



## A Collection of Talismanic *Bāzūbands* from the *Safavid* and *Qajar* Epochs: A Descriptive and Analytical Study

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### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

Amulets; Talismans;  
*Bāzūbands*; *Safavid*;  
*Qajar*; Magic;  
Superstition;  
Divination.

**(JAAUTH)**  
**Vol. 20, No. 4,**  
**(2021),**  
**PP.83-123.**

No doubt, every nation had possessed a set of deeply rooted beliefs, these rendered into variant practices and traditions, establishing civilization aspects. The belief in magic, superstitions and divinations are categorized under these beliefs. Mankind had tremendously believed their ability to hurt, bring bad destiny, and on other hand, trusting their capacity to bestow protection and guarantee good luck, thus, motivated the appeal to possessing amulets and talismans. This research paper deals with '*Bāzūbands*'; a form of amulets and talismans, worn by warriors to, morally, safeguard them and ensure triumph through *Qur'ānic* inscriptions, invocations, besides other magical texts. The research tackles some important aspects related the *Safavid* and *Qajar bāzūbands*, like the belief in magic, its roots in the Persian culture, an etymological study for the different terms; 'amulet', 'talisman' and '*bāzūband*', to reveal their roots and consequent development. This is followed by a preview for the *Shi'ites*' attitude regarding amulets and talismans, and the main elements that should be exploited in fashioning them, and the influence of the *Shi'ite* belief on its mounting and ornamentation. In addition, a detailed description for a special collection of talismanic '*bāzūbands*' from world-wide museums and private collections; some of which are to be published for the first time, is enclosed. Thenceforth, a concise analysis for the described samples is incorporated.

### Research plan

- I. The belief in magic
- II. Roots of magical beliefs in Persian culture
- III. Etymology of amulets, talismans, and *bāzūband*
- IV. *Shi'ites*' attitude regarding amulets and talismans
- V. Fashioning amulets and talismans with *Shi'ism* indications
- VI. Descriptive study for a chosen collection of *Safavid* and *Qajar bāzūbands*
- VII. Analytical study
- VIII. Conclusion
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- X. Figures

## I. The belief in magic

Persia or Iran, also known as the land of Aryans,<sup>1</sup> was the home of one of the unique human civilizations.<sup>2</sup> The political history of Persia (later Iran) dates to near 6000 B.C. Through this long history, religion has always served as both a means of dominance and a popular force of resistance to the political authority.<sup>3</sup>

Persia was the birthplace of several major world religions; the ancient Mithraism (God of Good and Justice), Zoroastrianism (the Persian adopted religion founded by prophet Zoroaster in the 17<sup>th</sup> century B.C., and the radical sect of Islamic Religion, *Shi'ism*. Politically, three major powers preceded Persia in Iran: *Susa*, *Elam*, and *Media*. *Susa* (Persian *Shusha*) was one of the oldest sites of ancient civilization with a political life on a massive scale beginning around 6000 B.C. or earlier. Another early Iranian people, the pre-Aryan federated state of Elamites raised in 3000 B.C. and continued for about 2500 years as a massive scale controlling a large territory comprising present Iran, the Caspian Sea region, Afghanistan, and a major part of the Near East including Babylonia and Assyria.<sup>4</sup>

A remarkable achievement of the ancient Elamites was the development of their own script, the proto-Elamite script, the designation applied to the earliest pictographic stage in contrast with the later Elamite 'linear script'. Their empire had been suppressed by the Medians (of the Aryan branches) in 600 B.C.<sup>5</sup>

The Aryans established a World-State Persian Empire of two branches; the first was the Medians who overwhelmed the Elamites. Under their control, the Iranian influence had expanded to beyond the Mesopotamia.<sup>6</sup> Median empire in turn, did not sustained more than 40 years, defeated by the Persians, Aryans' other branch, under Cyrus the Great in 559 B.C. Through the Achaemenid Persian empire religion played a major role in the governance process of the vast territories with numerous nationalities and ethnic characteristics. This vast controlling empire continued until 330 B.C. when defeated by Alexander the Great.<sup>7</sup> This was followed by the Sassanian dynasty in 224 B.C., which continued until 651 A.D. when overwhelmed by the Arab Muslim conquest.

It is worth mentioning that the Zoroastrianism was the state religion through the previous epochs. Accordingly, it took more than 300 years for Iran to accept Islamic religion.<sup>8</sup> When it happened, it created a new aspect in Islamic religion. This is designated in the *Shi'a* sect as an independent radical branch of the Islamic religion. *Shi'ism* is an ideology and a sociopolitical movement originated due to disagreement towards the legitimate successor of Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ. Persia, later Iran, is its heartland. A fundamental difference between *Shi'i* and *Sunnī* Muslims is that *Sunnī* followers believe in the selection of the prophet's successors, while *Shi'a* followers believe that '*Alī ibn 'Abī-Tālib* ﷺ the son-in-law and cousin of the prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the legitimate successor.

Whatever theoretical and ideological differences there may be within the *Shi'is* the undisputed fact remains that *Shi'ism* has grown in the number of believers, in its populism, and its radicalism regarding society, politics, and humanity.<sup>9</sup>

During the late *Umayyad* Caliphate, *Shi'ism* continued to play a minor role in social and political protest, and thus led to the *Shi'a* revolution that toppled the *Umayyad* Caliphate and brought to power the *'Abbāsīds* in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.H./ 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. However, the *'Abbāsīds* turned away from *Shi'ism* and many *Shi'ī* movements were suppressed.<sup>10</sup>

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the Iranians established the Great *Saljugh* Empire, they revived the *Sasanian* traditions of religious, political, and administrative aspects under the new banner of *Islam*, and *Shi'ism* have initially spread. Such aspects had been reinforced by the *Safavid* Empire, at the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D., particularly, the Persian tradition of the divine rulership, thus considered themselves descendants of the pious *Imāms*.<sup>11</sup>

The declaration of the *Shi'ism* as the state religion under the *Safavid* Empire (906-1149 A.H./ 1501-1720 A.D.) had revived it, and thus, contested to the neighboring *Sunnī Ottoman* Empire. In addition, it gave the religious leaders, *Ulamā*, the opportunity to gain greater power and independence from the state.

Since the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D. *Shi'a* radicalism has played a more distinct role in Iranian politics than before.<sup>12</sup> The *Ulamā* had owned a massive support and formidable weapon from all social classes against the *Qajar's* regime and its foreign supporters. This means that the *Ulamā* were in continuous conflict with the *Qajar* monarchy who tried to grant concessions to foreign governments in Iranian lands.

Consequently, being the homeland of the *Shi'ism*; Iran presents a different national and religious character in its internal and international politics from the middle East and Europe as well. It presents a practical traditional religious leadership supporting and leading the modernization and constitutional revolution.<sup>13</sup> It is meaningful here to refer that such religious sect had ever influenced all aspects of the Iranians' life and their social beliefs, such as magic, divination, and superstition. This resulted in their refuge, like other nations, to the use of several forms of amulets and talismans. Nevertheless, in several cases, their religious sect, the *Shi'ism*, was extent to express their unique personality.

## II. Roots of magical beliefs in Persian culture

Since the antique ages, man had lived days of misery and terrible fear of several reasons around, such as, plague, pestilence, sunstroke, death by lightning and the attacks of beasts, wounds in battles, drowning, etc. In addition, early man used to attribute all his ailments or any misfortune to the evil spirits. As time went on, his fear of evil spirits did not diminish.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the use of amulets was due to man's belief in the power of Evil Eye and its effect on both human and animals, besides, his confidence on the protective power of amulets and talismans against all dangers. Man used to evaluate amulets by results; that when he adopts a special amulet, if his affairs prospered and all his status sounds good, this assures his belief in its power, and vice versa.<sup>15</sup>

In the magical worldview, the need for a magical act rises when a misfortune occurred, or a positive target is greatly required.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the chief motivation for

possessing talismanic devices was the fear of Evil Eye or Evil Look. The reason for this is that the various human races in all the world since thousands of years convinced that both animate creatures and inanimate objects possess the power of causing several bad effects to their fellow-creatures and any kind of property through a mere glance of the eye, astonishing, or wonder look. The oldest mention of the Evil Eye occurred in texts of the Sumerians from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C., Babylonians, and Assyrians.<sup>17</sup>

In pre-Islamic cultures, images of lions, serpents, and scorpions were imaged on magical artefacts, such as amulets and magic-medicinal bowls. Other samples of magical signs widely employed in talismanic artefacts were the representations of the twelve zodiacal signs and the seven planets. Furthermore, exploring occult properties of substances, such as stone, glass, metals, etc. was taken into consideration when modeling talismanic artefacts. Such artefacts were considered to bestow protection due to the involved images or the natural substances' properties, thus, it almost did not include prayers or invocations.<sup>18</sup>

Since the early times of *Islam*, magic was used for seeking God's goodness.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Muslims have believed in the influence of the Evil Eye through all periods of their history, they called it as '*ain al-ḥasad*'. It is worth mentioning that Evil Eye possessor may or may not know that he has. He may have been born with it, due to the sign of the zodiac into which he was born, or the star which was rising through his birth. *Sūrat al-Falaq* (n<sup>o</sup>. CXIII) of the Holy *Qur'ān* was often written on scrolls or cut on agates and carried as a protection against the Evil Eye.<sup>20</sup> Another motive for possessing amulets and talismans is the fear of all spiritual creatures known as *Jinn*, whom existence was recognized in the Holy *Qur'ān* and referred to as fire creatures. *Jinn* were assumed to have the ability to pass through any substance and can take the form of anything even of tiny sizes. Several forms of amulets were used by persons who are subject to fits, of these; iron discs with strange marks scratched on. Additional talismans were composed of certain verses of the Holy *Qur'ān* as charm against *Jinn*. Besides, amuletic boxes with tiny versions of the entire Holy *Qur'ān* and special prayers were worn either to protect against maleficent spiritual creatures.<sup>21</sup>

Further form of amulets was used by Muslim soldiers, they always felt their need to the amuletic protection. The common form of military amulets is a strip of paper inscribed with an extract from the Holy *Qur'ān*, the name of Allah, prophet *Muḥammad* ﷺ, '*Alī*' ﷺ, besides the names of the seven archangels. In other cases, the amulet takes the form of a long roll of paper tied to the warrior's breast or any part of his body.<sup>22</sup>

Concerning the Iranians, they have a tradition that 'Evil Eye puts the camel into the pot and mankind into the grave'. As a result, their fear of the Evil Eye greatly increased the use of superstitions and talismanic objects.<sup>23</sup>

### III. Etymology of amulet, talisman, and *bāzūband*

The word amulet had several meanings and interpretations. It was said to be borrowed from the Latin '*amolētum*' which referred to the country-folk name of the cyclamen which is famed to prevent harmful influence of poisonous drugs where it is grown,<sup>24</sup>

thus interpreted as means of defense.<sup>25</sup> Another concept referred to the word amulet as synonymous to ‘phylactery’,<sup>26</sup> though, others stated that it is derived from the Arabic word ‘*ḥimāla*’, which means the cord by which an amulet is suspended from the neck, as well as for the amulet itself.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the word amulet had several equivalents differ from place to another, in Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Syria; amulets were known as ‘*tamīmah*’ literary means perfection and refer to *kalimāt Allah at-Tāmmāt*, ‘*Ūdzah*’ and ‘*ta’wīzah*’ which meaning an invocation for the protection of God.<sup>28</sup> In North Africa, the word ‘*Khurza*’ was the synonyms for an amulet.<sup>29</sup> In Morocco the word ‘*ḥirz*’, which means refuge, is used to refer to amulets, in Egypt, ‘*ḥijāb*’, which means covering or sheltering something, is referring to charm, in Iran, India, and the *Ottoman* empire, the term ‘*mūhr*’ which refers basically to earthly clay tablet of a sacred place; also used to refer to amuletic purposes.<sup>30</sup>

Nonetheless, a talisman is any object that is imbued with protective powers,<sup>31</sup> and almost associated with zodiacal influence.<sup>32</sup> The word talisman is synonymous to the Greek word ‘*telesma*’ and the Arabic ‘*ṭilasm*’ and ‘*ṭalāsim*’, which means to make marks like magician.<sup>33</sup> This is used to include all charms and amulets, and the popularly known as prayers.<sup>34</sup> Another definition for ‘*ṭilasm*’ is:

*‘An inscription with astrological and other magic signs or an object covered with such inscriptions, especially also with figures from the zodiacal circle or the constellations and animals which were used as magic charms to protect and avert the evil eye. The Greek name is evidence of its origin in the late Hellenistic period and gnostic ideas are obviously reflected in the widespread use of such charms’.*<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, talismans can be of two sorts: complete ‘*tāmm*’, and non-complete ‘*ḡair- tāmm*’. According to the theory of the organic unity of the universe; complete talismans can only be modelled when all the elements on earth, for instance; stones, trees, metals, are represented in them and the planetary arrangements are prosperous. However, this could be hardly ensured almost at least every 100 years. Thus, the non-complete talismans should be satisfying to human being.<sup>36</sup>

Argue is originated to define whether ‘amulet’ and ‘talisman’ are equivalent terms or not. The concept that they are differ from each other outlined that amulet is an object which is endowed with magical powers, and of its own accord uses these powers continuously on behalf of the person who carries it, laid on his house, or attached to any of his valuable belongings for protection from the Evil Eye.<sup>37</sup> While talisman is more complicated, since its modelling was based on special astrological arrangements and was intended to perform more specific purposes.<sup>38</sup> Though, the line which separates the two terms ‘amulet’ and ‘talisman’ has been rarely observed because both are part of the machinery of magic.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, the term ‘amulet’ considered more effective.<sup>40</sup>

In Muslim concept the word *ta’wid* is, as well, synonym to charm, amulet and talisman. It is used to refer to four short *Sūras* (*al-kāfirūn* n<sup>o</sup>. 109, *al-Īhlās* n<sup>o</sup>.112, *al-Falaq* n<sup>o</sup>. 113 and *an-Nās* n<sup>o</sup>.114) of the Holy *Qur’ān*. Those are called the ‘Four Declarations’ or ‘A refuge with God’.<sup>41</sup>

Talking about the emergence of amulet and talisman; they are antiquely rooted, since the time when animism satisfied man's spiritual needs. Primitive man seems to have adopted them because of an internal urge and desire to protect himself. Thus, he required amulets to give himself power to overcome his enemies, whether visible or invisible. When man believed in the existence of God; he ascribed to his Divinity the authorship of the magical powers which he believed to be inherent in his amulets and believed that his God needed them as much as he himself did. Though, later, man regarded his God as the granter of magical powers. Since amulets benefits its wearer with a sense of comfort besides bestowing protection, they have been globally working. Neither cultural improvement nor advanced education managed to liberate mankind from the believe in amulets and divination systems.<sup>42</sup>

Prehistoric Hebrews possessed a far-reaching system of magic, which is known from the Hebrew Bible. They inherited much of their magic from the Sumerians and Babylonians. Like their nearby nations, they possessed uninscribed amulets modeled from both precious and semi-precious stones. In ancient Egypt, amulets were, likewise, widespread. In the dynastic period *mk-t* which means 'protector' and *udjau* which means 'keep-safe' were the common words for amulet. In this period, inscribed amulets predominated, they were considered more powerful than plain ones. Such inscriptions are, as well, varied in value; the utmost ones were those extracted from the funerary texts, known as the *Book of the Dead*.

During the period of the Sassanids from about 226-632 A.D., amulets and amuletic seals used in western Persia (Iran) were commonly known as '*Pehlevi gems*' due to the *Pehlevi* characters applied on. These were derived from a *Semitic* alphabet, which was probably *Syriac*. Through a contemporary period, but in a different region; Egypt, with the emergence of Christianity in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., the power of magic still effective. This is rendered in the form of several Coptic amulets and talismans. They discarded the hieroglyphic, hieratic and demotic scripts, and had their own Coptic scripture; based on Greek alphabet and several old Egyptian characters.

For the Arabs, specifically, through the first six centuries A.D., before the emergence of the Islamic Faith, they possessed amulets and talismans simulating their ancestors, associated with them ideas borrowed from Hebrew, ancient Egyptian, and Gnostic writings.<sup>43</sup> However, the Islamic magical theory looks like an organic unity composed of the planets, the zodiacal signs, the four elements (earth, water, air, and fire), and the four qualities (cold, warm, dry and humid). These ideas had been deeply rooted in the sciences of Late Antiquity of which Islam became its transmitter. Other occult sciences like astrology and alchemy have shared the same concepts of the surrounding world's mechanism together with magic. The idea of unity is displayed in geometrical aspects, using concentric circles - representing the cosmos- or by magic squares.<sup>44</sup>

After the emergence of Islam in Arabian and Persian lands, although amulets and talismans were still in use, they had completely renovated. They had been composed of short *Sūras* of the Holy *Qur'ān*, some invocations, the 99 names of Allah and short prayers. The inscription must be written by a holy man, on a chosen material with black ink.<sup>45</sup>

Focusing on the Persians after Islam; they had used amulets and talismans in a wide range. They did not adhere to measures found in the Holy *Qur'ān* and prophetic traditions. They had believed in the existence of special protective power in respective objects, of these, shells, stones, mother-of-pearl, and various parts of animals. These all become recognized talismans.<sup>46</sup>

A further term to be illuminated here is '*bāzūband*'. It is a Persian word composed of two syllables; '*bāzū*' which means upper arm, and '*band*' which means bracelet, thus, the term '*bāzūband*' means armlet or armband.<sup>47</sup> The terms *bhujband*, *dand* and *joshan* are, as well, corresponding to *bāzūband*.<sup>48</sup> In *Pahlavi* language,<sup>49</sup> it is also known as *bahuand*, and *bāhūvand*.<sup>50</sup> In addition, the word '*bāzūband*' refers to a village in *Hurāsān e-Razavzī* province, Iran.<sup>51</sup>

According to the *Burhān-I Qāṭi*', *bāzūband* (armlet) is classified among the ornamental jewelry of the Iranian society as one of nine items. These are: *āvīz* (jeweled hair ornament), *gūshvār* (earrings), *Silsila* (chain and pearl necklaces), *galūband* (choker), *ḥalqa-i-bīnī* (nose-ring), *dast-birinjān* (bracelet), *khalkhāl* (anklet), and *angushtarī* (ring). These nine items probably of Indian origin, because the standard reference of the *Burhān-i- Qāṭi*' was compiled in India in about 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. However, if these ornamental jewelries were fashionable on one time, they are subject to change from time to another.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, *bāzūband*'s usage did not limit to ornamental purposes, it was sometimes reinforced by *Qur'ānic* inscriptions, the 99 names of God and several invocations. Thus, it was regarded as talismanic objects for warriors, due to the belief in their ability to protect and grant them victory as well.<sup>53</sup>

In this case, *bāzūband* should be in contact with the skin; and to be worn on several parts of the body as possible.<sup>54</sup> Such duty resulted in special composition of *bāzūbands* to fulfill. Sometimes, they take the form of amulet cases, of precious metals, silk, linen cloth, or leather, which were tied to the upper arm.<sup>55</sup> The idea of using *bāzūband* in the first place being to protect it from injury and contamination, and to keep it out of the sight of maleficent spirits and human body with Evil Eyes. This is also the case for a paper scroll containing magical formulae, miniature full copies of the Holy *Qur'ān*, or even particular verses, are all regarded as talismans.<sup>56</sup>

It could not be stated, in precise, where and when this fashion began, though it has been suggested that it may have originated at the Mughal court as evidenced by their appearance in Mughal paintings.<sup>57</sup>

### III. *Shi'ites*' attitude regarding amulets and talismans

The attitude of Islamic religion towards magic is determined by the fact that the Holy *Qur'ān* acknowledges its existence. Words relating to the idea of magic '*sihr*' occur more than 50 times in different *Sūras*. The most relevant is recorded in *sūrat al-Baqarah* (verse n<sup>o</sup>. 102), which refers to the evil demons '*Šaitāns*' who taught people witchcraft, and how this resulted in unwanted evil effects, such as separating between the married, only by God's permission. Hence, magic is not allowed to be practiced for evil purposes, so black magic is prohibited. Another important condition specifies that the consultant of magical formulae should only invoke God's support. However,

magical handbooks, ignore this prohibition, they are full of demons with unknown names whose assistance is petitioned.<sup>58</sup> This action was practiced by Jews, Christians, and later by Muslims.<sup>59</sup>

The Jewish Rabbis and some of the Christian Fathers condemned the use of amulets; because they associated them with magic and regarded their use as an indication of distrust in the divine providence. But their condemnation had no lasting effect except to incite men to do what was arbitrarily forbidden and formulating of amulets went on as before. Since the oldest civilized nations believed that their Gods had need of and made use of magic, it is not surprising that men and women had turned to magic in periods of stress and difficulty and used to wear amulets and talismans to protect themselves, and in the other hand safeguard the life and strength which had been granted to them by the Gods, although their belief in divine powers seemed abstracted. Looking back over the history of amulets; it is difficult to understand why most clerics had condemned their use.<sup>60</sup>

Though, how was the attitude towards using amulets and talismanic objects in Islam? There has been a wide-ranging debate about what is allowed in Islam, and what is prohibited.<sup>61</sup>

It was stated that Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ permitted using talismans against the Evil Eye. When he was asked for using spells against Evil Eyes, he ﷺ said: *'yes, for if there were any thing in the world which would overcome fate, it would be an evil eye'*.<sup>62</sup>

However, amulets and talismanic objects used by Muslims, appeal to God in the first instance. Muslims are differed from Byzantine, Roman, early Iranian, and other pre-Islamic magic which was basically addressed demonic forces or spirits of the dead. These objects did not confine on magical symbols; there were evocations, prayers, and verses from the Holy *Qur'ān*. The main function of these objects was to ward off misfortune and the Evil Eye to gain good fortune. Although these objects are varied according to regions; they are almost encompassing certain idioms and symbols.<sup>63</sup> There are many verses from the Holy *Qur'ān*, which are believed to afford protection against the Evil Eye, of these *sūrat Yūnus* verse n°. 81.<sup>64</sup>

#### **IV. Fashioning Amulets and Talismans with Shi'ism indications**

The description of the actual amulet is almost simple, because in most cases, each amulet or talisman explains itself.<sup>65</sup> They are applied on several forms: amulet cases, mirrors, boxes, weapons, talismanic shirts, armbands '*bāzūbands*' and standards. Those objects were designated as means to safeguard its possessor from maleficent forces. In addition, some physicians recommended them as devices for curing various ailments. Once, modelling of talismanic objects was based on Muslims' knowledge in astrology, their power in warding off evil was introduced by combining between magic and religious texts.<sup>66</sup>

Configuration of amulets and talismans differs according to the purpose of using them. They, sometimes, appeared in cylindrical boxes, when intended to enclose a scroll of written protective invocations. Others were in rectangular shape to suit the codex form of documents. Other ones were of triangular shaped cases; these were to

simulate the antique symbol of female fertility. It is worth mentioning that amulet holders in themselves are considered magically effective, so they can be used even without containing written spells.<sup>67</sup>

Regarding the materials exploited in modelling amulets and talismans; they were, occasionally, made of semi-precious stones, such as carnelian ('*aqīq*) and chalcedony,<sup>68</sup> though, metals are basically exploited, iron and steel predominated.<sup>69</sup>

In Iran (Persia) in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H./ 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D., two amuletic forms dominated. Silver sheet amulets in the form of body parts known as '*nazar*' meaning gaze upon, made for healing,<sup>70</sup> the other type was in the form of brass sheet inscribed with magical idioms accompanied with figural representations, which are linked to *Sabaeen* magical figures imported by early Islamic writers. Composing these amulets had been based on magical practices using astrology.<sup>71</sup> The most powerful talisman was a tiny sized print of the Holy *Qur'ān* within iron boxes. Iranians' belief in the magical power of iron is derived from Aristotle's speech, according to *Qazwīnī*, that '*wearing a piece of iron gives its wearer strength, increase his ambition, and became honorable among people*'.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, its potential magical force is implied in the Holy *Qur'ān* in *sūrat al-Ḥadīd* (verse n<sup>o</sup>. 25). In addition, due to the connection between using fire in modelling iron by hammering and the belief that the demons are creations of fire, thus iron is valued as superior to warding evil demons off.<sup>73</sup>

In addition, steel was among the honorable metals as possessing magical powers. It was usually used in casting rings which were often inscribed with a name of God or the names of the 'Five' or some magic numbers or formulae. This is emphasized by the steel ring which *Imām 'Alī* ﷺ used to wear, this was said to be the reason for his mighty strength. Lead was also employed in both medicine and magic. Iron and silver were frequently used in talismans, in the contrary, using brass and copper was uncommon, they were only exploited as bases where magical formulae were inscribed. Despite the prohibition of using gold in utensils; golden artefacts have also appeared among the magical objects. According to *Qazwīnī*, Gold was said to have the ability to cure seizures and insanity, besides endowing audacity.<sup>74</sup>

Certain colors of magical artefacts might have played a basic role in their selection. The golden tone, which was in most cases characterizing the representation of royals, confer feelings of dominance. Red was associated with blood, the mysterious sign of life, so it had positive role in discouraging negative impressions. Green as widely known to be symbol of paradise when color of trees and flowers being; thus, it is also marked as a source of positive psychic influence. Blue, as well, is highly praised as the most effective means of protection against Evil Eye.

Amulets and talismans as prophylactic devices; sometimes are plain, though their importance and influence is increased when bearing inscriptions.<sup>75</sup> Talismanic inscriptions applied by magicians were particularly composed of groups of letters of the alphabet arranged in an order, which was not necessarily alphabetic; to some of them they assigned meanings or symbolisms, but of others they regarded the meanings as inexplicable to the human.<sup>76</sup> Thus, became complicated and need further

clarification. This is known as *'ilm al-hurūf* (the science of the letters). The *Shi'ite Imām Ja'far aṣ- Ṣādiq* had the head start of this science which had entered the *Sunnī* and *Sūfī* contexts since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.H./ 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and continued widely in an advanced form with the *Sūfī* rite in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Special groups of letters are of great significance, of these the mysterious 14 letters of the Holy *Qur'ān*, which are repeatedly found in the beginning of about 29 *sūras*, those are called as *al-hurūf al-fawātiḥ*.<sup>77</sup>

Each of the Arabic alphabet has a numerical value; calculated according to their arrangement in old *Semitic 'abjad'* numeric system.<sup>78</sup> The magical power of some of the alphabetic letters were greater than others. *Alif*, for instance, is of greater value for being the first letter of the name of *Allah*, and the One God. Thus, talismanic inscriptions can be composed of letters only, numbers only, and in other cases have both. For instance, the names of the attributes of God known as *'al-Asmā' al-ḥusnā'* and the Archangels, might be written with letters or with numerical values of the letters which formed the names, and in either form they construct protective amuletic inscriptions.<sup>79</sup> Other forms of amulets and talismans are inscribed with short texts, though, of talismanic power, such as *al-basmallah*.<sup>80</sup>

Basically, Arabic language with its varied scripts (linear *kūfīc*, cursive rounded *Nashī*, *thuluth*, *raihan*, *muhaqqaq*, *riq'a*, *tawdi*), besides *nasta'liq* had almost predominated, because of applying Turkish, Persian, and Urdu inscriptions in Arabic alphabet.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, in some cases, talismans were bearing inscriptions in ancient-Hebrew, Syriac, or Greek- languages. This was ascribed to be more effective than Arabic ones,<sup>82</sup> for instance, talismans using the ancient alphabet of *Ibn Wahṣiyyāh*,<sup>83</sup> known as lunette script (Figure 1).<sup>84</sup>

A defined sign of amulets and talismans is a structure known as 'magical squares', frequently composed of the mysterious letters of the Holy *Qur'ān*. Preceding the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D., simple form of 3x3 design squares of 9 cells was applied. These were arranged to have letters or numbers, in a special order that resulted in equal sum of 15 as the sum of each, row, column, and the two diagonals.<sup>85</sup> This magic square is of Chinese origin named '*buduh*'.<sup>86</sup> In the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D., magic squares had been increased to 28x28, the status that had continuously improved through later centuries to become larger, until completed 100x100 ones. Hence, magical squares became, almost, a basic element for amulets and talismans since 7<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>87</sup> Such 'magical squares' had attracted the attention of historians of mathematics and puzzles, for the method of composing their numerical values in such astonishing order.<sup>88</sup>

Another form of squares has no mathematical properties, thus lack the magical formula. These are appeared into two forms; false magic square, each row, and each column of it contain the same group of signs in an order, differing from row to another, and the same in columns as well. The other case of non-magic squares known as the verse square, almost referring to verses of the Holy *Qur'ān*, where the cells of the square are filled with words or phrases set in a form that each row begins

with a word and ends with another until the whole verse ends, composing a square shape.<sup>89</sup>

Several geometrical shapes had great existence on amulets and talismans. The pentagram shaped star or the hexagonal, known as ‘seal of *Solomon*’ is among the items, frequently, incorporated with amulets and talismans.<sup>90</sup> In addition, Circles and squares were repeatedly found on both metallic and stone talismans. Other shapes, but to a lesser extent, were triangle, star, cross and swastika.<sup>91</sup>

Astrological iconography had been commonly accompanying several texts on amulets and talismans since the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. ahead. The existence of these signs ascertains that modeling such amulets was achieved in accordance with astrological conditions.

Nonetheless, the employment of identical magical items is a major difficulty in classifying amulets and talismans’ homeland, though, some features in texts could be helpful.<sup>92</sup> When amulets have clear indication to the Twelver *Shi’ism*, this refers to Iran (Persia) as the amulets’ homeland, particularly in the *Safavid* period (1501-1722A.D.). Other *Shi’i* idioms on amulets was the insertion of the names of the so-called the ‘pure Five’, referring to Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ, his daughter *Fātima*, his son-in-law ‘*Alī*’ ﷺ, and his grandsons *al-Ḥasan* and *al-Ḥusain*, or the Twelve *Imāms* who added to Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ, and his daughter *Fātima* called the fourteen immaculate ones.<sup>93</sup> Other sign of *Shi’i* amulets is the phrase ‘*Nadī ‘Aliyan*’ which means call upon ‘*Alī*’ as a sort of invocation to *Imām ‘Alī*’ ﷺ. Further sign is the phrase ‘*there is no youth ‘fata’ except ‘Alī and no sword except for Dhū’l Faqār,*’.<sup>94</sup> In addition, the last two *sūras* of the Holy *Qur’ān* known as *Sūrat al-Falaq* and *Sūrat an-Nās* are, as well, among the significant talismanic elements since they were the main texts which *Imām al-Ḥusain* was wearing around his neck before his martyr in the famous battle of *Karbala* in 61 A.H.<sup>95</sup> Despite the strong relation of all these signs with the *Shi’i* rite, it is undeniable that *Āl al-Bait* are almost honored by *Sunnī* and *Sūfī* associations as well.<sup>96</sup>

Amulets and *talismans* since their emergence, onwards, had encompassed a vast variety of symbols. These are grotesque figures, figures of archangels, astrological signs, mythological beasts, linear designs, geometrical patterns, and very frequently the human hand stretched out. All these drawings are inherited from the ancient Egyptians, Copts, Gnostics, and Hebrews. Though, for Muslims, their employment had differed from a doctrine to another. The *Sunnī* Muslims only employs some of these, however the *Shi’is*, or "free thinkers" adopt them all. As a rule, Persian amulets are more artistic than those of the Arabs.<sup>97</sup>

## V. Descriptive study for a chosen collection of *Safavid* and *Qajar bāzūbands*

### 1. A Large *Safavid* engraved hematite octagonal *bāzūband* (Figure 2) (Published for the first time)

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Safavid* dynasty

**Material and Technique:** Octagonal *bāzūband* made of hematite and silver,  
high – relief inscription with chamfered reverse frame

**Conservation:** Christies, Auction 7428- 2007

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 437

**Dimensions:** 5.4 cm height

### Description

This is a hematite octagonal shaped *bāzūband* of 5.4 cm high, with a chamfered reverse silver frame. Two heart-shaped loops are hinged to the frame.<sup>98</sup> Those are usually meant to the insertion of such kind of ropes to fastening the *bāzūband* on the upper arm, but here is nonexistent. This piece dates to the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- the *Safavid* dynasty Iran. Its decoration consists of a *nasta'liq* script with the verses n<sup>os</sup>. 51 and 52 from *sūrat al-Qalam* from the Holy *Qur'an*, the inscription is elegantly adorned with some tiny five and six-petalled flowers.

### 2. A pair of *Safavid* steel *bāzūbands*, Persia, (Figure 3)

*(Published for the first time)*

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Safavid* dynasty

**Material and Technique:** Steel- Inscription carved in high- relief

**Conservation:** Bonhams, Auction 24198

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 103

**Dimensions:** 8.5 cm long

### Description

Two oval-shaped *bāzūbands* of steel, with two side hollow loops, designated to the insertion of fastening rope, each *bāzūband* is 8.5 cm long.<sup>99</sup> The upper *bāzūband* is inscribed with the phrase '*ḥasbunā Allah wā ni'ma al-wakīl*' (part of verse n°. 173 *sūrat āl- 'Imran*), while the lower one is inscribed with the phrase '*ni'ma al-mawlā wā ni'ma an-Naṣīr*' (part of verse n°. 40 *sūrat al-Anfal*), all are in *thulth* script.

### 3. A *Safavid* engraved silver-gilt amulet case (*bāzūband*) (Figure 4)

*(Published for the first time)*

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Safavid* dynasty

**Material and Technique:** Silver gilt- engraved inscription

**Conservation:** Bonhams, Auction 20833

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 56

**Dimensions:** 5.2 cm diameter

### Description

This is a circular-shaped amulet case (*bāzūband*) of gilded silver of 5.2 cm in diameter. It dates to the *Safavid* dynasty, precisely 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Two circular hinged lugs, hollowed with palmettoes motifs inside are attached to the two sides. This amulet case is adorned from both sides; the upper lid is adorned with a central rounded frame; where we can read subdivided into five lines inscribed in *nashī* script, surrounded by a frieze of scalloped semi-circular motifs crowned by palmettoes.<sup>100</sup> However, the base face displays a magic 4X4 squares surrounded by

inscriptions from all sides. The inscription on the upper lid is the names of the fourteen innocents<sup>101</sup> as follows:

*alahuma ṣalī ‘alā Muḥammad  
wa ‘Alī wa Fātima wa ‘l-Ḥasan wa ‘l-Ḥusain  
wa ‘Alī wa Muḥammad wa Ja‘far wa Mūsā  
wa ‘Alī wa Muḥammad wa ‘Alī wa ‘l-Ḥasan  
wa al-Ḥujja al-Qasīmī*

However, the base face displays undefined symbols accompanied with numbers as a talismanic formula. This is surrounded by the verse n°. 35 of *sūrat an-Nūr*.

The talismanic formula consists of repeated Arabic letters that have positive attributes in Arabic magic which are (*Hā’*, *‘ain*, *ṣad*, *mīm* and *wāw*), called “Letters of Light”, in this *bazūband*, the letter (*‘ain*) is repeated many times in a grid of sixteen squares, *‘ain* relates to a specific Name of God, “*‘Ālim al- ḡaib wa ‘l-ṣahāda*” (He who knows the Invisible and the Visible), a magic square composed of the letter *ḥā’* alleviates fear of the dark. It’s noteworthy to mention that the latter letter was usually written to destroy magic, to free one who is bound and to make difficult things easier.<sup>102</sup>

#### **4. A Safavid steel *bāzūband*, 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Figure 5)** (Published for the first time)

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Safavid* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Steel- inscription carved in high relief

**Conservation:** Bonhams, Auction 12051

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 526

**Dimensions:** 6.3 cm width

#### **Description**

This is a simple armband (*bāzūband*) of steel. It is composed of three plaques; the central one is the largest. Two small, filigreed lugs are attached to both sides, where a round braided rope is riveted.<sup>103</sup> The central plaque is inscribed with a part of the verse n°. 13 of *sūrat al-Ṣaff* in *nasta‘līq* script over a pierced (arabesque) ground saying:

*‘nasrun min Allah wa fathun qarīp’.*

The two side plaques are also inscribed with the name of *‘Alī* ﷺ.

#### **5. Two Safavid openwork steel *bāzūbands* (Figure 6)** (Published for the first time)

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Safavid* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Steel – Inscription in high -relief

**Conservation:** Bonhams, Auction 23436

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 87

**Dimensions:** 9.3 cm long

#### **Description**

Two *Safavid* armbands (*bāzūbands*) attributed to the *Safavid* dynasty; approximately from the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Each armband is composed of one

lobed plaque, with two hinges terminating with two hollowed lugs, each is totally 9.3 cm long.<sup>104</sup> Both armbands are inscribed with special *Shi'ite* phrases applied in *Dīwāni, thulth* protruding script. The upper armband is inscribed with the phrase '*la fata illā 'Alī'*', referring to the bravery of Imam '*Alī ibn 'Abī Ṭālib*'. The lower armband is inscribed with the phrase '*la saif illā dhu'l-faqār'*', referring to the famous sword of Imam '*Alī ibn 'Abī Ṭālib*' that Prophet *Muḥammad*, had given it to Imam '*Alī*' during the *ġazwa of Badr*.<sup>105</sup> These inscriptions are applied over an openwork plate riveted with brass pins over the steel ground. Two confronted fishes,<sup>106</sup> somewhat unique, are shown on the top and bottom of each *bāzūband's* plaque.

**6. A pair of Safavid cut steel *bāzūbands*, Persia, (Figure 7)**  
(Published for the first time)

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Safavid* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Steel, Gold, Inscription chiseled in high- relief

**Conservation:** Sothebys, Auction L12220

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 555

**Dimensions:** 8 cm width

**Description**

This is a pair of cut steel armbands (*bāzūbands*) attributed to the *Safavid* dynasty, almost the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. These *bāzūbands* are made particularly for *Muḥammad Qulī Hān*.<sup>107</sup> Each armband (*bāzūband*) is composed of a circular plain plaque, with an openwork plate riveted on with brass or gold pins. Two hollowed hinges are attached to the terminals of each armband; the whole width of each *bāzūband* is 8 cm.<sup>108</sup> Each armband's circular plaque is divided into four lines in cursive script.<sup>109</sup> The two *bāzūband's* inscriptions are as follows:

*be-jehat-e sarkar-e 'alijah*  
*mu'alla jaygah sahibi*  
*Muḥammad Qulī Hān be-etmam*  
*rasid raqimahu Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ*

'It was completed for the one of exalted rank, with elevated position, my master *Muḥammad Qulī Hān*. Its scribe, *Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ* '

This is one of the famous quatrains of the *Sūfī* poet *Abū Sa'id Abī'l Ḥair*.<sup>110</sup>

**7. Two Safavid cut steel armbands, Persia, 1109 A.H./1697-8 A.D. (Figure 8)**  
(Published for the first time)

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Safavid* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Steel - inscription amongst leafy scrolls

**Conservation:** Sothebys, Auction L12223

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 190

**Dimensions:** 17.7 cm length

**Description**

These two steel armbands are dated back to 1109 A.H./ 1697-8 A.D. Each armband is 17.7 cm length, composed of a central lobed plaque flanked by two smaller ones.

Two- palmettoes shaped loops are attached to the terminals. Both armbands are inscribed over a leafy scrolls background.<sup>111</sup> The first large plaque is bearing the first part of *al-Šahāda* ‘*lā-illah-illāh Allah*’, the two side plaques are displaying invocation to God; the right-hand side is inscribed with the phrase ‘*yā fattāh*’, the left one is inscribed with the phrase ‘*yā ma‘būd*’ all are in *thulth* script. The lower armband’s central plaque is displaying the second half of *al- Šahāda* ‘*Muhammad rasūl Allah*’, the two side plaques are displaying invocation to *Imām ‘Alī*; the right-hand side one is inscribed with the phrase ‘*yā ‘Alī*’ all are in *thulth* script, the left one is inscribed with the maker’s name *Kamāl al-Dīn* only in *nasta‘līq* script. These are used for both decorative and talismanic purposes.

It was stated that using the invocations to God as ‘*yā fattāh*’ and ‘*yā ma‘būd*’ together is unusual. In addition, all the plaques of the two armbands are inscribed in *thulth* script, except one is in *nasta‘līq*, thus it was suggested to be detached and wrongly reassembled.<sup>112</sup>

### 8- Three plaques silver *bāzūband* (Figures 9 A- B)

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Safavid* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** silver- Inscription engraved over an incised background

#### Description

This is an arm amulet of silver, dated back to 12<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and attributed to Iran. It is composed of three plaques; the central one is octagonal, bordered with two undetermined shaped plaques. The border band is inscribed with the verses n<sup>os</sup>. 51- 52 from *sūrat al-Qalam* in *nashī* script. The octagonal plaque is occupied by a central roundel containing verse n<sup>o</sup>. 13 of *sūrat aṣ-Ṣaf* in *nasta‘līq* script over an incised ground. The two side plaques are decorated with frames containing five names from the Beautiful names of *Allah*, of which one written twice. In addition, both side plaques are inscribed with *Ayat al-kursī* (verses n<sup>os</sup>. 255-256 of *sūrat al-Baqara*). They are attached on two fringes ending in two tassels with flowering bud shaped mount.<sup>113</sup>

### 9- Armband Amulet (*bāzūband*) Inscribed “In the Name of God” (Figure 10) (Published for the first time)

**Date:** Late 12 century A.H./ 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D. – *Qajar* dynasty

**Material and Technique:** Steel with pierced decoration and inscription

**Conservation:** Art Institute of Chicago

**Item (piece) N<sup>o</sup>:** 1932.157

**Dimensions:** 3.6 cm long, 6.3 cm width, 0.8 cm thick

#### Description

This is an oval shaped armband amulet (*bāzūband*) of steel. It dates to 1248 A.H./ 1832 A.D., thus attributed to Iran- *Qajar* dynasty. Two hollow-shaped loops are riveted on both sides, where rose-colored rope is attached to be used in fastening the armband. It displays a simple inscription in *thulth* script as follows” *Bismallah al-*

*Rahmān al-Rahīm* الرحيم الرحمن الله بسم الله' flanked by two words saying: 'amal Hasan عمل حسن'. This inscription is applied over intertwined floral 'Arabesque' background.<sup>114</sup>

**10- Circular-shaped amulet case (*bāzūband*) with *Qur'ānic* inscription (Figure 11) (Published for the first time)**

**Date:** Early 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Qajar* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Silver – incised and engraved decoration and inscription

**Conservation:** Ashmolean Museum – Youssef Jameel Centre for Islamic & Asian Art

**Item (piece) N°:** EA2012.95

**Dimensions:** 1.5 cm height, 9.1 cm wide, 5.9 cm diameter

**Description**

This is a circular amulet case (*bāzūband*) of silver with two almond shaped side lugs. It is attributed to Iran from the *Qajar* dynasty. It is engraved with incised decoration.<sup>115</sup> This elaborated box used as amulet case was employed to store miniature copy of the Holy *Qur'ān*, or selected verses to bestow protection. This *bāzūband's* upper face is inscribed with *al-Basmallah* in the center, surrounded with two outer circles; the inner one displays (the verse n°. 111 of *sūrat al-Tawba*) that talking about the paradise as a reward for whom fight 'jīhād' for the victory of God's religion. While the outer circle is inscribed with the verses n<sup>os</sup>. 51-52 from *sūrat al-Qalam* talking about the bad effect of the Evil Eye. While the reverse face is engraved with a central embellished circle displaying six foliating petals penetrated with trilobed floral leaves. A braided frieze with semicircular tiny pendentives is adorning the outer frame of this reverse face.

**11- Circular-shaped amulet case (*bāzūband*) with *Qur'ānic* inscription (Figure 12) (Published for the first time)**

**Date:** Early 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Qajar* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Silver – incised and engraved decoration and inscription

**Conservation:** Ashmolean Museum – Youssef Jameel Centre for Islamic & Asian Art

**Item (piece) N°:** EA2012.118

**Dimensions:** 1.8 cm height, 8 cm width, 5.1 cm diameter

**Description**

This is a circular shaped *bāzūband* in the form of amulet case of silver with two hollowed almond shaped lugs with terminals are interlaced to the inside. It is attributed to the *Qajar* dynasty. This form of *bāzūbands* was used to preserve a miniature copy of the Holy *Qur'ān* or paper scrolls with special verses of *Qur'ān* that are famed with their use as protective talismans. Such type of talismanic objects was tied to the arm by strings.<sup>116</sup> Both sides of this *bāzūbands* are incised with stamped decoration. The upper face is adorned with a protruding octagonal star medallion

adorned with trilobed floral leaves and centered with a circle occupied by *al-Basmallah* in *thuluth* script. The outer edge is occupied by part of *sūrat an-Nās*, the last of the Holy *Qur'ān*, invoking God's protection from *satanic* temptation. The reverse or base face of this *bāzūband* is adorned with six floral shaped lobes in the center, with a thin zigzag frieze adorning the outer frame.

**12- Five silver octagonal Qajar amulet cases (*bāzūbands*) Iran, (Figures 13 A- E) (Published for the first time)**

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Qajar* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Silver - incised and engraved decoration and inscription

**Conservation:** Christies- Auction 5830

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 281

**Dimensions:** 5 cm diameter

**Description**

This is a group of octagonal amulet cases (*bāzūbands*) attributed to Iran, 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D., all are of silver with two side loops, which are different from one to another, the *bāzūbands* A and E had hollow semicircular side loops, B and D had hollow almond shaped loops, while *bāzūband* C is unique: with rectangular shaped loops. Each *bāzūband* is about 5 cm in diameter.<sup>117</sup> As mentioned before, such type is of talismanic nature, that meant to bestow protection on its wearer through the outside inscriptions, the miniature copy of the Holy *Qur'ān*, or only paper scrolls with special verses of *Qur'ān*, all kept inside these box shaped amulets. The upper face of each *bāzūband* is inscribed with verses of the Holy *Qur'ān*.

[Figure 13 A] It is embellished with three octagonal frames; the two outer ones are inscribed with the verses n<sup>os</sup>. 51-52 of *sūrat al-Qalam* beside the phrase '*fa-Allah Ḥair ḥāfazan*', while the smaller inner octagonal frame is occupied by the phrase '*nasrun min Allah wa fathun qarīb*'.

[Figure 13 B] It is embellished with two octagonal frames; the interior one is occupied with *al-Basmallah*, while the outer is probably occupied by *sūrat an-Nās* but unfortunately it is not clear enough to be sure.

[Figure 13 C] This *bāzūband* is adorned with two octagonal frames, the outer octagon is occupied by part of the Holy *Qur'ān* verses saying: '*wa yaqulūn inahu lamajnūn wa ma huwa illā zikrun lil 'ālamīn*'.<sup>118</sup>

[Figure 13 D] This *bāzūband* is adorned with two octagonal frames, the outer octagon ground is filled with scattered floral leaves, while the inner octagonal frame is occupied by a lobed shape with the phrase '*nasrun min Allah wa fathun qarīb*'.<sup>119</sup>

[Figure 13 E] It is embellished with three octagonal frames; occupied by the verses n<sup>os</sup>. 7-8 of *sūrat al-Baqara*. The larger outer octagonal began with *al-Basmallah* and the verse n<sup>o</sup>. 7 saying '*Ḥatm Allah 'alā qulūbihim wa 'alā sam'ihim wa 'alā 'absārihim ġišāwa wa lahum..*', the next octagonal frame complete the verse n<sup>o</sup>. 7 and part of verse n<sup>o</sup>. 8 '*azabun 'azīm wa min an-Nās man yaqūl 'āmanā bi-Allah ..*', the

verse is completed in the central octagonal frame as follows; ‘*wa al-yawm al-Aḥir wa ma hum bim..*’, the word *bi-mu’minīn* is incomplete.

### 13- Parcel-gilt silver octagonal amulet-case (*bāzūband*), Iran (Figures 14 A- B)

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Qajar* dynasty

**Material and Technique:** Gold, silver – inscription engraved in gilded section over the silver case.

**Conservation:** Michael Backman Ltd.

**Item (piece) N<sup>o</sup>:** 5745

**Dimensions:** 4.7 cm diameter, 1 cm thick

#### Description

This is an engraved silver amulet case (*bāzūband*), partially gilded, dated back to 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D., attributed to the *Qajar* dynasty. It is octagonal shaped amulet case (*bāzūband*) of 4.7 cm in diameter and 1 cm thick.<sup>120</sup> The octagonal box is terminating with two hollow semicircular loops on both sides, where a dark rose cord, with gold thread and elaborate knots, is attached. This cord is used to fasten this device on the upper arm, usually for soldiers. Due to the talismanic nature of this device, it often contained a miniature copy of the Holy *Qur’ān*, or selected verses of it. The slightly domed cover is embellished with eight gilded sections each engraved in *Farsi* Arabic with one of the 99 names of God (Figure 14 A).

The reverse (lower) face of this *bāzūband* is engraved with a solar emblem, an emblem that was used in some parts of northern India, and either Persia (Figure 14 B).<sup>121</sup>

### 14- Inlaid and enameled armlet (*bāzūband*), Iran, (Figures 15 A- B)

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Qajar* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Gold- inlaid and enameled with cords of cotton and metal thread

**Conservation:** The David Collection- Copenhagen- Denmark

**Item (piece) N<sup>o</sup>:** 23/2010

**Dimensions:** 8.3 cm high, 6.5 cm width

#### Description

This is a gold armlet (*bāzūband*) inlaid and enameled, attributed to Iran from the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This armband had two side openwork loops with a cotton cord with metallic thread attached. As mentioned before, this cord was used to fasten the armband on the upper arm for talismanic purposes.<sup>122</sup>

Armlets were worn by both men and women in India and Iran since the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Thus, the purpose may be differed from case to another, between protection and adornment as well. The lavishly adorned armbands were designated particularly for princes and the elite, these were formed of numerous gemstones, and were worn as jeweled bands.

According to the inscriptions, the upper face of this armlet (Figure 15 A) depicts prince *Tahmasp Mirza*, grandson of the grandson of the ruling *Fath'Alī Šāh*. The name of the enamellist is applied on the armlet's left side as *'Alī ġulām Ḥanizād*. The reverse side (Figure 15 B) is as well lavishly adorned with colorful -pink, light blue and white with green leaves-flowers over a golden ground. This armlet (*bāzūband*) was almost possessed by one of the subjects of the *Qajar* family in this Iranian province.<sup>123</sup>

### 15- Three- part engraved silver Talismanic *bāzūbands*, Iran, (Figure 16)

**Date:** Late 13<sup>th</sup> – early 14<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Qajar* dynasty

**Material and Technique:** Silver- Decoration and inscription engraved

**Conservation:** Michael Backman Ltd.

**Item (piece) N°:** 3503

**Dimensions:** 12.5 cm length

#### Description

This is a silver armband (*bāzūband*) composed of three parts, it is attributed to Iran from the 13<sup>th</sup> –early 14<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>124</sup> Two semicircular hollow loops are attached to each side; these are designated for the insertion of some sort of cords for fastening on the upper arm. This *bāzūband* is composed of a central lozenge-shaped box with a cover kept closed by a small silver latch, the central piece is flanked with two side silver scalloped sheets, the upper face of the three plates is embellished with talismanic inscriptions from the Holy *Qur'ān*.<sup>125</sup> Small pieces of paper with protective *Qur'ānic* verses would have been kept inside.

### 16- A gold carnelian engraved *Qajar* talismanic *bāzūband* – Iran, (Figure 17) (Published for the first time)

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Qajar* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Gold – Inscription engraved on carnelian

**Conservation:** Christies – Auction Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 72

**Dimensions:** 20 cm long

#### Description

This is an elaborated *Qajar bāzūband* composed of five panels of carnelian, set in gold filigree mounts with suspended pearls.<sup>126</sup> Each panel is engraved with small lines of *nashī* script as follows: from right to left:

The first one from the right is occupied by the verses of *sūrat al- Ihlās*, the outer part of the second is adorned by 'nidā 'Alī' quatrain as follows:

*nādī 'Alā, nādī 'Alī, nādī 'Alī, nādī 'Alīyyan mazhar al-'ajā'ib, taḡīdahu 'awnan lakā fī'l-nawā'ib, Kullu hammin wa ḡammin, sayanj-i 'Alī Bi wilayatika, yā 'Alī! yā 'Alī! yā 'Alī!*

The central panel holds the verse n°. 87 of *sūrat al- Anbiyā'*, the fourth panel is decorated by the verses of *sūrat al- Fātiḥa* and the last one is a replica of the first with the verses of *sūrat al- Iḥlās*.

**17- A gold carnelian engraved Qajar talismanic *bāzūband* – Iran, (Figures 18 A-B) (Published for the first time)**

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Qajar* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Gold – Inscription engraved on carnelian

**Conservation:** Christies – Auction Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 72

**Dimensions:** 10.4 cm

This is an oval *bāzūband*, made of carnelian and surrounded by small quatrefoils and contained within a cartouche, set in a gold mount with cusped edges and two *palmettoes* shaped loops attachment. The carnelian holds an elegant *nasta'liq Qur'ānic* inscription of *sūrat an-Nās*, (Figure 18 A).

The back is engraved with a talismanic grid of 49 squares filled with magical letters, bordered on each side by a line giving the name of the patron, the maker, and the date of the mount.

The upper line on the mount around the edge, is adorned with the following inscription:

*'ḥasab al-'amr nawwab-ī a'zam Husain 'Alī Mīrzā farmanfarma hukmran-e velayat-e fars be-ṣinā'at rashīd adāma Allah dawlatahu wa jalālatahu wa shawkatahu ṣana'ahu Muḥammad Ḥasan Šīrāzī sanat 1221'.*

It was made on the order of the greatest deputy, *Ḥusain 'Alī Mīrzā Farmanfarma*, Governor of the Province of Fars, may God perpetuate his wealth, splendor and glory. *Muḥammad Ḥasan Šīrāzī* made it in year 1221 A.H./ 1806-07 A.D., (Figure 18 B).<sup>127</sup>

From the inscription we know that this talisman was made for the son of *Fath' Alī Šāh Qajar*. He was a long-term governor of Fars and briefly the self-styled king of Persia.

**18- A Qajar pierced silver *bāzūband*, Iran, late 19th century (Figure 19) (Published for the first time)**

**Date:** Late 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.- *Qajar* dynasty.

**Material and Technique:** Silver – pierced inscription on a floral background

**Conservation:** Auction Fr- Ventes aux enchères d'objet d'art – France

**Item (piece) N°:** Lot 454

**Dimensions:** 7 cm diameter

**Description**

This is an oval- shaped silver arm bracelet, adorned with four lines of *Qur'ānic* inscriptions in *thuluth* script, showing the verse n°. 256 of *Sūrat al-Baqarah* known as '*Ayat al-Kursī*' the throne, over a background of spiral arabesques, this armlet has two side openwork loops with a motif of trilobed florets.<sup>128</sup>

### Analytical study

- In terms of the survival of amulets, few samples can be attributed to before the 6<sup>th</sup> or the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H./ 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.<sup>129</sup>
- The magical vocabulary found on the earliest surviving examples reflect pre-Islamic magical symbols; of a complex design composed of a scorpion, rampant lion or dog, a canopy of stars, and a frame of pseudo-*kūfī* writing that occurs on Iranian amulet objects of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.H./ 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. or early 4<sup>th</sup> century A.H./10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>130</sup>
- From the mid of 6<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D., other elements prevailed, these are verses from the Holy *Qur'ān* and invocations to God or revered figures in Islam: the prophet *Muḥammad* ﷺ, Hebrew Prophet mentioned in the Holy *Qur'ān*, Moses (*Mūsā*) ﷺ, Abrahām (*Ibrāhīm*) ﷺ, Ishmael (*Ismā'il*) ﷺ, and Solomon (*Sulaimān*) ﷺ, the names of the seven sleepers of Ephesus, whose story is told in the Holy *Qur'ān*, the names of the Archangels (*Jibta'il* (Gabriel), *Mīkā'il*, *Isrāfīl*, and *'Azrā'il*) were also used.<sup>131</sup>
- Furthermore, the 'Beautiful names of God', or the 'ninety-nine names of God' whether written in alphabet or transformed into numerals through the use of abjad alphabet,<sup>132</sup> besides the names of the Prophet *Muḥammad* ﷺ and the *Shī'ī imāms* are among the widely dignified magical vocabulary.<sup>133</sup>
- In the Muslim world, talismans were to bear *Qur'ānic* verses, images of prophets, astrological signs, and religious stories.
- There is a strong belief in the power of any talisman inscribed with the word '*Allah*' in protecting its wearer from any evil.
- Talismanic objects were carried in a pocket, or rolled and placed in an amulet case, or to be worn as clothing.<sup>134</sup>
- Muslims regard the whole *Qur'ān* as a powerful amulet, though, certain *sūras* are considered of special importance; of these verse n<sup>o</sup>. 256 of *sūrat al-Baqarah* known as '*Ayat al-Kursī*' (the throne verse), the last two verses n<sup>os</sup>. 128, 129 of *sūrat al-Tawbah* also known as '*Ayat al-'Arš*', *sūrat al-Fātiha*, the short *sūras* n<sup>o</sup>. CXII known as *sūrat al-Ihlās*, *sūra* n<sup>o</sup>. CXIII known as *sūrat al-Falaq* and n<sup>o</sup>. CXIV known as *sūrat an-Nās*.<sup>135</sup>
- The written story of prophets was, as well, employed as a protective tool. However, the representations of certain prophets are more effective than others, as prophet Solomon for instance, due to his fame with wisdom and his ability to talk to animals and supernatural beings. Thus, his six-pointed star was famed to be an apotropaic seal occurred on several talismanic objects.<sup>136</sup>
- Wearing amulets bearing texts of the Holy *Qur'ān* is regarded as a religious habit, that placed the wearer into communication with *Allah*, so that *Allah* may afford his protection. This practice of wearing amulets of this kind is entitled under the Harmless or White Magic.<sup>137</sup>

### Materials and techniques

- Several materials were used in making *bāzūbands*, the most common were, steel, iron, besides brass and copper, but in lesser extent. In addition, silver and gold were widely used especially under the Qajars.
- Two stages of production can be distinguished; the first covering the *Safavid* dynasty, from the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and the second stage is related to the *Qajar* dynasty covering the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.
- The *Safavids* mostly used yellow copper that was very shiny like gold, also, they used the combination of red copper and tin like silver.
- It was in this age that the artists excelled in lattice work and were able to bring it to the fullest, creating masterpieces.
- Such objects are engraved all-over with patterns of spiraling split-leaves or zigzag bands, besides lozenge-shaped cartouches filled with vegetation arranged to emphasize the sleek contours of the form.
- During the *Qajar* dynasty, most of the *bāzūbands* were made of silver and gold, however, a new stage of decoration took place where high relief inscriptions, enamel, and precious stones were largely in use.<sup>138</sup>
- The main method used to shape the *bāzūbands* was Casting (molding), during this process, the *bāzūband* was shaped by pouring the metal splash into a casting mold.
- Many decorative techniques were used; such as engraving, latticework, forging, damascening, inlay, and enameling.
  - **Etching and engraving:** in this method, the artist creates troughs and ridges on the *bāzūband*'s surface by scraping with special etching tools.
  - **Latticework:** It consists of an open framework consisting of a criss- crossed pattern of strips in the metal, created by crossing the strips to form a grid or weave, a purely decorative method used on *bāzūbands*, especially to forge a floral background, over which another layer, would be added.<sup>139</sup>
  - **Inlay (Damascening)** in this method, the metal is corrugated by gold and silver, also known as “damascening”; the term "damask", in Arabic "*takfūt*", refers to a technique producing decorative effects by contrasting the colors of the different metals chosen. These effects are obtained by encrusting by hammering threads, usually gold or silver, small plates or sheets of metal, in a different metal background, usually copper or steel, on which grooves and surfaces have been engraved beforehand.<sup>140</sup>
  - **Enameling:** Enamel is a melting material, composed of different minerals (silica, kaolin and metallic oxides), used to paint and decorate gold and silver *bāzūbands*, by special glazed color that is fixed on highest temperature.<sup>141</sup>

- The inlay and enameling techniques were rarely applied on *Safavid bāzūbands*, however, during the *Qajar* dynasty, especially in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D., they were much elaborated and largely in use.<sup>142</sup>

### Decoration

- A variety of floral and geometrical motifs were used in decorating *bāzūbands*, in addition to the inscriptions considered pivotal on *bāzūbands* due to its function.
- **Foral motifs** were of undeniable importance, flowers (especially roses and irises) and foliage, were both used as central motifs and background supports (Figures 6- 8), rare are the pieces without floral decoration (Figure 15 B). Painting flowers as an independent and unique way in *Qajar* age defines new source of inspiration, the plant motifs in the shadow of naturalism in this age has changed with the intrusion of European influence on art, therefore, realistic designs can be depicted like rose, clove, acacia and lily flowers.<sup>143</sup>

### Iconography (figurative motifs)

- Under the *Safavids*, we can depict the artistic freedom in representing figurative motifs like human, animals and plants, this characteristic is considered of particular importance in *Qajar* art, recognized by the richness of its iconography; the figures are placed in medallions, with rounded angles, polylobed, pointed or in rhombus, and defined by a vividly colored background (Figure 15A) .
- It is noteworthy that in the *Qajar* dynasty, the decor is characterized by an exuberant style and a flamboyant use of color, with a European taste during its second half, where technological mastery made some elaborated forms of decoration possible.<sup>144</sup>

### Calligraphy

- Besides the floral motifs, a dominant part of the ornamentation is confined to calligraphy, *bāzūbands* were often decorated with a wide variety of *Qur'ānic* verses and pious invocations, which functioned as a call for protection and victory, while offering visually pleasing ornaments.
- Under the *Safavids*, Arabic verses in honour of 'Alī ﷺ, blessings sought from the *Imāms* and the owner's name can be noticed, an aspect that will still be in use under the *Qajar* dynasty.
- Inscriptions of the *Safavid* period can be distinguished from those of the *Qajar* period as from the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D., inscriptions show that the most common used script was *nasta'liq* and the quality of execution was significantly inferior to that in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D., nevertheless, *thuluth* and *nashī* scripts,<sup>145</sup> were mostly used in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.
- The arrangement of the inscriptions on *bāzūbands* changes. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the words of the inscription fill the entire space, leaving no gaps between letters, along the line and elements of floral decoration appear between words and letters. The tendency for ornamentation to occupy the background of inscriptions intensifies in the 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D., when the background is filled by

twisting stems with leaves and flowers. It is also noticeable that this background is worked exclusively in hatching, this technical process is simplified, under the *Qajar*, from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D. onwards, the background to the ornamentation and inscriptions is no longer worked in hatching; it is punched, which clearly speeded up the production process, but also simplified it.<sup>146</sup>

### Conclusion

- Characteristics of Islamic art reveal the continuity of traditions, revival, besides the appearance of new artistic forms, variety, and unity.<sup>147</sup>
- The amulets and talismans of Muslim epochs based mainly on invocations to God, through employing *Qur'ānic* Quotations and prayers. Thus, it differs from the Byzantine, Roman, early Iranian, and other pre-Islamic cultures.<sup>148</sup>
- This world-wide belief in amulets and talismanic devices might have been related to the nature of races to bestow self- protection. As a result, it can be said that the use of amulets and talismans was, and still, universal.
- Different materials were used in mounting *Safavid* and *Qajar bāzūbands*, steel, silver and rarely gold were the most used materials.
- We can deduct from this study that the use of specific material was most probably related to the rank of its holder, steel talismans which were largely in use were designated for army soldiers, nevertheless, silver might be used for high ranks army officers and gold was mainly used for princes or governors.
- Most of the *bāzūbands* bear inscriptions, whether it is a *Qur'ānic* verse or an invocation for 'Alīؑ, those invocations, rooted in the *Shī'ī* belief, held a great importance and value on *bāzūbands*, since they guarantee a sort of salvation and victory during hard times and wars.
- Some specific *Qur'ānic* verses were used on *bāzūbands* like 'Victory from God and conquest is near' which reflects enthusiasm and protection to the soldiers in battles.
- Magical formula took their share on the *Safavid* and *Qajar bāzūbands*, Arabic letters' ciphers symbolizing protection or representing one on the 'Greatest Names' of God were widely in use.
- Different kinds of scripts were used on *bāzūbands*, like *nasta'liq*, widely in use under the *Safavids*, along with *nashī* and *thulth* scripts that slowly replaced *nasta'liq* script under the *Qajars*.
- Regardless of the kind of script used on *bāzūbands*, it is noticeable that the inscriptions were stiffer, proliferated and more schematized under the *Safavids* in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.
- During the 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the floral decoration was divided among interlocking and overlapping compartments, but the motifs are abstracted, and the calligraphy is more prominent.
- These elements of floral ornamentation found in the *Safavid* period are either absent in 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D. objects, or they are treated differently. On the other

hand, images of people, animals, become more common, being, indeed, the typical decorative elements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D., with an elapsing vibe of European inspiration especially in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

- Some *bāzūbands* had hexagonal shape, which may refer to the eight gates of the Paradise.
- It is evident that there was a difference in mounting, materials used and decorations of *bāzūbands* made under the *Safavid* and those made under the *Qajar* dynasty, since the latter dynasty offer a wide range of silver and gold *bāzūbands*, much more elaborated than those of the *Safavids*.
- Some elaborated *Qajar bāzūbands*, dedicated to the *Šāhs* bore their images like the example of the *bāzūband* made for *Fath ‘Alī Šāh*.

### Figures



(Figure 1) Ancient magical alphabet of *Ibn Waḥšīah*  
*Ibn Waḥšīah (Aḥmad Ibn- ‘Alī): Kitāb Šauq al-mustahām fī ma ‘rifat rumūz al-aqlām,*  
 Constantinople, 1791, p. 32



(Figure 2) A Large *Safavid* engraved hematite octagonal talisman (*bāzūband*)  
<https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-4979750/?intObjectID=4979750&lid=1>  
Accessed: March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 (First Publishing)



(Figure 3) A pair of *Safavid* steel *bāzūbands*, Persia, 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.  
<https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/24198/lot/103/?category=grid>  
Accessed: March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, 23:45 UTC (First Publishing)



(Figure 4) A *Safavid* engraved silver-gilt amulet-case (*bāzūband*), Persia, 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

<https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20833/lot/56/>

Accessed March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, 23:55 UTC (First Publishing)



(Figure 5) A *Safavid* steel *bāzūband*, Persia, 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

<https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/12051/lot/526/>

Accessed: March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, 00:07 UTC (First Publishing)

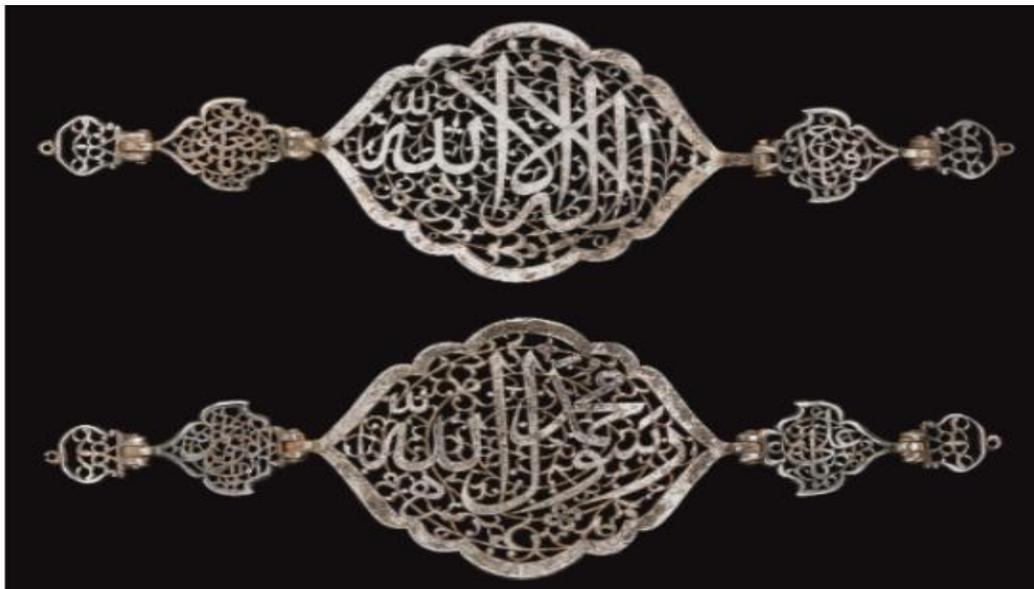


(Figure 6) Two *Safavid* openwork steel *bāzūbands*, Persia, 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Private UK collection, <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/23436/lot/87/>

Accessed: March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, 00:14 UTC (First Publishing)



(Figure 7) A pair of *Safavid* cut steel *bāzūbands*, Persia, 11<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.  
<https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2012/arts-of-the-islamic-world/lot.555.html> Accessed March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 202, 00:30 UTC



(Figure 8) Two *Safavid* cut steel armbands, Persia, 1109 A.H./1697-8 A.D.  
James W. A., and Brian J.J.: “Persian Steel: The Tanavoli Collection”, p. 264  
<https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2012/arts-of-the-islamic-world-2012/lot.190.html> Accessed: March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, 23:34 UTC



A



B

(Figures 9 A-B) Silver *bāzūband*, Iran, 12<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Fodor, A.: *Sufism and Magic- Amulets from the Islamic World*, 129, fig. 54



(Figure 10) Armband Amulet (*bāzūband*) inscribed “In the Name of God” <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/92944/armband-amulet-bāzūband-inscribed-in-the-name-of-god> Accessed: March 11, 2021, 3:14 UTC.



(Figure 11) Circular- shaped amulet-case (*bāzūband*) with *Qur'ānic* inscription  
<http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/object/EA2012.95> Accession n°. EA2012.95, Accessed:  
March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, 22:29 UTC (First Publishing).



(Figure 12) Circular- shaped amulet case (*bāzūband*) with *Qur'ānic* inscription  
<http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/object/EA2012.118>  
Accession n°. EA2012.118 Accessed: March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, 22:45 UTC (First Publishing)



(Figures 13 A-E) Five silver octagonal *Qajar* amulet cases (*bāzūbands*) Iran, 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

<https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-five-silver-octagonal-qajar-arm-amulet-cases-5186628/>

Accessed March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, 00:35 UTC (First Publishing).



A



B

(Figures 14 A-B) Parcel-gilt silver octagonal amulet-case (*bāzūband*), northern India or Iran  
13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

<https://www.michaelbackmanltd.com/object/parcel-gilt-engraved-silver-octagonal-amulet-case-bāzūband/> accessed: March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, 00:51 UTC



A

B

(Figures 15 A-B) Inlaid and enameled armlet (*bāzūband*), Iran, 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

<https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/materials/metal/art/23-2010>

Inv. n°. 23/2010 accessed: March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 22:13 UTC

Kjeld von Folsach: *Flora Islamica: Plantemotiver i Islamisk kunst*, cat.n°. 61.



(Figure 16) Three- part engraved silver talismanic *bāzūbands*, Iran, 13<sup>th</sup> - early 14<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

[https://www.michaelbackmanltd.com/archived\\_objects/silver-persian-bāzūband/](https://www.michaelbackmanltd.com/archived_objects/silver-persian-bāzūband/)

Record n°. 3505. Accessed: March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, 00:56 UTC

Bala Krishnan, U.R., and Kumar, M.S.: *Dance of the Peacock: Jewelry Traditions of India*, 1999.

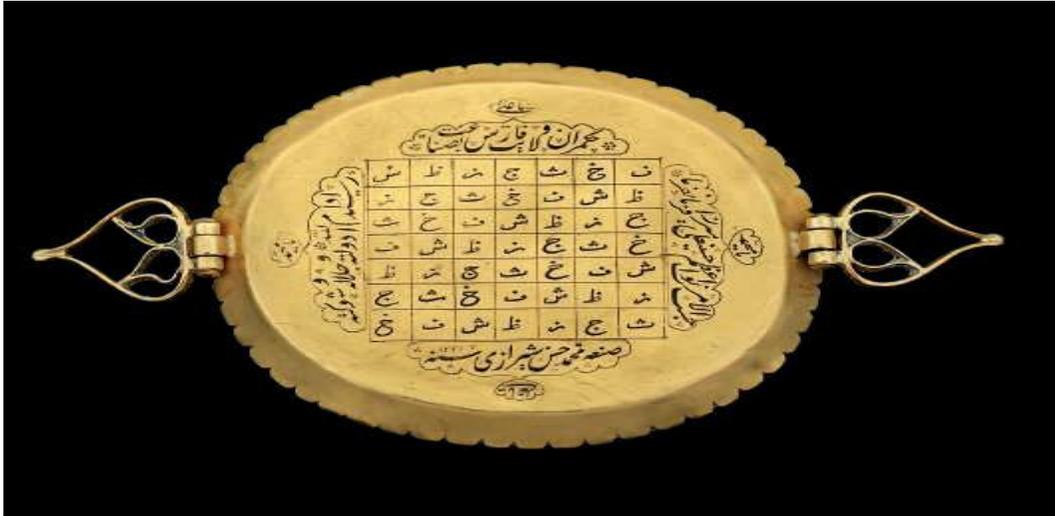


(Figure 17) Five panels gold carnelian engraved *Qajar bāzūband*- Iran, 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H. / century A.D.

<https://www.lotsearch.de/lot/a-qajar-talismanic-bazuband-25543117?page=3&orderBy=lottitle&order=DESC> Accessed: April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, 22:30 UTC.  
(First Publishing)



A



B

(Figures 18 A- B) Gold mounted carnelian engraved *Qajar bāzūband* - Iran, 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds, Christies Auction Catalogue, 21 April 2016, Lot. 127.



(Figure 19) *Qajar bazūband* – Silver pierced armband - Iran, late 13<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

<https://www.auction.fr/fr/lot/bazuband-qajar-iran-fin-xixe-siecle-bracelet-de-bras-en-argent-ajoure-de-17290160>

<sup>1</sup>. People of Indo-European origin Aryan, name originally given to a people who were said to speak an archaic Indo-European language and who were thought to have settled in prehistoric times in ancient Iran and the northern Indian subcontinent. Britannica, The Editors of *Encyclopedia*. "Aryan". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 27 May. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aryan>. Accessed 15 May 2021 00:45 UTC.

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<sup>3</sup>. Farazmand, A. "Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Shia Radicalism, Revolution, and National Character": In: *International Journal on Group Rights*, vol. 3, n°. 3, 1995, p. 227–257. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/24674471](http://www.jstor.org/stable/24674471). Accessed 24 Dec. 2020 18:20 UTC.

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- <sup>82</sup>. Gonella, J.: “Magic spolia in medieval Islamic architecture of northern Syria”, *Muqarnas*, 27, 2010, p. 103–120.
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- *Ibn Waḥṣīyah (Aḥmad Ibn-‘Alī): Kitāb Ṣauq al-mustahām fī ma‘rifat rumūz al-aqlām*, Constantinople, 1791, p. 30, 32.
- <sup>84</sup>. Emile, S. S.: “Magic and Islam”, Vol. I, p. 86,110.
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- <sup>93</sup>. Donaldson, B. A.: *The Wild Rue: A Study of Muhammadan Magic*, p. 48.
- <sup>94</sup>. *Dhu’l Faqār* is the famous sword that Prophet *Muḥammad* peace be upon him, had given it to *Imām ‘Alī* during the *ḡazwa of Badr*.  
- Porter, V., Saif, L. and Emilie, S. S.: “Medieval Islamic Amulets, Talismans, and Magic”, p. 546.
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- <sup>98</sup>. <https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-4979750/?intObjectID=4979750&lid=1> Accessed: March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. 11:30 UTC.
- <sup>99</sup>. <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/24198/lot/103/?category=grid> accessed: March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 23:45 UTC.
- <sup>100</sup>. <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20833/lot/56/> Accessed March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 23:55 UTC.

<sup>101</sup>. The fourteen innocents, '*al-Ma'šūmūn al-'Arba'at 'Ašar'*'; Persian: چهارده معصومین, in Twelver *Shī'a* Islam are the Islamic prophet *Muhammad*, his daughter *Fātima az-Zahrā*, and the Twelve *Imāms*, all are infallible under their theological concept. Accordingly, they are to avoid doing sin, which is regarded as a miraculous gift from God. The infallible is believed to follow only God's desire in their actions because of their supreme righteousness, consciousness, and love for God. Some Twelver *Shī'a* believe the Fourteen Infallible are superior to the rest of creation and to the other major prophets.

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<sup>103</sup>. <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/12051/lot/526/> Accessed: March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 00:07 UTC

<sup>104</sup>. Private UK collection, <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/23436/lot/87/> Accessed: March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 00:14 UTC (first Publishing)

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<sup>106</sup>. The representation of the fish had its signification in the Coptic art where it symbolized the Christ and the creative force, in the Islamic art, it was abstracted from that religious meaning, and was used to, sometimes, symbolize eternity, life, resurrection and the good.

- Wilson, E.: *Islamic Designs for Artists and Craftspeople*, Dover publication, New York, 1998, p. 111.

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- Mātī, R.: *Bilād Fāris fī Azmat al- Inḥidār al- Šafawī wa Suqūṭ Ašfahān*, T. B. Turis, 2011, p. 214.

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<sup>110</sup>. *Abu Sa'īd Abul Ḥaīr* is an *Aš'arī Sūfī* and mystic who was born in 375 A.H. in *Maihana*, a village in Northern Khorasan. (357-440 A.H.). He was an expert in sciences of interpretation, *Ḥadiṭ*, *Fiqh* and *Sufism* and miracles are attributed to him. Many scholars of *ḥadiṭ* and *Sufism* traditions had received their permissions to recite *ḥadiṭs* from *Abu Sa'īd*. Several poems are attributed to him in a series called '*Abu Sa'īd's* quatrains', nonetheless, what is certain is that only two quatrains and two verses are truly of him. For *Abu Sa'īd's* good ability in poetry, hence, people have attributed to him romantic and mystical poetry as they also did to Omar Khayyam. *Abu Sa'īd* finally died in *Maihana* and was buried right there in 440 A.H.

- Kamaladdini, S. M.: "A newly found edition of "forty positions" by *Abu Sa'īd Abul Ḥaīr*", In: *International letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* (ILSHS), vol. 54, Sci Press, Ltd, Switzerland, 2015, pp 34-39

<sup>111</sup>. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2012/arts-of-the-islamic-world-2012/lot.190.html> Accessed: March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, 23:34 UTC.

<sup>112</sup>. James W. A., and Brian J.J.: "Persian Steel: The Tanavoli Collection", In: *Oxford studies in Islamic art*, vol. 15, Oxford university press for the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford and the British Institute of Persian Studies, 2000, p. 264.

<sup>113</sup>. Fodor, A.: *Sufism and Magic-Amulets from the Islamic World*, p. 129, fig. 54.

<sup>114</sup>. <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/92944/armband-amulet-bāzūband-inscribed-in-the-name-of-god> Accessed March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 3:14 UTC.

<sup>115</sup>. <http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/object/EA2012.95> Accessed March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, 22:29 UTC (first publishing).

<sup>116</sup>. <http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/object/EA2012.118> Accession no. EA2012.118 Accessed: March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, 22:45 UTC (First Publishing).

<sup>117</sup>. <https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-five-silver-octagonal-qajar-arm-amulet-cases-5186628/> Accessed March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, 00:35 UTC (First Publishing).

<sup>118</sup>. The Holy *Qur'ān*, *sūrat al-Qalam*, verses n°. 51, 52

<sup>119</sup>. The Holy *Qur'ān*, *sūrat aš-Šaf*, part of the verse n°. 13

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## مجلة اتحاد الجامعات العربية للسياحة والضيافة

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### مجموعة من البازوبند الطلسمية من العصرين الصفوي والقاجاري (دراسة وصفية تحليلية)

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| المخلص  | معلومات المقالة  |
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| <p>ما من شك في أن كل أمة من الأمم تمتلك مجموعة من المعتقدات المتأصلة، والتي تتضح وتتمثل في ممارسات ومعتقدات ترسخ مظاهرهم الحضارية. فالاعتقاد في السحر، العرافة والتنجيم جميعها تندرج ضمن هذه المعتقدات وما ينطوي عليها من ممارسات. فقد اعتقد الإنسان في الاعمال السحرية وقدرتها على الإيذاء وجلب سوء الحظ، بالإضافة إلى قدرتها على توفير الحماية وجلب الحظ من جانب آخر؛ فكان ذلك هو الباعث والمحفز الأساسي لاقتناء ما يُعرف بالتمائم والتعاويذ. يتناول هذا البحث أحد أنواع هذه التمام والتعاويذ الذي يُعرف بـ "البازوبند" وهو سوار العضد الذي كان يرتديه المحاربين لاعتقادهم بقدرته على توفير الحماية لهم وجلب النصر في حروبهم ومعاركهم حيث كان يحتوي على العديد من الكتابات القرآنية والادعية الدينية المختلفة، فضلاً عن بعض الكتابات أو الطلاسم السحرية. يتناول البحث عدد من النقاط المتعلقة بـ 'البازوبند' مثل الاعتقاد في السحر من حيث بداياته وملامحه في الحضارات المختلفة، وتتبع لأصوله وسماته في الحضارة الفارسية. كما يوضح البحث المصطلحات الأساسية؛ وهي "التميمة"، "التعويدة"، و"البازوبند" في محاولة لاقتفاء أثرها وتتبع أصولها وما طرأ عليها من تطورات. يلقي البحث الضوء على موقف الشيعة من استخدام التمام والتعاويذ. كما يركز على أهم السمات والعناصر التي تتوافر في التمام والتعاويذ بشكل عام، وأهم ما يميز تلك التي تنتمي للشيعة. يضم البحث دراسة وصفية لمجموعة مختارة من البازوبند الطلسمية المعروضة بالعديد من المتاحف العالمية والمجموعات الخاصة والتي منها ما يُنشر لأول مرة. ويختتم البحث بدراسة تحليلية مفصلة للعناصر الواردة ضمن الدراسة الوصفية للنماذج المختارة.</p> | <p>الكلمات المفتاحية<br/>التمائم، التعاويذ؛ البازوبند؛ العصر الصفوي؛ العصر القاجاري؛ السحر؛ العرافة؛ التنجيم.</p> <p><b>(JAAUTH)</b><br/>المجلد 20، العدد 4،<br/>(2021)،<br/>ص 83-123.</p> |