Gesta triumphalia per Pisanos facta* (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2010); Bernardo Maragone, *Annales Pisani*, ed. Michele Lupo Gentile. Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, n. ed., VI/2 (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1936).
- 72 Monneret de Villard, “Le chapiteau arabe.” It belongs to a well-known group of signed capitals from Madinat al-Zahra’: see Anna Contadini, “Capitello in marmo,” in Curatola, *Eredità dell’Islam*, 122–23, cat. 39, with relevant bibliography; Almut von Gladiss, “Komposit-Kapitell,” in Sievernich and Budde, *Europa und der Orient*, 606–7, no. 4/106; Clara Baracchini and Antonino Caleca, “Presenze islamiche nell’arte a Pisa,” in *Arte Islamica: Presenza di cultura islamica nella Toscana costiera*, exh. cat., ed. Mariagiulia Burrelli and Antonino Caleca (Pontedera: Bandecchi e Vivaldi, 1995), 52 and fig. on 67; Cinzia Nenci, “Scheda 1863,” and “Scheda 623” (for the replacement capital on the roof), in *Il Duomo di Pisa*, ed. Adriano Peroni (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1997), vol. 3: 611-12 and 415.
- 73 Ibid., 22.
- 74 As cogently argued by Giuseppe Scalia, “Pisa all’apice della gloria: l’epigrafe araba di S. Sisto e l’epitafio della regina di Maiorca,” *Studi medievali*, 3^a serie, 48, no. 2 (December 2007): 810-814, who also refers to the stories of the human booty, the prince who briefly succeeded al-Murtada, and a queen and her son. See also the discussion in Raby, Chapter 3.7.
- 75 The Church of San Sisto dates to the late eleventh century, being constructed from the proceeds of the campaign against the North African cities of Mahdiyya and Zawila in 1087.
- 76 José Barral, “Encontrada la lauda del emir al-Murtadà primer reu independiente de las Islas,” *Anuario de Ibiza y Formentera* XII (1994): 119-126.
- 77 Scalia, “Pisa all’apice della gloria,” 823, footnote 58.
- 78 Baracchini and Caleca, “Presenze islamiche nell’arte a Pisa,” 59-60 and fig. on 79.
- 79 Attested by the *Annales Pisani* as active between 1142 and 1186.
- 80 Marilyn Jenkins, “New Evidence for the Possible Provenance and Fate of the So-Called Pisa Griffin,” *Islamic Archaeological Studies* 1 (1978): 79-85.
- 81 The passage is found in Maragone, “Vetus Chronicon Pisanum,” vol. VI, part 2, 5-6, with variants in a note on 5. The whole passage with an Italian translation is found in Contadini, “Il grifone di Pisa,” 130, n. 8.
- 82 Scalia, Giuseppe, and Alberto Bartòla, eds., *Enrico Pisano, Liber Maiorichinus de gestis Pisanorum illustribus*. (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2017); see also Garzella, Chapter 3.1, Appendice, 176-177.
- 83 Scalia, *Gesta triumphalia*, 18, lines 213-220.
- 84 Traduzione di Anna Contadini.
- 85 Ranieri Sardo, *Cronaca di Pisa*, ed. Ottavio Banti (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1963), 24-25: *In del millecento-sedici li Pisani reconno [di Maiolica] le porte del legno che sono in duomo et una picciola colonna la quale è in del frundispizio, cioè di sopra alla porta di duomo, cioè alla (25) maggiore: è grande forse due braccia, di colore rossecto ... et due colonne che, come si dice, erano belle et sì per li Saracini incantate ... le mandonno a Fiorenza che aveva guardato Pisa* See also Antonio Milone, “Il Duomo e la sua facciata,” in Peroni, *Il Duomo di Pisa*, vol. 3, 204; Baracchini and Caleca, “Presenze islamiche,” 52.
- 86 As highlighted by Cecilia Iannella in *Cronica di Pisa. Dal ms. Roncioni 338 dell’Archivio di Stato di Pisa*, edited with commentary by Cecilia Iannella (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 2005), 15.
- 87 See Maria Luisa Ceccarelli Lemut, “Antiquaria e Riscrittura della Storia nel Contesto Socio-Politico di Pisa tra XV e XVI Secolo,” in *Prima e Dopo le Tavole Eugobine – Falsi e copie fra tradizione antiquaria e rivisitazioni dell’antico*, ed. Patrizia Castelli and Salvatore Geruzzi (Pisa-Rome: Fabrizio Serri editore, 2010), 97-111. I thank my colleague Gabriella Garzella for alerting me to this.
- 88 Tedeschi Grisanti, “Note sul grifone.” See Ittai Weinryb, *The Bronze Object in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 143-146 for a discussion on the concept of “spectacle” in the Piazza.
- 89 See Antonio Milone, “‘Arabitas’ pisana e medioevo mediterraneo: Relazioni artistiche tra XI e XIII secolo,” in *Fibonacci tra arte e scienza*, ed. Luigi A. Radicati di Brozolo (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 2002), 110 and n. 15.
- 90 Contadini in “Beasts That Roared.”
- 91 R. B. Serjeant and R. Lewcock, “The Church (al-Qalīs) of Şan’ā’ and Ghumdān Castle,” in *Şan’ā’, an Arabian Islamic City*, ed. R. B. Serjeant and R. Lewcock (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1983), 44, quoting al-Hamadani, *Iklīl*, VIII (Baghdad, 1931), 24; and Yaqut ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Hamawī, *Jacut’s Geographisches Wörterbuch*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1866-73), vol. 3, 811. On the roof of the Cathedral, the wind would enter the Griffin primarily through the wide opening in the belly, and circulate in the resonant interior.
- 92 Karen Mathews has argued that this show of power was not aimed towards Muslims, but instead to its other Italian rivals, notably Genoa: see “Plunder of War or Objects of Trade? The Reuse and Reception of Andalusī Objects in Medieval Pisa,” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2012): 244-245.
- 93 Ciampi, *Osservazioni*, 58-9. A griffin, he says, is not to be confused with the hippogriff (the term used by Da Morrona), which has a different meaning, for which he cites Ariosto: it is a *grifo* combined with a mare (*giumenta*), having plumes and wings like the father (*grifo*), and the rest of the body like the mother (*giumenta*). Regarding the Christological reading of the dual nature see also Luca Carletti, “Grifo,” in *Pisa e il Mediterraneo: Uomini, merci, idee dagli Etruschi ai Medici*, ed. Marco Tangheroni (Milan: Skira, 2003), no. 116.
- 94 Cicognara, *Storia della scultura*, 2nd ed., 108-9.
- 95 See also Eva Hoffman, “Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century,” *Art History* 24, no. 1 (2001): 17-50. For the broader connections between “East and West”, see Deborah Howard, *Venice & The East: The Impact of the Islamic*

World on Venetian Architecture 1100-1500 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000; second printing 2006).

- ⁹⁶ The Mari-Cha Lion is now part of the collection of the museum Louvre Abu Dhabi.
- ⁹⁷ See the catalogue of the Doha exhibition: *Beyond Boundaries: Islamic Art Across Cultures*, ed. Oliver Watson and Hubert Bari (Doha: Museum of Islamic Art), 56-63.
- ⁹⁸ The production of the contemporary Egyptian artist Moataz Nasr is pan-arab

and cross-cultural in character. His art gallery, *Galleria Continua*, has sites in San Gimignano, Les Moulins, Havana and Beijing. The leather griffin is published in *Moataz Nasr – The Journey of the Griffin*, ed. Ilaria Mariotti (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 2014).

- ⁹⁹ Villa Pacchiani, Santa Croce sull'Arno (Pisa), "Moataz Nasr. Un ponte tra Pisa e Santa Croce sull'Arno," curated by Ilaria Mariotti, December 2013-February 2014. The videos (directed by Anna Contadini

and produced by Roberto Scopigno and the CNR Pisa) are published at <http://vcg.isti.cnr.it/griffin/>.

- ¹⁰⁰ Gabrieli and Scerrato, *Gli Arabi*, 299, no. 337; and, for a reading of the inscription as the word *yumn* see Ennio G. Napolitano, "Le iscrizioni arabe della porta del mausoleo di Beomondo a Canosa," *SPOLIA. Journal of Medieval Studies*, Essays 2017, anno XIII, n. 3, n.s. (2017): 35-43.