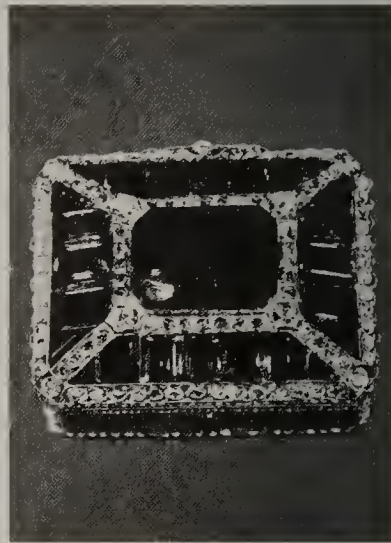






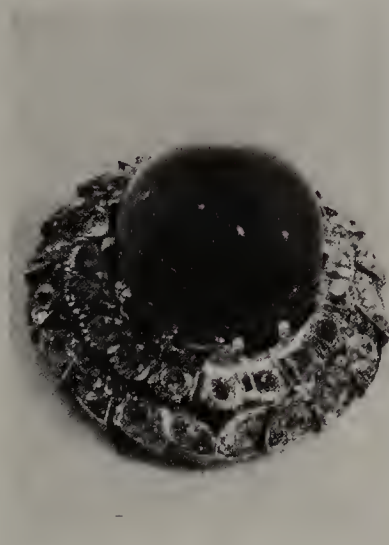
Crown Jewels of Iran



Dedicated to His Imperial Majesty
Muhammad Reza Pahlavi Aryamihir
the Shahanshah of Iran and to his people,
whose past glories and present achievements
are fittingly honoured in their magnificent
collection of Crown Jewels

Photographed by Leighton Warren

Crown Jewels of Iran



V. B. Meen and A. D. Tushingham

University of Toronto Press

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Preface

For most of their history the Crown Jewels of Iran have been virtually unknown outside the court circles of Tehran. While world-famous collections, such as the British or the Russian Crown Jewels, have been studied and described in some detail by gemmologists and art historians, the richer Iranian treasures have lain locked away in vaults, to be worn on state occasions and seen only by highly favoured visitors. In the literature of gemmology there were only occasional short references to them, and then only to gemstones "believed to be still in the Persian treasure."

In the spring of 1964, I received my first direct information about the Crown Jewels of Iran from my friend Martin Ehrmann, a Los Angeles gem dealer. He had seen them during a brief stopover in Tehran between flights a few months earlier. His "thumb-nail" description left me breathless. We decided then and there to try to make a joint study of the collection which could be published. With the assistance of the Canadian Embassy in Tehran I obtained an invitation to discuss this audacious proposal with the custodians of the Crown Jewels, the officials of the Bank Markazi (Central Bank) of Iran.

That meeting did not take place until late January 1965. During a somewhat protracted journey to Iran I was struck by an anomaly. The Crown Jewels had been put on public display in a specially designed museum vault within the National Bank in 1960, and were already one of the chief attractions of the Iranian capital. On a number of occasions I encountered tourists who described them in glowing terms. But during the months between Mr. Ehrmann's account and my arrival in Tehran I met no other gemmologist who knew anything of them. The reason became clear in Tehran. This large (population two and one-half million) and bustling city is not a world gem market and was therefore not likely to have attracted the attention of gem specialists in the few years that the Jewels were available for viewing.

Discussions with the Bank officials continued throughout a week. From the first, it was clear that the chief difficulty in a study such as the one I proposed would be the security of the collection. However, the fact that the initiative came from a great Canadian museum, whose personnel were trained in the care of precious objects and included both gemmologists and specialists in the arts of the world, seemed to weigh in our favour. Towards the end of the week, I submitted a formal proposal on behalf of the Royal Ontario Museum to study the Crown Jewels and describe scientifically the principal items of jewellery and the major gemstones. A copy of the findings would be turned over to the Central Bank for its records, and a well-illustrated book would be prepared. It was proposed that the study and its publication would form part of Canada's contribution to the forthcoming celebration of the 2500th

Anniversary of the Monarchy of Iran. Mr. Mehdi Samii, Governor of the Bank Markazi, assured me the proposal would receive consideration at the highest level. Six weeks later, permission was granted.

Martin Ehrmann and I could deal with the gemstones, but the collection included much jewellery and *objets d'art*: a colleague was therefore needed versed in these fields, someone who might be able to determine dates and places of manufacture and even the maker of particular pieces. The Museum's Chief Archaeologist, Dr. A. D. Tushingham, was appointed to the study group to fill this role. Since so much depended on obtaining excellent illustrations, the Museum also assigned its staff photographer, Mr. Leighton Warren, to the project. In this, and in all aspects, we enjoyed the full support of the then Director of the Museum, Dr. W. E. Swinton, and his successor, Mr. Peter C. Swann.

It had also become abundantly clear, while I discussed the proposal with Bank officials, that a study of even the major items could not be carried out in the three or four weeks Martin Ehrmann and I had originally considered. It could take several months; but this possibility had to be balanced against the disruption to the Bank's operations and the length of time our own staff could spare. Eventually an arbitrary study period of three months was set, from February 1 to April 30, 1966. Unfortunately, Mr. Ehrmann did not feel that he could take so much time from his business, and withdrew. I then sought the assistance of Mr. Grant Waite, a Research Associate with me at the Royal Ontario Museum. He was quite familiar with the project since he and I had spent many hours discussing the problems of the gemmological study, and he quickly accepted the invitation.

Financial support for the field study was generously provided by The Birks Family Foundation, a foundation created in 1963 by a Canadian family with a long history in the jewellery and goldsmithing fields. In addition, Henry Birks and Sons Limited, one of Canada's leading gem and jewellery houses, offered the Museum the services of their Chief Gemmologist, Mr. Edward B. Tiffany, as a second Research Associate to work in Tehran during the last month of the study.

Because of the magnitude of the project and the limited time available, it was decided that my wife and Mrs. Tushingham would take part in the expedition as assistants. Mrs. Waite accompanied her husband on a pre-study trip through the Orient and after their arrival in Tehran she decided to stay on to assist where needed. Dr. Tushingham spent an additional five weeks in early 1967 continuing research on the subject in Iran and in the Soviet Union.

The pages which follow are the result of the unfaltering efforts of all members of the party aided by the wholehearted co-operation of the officials and staff of the Bank

Markazi and the Canadian Embassy in Tehran. The publication itself has received the generous financial support once again of The Birks Family Foundation.

V. B. Meen

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To those whose interest made this study possible, or whose assistance in countless ways eased our work immeasurably, we feel a gratitude expressed most inadequately in the words that follow.

In Iran His Excellency, the Minister of the Imperial Court, not only gave enthusiastic support but provided introductions by letter, telephone, or telegram which assured us a welcome and full co-operation from the Governors-general of the provinces of Khurasan and Fars and the Governor of Qazvin, the Directors of the Treasuries of the Shrines at Meshed and Qum, the Golestan Palace in Tehran, and collections in Shiraz, Karaj, and Qazvin. Mr. Humayun Bahaduri of his staff was most helpful.

The members of the Supervisory Board for the Crown Jewels collection and its Chairman, Dr. Abdol-Hossein Aliabadi, gave freely of their time and knowledge. The Governor of the Bank Markazi, Mr. Mehdi Samii, and Vice-governor, Mr. Ziaollah Shahidi, put themselves and their staffs at our disposal. The head of the Note Issue department, Mr. Ali-Reza Hedayat, and other staff of the Bank — Mr. Abbas Ali-Pur, Mr. Mohsen Hosseini, and Miss Knarik Avakian — worked with us daily; they created a congenial atmosphere and contributed much to the research. The President of the University of Tehran and members of the academic staff assisted in many ways.

To other individuals in Tehran we are greatly indebted, particularly to Prince and Princess Firuz, General Ali Zand, General Hassan Arfa, Mr. Yahya Zoka and to Dr. Ezatollah Negahban and the staff of the Archaeological Museum. The Canadian Ambassador, Mr. Paul Malone, and his staff, particularly Mr. Jacques Montpetit, the Secretary, were our official channel of communications with the Iranian authorities before and during our study, and contributed in many ways to our comfort and efficiency. Finally, we are indebted to the British Ambassador, Sir Denis Wright, and his staff, and the British Institute of Persian Studies and its Director, Mr. David Stronach.

The important holdings of the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad were opened to us by the Director, Dr. B. B. Piotrovsky, the Scientific Secretary, Mr. Yuri Miller, and the Vice-chief of the Oriental Department, Mr. Anatoly Ivanov. The Director and the Scientific Secretary, Miss I. A. Rodimtsava, of the Kremlin Museum, Moscow, were equally generous. The Canadian Ambassador to the USSR, Mr. Robert A. Ford, and his staff were most helpful.

Mr. Basil W. Robinson and Mr. Robert Skelton provided many facilities for study of the Persian material in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and gave us the benefit of their own research. Mr. Russell Robinson, Assistant to the Master of the Armouries, Tower of London, and Mr. Ernest S. Hedges of the Tin Research Institute freely gave expert guidance.

Dr. Myron B. Smith, the Director of the Islamic Archives in Washington, D.C., put its great resources at our disposal. Our appreciation goes also to the directors and staffs of the Royal Library, Windsor; British Museum; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Musée Duplessis, Carpentras, France; Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Library of Congress, Washington; and to many private collectors, most notably Mr. and Mrs. Julian Amery of London.

We must extend our thanks to the Board and Director of the Royal Ontario Museum and its staff, particularly Miss Eleanor Feely, Head Librarian; Mr. Robert Organ, then Curator of Conservation; and Mrs. F. Scheffel and Miss Lucile Hoskins, our secretaries. Professor Michael Wickens and his colleagues in Islamic Studies at the University of Toronto endured our questions cheerfully.

A special kind of appreciation is expressed to our colleagues who shared the hectic months of study in Tehran. To the University of Toronto Press we are grateful for sympathetic understanding and imaginative book production, and to Professor Laurence Lockhart who read parts of the manuscript and made many helpful comments. The study and publication would have been impossible without the support of The Birks Family Foundation.

Finally, to Martin Ehrmann of Los Angeles, gem dealer and friend, whose glowing account of the collection led directly to the project, our thanks are due for what has been an exciting and rewarding pursuit.

The Authors

PREFACE TO SECOND PRINTING

The untimely death of Dr. V. B. Meen, in January 1971, mars what otherwise would be an occasion of pleasure and satisfaction: the appearance of a second printing of this work. Its publication coincided with a new interest in the arts of Iran and we hope that this reissue will contribute to the clearly continuing desire for an authoritative treatment of the jewellery and other works of aesthetic and historic significance in the national collections of the country.

A.D.T.

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Introduction

A nation's traditions form, in a very real sense, its life, for they colour the character of its people and dictate in large measure the responses they will make to new circumstances. Such traditions are woven about the real or legendary events which the nation has selected, consciously or subconsciously, as significant in explaining how it came into being, and how it has asserted and preserved its identity against all challenges to its existence. They are a source of pride, a rallying-point for the nation in the hurly-burly of politics, economics, and social change, and a refuge when foreign influences threaten to engulf it.

Vital traditions always find their focus in men and women — in personalities rather than in impersonal forces. History is a record of kings and warriors, of poets and martyrs, of paragons of justice and monsters of villainy, of wise men and fools. Although almost super-human in retrospect, their actions speak a language all can understand for they arise from common human passions, hopes, fears, and failings.

These giants of the past are gone, but they can be resurrected and the stirring events in which they participated made to live again. Objects they touched, wore, or used — especially if they are beautiful or exotic — can work this miracle. By some magic they can translate the modern sophisticate to another age when everything appears simpler and more clear-cut, and when man's role in events seems more direct and decisive.

Among such historic objects, crown jewels are pre-eminent, for they compress the past into a small but exciting compass and passionately evoke it for those who are its heirs. By their very nature they have had an intimate, even central, role in many of those events that created the national identity, for they have been closely associated with the human protagonists in the crucial struggle over who should be master. Their possession and display have constituted an undeniable proof of power and sovereignty and a strong claim to legitimacy.

The Crown Jewels of Iran are as dramatic in their power to recall the past as any that Europe can show. The Kiani Crown, although less than two centuries old, evokes in its name the legendary dynasty which first united Iran twenty-five centuries ago. It may be compared with the Crown of St. Edward in the British regalia, which represents the crown of Edward the Confessor whose death marked, in effect, the downfall of Anglo-Saxon England. The Nadir Sabre is a vivid reminder of the great conqueror who not only resuscitated a nation torn by civil war and overrun by enemies, but even conquered mighty India. Its significance for Iran is similar to that of the Sabre of Charlemagne, preserved in Vienna, which recalls the days of the Holy Roman Empire. Such objects, maintained and embellished, are a direct link with the past and lend their aura

of authority at each new coronation. In the past, their legitimizing power in Iran was even more apparent. At the great imperial levées, especially those held at the Spring Equinox (the Persian New Year), the shah on his great throne was the focal point of the drama. He sat quietly, accepting the adoration of his subjects assembled in their best attire for the occasion. He received and distributed gifts, he heard addresses expressing loyalty and devotion, he accepted the obeisances and tokens of respect presented by foreign ambassadors, but no personal word or act of his was required or expected. His status was proclaimed by the scintillating rays streaming from his crown, his throne, and the jewels which bedecked his person and all objects associated with him. He was the Shahanshah, the King of Kings, the visible focus of the glories of the universe, the strong right arm of God, and the hope of his people.

It was not, however, only on such occasions that the Crown Jewels declared the sovereignty of the shah. If we may credit the descriptions and depictions which have come down to us from the past, he wore the regalia — crown, armbands, belt, sword, and the rest — on the field of battle, in the chase, and even sitting quietly in his palace. There could never be a moment of relaxation, a pause, in his declaration or the world's recognition of his regal and unique status.

Royal possession of jewels, in Iran as elsewhere, had another, more mundane significance. They were the state treasury. Wealth has always been power; tangible and visible wealth has always been an effective demonstration of power. When the shah left his capital, the Crown Jewels accompanied him, not only because they were his indispensable insignia of rank but because they were the portable treasury of his kingdom and could provide the means of winning allies and recruiting troops, buying off the enemy, or rewarding the loyal servant.

The significance of the Crown Jewels, however, transcends their past political and economic value. They provide insights into the character of the nation which created them. Their miscellaneous nature — crowns and thrones, swords and saddles, clothing and utensils — illuminates the society which produced them. Their design and materials throw light on the arts and crafts of the country, its own indigenous artistic tradition and the influences which played upon it from without, the tastes of its rulers and upper classes, and the resources at their disposal. In a word, they can re-create the past in a multitude of its facets.

The Crown Jewels are now in the custody of the Bank Markazi (Central Bank) and housed in the Bank Melli (National Bank) in Tehran, the modern, bustling capital of Iran. While these are the finest and most valuable of the Persian imperial collections, there are also carpets,

porcelains, manuscripts, paintings, arms and armour, and many other objects — even several thrones — displayed in the Golestan Palace Museum.

Until late in 1960, the Crown Jewels were kept in dark, dusty, subterranean vaults where only on very rare occasions could any outsider get a glimpse of them. On December 24 of that year, however, His Imperial Majesty Muhammad Reza Shah officially opened a new display of the choicest pieces. Although protected by thick walls, great steel doors, electronic alarms, automatic gates, and armed guards, this new gallery does not give the impression of being a vault. It measures about 110 feet by 50 feet (33.5 metres by 15 metres), is faced with native marbles, is air-conditioned and attractively lighted, and was arranged by Boucheron, a jewellery firm of Paris. It houses thirty-five cases of modern design (although numbered to thirty-seven, there are no cases 16 and 18). Two of these contain one item only, and three have no more than six, but most display between fifty and seventy pieces each. The exciting appearance, spectacular quality, and romantic appeal of the collection are demonstrated by the great and growing number of visitors, both Iranian and foreign.

The first impression on entering the vault is of a scintillating mass of gemstones, the dominant colours of which are green, white, and red: the colours, probably fortuitously, of the Iranian flag. Closer observation confirms this impression. Emeralds, diamonds and pearls, rubies and red spinels are everywhere, and in addition attention is focused on them in several displays of the individual gems.

Two cases are devoted to emeralds, both set and unset, which in number, quality, and size exceed any display of emeralds known elsewhere. A diamond case contains a number of tiaras and thousands of cut but unset stones: scores are over 20 carats in weight and six exceed 100 carats. (The *Darya-i Nur*, much larger, is in another case.) In fact more than half of all cut diamonds of more than 100 carats weight whose locations are known are in this collection. Pearls have their own large case, while rubies and red spinels are displayed together in rich profusion. The only other gemstone assigned an individual case is the turquoise, the one native Persian gem.

One case houses a magnificent throne; three others are devoted to crowns and other regalia. There are cases which show objects of personal adornment: necklaces, armbands, hat ornaments, and brooches. Others contain articles of apparel, mirrors, walking-sticks, swords, daggers, and fire-arms. Many cases display objects used formerly in the royal household: gold dishes, dish-covers, water and wine flasks, tea and coffee cups, snuff or pill boxes, candlesticks, and water-pipes. Most of these pieces are embellished with gemstones, as is the spectacular, 3½-foot-high world globe (containing over 51,000 gems)

which stands in solitary magnificence. Undoubtedly, for women visitors, the large wall case reserved for the jewelry of the royal ladies is the most fascinating.

Excited by such spectacular objects, visitors are responsible for frequent false alarms in the security system. Impulsively striving for a closer look, they may strike their heads against a case and thereby initiate the raucous hooting of an alarm, the automatic, swift and silent closing of steel gates, and the sudden appearance of many guards. Members of the Bank staff who act as guides or mingle unobtrusively with the crowd understand the public enthusiasm which leads to such frightening alarms and take them in their stride.

Like his Iranian fellow-visitor, the foreigner will marvel at the number, size, and quality of the gems. He will recognize the uses to which many of the pieces were put and thus have a glimpse into past manners and customs. He will appreciate the beauty of many individual objects, even though he approaches with the aesthetic standards of another culture. But he will miss much of the emotional impact of this amazing collection unless he knows something of Iran's great past.

Historical Outline

The Iranian monarchy enjoys a proud history stretching back some 2500 years to the foundation of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great. At one time this empire extended from India to the Aegean, from the cataracts of the Nile to the steppes of Central Asia, thus incorporating a large part of the civilized world and for the first time bringing Europeans and Asiatics under a common rule. The ruins of its mighty capital at Persepolis can still be seen and wall reliefs there, representations on seals and coins, and the descriptions of early writers give us a vivid picture of the pomp and ceremonial of its court. This Persian empire was destroyed by Alexander the Great, and Iran itself, after his death, formed part of the Seleucid domain ruled by his successors. Native rulers reasserted themselves, however, and under the Parthian and Sasanian dynasties, Iran once more dominated large parts of the Near East and carried on a centuries-long struggle first with Rome and then with the Byzantine Empire, before falling to the armies of the successors of Muhammad in the seventh century of our era. For well over a thousand years, this succession of Persian monarchies had displayed their power and culture in great capital cities and palaces and, not least, in the state with which the Great King was surrounded and in the rich apparel and jewels by which his unique position was demonstrated. But of the Crown Jewels of the period there is no recognizable trace.

For another 600 years, until the capture of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258, Iran was technically part of the Arab empire, ruled by the caliphs from Damascus or Baghdad. In periods when the caliphate was weak, and in the centuries which followed its collapse, Iran was a prey to conquests by hordes from the east and north, or the ineffectual and ephemeral rule of native chiefs and kinglets. In spite of such political vicissitudes, Iran maintained her identity. If she could not assert independence under her own rulers, she could dominate culturally. Her art and architecture repeatedly "naturalized" her conquerors; she adopted and adapted from them but never lost her soul in the process. From this long period, marked by invasions, civil war, and sheer anarchy, few portable objects of any intrinsic value have been preserved, and of those that do exist, many are to be found in collections outside of the country or have only recently been unearthed by the spade of the archaeologist.

The history of the Iranian Crown Jewels, as we know them today, starts with the Safavid dynasty. In the year 1501, Ismail, the lineal descendant of Musa the seventh Imam (and so in the line of the Prophet Muhammad himself), was proclaimed Shah of Persia in Tabriz, combining in himself the highest secular and religious authority. The Persians, whose nationalist sentiments had expressed

themselves for centuries in their adherence to the Shiite faith of Islam – in opposition to nearly all other Moslems who were of the Sunnite persuasion¹ – found in the new Safavid dynasty the champions of their religion and culture.

Under Ismail's successors, and particularly under Shah Abbas the Great (1587–1629), the country enjoyed two centuries of relative peace, security, and prosperity. Isfahan, which became the capital, is today still the national show-place; its glorious palaces, mosques, schools, bridges, and gardens attest the splendours and taste of the age. The gorgeously illuminated Persian manuscripts which grace the world's important museums and art galleries are, in many cases, the product of the same civilized court.

Even before the establishment of the Safavid dynasty, Persia was well known in the chancelleries of the West. The Ottoman Turks had conquered Constantinople in 1453, and were to go on to capture Palestine and Egypt in 1517, to reach the gates of Vienna in 1529, and to control North Africa and the Mediterranean. To meet this threat, the Western Powers sought an alliance with Persia, hoping to persuade her to attack Turkey from the rear and so divert the pressure from Europe. Four ambassadors from Venice visited Iran between 1471 and 1478, and three of them have left narratives of their experiences. Over the next two centuries, other Westerners followed and set down the record of their visits in English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Anthony Jenkinson, for example, appeared at the court of Shah Tahmasp (1524–76), the successor of Ismail, in 1561 as the representative of Queen Elizabeth. During the reign of Shah Abbas the Great, Sir Anthony and Sir Robert Sherley arrived in Persia as adventurers but so won the respect and confidence of the Shah that he sent Sir Anthony back to Europe on a "mission accredited to the Courts of Russia, Poland, Germany, France, Spain, England and Scotland, and to the Pope of Rome and the Seniors of Venice."² Sir Robert returned to Europe in 1608 as the Shah's representative to James I of England.

George Mainwaring, one of Sir Anthony's companions on his trip to Persia, described the throne of Shah Abbas, set up in the bazaars of Qazvin, thus: *the King's chair of estate . . . being of silver plate set with turkies [turquoises] and rubies very thick, and six great diamonds which did shew like stars, the seat being of rich scarlet embroidered with pearl, and the multitude of lamps hanging about it were innumerable.*³

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, an intrepid French merchant in gems and jewellery, journeyed to the East six times between 1631 and 1668, and left in his *Voyages* a tremendous amount of information about Persia and India.

His information on the major gemstones in the hands of Indian rulers and dealers is most important since it describes material which later may have become part of the Iranian treasure; but, for Persia, he is more useful as a source for the customs, natural resources, manufactures, arts, and crafts of the country.⁴

Sir John Chardin,⁵ another famous itinerant jeweller whose travels to the East between 1664 and 1667 overlapped those of Tavernier, also gives a great deal of information about the state and customs of Persia at this period and more specific information on the Iranian Crown Jewels. He was in Persia at the time of the death of Shah Abbas II (1666) and so witnessed the intrigues preceding the coronation of Shah Safi II (Shah Sulaiman) and the coronation itself. He describes the throne, the crown, the sabre and dagger, and gives sketches of them. Of the first he says: *It is a small square stool. Its height is three geometric feet. Each of the posts which support its corners rests on a large apple: and to keep the Throne rigid, there are also, above and below, a like number of stretchers: in a word, its form is very similar to our stools. The plain seat, without any fabric to soften it, is of the same material as the rest, that is of solid gold, rather thick: and the four posts with the four apples are encrusted above with small rubies and a few emeralds. This Stool, when it is not being used for this ceremony, is carefully preserved in the Royal Treasury, situated in the Keep of the Fortress of Ispahan: it is so heavy, that when it is to be removed, two men can scarcely carry it.*⁶

Some idea of the scale and value of gifts exchanged by monarchs of the time can be derived from Chardin's listing of the objects presented, in 1669, by the French envoy to the Shah. They included: *A Chain of Emeralds and Diamonds. An Emerald Ring. A ring, with a Balass Ruby [probably a spinel]. A pictur'd Box set with Diamonds and Emeralds, with the King's Picture [presumably that of Louis XIV] enamell'd, the back Part being of inlaid Work. Two large Branches of Christal. Four Looking-Glasses of Christal. . . .*⁷

Again he reports: *On the Second, I went in the Morning to the Chiraconé, which is the King's Side-Board, to see it pack'd up for the Journey. The Intendant or Overseer thereof . . . was so kind as to show me all the finest Things that he had in his keeping. It consisted of several Sets of Dozens of Spoons, of Vessels, Cups, Salvers, Dishes, Basons, large Tankards, Water-pots, Boats, Bottles, Spitting-pots, all of which were of Gold, either enamel'd, set with precious Stones, or curiously garnish'd with Pearls; there is nothing there but fine Gold, either delicately wrought or finely set. It is incredible, the vast Quantity, and the Value of this Plate; there are Cups so large, that one cannot hold them in one Hand when they are full. . . . The Head Butler told me one*

Day, that the King's Buffet contain'd four thousand Pieces, or Utensils, all of Gold, or embelish'd with Gold and precious Stones, as I have already said.⁸

Of this great treasure little remains. In the early eighteenth century, the Safavid house became effete – an invitation to attack from every side. The Uzbeks and Tatars made incursions in the northeast; the Arabs of Muscat seized the pearl-producing island of Bahrain and threatened the coast of the Persian Gulf. But the death-blow came from the east: the Afghans revolted, marched on Isfahan and took it, plundering all the wealth and treasure of the Safavid kings. At this juncture, the Turks – Persia's foes for centuries – and the Russians moved in quickly from the west and north to share in the dismemberment of the once great empire. Peter the Great, whose assistance had been sought by one of the Safavid princes, seized the Persian provinces in the Caucasus and along the littoral of the Caspian; later, in 1724, by treaty with the Turks, both Russia and Turkey staked out zones of occupation in the northern part of the country.

Persia found its deliverer in Nadir Quli, a Turkman chieftain of Khurasan, who supported the cause of the Safavid prince Tahmasp, became his general, and drove the Afghans from Persia, retrieving some of the treasure. In 1736 he took the crown to himself. For the rest of his life, Nadir Shah drove back invaders and extended the boundaries of his country. His most memorable achievement was the invasion of India in 1739 and the capture of Delhi from the Moghul emperors. This was little more than an extended raid, ostensibly to punish the Indian emperor for real or fancied slights, but no doubt the prospect of great wealth to be won was an important factor. He succeeded in dethroning the Indian emperor, Muhammad, and seized his treasures and those of his wealthy subjects. A few months later, having re-established Muhammad on his throne, he returned to Iran carrying with him vast quantities of booty. It was Nadir's treasure which henceforth constituted the bulk of the Iranian Crown Jewels, although little of it remains in its original form. It will be of interest, therefore, to let several of his contemporaries describe his wealth and splendour as they witnessed it.⁹

Even before the invasion of India, Nadir had already amassed great riches, including the old Safavid Crown Jewels regained from the Afghans. Abraham of Crete, an Armenian archbishop, was at Nadir's camp until the day before he was proclaimed Shah and received a first-hand report of that event from a priest, Thoma, which he recorded: *There was put on his [Nadir's] head a gold crown shaped like a 'saghavard' [the high, bulbous, head-dress of an Armenian bishop] and adorned with rare gems and huge pearls, wonderful to the sight.¹⁰* Elsewhere he described in detail the table service of

large bowls, jugs, trays, cups, vases with stands, incense burners, ewers and basins, goblets – some gold, some silver, some inset with gems.¹¹

The French Abbé de Claustra describes the booty Nadir seized in India: *A hundred labourers were occupied for fifteen days in melting down and casting into ingots the gold and silver which was not already in the form of coins in order to facilitate transport. Two ingots, pierced through the middle and tied together with a heavy cord, constituted one camel-load; five thousand chests were filled with gold rupees and eight thousand with silver rupees. There was also an inconceivable number of other chests filled with diamonds, pearls and other jewels. In a word, the value of the treasure which the King of Persia carried off from India can be estimated at three hundred carols of silver rupees: which is the equivalent of five billion, four hundred millions of our silver.*¹²

Jonas Hanway, an English businessman who attempted to set up trade with Persia through southern Russia and the Caspian Sea, exclaimed about the horse furniture possessed by Nadir Shah which he saw in 1744: *He had four complete sets, one mounted with pearls, another with rubies, a third with emeralds, and the last with diamonds, most of which were so prodigious a size as hardly to merit belief; for many of them appeared as big as a pigeon's egg. I could not but regard them with wonder, not more for their immense value, than for the barbarous taste in which they were set; for some of them did not appear to have any art at all bestowed on them.*¹³

Extant portraits of Nadir Shah show him wearing jewelled armbands, belt, sword and dagger, ropes of pearls about his neck, and a characteristic four-pointed, red felt hat adorned with *jigās* (aigrettes or plumes, usually bejewelled) and gems.

Nadir established his capital at Meshed, in the north-east, and there, or in the nearby natural fortress of Qalat, he stored his treasures. Nadir's warlike talents were not, however, of a kind to establish a powerful succession or to guarantee the internal security and well-being of his country; his strange attempts to heal the rift between the Shiite Persians and the Sunnite Moslems of the rest of the Islamic world aroused strong opposition both at home and abroad. He was assassinated in 1747. Persia was in anarchy once more, civil war raged, and the treasures – whether Safavid or Indian in origin – were again largely dispersed, some to be lost forever to the country.

Two years later, Shahrukh, Nadir's grandson, was placed on the throne and, though blinded and several times imprisoned by contenders to the throne, reigned – in name if not in fact – at Meshed for nearly 50 years. One of his supporters was Ahmad Abdali, an Afghan who

had risen to high rank under Nadir but had after his death returned to Afghanistan, subdued it, and established himself as its shah with his capital at Kabul. For his help, Shahrukh presented him with several important jewels, amongst them the *Kuh-i Nur* diamond. Having descended through Ahmad Shah's family, this gem was finally taken back to India, was seized by Ranjit Singh of the Punjab, and – after his defeat by the British – passed to the East India Company, which presented it to Queen Victoria in 1850.¹⁴ Ahmad Shah himself invaded India five times, ransacking Delhi and other cities. Portions of the booty thus acquired came, in some way, into the Persian Crown Jewels, for several of the gems have his name engraved upon them.

The civil war in Persia finally became a struggle between three men in different parts of the country: another Afghan general of Nadir Shah ruled in Azerbaijan, from Qazvin; a Qajar chief controlled the Caspian provinces; and Karim Khan Zand, a Kurd, held the south with his capital at Shiraz. In the years that followed, the Qajars finally defeated the Afghan general and were in turn defeated by Karim Khan. The latter, from about 1759, was master of Persia except for the province of Khurasan, where Shahrukh was allowed to maintain himself. But the Zands never took the title of Shah, remaining content with the title of *Vakil* or "Regent." The Crown Jewels – those that had not been dissipated – now largely resided in the hands of Karim Khan and Shahrukh.

On Karim Khan's death in 1779, civil war broke out once more. While Zand claimants to the throne rose and fell, Agha Muhammad Khan, a Qajar prince who had been made a eunuch by a son of Nadir Shah and later had been held a hostage at the Zand court in Shiraz, fled north, gathered tribal support, and established his capital at Tehran. The last Zand protagonist was the noble Lutf Ali Khan. To raise money to carry on the war against the brilliant but cruel Qajar chief, he sought, in 1791, to sell the Crown Jewels. Harford Jones Brydges, later British Ambassador in Persia, gives a fascinating account of the negotiations, and in so doing provides a prime source for our knowledge of the Crown Jewels at this time.¹⁵ The negotiations, however, broke down.

The Qajars triumphed and the Zand treasure fell into Agha Muhammad Khan's hands. He then proceeded to round out his dominions by launching an expedition against the Caucasus, where Georgia and Armenia were brought under his control. Finally, in 1796, he turned northeast against Khurasan. Shahrukh, still governing from Meshed, could put up no resistance. He was imprisoned once more, tortured unmercifully to force him to reveal the hiding places of the remainder of Nadir Shah's gems, and finally died. Agha Muhammad Khan had now secured for himself and his successors the bulk

of the Crown Jewels – at least what remained after the vicious civil wars of the preceding fifty years.

Agha Muhammad Shah assumed the crown only in 1796, and did not wear it long. He had established Tehran as his capital and begun to build palaces and other public buildings there, bringing the Marble Throne and other structural pieces from Shiraz where they had once adorned the palace of Karim Khan. He championed the Shiite branch of the Moslem faith and so reversed the policy of Nadir Shah, which had been a failure. In 1797, however, during another campaign in the Caucasus, he was murdered.

As Agha Muhammad Shah was the founder of the Qajar dynasty which was to rule Iran for 130 years, any evidence bearing on the Crown Jewels in his time is important. Although all the portraits we have of him appear to be posthumous, they were painted so soon after his death that there is good reason to accept the picture they give.¹⁶ The crown, particularly, is important because it differs from the Kiani Crown (page 72) created later for Fath Ali Shah. It is high and somewhat ovoid in form, the lower two-thirds covered with pearls *en pavé*, the upper part apparently plain and terminating in a large jewelled finial knob.¹⁷ The throne on which he kneels in a portrait in the Sulaimaniyeh Palace, Karaj, resembles an early form of Fath Ali Shah's Peacock Throne now in the Golestan Palace.¹⁸ The large *qalyan* (water-pipe), illustrated in the same portrait, may be one used later by Fath Ali Shah and preserved in part in Case 2 (Nos. 26, 27). In these portraits, however, there is no evidence for the great jewelled mace (page 75), the pearl sabre (page 74), the jewelled shield of Nadir (page 59), the ewer and basin (page 96), and other similar pieces prominent in Fath Ali Shah's regalia.

Agha Muhammad Shah had determined that his nephew Fath Ali should succeed him. He had, as he once put it, "raised a royal palace, and cemented it with blood, that the boy Baba Khan (the name he always gave his nephew) might sleep within its walls in peace."¹⁹ But first Fath Ali had to secure the Crown Jewels. They had been seized after his uncle's death by the old shah's general, who had then tried to establish himself as ruler in Azerbaijan. Fath Ali's forces defeated him, and to win his pardon he surrendered the imperial treasure. Two other rebellions followed – one by Fath Ali's brother, the other by the son of Shahrukh – but, thenceforth, Fath Ali Shah enjoyed a peaceful reign internally.

For the times of Fath Ali Shah and his successors there is considerable pictorial evidence, both Persian and foreign. The Western powers took renewed interest in Iran during the nineteenth century. Embassies arrived from British India, Britain, France, and Russia. Many of these diplomats, as well as merchants, explorers,

scholars, and other specialists, wrote of their travels in the "mysterious East" and of its "fabulous wealth" – books which had popular romantic appeal. But official interest in Iran lay in its geographic position as a passage or buffer athwart the land routes to India. The competition between the Western Powers to control or neutralize Iran in their own struggles formed the back-drop of the country's history for 150 years, and largely relegated its role to that of an impassive bystander to its own dismemberment and destruction.

Fath Ali Shah was no Nadir or Agha Muhammad. He was content merely to enjoy the fruits of his uncle's energy. His wars with Russia and Turkey were costly both in treasure and in territory. Government at every level was corrupt, a condition which Fath Ali Shah not only tolerated but positively encouraged by his own example. James Silk Buckingham, who travelled in Iran in 1816, wrote that the people of Isfahan "inveigh both against his boundless avarice, his oppressive government, the corruption of his inferior agents, and his own personal cowardice."²⁰ Other visitors were more charitable. Sir John Malcolm, the astute envoy from the government of British India, saw another side: *The condition of Fatteh Ali Shah, at the time I first saw him [i.e. in 1800], was deemed, by his Mahomedan subjects, as fortunate as could be attained by any human being in this world. He added to youth and personal endowments, four wives, more ladies than I will venture to name, and nearly one hundred children, the possession of a splendid throne, and the prospect of living long to enjoy it. . . . The king has elegant manners and many accomplishments. Among others, he is a poet, and has written a book of odes, of the merits of which the critics of Persia speak in perfect raptures. I only wish that I had the same power that he possesses of disarming severity and propitiating favour. . . . Notwithstanding the habits of his condition, and the severe and cruel acts to which that has often led him, there is naturally a kind disposition in the present King of Persia, which has made me always regard him as deserving of estimation. . . . I never knew a man, who, with all his good qualities, would listen with so little patience to political economists, as the king of kings, Fatteh Ali Shah; for that monarch, besides the habits and prejudices of his condition, has personally an insurmountable objection to all measures which include disbursement.*²¹

Yet, in the history of the Iranian Crown Jewels, Fath Ali Shah is of paramount importance for he established the collection as we see it today. Of the splendour of his court, there can be no doubt. Pierre-Amédée Jaubert, who was sent by Napoleon to the court of Persia, gives a lively description of a levée held by Fath Ali Shah in the summer of 1806: As soon as Feth-Aly Schah had uttered

these words, one of the vizirs approached me and guided me up by a staircase contrived within the platform itself, to the raised audience chamber. The walls of this room, forming a rectangle, were decorated with arabesques and inscriptions in letters of gold applied against a white ground. Two high twisted columns of green marble supported, on the approach side, the facade of the building. Daylight penetrated, on the other side, through coloured glass windows with various designs of a remarkable elegance and delicacy. The whole floor was covered with a Kashmir rug which in the fineness of its weave and the brilliance of the flowers with which it was decorated far exceeded the most beautiful shawls which come to us from this famous valley. The throne was supported on several marble columns seven to eight [French] feet high. Four other columns covered with gold and enamelled plaques were placed above the former and supported a canopy. Thousands of diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires sparkled from all sides. A sun, formed by a very large number of great diamonds, gleamed behind the shah, who was seated, his back supported by a cushion of white satin embroidered with pearls, dressed in a robe of the same material over which fell the long beard of this prince. Cuffs formed of a fabric of pearls bordered with rubies and sprinkled with roses or coloured stones extended almost to his elbows. The shoulders and half the surface of the robe were covered with a similar fabric. Two great circular bracelets, worked in precious stones, ornament the upper part of each arm. The diamond to which the Persians give the name Kouhi-Nour (mountain of light) was set in the middle of one of these bracelets; and that which they call Deryäi-Nour (ocean of light) embellished the other. . . . Instead of a turban, the shah wore a sort of tiara of which a fabric of pearls, sprinkled with rubies and emeralds, formed the border. An aigrette of gems was placed on the front of this head-dress, and above it rose three heron plumes. A rope of matched pearls as large as hazel-nuts, and of the finest water it would be possible to see, crossed over his breast and passed twice around his body. A dagger embellished with gems was stuck into a girdle decorated with fine emeralds from which was hung a sabre entirely covered with pearls and rubies.²²

Many contemporary portraits of Fath Ali Shah – some full-scale oil paintings, some miniatures – exist in museums and private collections throughout the world.²³ In them, the traditional love of detail, so characteristic of Persian painting for centuries, makes items of dress and adornment identifiable. It is often possible, therefore, to attribute jewellery in the Crown Jewels collection to Fath Ali Shah or his successors on the clear evidence of the portraits.

Fath Ali Shah was succeeded by his grandson,

Muhammad Shah (1834–48), who brought Iran close to financial ruin by expenditures far exceeding his income. But in the history of the Crown Jewels he holds a position of some importance. His predecessors were always portrayed and described as wearing Persian clothing and following traditional customs. Muhammad Shah did apparently don the imperial regalia of his grandfather for his coronation, but rarely if ever wore it afterwards. He suffered, we are told, from gout and found it impossible to kneel in the Persian fashion. Instead of using the great bed-thrones – the Marble and so-called Peacock thrones – or kneeling on a rug on the floor, he favoured a chair.²⁴ For this he no longer required the very full-skirted traditional gown. He preferred, instead, the Western military uniform of frock-coat, epaulettes, sword-belt, and decorations which imitated the garb of European monarchs of the period and also, perhaps, fed his military vanity. Such a departure from the ancient norms required the creation of new pieces of regalia (e.g. the diamond epaulettes of page 120). He adhered, however, to the tall *karakul* hat of his country, and commissioned *jigās* to adorn it of a form far exceeding in size, ostentation, and ugliness anything worn by his predecessors or successors. Some of these are preserved in the Crown Jewels collection, but none is illustrated in this book.

Nasir ud-Din Shah, his son and successor, came to the throne in 1848 at the age of seventeen and ruled Iran for nearly half a century. During his reign, all the problems arising from internal misrule and external pressures came to a head. Nasir ud-Din Shah seems to have had the best of intentions for his country. Three visits to Europe – in 1873, 1878, and 1889 – gave him insights into Western forms of government which were more enlightened than any his homeland had ever enjoyed. He recognized the desirability of bringing his country into the modern world by introducing industry, building trade, suppressing corruption, establishing security through a national army, and improving the common lot through education. Yet, partly through lack of resolution, partly because of bad advice from his ministers or favourites, and partly because autocratic systems are not easily modified, his good intentions bore little fruit. The very weakness of Iran suited, or at least invited, the continued interference of the Great Powers, and it would have taken a much stronger ruler to combat the lethargy within his own country and the encroachments of foreigners.

Nasir ud-Din Shah was the last Qajar ruler to add substantially to the Crown Jewels. His visits to Europe gave him an opportunity to see and admire the finery of other monarchs and led him to purchase and commission many pieces which still hold an important place in

the national collection. In his love for gems, also, he was a true Iranian prince. The South African mines provided a new source of diamonds and the gem cutters of Europe a new skill of which he was quick to take advantage. But the cost led him to commit himself heavily to foreign lenders – particularly the Russian government – who were only too happy to oblige in order to secure further concessions.

Nasir ud-Din Shah also established in the Golestan Palace a museum where many of the royal treasures were set out for favoured guests to see. Lord Curzon saw it in 1889: *Here are the enamelled and bejewelled arms of the great Sefavi kings, here the swords of Timur, Shah Ismail and Agha Mohammad Shah, here the magnificent Abbas' coat of mail. A square glass case contains a vast heap of pearls, four or five inches deep. After describing the jewelled globe (page 140) he continues: At the upper end of the room, beneath glass cases, are a number of royal crowns, dating from the Sefavean days to modern times, prominent among them being the mighty head piece, pearl-bedecked, and with flashing jika or aigrette of diamonds in front, which is worn by the King at No Ruz [the Persian New Year], and was so familiar an object upon the head of Fath Ali Shah, as depicted in the illustrations, English and Persian, of the early part of the century. Here, too, is a superb tiara, manufactured by order of the present Shah, in Paris. The number of jewelled swords, scabbards, epaulettes, and cups, vases, boxes and kalians, is enormous.*²⁵ Although many objects once displayed in the Golestan Palace have now been removed to the new exhibition hall in the Bank Melli, a number of larger pieces (the so-called Peacock Throne, for instance) and items of historical but no great intrinsic value remain in the original museum and can be seen today by a visitor to Tehran.

In 1896, while he was at prayers, Nasir ud-Din Shah was assassinated. He was succeeded by a sickly son, Muzaffar ud-Din Shah. By this time a reform movement was making headway in Iran. Government bungling and timidity had given rise to demands for moderate change, including the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. Britain supported the reformers, Tsarist Russia the reactionaries, and the weak new shah did little to resolve the conflict. Three royal trips to Europe in the early 1900s, made on doctors' advice to seek a cure, further depleted the national treasury. New loans, particularly from Russia, were floated in return for concessions and liens on the Persian revenue. Iran's state was by now so low that the reformers were finally able to achieve their main goal – the granting of a constitution. It was signed into law on December 30, 1906. A few days later Muzaffar ud-Din Shah died.

Muhammad Ali Shah, his eldest son, succeeded to the

throne and led the forces of reaction against the Constitution. In 1907 he engineered a coup d'état with the help of the Russian troops stationed near Tehran. The Majlis (Parliament) building was bombarded, and for nearly a year Muhammad Ali Shah ruled as a despot with Russian support. In 1909, however, the nationalist forces recaptured the city and the Shah was forced to take refuge in the Russian summer embassy. Finally, he agreed to abdicate and his twelve-year-old son, Ahmad, assumed the throne. In this drama the Crown Jewels again played a part. Muhammad Ali Shah had given some pieces as surety for loans to the Russian bank, and when he fled, he took others with him, including the magnificent *Darya-i Nur* diamond. In the negotiations which followed, the Shah was most unwilling to surrender the jewels but the government, by assuming all his debts and paying him a handsome pension, succeeded in recovering the bulk of them.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Iran was still dominated by Russia, its Majlis dissolved, its popular leaders in exile, its press under strict censorship. But in 1914 Ahmad Shah came of age, called the Third Majlis into being, and proclaimed Persian neutrality. It was a neutrality which was difficult to maintain, for Russia and Britain were allied against Germany and Turkey, and Iran – besides being a neighbour to Russia on one side and to Turkey on the other – lay on the path to India. Ahmad Shah, under British-Russian pressure, remained pro-Entente, but much of the southern part of the country threw in its lot with Germany and welcomed German agents.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 had important repercussions for Iran. Tsarist troops were immediately recalled, leaving a power vacuum: Britain consequently occupied the entire country to prevent German-Turkish penetration eastward against India. After the war the Soviets annulled the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 which had virtually partitioned Iran into two spheres of influence, renounced all Russian claims, financial and territorial, and surrendered all Russian privileges. Britain proposed a new treaty which would guarantee Iran's independence and assist her development under British protection; but Russia's new conciliatory policy removed the need for a strong British counterbalance, and popular nationalist feeling within Iran was so strong that the agreement was never ratified.

Meanwhile, the political situation deteriorated. Intellectual and progressive elements gradually turned against the fumbling conservatives in power. In 1921 the government was overthrown by a coup d'état. The commander of the army which marched on Tehran was a young officer named Reza Khan. In the months that followed he emerged as Iran's strongman, first as Prime Minister, later

as both Generalissimo and Prime Minister, and finally – after the formal deposition of the Qajar dynasty – he rose to the supreme power. On April 25, 1926, Reza Khan was proclaimed Shah and crowned himself as the first ruler of the Pahlavi dynasty.

The reign of Reza Shah is of great importance for any student of the Crown Jewels collection. The establishment of a new dynasty required the creation of new imperial regalia to complement the traditional Qajar jewels. A new crown, a new sceptre, and new robes of state were added to the collection. Further, by a law enacted on November 16, 1938, the Crown Jewels were transferred to the vaults of the National Bank of Iran (the Bank Melli) to serve as collateral for part of the government's obligations in connection with the issue of its bank-notes. The Crown Jewels collection thus ceased officially to be the personal property of the monarch and became a national resource.

The great tasks faced by Reza Shah were to preserve Iran's integrity from foreign encroachment; to create a modern state with constitutional government, a reliable and honest civil service, and a strong army and police force; and to introduce the agricultural reforms, educational opportunities, and industrialization which alone could provide the economic basis of a strong nation. Such problems were not easily solved, and the Second World War once more forced Iran into an impossible position. To supply Russia with the material she required to carry on the struggle against Germany, and to guard against an Axis drive through the Middle East towards India, the Western Powers stepped back into Iran. When Reza Shah opposed them, he was forced to abdicate the throne in 1941.

Muhammad Reza Shah, his son, replaced him, and since the Second World War the modernization and westernization of Iran's economy and society have gone on apace. Today Iran maintains friendly relations with the Great Powers, her territorial integrity is maintained, education and social services are continually being improved, her natural resources are being tapped, and industrialization is proceeding rapidly. Iran today plays a role in world affairs congruent with her still-vital geographic position, her great natural resources, and the skill, intelligence, and long artistic tradition of her people.

The history of the Crown Jewels is not closed. In 1960, on the formation of the Central Bank of Iran (the Bank Markazi), the collection was transferred to its custody, although it is housed in the specially created display vault of the National Bank (Bank Melli). It is also undergoing minor modifications, as unmounted gems are being utilized in new regalia and jewellery. The most recent change was the creation of a crown (page 57)

for the Empress, and some new jewellery and regalia for the long-delayed coronation, on October 26, 1967, of His Imperial Majesty Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi Aryamihir.

In modern Iran's constitutional monarchy, much of the mystique of the ancient role of kingship has been lost, but the historic, artistic, and economic values of the Crown Jewels remain. They can still evoke the past glories of the Iranian nation and provide one means by which it can finance its progress in the modern world.

Study and Documentation

Magnificent though the Crown Jewels of Iran are and important though they have been in the history of Iran, until they were released to view in 1960 they had been virtually unknown to Iranians or foreigners. Even in the records of their custodian, the Central Bank, there was little if any detailed information about the individual items. The purpose of this study was therefore twofold: first, to examine, identify, measure, and weigh (where possible) the principal gemstones of the collection, and to compare them with other major gems known today or described in literary records; and, second, to discover the history, provenance, and use of the individual objects, whether or not they contained gems.

Ideally, a study of this magnitude would require unlimited access to the individual objects and a well-equipped laboratory. Practically, of course, neither was feasible. Security regulations demanded that no object be removed from the vault and that no case be opened or object be outside its case except in the presence of five of the nine-man Supervisory Board. Since these men hold high positions in Iran, the demand on their time would have to be limited.

We had been informed of these necessarily stringent regulations long before we arrived in Tehran and realized that our study must be restricted largely to an examination through the glass of the cases, followed by a comparatively few hours in which we could handle the pieces and take the hundreds of photographs required. To overcome the obstacles thus presented we worked out methods by which a maximum of reliable data could be obtained prior to the opening of the cases.

On arrival in Tehran, we found that we could spend about three hours daily in the vault. The public was present during four of these periods each week and somewhat limited our operation. At such times we could use only flashlights for additional illumination and take only flash record pictures. The physical presence of several hundreds of excited visitors, the resultant hum and buzz, and the natural curiosity which our presence aroused were distracting. In spite of these disadvantages, we had to use every minute available to us.

However, three days a week we had the vault to ourselves. In these periods, naturally, we accomplished the most, for then we could lay electric cables across the floor to supply power for concentrated light by which to study and photograph; we could use step-ladders to allow closer examination; and we could consult, without interruption, with the custodians of the collection. Above all, it was quiet.

Finally, towards the end of our study, we had the privilege of removing objects from cases and handling them during fourteen four-hour periods. At such times, the vault became a scientific laboratory in which we

were able to give certain selected objects the critical examination that had been impossible while they remained behind glass. It became also a studio for the accurate photographic recording of these objects. Unexpected assistance was forthcoming from members of the Supervisory Board who gave us the benefit of their knowledge of Iranian history, customs, and literature.

As the purposes and methods of the gemmological and documentary researches differed, it is best to treat them separately.

GEMMOLOGICAL RESEARCH

It was obviously impossible to study tens of thousands of gemstones. We therefore restricted our attention to diamonds, emeralds, and red spinels more than half an inch in diameter (a diamond brilliant of this size weighs about 7 carats). Such limitation was required to keep the project within bounds. This rule of thumb, however, was not applied to gems which are rare in the collection (e.g. chrysoberyl cat's eye, opal, and amethyst), or to rubies, sapphires, turquoises, and pearls which seldom exceed that arbitrary limitation in size.

Examination through glass

Our chief instruments were Zeiss monoculars (8 x 30B photomocular) fitted with interchangeable additional front lenses to allow us to focus sharply on objects only a few inches away. In the eyepiece of each was put a rectangular net-grating. With these modifications, the instrument could well be termed a macroscope. With a stable tripod and additional concentrated illumination, we could examine a gemstone from top to bottom and see clearly its external and internal characteristics and condition. By means of the net-grating, calibrated for each of the front lenses, we could determine, with reasonable accuracy, the lateral dimensions of the gems and, in some cases, even their depth. *Optical measurements made in this way are reported in the following pages without the decimal point.*

The Chelsea filter was in almost constant use on the green stones, and those that did not react were noted for further direct study. By constructing a tent of opaque cloth large enough to swathe any case, we were able to test the reaction of the gems to ultraviolet light. The rubies and red spinels fluoresced brilliantly, even through glass, thus readily distinguishing them from red garnets and tourmalines. Many of the diamonds fluoresced also. Tests with the dichroscope provided unreliable data.

Two persons were engaged in these studies through glass for a total of 125 hours each.

Direct examination

When the maximum of data had been obtained through glass, arrangements were made for the direct study of selected pieces. For this purpose, a mobile but rather complete gemmological laboratory was set up daily in the vault. During this part of the study our optical equipment consisted of a stereo-gemmological microscope, two refractometers, three dichroscopes, one polariscope, long- and short-wave sources of ultraviolet light, and sundry lenses and filters. We had also various calipers, a gem-balance, and a borrowed set of grocer's scales to weigh those stones in excess of 275 carats – almost two ounces, the limit of the gem-balance.

Most gemmological equipment is designed to be used with relatively small objects. Some ingenuity was required, therefore, in dealing with very large gems, whether loose or mounted in closed settings. For example, we had to identify the red 500-carat stone (page 67). The shade of colour indicated a spinel rather than a ruby. However, some more diagnostic piece of information, such as the refractive index or specific gravity, was required. Because of its shape, it was thought unlikely that a reading of refractive index could be obtained, so the specific gravity was determined by lowering the weighed gem into a large water-filled graduated cylinder (borrowed on short notice from the Department of Physics, University of Tehran) and noting the increase in volume. The gem was thus proved to be a red spinel – the largest on record.

In no case did the results of the direct study contradict conclusions reached on the basis of the examination through the glass. The opportunity to handle the gems, however, did permit the solution of problems recognized in the preliminary study. The direct examination was uniquely valuable in providing precise measurements, and other measurements which had been hitherto unavailable. *Dimensions and weights obtained directly from the stones are distinguished in the following pages by being quoted beyond the decimal point.*

Three persons were involved in this phase of the study for a total of fifty-six hours each.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

There is little historical documentation for the Iranian Crown Jewels, at least in the form of written archival materials. Important exceptions to this general statement are the regalia and a group of tiaras, necklaces, bracelets, ear-rings, etc. created for the present dynasty. For these there are records of the makers, the dates of construction, and the occasions for which they were made. For the bulk of the collection, however, we had to seek our

documentation in more indirect ways.

For each object in the collection we sought to answer the following questions: the use to which it was devoted; its date and provenance; and its importance, if any, in Iran's secular or art history. Even to ascertain the use or purpose of some items in the collection substantial research was required, because the tremendous social, political, and economic changes Iran has experienced in the last forty years have, in many cases, obliterated memories – even among Iranians – of the old customs and mode of living (especially as practised in court circles).

Some of the objects in the collection bear their own documentation – or at least partial documentation – in the form of inscriptions and dates. The gems may bear names of emperors and shahs, indicating that they once were in their possession, and in a few cases longer inscriptions detail the use to which the stone was put. But such inscriptions document the gems only and can provide merely a *terminus post quem* for the item of jewellery in which they may now be set.

Blades of swords and daggers may carry names of makers. At best these date the blades themselves and not necessarily the ornamental scabbards and mounts now attached to them; at worst such inscriptions may be forgeries. There are few maker's marks on the jewellery. Even modern pieces, made in the West and for which there is written documentation, do not usually bear hallmarks or maker's marks.

For the enamels, we are more fortunate. Some of them are signed and dated, and a knowledge of the characteristics of style, technique, and palette of colours represented in these pieces can suggest dates for other, unsigned, enamels. Many objects also bear portraits of the shahs or other members of the royal family and so can be dated with reasonable certainty.

Such portraits share one of the chief characteristics of Persian painting generally – the love for detail. Iranian artists have for centuries created naturalistic or slightly formalized depictions of court scenes and vignettes of everyday life in the jewellike miniatures which embellish hundreds of manuscripts, and in the lacquers and enamels which adorn objects of various kinds. Even after the introduction of oil painting from the West, the traditional subject-matter and treatment continued. The advent of the camera, a century ago, provided a new means of achieving realism in portraiture. We have, then, in one medium or another, portraits of the shahs seated in splendour – often on the occasion of the great court levées – or participating in ever-victorious battles or the chase. Many are signed and dated, or bear other indications of their period. Details of costume, jewellery, court regalia, furniture, horse-trappings, and weapons are all

depicted meticulously. Such pictorial sources, gathered or recorded from Tehran and other cities of Iran, from Britain, Russia, France, the United States, and India, have proved invaluable in our study.

Another important source of information has been the writings of early travellers. Visitors to Iran – whether they were jewellers such as Tavernier and Chardin, diplomats such as Malcolm, Jaubert, or von Kotzebue, soldiers, merchants, scientists, or missionaries – have left many interesting accounts of their experiences. Iran, to them, was exotic; their curiosity led them to observe life around them and to record their experiences and impressions vividly and in detail. They describe customs which have now passed away. They often provide clues and explanations by which some object in the collection, of unknown purpose, can be identified, and the history of another can be reconstructed. Like the Persian painters, they often report in detail the construction of a throne, the caparison of a horse, the jewels worn by a shah, or the table vessels at court. They tell us, in addition, of internal happiness or discontent, border problems with the Russians, Turks, or Uzbeks, trade and commerce, arts and manufactures, the life of the city and the country, law and finance, singular customs – the raw material for reconstructing the social history of the time in which they are writing. Certainly the most vivid account of everyday life in early nineteenth-century Iran is James Morier's famous novel *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*.

Many books have been consulted, but there is no doubt some have been missed. Of works in Persian, some have been read in translation. Some have long since been embodied in the great historical works of Malcolm, Sykes, and others and have been used through their mediation. The foreign writers have two great advantages over the native sources: they can be more objective (although they may have their own bias) and, most important, they frequently concern themselves with matters which a Persian writer would take for granted.

For comparative purposes, it was necessary to study and record objects in other collections, both public and private, inside and outside Iran. Some of the most important pieces in the Iranian collections are to be found in the Museum and Library of the Golestan Palace in Tehran: several thrones, the bow of Nadir Shah, the crown of Agha Muhammad Khan, the sword of Karim Khan Zand, and so on. The Archaeological Museum in Tehran contains objects and pictures relevant to this study. Other cities of Iran, such as Isfahan, Shiraz, Qazvin, and Karaj, and the great shrine collections at Meshed and Qum, have unpublished material, much of which has been seen and studied.

Many great public and private collections in London,

New York, Moscow, Leningrad, Istanbul, and other major cities have Persian objects which help document the Crown Jewels collection in Tehran and many of these have been consulted. There is little doubt that important material still awaits study in the great shrines of Kerbela and Najaf in Iraq.

Evidence acquired from pictorial and literary sources and from comparable objects in other collections can at best indicate that a particular item in the Crown Jewels collection was in use at the date when the painting was made, the account written, or the comparable object created. It could in theory be earlier. However, the recurrent upheavals arising from foreign invasion and civil strife, particularly in the eighteenth century, make it unlikely that many items of the earlier treasures remained intact at the time when Fath Ali Shah began to create a new Crown Jewels collection worthy of the Qajar dynasty. For individual pieces in the present collection, however (such as the jewelled bottle of page 111 or the candlestick of page 108), there may be nothing in style or technique to indicate that the piece is not earlier than his time. The dates assigned, therefore, must be taken as being at best approximate, unless the piece bears some definite indication which allows us to be more specific.

Finally, the process of documentation has included discussion and correspondence with specialists in many diverse subjects: the composition of alloys, marks on swords, illegible signatures, the translation of a passage from Old Armenian, the location of some painting, or the elucidation of some obscure title.

Some problems remain unsolved, but the general picture is now clear. Probably the bulk of the important gems in the collection represent what survives of Nadir Shah's booty taken from Delhi in 1739, although there may be stones with a longer history, now unidentifiable. Of the jewellery and other objects, there is little that can be dated earlier than the time of Fath Ali Shah (1797 – 1834), that luxury-loving and artistic monarch who created the regalia and the opulent fixtures of the Qajar dynasty. Of his successors, only Nasir ud-Din Shah, in his long reign (1848 – 96), added substantially to the collection and, apparently, renovated some of his ancestors' creations. Since his time, with the exception of the crowns, sceptre, and jewellery created for the Pahlavi dynasty, the collection has remained almost static.

While in many ways the gemmological and historical research activities differed in method and purpose, there was close collaboration at all times. The findings of one were quickly communicated to the other and frequently queries raised in one study led to discoveries in the other.

One result of this continuing cross-fertilization of

ideas was the suggestion that the great tablet diamond, the *Darya-i Nur*, might be Tavernier's "Great Table" diamond. Many months of research have led us to a refinement of this first hypothesis. We now believe that the *Darya-i Nur* (page 53) and the *Nur ul-Ain* of the diamond tiara of page 139 are the surviving pieces of the "Great Table." The whole argument leading to this conclusion has been published elsewhere.¹ Here we can but touch the highlights.

The precise descriptions of the *Darya-i Nur* and the *Nur ul-Ain* are given on the pages cited. For the "Great Table" we had originally only the description and sketch given by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier,² a French jeweller who saw the stone for sale when he was in India in 1642. In his sketch he provided a shape but no dimensions; in his description he quoted a weight of 242 carats and implied that the stone was of superb quality. The later history and fate of this magnificent diamond have been a mystery which generations of gemmologists have sought unsuccessfully to solve.

The clue which launched this particular study was provided by the long-neglected Introduction to Sir Harford Jones Brydges' *The Dynasty of the Kajars*. In this, Harford Jones (as he then was) recounts his experiences at the court of Lutf Ali Khan Zand in Shiraz when he visited him in 1791. This prince wished him to act as his agent in the sale of some of the Crown Jewels. As a result, Harford Jones was able to handle and examine the magnificent diamond called by the Persians *Darya-i Nur* (Sea of Light). He described the stone as a "table diamond," its colour "a slight tinge of a palish pink," its "water . . . perfect and brilliant," and stated that "the shape and size of the gem perfectly agreed with . . . the size of the drawing given in Tavernier."³ The drawing referred to is the sketch of the "Great Table" provided by Tavernier in his book, a copy of which Harford Jones had with him. The significance of this key statement appears to have been missed until now. His further statement that "it was not likely that there should be two stones in the world of such magnitude without it being known in whose possession they were"⁴ is as valid today as then and indicates that Harford Jones was convinced of their identity.

If we accept the identity of the "Great Table" and the *Darya-i Nur* in 1791, we must admit that there are substantial differences between the *Darya-i Nur* of that time and the one we know today.

Harford Jones's statement leads to the conclusion that the sketch of the "Great Table" given by Tavernier is to natural scale. A comparison of today's *Darya-i Nur* with the "Great Table" indicates that the breadths are the same and both taper slightly towards one end, but the former is considerably shorter. Harford Jones's stone was

unfaceted; ours has a few simple facets around the girdle and on the pavilion. His had, apparently, no inscription; ours bears the name of Fath Ali Shah and a date equivalent to 1834. Colour and quality are comparable. At this stage of our investigation it was possible to conceive that Harford Jones's stone had suffered an accident after which it was refashioned and the inscription added to form the stone in the collection today.

If today's *Darya-i Nur* is the major portion of Tavernier's "Great Table," what happened to the lesser piece which is presumed to have been split off? The appropriate colour and quality were to be found in the large pink brilliant called the *Nur ul-Ain*. Could a diamond of this size and shape have been cut from the remnant? This question was answered by Mr. Grant Waite, one of our number, who cut models of the "Great Table" (assuming that its thickness was identical with that of today's *Darya-i Nur*), the present *Darya-i Nur*, and the cleavage piece which would have remained. From that "fragment," after much experimenting, he cut a model of the pink brilliant which matched it in dimensions. Indeed, he found that the very shape of the fragment dictated the cutting of the pink brilliant as a shallow stone with the slight drop-shape and asymmetric shoulders it actually possesses.

A slight flaw in the *Nur ul-Ain* gave us cause for concern, because the "Great Table" was apparently flawless. Actually, this flaw provided yet further confirming evidence. Examination of large colour transparencies showed the flaw to be incipient cleavages. Consideration of the orientation of these cleavages led us to the conclusion that when the crystallographic orientation of the *Nur ul-Ain* was matched to that of the *Darya-i Nur*, the former lay in the position it must have occupied to have been cut from the cleavage fragment. In addition, it was obvious that the flaw lay on the surface which had been adjacent to the present *Darya-i Nur*. This fact suggested, in turn, the reason for a large, asymmetrically placed pavilion facet in the *Darya-i Nur*. In the accident which split Harford Jones's *Darya-i Nur* incipient cleavage was formed in both pieces. In fashioning the larger piece into the present *Darya-i Nur*, it was returned to flawless condition by grinding away the incipient cleavage, thus forming the asymmetrically placed facet. The inscription bearing the name of Fath Ali Shah and the date 1834 suggest strongly that the accident to the "Great Table"/*Darya-i Nur* occurred shortly before this time.

The smaller fragment may have lain many years in the Treasury before it was fashioned into its present brilliant form. Had the lapidary removed the tiny flaw, he would have reduced the weight of this 60-carat diamond appreciably. So it was left in and has served as a clue by which we are able to link the *Nur ul-Ain* to the *Darya-i Nur* and

in turn identify both with the even larger but long-lost "Great Table."

Apparent discrepancies – the flaw in the *Nur ul-Ain* and the asymmetric facet in the *Darya-i Nur* – have actually supported our argument, but for one other discrepancy we have so far no satisfactory solution. The sum of the weights of the *Darya-i Nur* (est. 175–95 carats) and the Pink Brilliant (est. 60 carats) equals if not exceeds the weight of the "Great Table" (242 carats reported by Tavernier) with no allowance for loss during the refashioning of the two fragments. Our experiments with the models, however, demonstrate clearly that the "Great Table" must have weighed approximately 300 carats. Whatever may be the explanation of the discrepancy in weights, we are convinced that Tavernier's weight is wrong and must be disregarded, for all other evidence, as we have shown, points clearly to the identity of Tavernier's "Great Table" and the original *Darya-i Nur*.

In this case, as in many others, close collaboration between gemmologist and historian has produced important results. This splendid diamond, magnificent in size and quality, and long prominent in Iran's Crown Jewels, now stands without peer in the world in its documented history of more than three centuries.

Gems and Settings

THE GEMS

Emeralds

Unlike some other gems, emerald appears in one colour only, a rich green which is the result of a trace of chromium in its composition. Most of the emeralds in this collection have the characteristics of those from the famous mines of Colombia – the soft velvet green of Muzo or the blue green, sometimes with pyrite inclusions, of Chivor. Others may have had different origins, but because their quality is not comparable with those from South America, little time was spent on them.

When the Spaniards invaded South America in 1537, they found that the Incas possessed quantities of large and fine emeralds. The Indians endeavoured to keep the source secret, but the invaders discovered it and began a systematic exploitation of the deposit known as El Chivor, followed later by the discovery and mining of the Muzo and Cosquez deposits. In 1675, Chivor was abandoned; it became covered by jungle and was not rediscovered until 1896. Since then all three deposits have been worked more or less continuously, although the emeralds obtained do not compare in size or quantity with those of Spanish times.

It has been generally assumed that the Spaniards carried off South American emeralds for sale in Europe, and that only the culls were carried farther east to Iran and India. That there are fine emeralds in Western treasures is undisputed, but the Iranian collection proves that the above assumption is wrong. Tavernier¹ states that emeralds were brought by the Spaniards across the Pacific to the Philippines and were distributed from there. He suggests also that this trade with Southeast Asia had been carried on by South American natives long before the Spanish conquest.

Egyptian emeralds from the Sikait/Zubara region near the Red Sea – known in antiquity but rediscovered only in the nineteenth century – may be present in the collection but were unrecognized. Emeralds from the Russian Urals are present in relatively small numbers, but could not have been among those taken by Nadir Shah from Delhi since those deposits were not discovered until 1830. Despite the great love Indian rulers had for the green gem, native emerald was not reported there until 1943, when it was found in the state of Rajasthan, where it has since been mined sporadically. It is possible that there are in the collection emeralds from an earlier unreported Indian source – long since lost – but if so they were not identified.

Diamonds

Most of the diamonds in the collection are undoubtedly of Indian origin, since India produced the bulk of the

world's supply until the early part of the eighteenth century. Brazilian diamonds entered the European market in 1727 and some went also to India whence they were re-exported as Indian stones. Some may have entered Indian collections and thence the Iranian Crown Jewels. South African diamonds were not discovered until 1866; the first documented acquisition for Iran is the purchase by Nasir ud-Din Shah during a visit to Europe in 1889 (see page 131). Likely the baguette-cut diamonds set in the tiaras (pages 138 and 139) and other jewellery made for the royal ladies of the present dynasty are of South African origin.

Between A.D. 1347 and 1687 Golconda, the most famous of the Indian diamond-producing areas, existed as a state with the fortified town of the same name as its capital. This city, a few miles northwest of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh and now in ruins, was not a mining town. It was rather the emporium for the diamonds obtained from alluvial workings scattered over an area bounded to north and south by the Godivari and the Penner rivers. Between them on the Kristna (Kistna or Krishna) River lay the Kollur mines famous as the producers of large diamonds of superior quality such as the *Kuh-i Nur* of the British Crown Jewels and the Orlov in the Russian Treasury. It is probable that the *Darya-i Nur* (page 53) and the *Taj-i Mah* (page 68) of the Iranian collection came from these mines also.

Red gems

Red gems are outstanding in this collection. Although a few are garnets and tourmalines, most are rubies and spinels – in the past all loosely referred to as rubies.

From an early date there appears to have been recognition of a difference between true rubies and other red stones called balas rubies or spinels. As the distinction seems to have been based on slight differences of colour and perhaps of hardness, there was some confusion. Only in 1783 were ruby and spinel distinguished on chemical grounds. It is still easy to confuse cut rubies and red spinels; for certain identification, optical or specific gravity tests are necessary.

It was not possible to carry out definitive tests on all the red stones in the collection, but from a sampling a general conclusion was reached. Faceted red stones greater than 10 carats are in all probability spinels as are most of the large, polished irregular lumps. Most regular red cabochons, usually less than 15 carats in weight but a few up to 75 carats (pages 56 and 142), are rubies. Four star-rubies up to 55 carats (estimated) were noted (pages 56, 96, and 142). Many faceted rubies of less than 5 carats were recognized.

Rubies Rubies are found in Burma, Thailand, and

Ceylon. The finest are deep blood-red in colour with a hint of purple, and these come from the Mogok area of northern Burma. The gems occur in the alluvial gravels, and mining is carried out under lease and licence. Stones greater than 10 carats have always been rare, and a condition imposed on the miners required the surrender of any such stone to the king. As a result, larger stones were likely to be broken up. In any event, the collection displays relatively few which are larger than 10 carats in weight. The most notable are those in the two plaques of rings (see page 118), the buckle (page 117), the throne (page 56), and several in the World Globe (page 140). One unillustrated, unmounted cabochon is calculated to weigh 100 carats. No rubies of this size and high quality come from the mines today and only very rarely does one appear on the market.

Spinel Spinel occurs naturally in several colours but only red was observed in the collection. Most of the large red stones are spinels and many of these are of remarkable size – hundreds in excess of 20 carats and a score or more greater than 100 carats. One of the latter, a polished pebble of 500 carats (page 67), is thought to be the largest red gem spinel known, far surpassing the Black Prince's "Ruby" and the Timur "Ruby" (both now recognized as spinels) in the British Crown Jewels, and one in the Russian Treasure.

Most of the spinels in the collection are bright, lively gems, often free of the flaws and inclusions common in ruby. Although some do display the blood-red colour which characterizes the good ruby, most exhibit a hint of orange or amethyst. Most are faceted, usually step-cut or mixed-cut. Some are much abraded, while others look as if they were fresh from the lapidary's wheel. Red spinels come from the gem mines in Mogok, Burma, and Ceylon, but the chief source for centuries appears to have been the mines of Badakhshan, a district in north-eastern Afghanistan in the upper reaches of the Oxus River (Amu Darya). Chardin suggests that the term *balas ruby* is derived from Badakhshan: "They likewise call it [ruby] *Balacchani*, the stone of *Balacchan* . . . from whence I judge might be deriv'd the Name of *Balays*."²

The abundance and high quality of the spinels in the Iranian collection enable the gemmologist and connoisseur for the first time to reach a just appreciation of this magnificent gem.

Pearls

Pearls appear in profusion in the collection – combined with other gems, massed *en pavé* (e.g. the Kiani Crown on page 72 and the pearl sabre on page 74), embroidered on costumes, and strung in scores of ropes and tassels (pages 77 and 125). In a world which has

grown accustomed to the cultured pearl, it is a delight to be able to see and admire thousands of fine natural pearls in all their variety of form, colour, and size. To be sure, a few have lost their original fine lustre (orient) as a result of use, abuse, or simply age, but the bulk of them retain their pristine beauty. In form they are spherical, tear-drop, ovoid, or baroque.

Fine pearls were readily available to the rulers of India and Persia. The fisheries of the Persian Gulf and particularly those around Bahrain Island have always been a prolific source. Chardin, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, wrote: *This Fishery [Bahrain] has a prodigious Plenty, and produces more than a Million of Pearls a Year. I have seen a Pearl taken out of it that weigh'd Fifty Grains, and round to Perfection [12.1 mm., nearly half an inch in diameter]: This was a great Rarity, the largest Pearls in that Sea weighing no more generally than Ten or Twelve Grains. The Fishermen are obliged, under the severest Penalties, to present the King with the Pearls that are above that Weight.*³ The second major source lay in the Gulf of Mannar, between the island of Ceylon and the mainland of India.

Pearl fishing in these two areas, though now quite limited, has been carried on for many centuries, and it is probable that these are the main sources of the pearls in the collection. Tavernier,⁴ however, mentions a third source from which some of the large pearls may have come. He describes a large pear-shaped pearl of 55 carats (220 grains), from the island of Marguerite off the coast of Venezuela, which he sold to the uncle of the Great Moghul. He then continues: *Many are astonished to learn that pearls are taken from Europe to the East, whence they come in abundance, but it should be remarked that in the Oriental fisheries they are not found of as great weight as in those of the West.*

Turquoise

The colour most desired in the opaque gem turquoise is unblemished robin's-egg blue or sky blue, any greenish hue or mottling decreasing the value. The finest turquoise has always come from mines near Nishapur, about 45 miles west of Meshed, in northeastern Iran. Even in Tavernier's time the product of one of these, known as the Old Mine, was superior and reserved entirely for the shah. Today it appears that the annual production is not great, and it is reported that most of this is exported to India and the USSR.

One case in the collection is devoted to turquoise, the quality of which is mostly good to excellent. In some pieces, however, the material is pale or has a greenish tint. There are no large stones; apparently uniformity of colour could be obtained, even in earlier times, only in small pieces.

Sapphires

There are relatively few sapphires in the collection, but more than the casual observer would believe. Sapphires and rubies are identical in all but colour: blood-red stones are rubies and all others are sapphires. They are found associated with rubies in the Mogok deposits of Burma and are the principal gems from the mines in the vicinity of Ratnapura (City of Gems) in Ceylon. It is probable that the sapphires of the collection come from these sources since the deposit of blue sapphires in Kashmir was not discovered until 1881.

Sapphires occur in several pieces of the collection (e.g. pages 50, 55, 84, 91, 128, 130, 142). A number of unmounted sapphires are displayed in the diamond case, of which three are worthy of special note. The two largest are blue: a hollow rectangular cabochon (191.58 carats), with some flaws and inclusions; and a rectangular mixed-cut (141.91 carats), quite clean. The third is an oval mixed-cut yellow stone (119.04 carats), with a very shallow crown, some inclusions and flaws.

Other gems

Of gem materials other than those described above, there are very few examples, and only those listed below were recorded.

Amber One piece of amber was noted, a much abraded, spirally fluted *qalyan* mouthpiece (Case 4, No. 37).

Beryl Beryl is a mineral which, depending on its colour, provides a variety of gems: green beryl is emerald; blue is aquamarine. There are no cut aquamarines in the collection, but crystals have been fashioned as handles for knives and, in one case (page 120), a single natural crystal is displayed. Several beryls, their chartreuse colour probably produced by foil backing, are used in the gem-studded basin of page 97 and in a *jiqa* (Case 7, No. 12).

Chrysoberyl Of the four chrysoberyls noted, all are cat's eyes. The largest, a drilled, dark chartreuse stone of irregular form, weighs 147.69 carats and is displayed in Case 24. The finest is a stone of about 25 carats set in the bracelet of page 130.

Garnet Although we expected to find demantoid (a rare green variety), red garnets only were noted. Bright and attractive stones are found in the bracelet of page 130 and in the handle of the sabre (Case 22, No. 6), a gift of Tsar Alexander II (1855–81). The largest garnet, weighing 130.57 carats, is an unset, hollow carbuncle with numerous flaws displayed in Case 24.

Jade There is little jade in the collection, despite the

relative proximity to the Burmese jadeite and the Chinese nephrite sources. The most noteworthy pieces are two ladles (see page 105) and the handle of Fath Ali Shah's hand-mirror (page 70).

Lapis Lazuli Lapis lazuli is a massive opaque material which depends for beauty on its deep azure-blue colour. Its name (which is a corruption of a Persian word) and its source, in the mountains of Badakhshan in northeast Afghanistan, would lead us to expect to find in the collection more than the one example actually found, a sabre handle (Case 6, No. 6).

Opal Opal is represented in the collection only by a small spray at the top of the *jiqa* of Case 10, No. 36. As this piece is signed "Gebrüder Wiser Wien," and probably dates from the reign of Muhammad Shah (1834–48), there can be little doubt that the opals originated in the centuries-old mines of Cervenica (Hungary), now in Czechoslovakia.

Quartz and Chalcedony Quartz and chalcedony provide several varieties of gems depending on the particular colour or pattern. Even taking them as a group, there are fewer than two dozen such gemstones in the collection. The largest is a citrine of about 220 carats in a crupper (Case 22, No. 13). There are also a few examples of amethyst, carnelian, onyx, rock crystal, and sardonyx.

Topaz The only topaz noted was a golden-brown oval brilliant of about 20 carats, surrounded by diamonds, in the brooch of Case 11, No. 58.

Tourmaline Tourmaline is a gem which may appear in a wide variety of colours, but only green and red specimens were noted in the collection. Of the former, a fine example is to be seen in the bracelet of page 130; there are other examples in the handle of the turquoise dagger of page 88. One red tourmaline occurs amongst the spinel pendants of the necklace of Case 26, No. 30.

GEM CUTTING

To the visitor with the time and the interest to browse, the collection offers an unusually comprehensive display of the gem cutter's art through the ages. If he looks, he can find almost everything from the most primitive to the most modern.

From earliest time, man has treasured stones which appealed to his eye or sense of touch. It was but a step to begin polishing the natural pebble to increase its attractiveness, and then to grooving or drilling it to allow

attachment to his person. The finial spinel of the Kiani Crown (page 72), said to have belonged to the Emperor Aurangzib, is simply a polished irregular lump; and the stones of the spinel necklace (page 66) and the 500-carat "Golden Calf" spinel (page 67) are examples of unfashioned but drilled stones.

The achievement of a regular curved surface and general over-all symmetry produced the cabochon – a cut still favoured today for non-transparent stones. In this collection, however, this treatment may be found applied to all types of gems except diamonds. The buckle shown on page 117 and the *jiqa* on page 82 illustrate the usage.

At some time it was discovered that glitter could be produced and internal flaws hidden by covering the surface of the stone with a great many flat, haphazardly placed planes or facets. The original form of the rough gem and the application of a symmetrical arrangement of facets produced the rose-cut and the mogul-cut.

The rose-cut was developed probably before the sixteenth century, and, in its usual form, consists of two zones of triangular facets, in multiples of six, arranged about the apex. Tens of thousands of gems – mostly diamonds – in the Iranian collection exhibit this cut. The normal rose-cut has a broad, flat base. When this type of faceting is applied to both sides of the stone, a somewhat biconical form results which is called a double rose. The briolette is a tear-drop shaped double rose. Both double roses and briolettes occur frequently in the collection as the pendants on *jiqas*, and the diamond briolettes of the necklace (page 134) are particularly noteworthy.

The mogul-cut is derived from thick cleavage pieces (i.e. from split crystals) which have two broad, flat, parallel faces. Around the sides of such tablets two or more zones of steep, trapeziform facets of various sizes and shapes are applied; the top and bottom usually remain flat. The *Taj-i Mah* and three other large diamonds of page 68 illustrate this cut. In some cases, the upper table is replaced by three or four large, nearly horizontal, facets. The *Kuh-i Nur* of the British Crown Jewels had this form before it was recut. If the cleavage piece receives a minimum of faceting around the edges and retains broad upper and lower faces, a tablet-cut diamond is produced; there are many examples of this treatment in the collection, of which the most important is the *Darya-i Nur* of page 53. If the stone is still thinner – almost like a piece of plate-glass – the term "portrait" diamond is used (see page 129).

The development of the brilliant-cut overlapped, at least in part, the development of the rose- and mogul-cuts. The earliest treatment of the symmetrical diamond crystal was the polishing of its octahedral faces. The

removal of part of one point to produce a flat table provided the primitive form which has evolved, by an increase in the number of facets and improvement in their orientation, into the modern brilliant-cut of 56 triangular facets, plus a table, and a small culet. Other gems have been similarly treated. The collection holds many examples of various stages in this development. For instance the Kiani Crown (page 72) contains two red spinels in the primitive form, and in the Pahlavi Crown (page 50) there is a relatively modern diamond brilliant.

Two modifications of the brilliant-cut are the marquise (elongated or boat-shaped) and the pendeloque (drop- or pear-shaped). A marquise diamond is set above the front sunburst of the Pahlavi Crown and pendeloques of diamonds, emeralds, and spinels occur in many pieces of jewellery.

From the primitive crystal form of the diamond also developed the step-cut characterized by zones of narrow trapezoidal facets, the long sides of which are parallel to the girdle (equator of the stone). This cut is now used principally for coloured stones, particularly for emeralds, and an eight-sided form is known specifically as the "emerald cut." By manipulating the thickness of the gem, the depth of its colour may be enhanced, but if the angles of the facets in the pavilion are poorly chosen it "bleeds" light and the stone appears "dead." The step-cut is very common in the collection and, as might be expected, there are many stones which bleed. This is particularly apparent in emeralds with closed settings. The centres of such stones may appear quite light yellow-green, although the stone, near its edges, shows its true darker colour (page 79). The baguette, a modern adaptation of the step-cut, is a small rectangular diamond used, often in large numbers, in support of major gems (pages 138 and 139).

Hundreds of the emeralds and red spinels in the collection exhibit the mixed-cut, a combination of brilliant-cut crown and step-cut pavilion; a few were noted which display the reverse arrangement.

An interesting feature of the collection is the frequency with which gems are mounted pavilion outwards or exposed. This could be attributed to the fact that in the older cuts – cabochon and rose – the gem naturally protruded like a boss, and that this appearance was retained even when utilizing stones of more modern make by burying the crown to the girdle and exposing the pavilion. When, moreover, a shallow setting was necessary – as in the ewer (page 97), the Imperial Sword (page 85), or the Nadir Shah buckler (page 59) – it was more convenient to mount the stone in a position which, to Western eyes, is wrong side up. But with gems of the size and the beauty of those described on the following pages, the orientation is of little consequence.

METALS AND SETTINGS

Thousands of the gems in the collection are unset, but by far the largest number are incorporated in jewellery or embellish such objects as thrones, swords and daggers, bowls and bottles, *qalyan* parts, and miniature portraits. These gems are held in position within a framework of metal.

It must be remembered that gems have always been of high intrinsic value, but until comparatively modern times the settings served merely to hold them in position and show them off to the best advantage. Terms such as “embellished with enamels” or “encrusted with gems” betray modern attitudes which attach greater importance to the form of a jewel and less to the gems and surface ornamentation which it bears. Only when we recognize that the settings were in themselves of little importance can we understand the attitude which could not only condone, but foster, the breaking up of old or unfashionable settings and the creation of new ones. It is not surprising, therefore, that so few, if any, very early examples of the jeweller’s craft are to be found in the collection; there are pieces demonstrably of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, but they probably have been preserved not primarily for aesthetic reasons but for historic or dynastic interests, if not by pure chance.

Nevertheless precious metals were employed prodigally. It is not unusual to find in this collection objects of solid gold where, in another age or another part of the world, silver gilt would be expected. Nor would we think it necessary to have gold plating in thickness approaching an eighth of an inch, even when it is to receive champ-levé enamels. The relative unimportance of the setting also explains the juxtaposition of gold with other materials considered today unworthy of gems — for example, the tin alloy mounts of many of the gems in the Kiani Crown.

As the metals used in the Crown Jewels collection are varied, and in one case at least unusual, a few words should be said about them. It was, unfortunately, impossible to take samples of these metals for analysis, and the remarks that follow must be considered provisional whenever the presence of an alloy or the degree of alloy is suggested.

Gold

Most objects in the collection are of solid gold or are overlaid, sometimes very heavily, with gold. The surface of the gold may be burnished (most commonly) or matt. There may be surface decoration, usually by incision, but most frequently the gold is embellished with enamels (champlevé or painted) or encrusted with gems, or both.

There are also works in gold filigree, and hollow-wares. Some individual gems are set in gold mounts; the early and usual type of setting is that in which the under-side of the gem is completely enclosed, but claw mounts are also found.⁵

It was generally believed that only the purest gold would admit the full range of enamel colours, and there seems little reason to doubt that the enamelled gold in the collection is quite pure. On the basis of colour, the same judgment may be passed on the gold in unenamelled objects. There are a few exceptions: the reverse of the fine *jiqa* of page 79, for instance, has a definite reddish tinge, suggesting a rather high copper content.

Silver

This metal is not common in the collection,⁶ except in that jewellery which on stylistic grounds can be dated to the latter part of the nineteenth century. In such cases, gold and silver are used together, reminiscent of the fashion for this mixture in jewellery of the Victorian period in Western Europe.

White metal (tin)

Throughout the descriptions of the objects in the collection, reference is frequently made to "white metal." This is a metal which is silvery in tone and has a fine mellow glow, but which does not tarnish like silver. It was found often as the closed setting on diamonds (to add brilliance, for the faceting was usually very irregular) and in the metal open-work of the plaques on the Kiani Crown holding the gems. It may be an alloy of tin and antimony.⁷ There is little, if any, lead present in the alloy,⁸ for usually — as for instance in the interiors of the small, turquoise-studded coffee-cup containers (page 99) — the metal is as bright and clean as if it had been newly polished.

Pure tin, because it is malleable, can be beaten out very thin. As foil,⁹ sometimes coloured red, green, or blue with varnishes, it could be inserted behind a setting bearing several gems (as in the Kiani Crown), or it could be cut into small sequins or other minute forms and sewn to a cloth background as ornament (often with a central seed pearl, as on the large head-dress attributed to Abbas Mirza, Case 19). Coloured foils were also, on occasion, placed behind green or red gems to increase their depth of tone. In some pieces — e.g. the Nadir Shah *jiqa* (page 78) — red and green foils have been placed behind diamonds to colour them.¹⁰

Tin had been imported from southeast Asia and Malaya¹¹ for many centuries and had been used to "tin" (as it still is) the interiors of bronze and brass food dishes. It may seem peculiar to us that tin should play such an important role in the settings of jewellery, but

we should not allow our modern prejudices (which are largely moulded by a lack of appreciation of the real value and inherent qualities of tin) to colour our judgment.

Platinum

This metal did not come into common use for jewellery until early in the twentieth century. The only objects in the Iranian collection utilizing it were created for the present dynasty.

Steel

The Crown Jewels collection contains many fine swords, daggers, knives, and other triumphs of the Persian steel-smith's craft. More are to be found in the Golestan Palace collection and in other vaults of the Bank Markazi. Many of these are encrusted with gems, but such embellishment is restricted to scabbards, hilts, hangers, stocks, and the like. Rarely did the Persian connoisseur of fine steel-work countenance anything that could detract from the innate beauty of the steel itself. This beauty does not lie primarily in ornamentation — engraving, inlaying with gold wire, or chiselling — but, rather, in the exquisite veining inherent in the metal, which has led to the term "watered steel." Although it was sometimes called "Damascus" steel from the fact that the West obtained it first from that city, the metal used in Damascus blades was brought from farther east. It was mined in India and exported in small, round cakelike ingots containing a crystalline pattern which became modified during the forging process. Persian craftsmen in the cities of Meshed and Herat worked this steel — augmented, perhaps, from local sources — into beautiful armour, swords, daggers, helmets, maces and axes. The finished product was characterized by hardness and sharpness combined with flexibility, and by the beautiful patterns of darker and lighter metal which were emphasized by etching.¹²

The working of this steel into blades appears to be a very old craft in Iran, but the most famous sword-makers were Asadullah and his son Kalb Ali of Isfahan (see page 74), who worked under the Safavid monarchs in the seventeenth century. Blades bearing their names were highly prized — so much so that their names were sometimes forged.

Gun-barrels made in Persia bear a superficial resemblance to the blades and armour in that they, too, have a watered-steel effect, but in this case the result was achieved by forging separate strands of wire of differing carbon content into rods which were twisted, plaited, and finally coiled on a mandrel for forging into the barrel of the gun, which was subsequently etched to bring out the pattern.¹³

ENAMELS

The enamellist's craft is an ancient one, in which a vitreous compound (a form of glass) is applied to metal. The purpose traditionally has been to beautify, but it can also serve purely utilitarian purposes, as in modern enamelled cooking wares.

The enamel substance, in the form of finely ground powder coloured with oxides and made opaque (if desired) by the addition of tin oxide, is fused to the metal by heat. Two principal methods have been followed in applying the enamel. In the first, *cloisonné*, fine wires are soldered to the metal background to form cells in which the separate colours are fused. The second, *champlevé*, achieves the same result by hollowing out the metal to hold the enamel. Frequently the background is scored or finely engraved to make the enamel adhere more tightly. If the enamel is translucent, such treatment also produces a play of light. Painted enamel is a subtype; an opaque colour is first fused to the metal and the designs are painted on it in vitreous colours and then fired. Persian and Indian enamellists used the *champlevé* and painted enamel techniques.

All the enamels in the Iranian Crown Jewels collection are on gold, which seems to take the widest range and best tones of colour.

Persian and Indian enamels can be distinguished from all others in the Eastern, Moslem world by technique and by the fact that they depict flowers, animals, and birds. Persian enamels frequently show people, whereas Indian enamels rarely if ever do so. The pride of the enamellist in his craft is revealed by the fact that many enamels are signed and sometimes dated.

The history of enamel-making in Iran is by no means clear. The fact is that no enamels survive which can without doubt be considered Persian and of the Safavid period. The lack of such concrete evidence, however, may be merely the result of the fact that enamels are by their nature fragile and, once cracked or damaged, would be broken up. In the long, turbulent period which followed the downfall of the Safavid dynasty it is not surprising that works of great intrinsic value would be melted down for their gold.

There is no doubt, however, that enamelling – at least on silver (and probably on copper and bronze) – was practised in Persia under the Zand dynasty, for examples are preserved. If the enamelled bottle of page 106 is also Zand, we have at least one superb example of enamelling on gold from the same period.

Only from the reign of Fath Ali Shah (1797–1834), however, do we have a large number of examples of enamel on gold to show us what the Persian craftsman was capable of. The largest preserved group of these is

in the Crown Jewels collection. It is true that they often lack the finesse and perfection of European enamels, but they more than make up for this in their brilliance of colour (particularly the deep ruby red, the dark royal blue, the emerald green – all translucent) and in the ebullience of their painting. Enamels are also used everywhere in the collection to emphasize the colour and glitter of the gems – orange-red for emeralds, green for rubies and spinels.

Like many other arts, Persian enamels suffered an eclipse after Fath Ali Shah's death, but there was a renaissance under Nasir ud-Din Shah. Several artists of his reign equalled, but certainly did not surpass their predecessors in painting on enamels. However, the broad and vivid palette of colours, which was characteristic of the *champlevé* enamels of Fath Ali Shah's reign, was now gone – perhaps beyond the skill of these later craftsmen or no longer in demand.

Gem Inscriptions

Many gems in the collection, both set and unset, bear inscriptions. Some are quotations from the Koran or pious ejaculations such as “Ya Ali” (Oh Ali), or simply “Allah” (God). Others, however, are the names of kings (and sometimes dates) which are evidence of the history of the gems. These only are described here.

As has been noted under Study and Documentation, there was not sufficient time to examine all objects in the collection, and it is quite possible that some inscribed stones escaped our notice. Since their description was only incidental to the larger study, there was perforce a scamping of time devoted to the inscriptions themselves. Sometimes also the stones have become abraded through wear. For these reasons there may be slight errors of transcription, but it is hoped that such mistakes have been kept to a minimum.

In the list which follows, the gems are arranged according to the case in the collection where they are now displayed. When the gem is illustrated in this book, the page number is inserted even though the inscription itself may not always be visible or legible. If the stone is one on a string, or loose in a tray with others, close identification is impossible because of the absence of registration numbers for the individual gems.

Persian writing uses the Arabic alphabet with some additions and modifications, and like it normally is written from right to left, from the top line downwards. This convention is not, however, followed in inscriptions containing only names, titles, and dates – whether they appear on enamels or, as here, on gems. In such cases, the inscription is read from right to left beginning at the bottom and moving upwards, though exceptions to this rule do occur when the desire to produce an aesthetically pleasing (i.e. visually balanced) inscription is given priority. One example will suffice: many of the gems listed below bear an inscription which would be read, following the normal procedure, “Akbar Shah Jahangir Shah.” Jahangir was the successor of Akbar and, whenever a date follows, it is obvious that the inscription was cut under Jahangir Shah. We must then understand the inscription to read “Jahangir Shah [son of] Akbar Shah” and, in the following list, the inscriptions are translated in this form. The *izafe* or Persian genitival ending has been omitted in the transliterations given.

The dates given on the gems are those of the Hijra, or Hegira, era, dated from the Flight of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622. Since this is a lunar calendar, the dates are translated into the Western equivalents.

Case 11, No. 12

Tray of red spinels, of which two bear inscriptions:

1 Three inscriptions:

- (a) Akbar Shah
- (b) Jahangir Shah 1014 [son of] Akbar Shah (A.D. 1605–6)
- (c) Sahib Qiran Sani 1038 (i.e. Shah Jahan, A.D. 1628–29)¹

2 One inscription:

Ahmad Shah Durr Durran²

Case 11, No. 25

String of red spinels, three of which bear inscriptions:

- 1 Jahangir Shah [son of] Akbar Shah
- 2 Jahangir Shah [son of] Akbar Shah
- 3 Jahangir Padshah Ghazi

Case 11, No. 35

Large red spinel with seven inscriptions (page 67):

- (a) Jahangir Shah 1028 [son of] Akbar Shah (A.D. 1618–19)
- (b) Sahib Qiran Sani 1038 (A.D. 1628–29)
- (c) Alamgir Shahi 1076 (i.e. Aurangzib, A.D. 1665–66)³,
- (d) Muhammad Farrukh-siyar Padshah Ghazi
- (e) Bazuband Shahshahan Sultan Nadir Sahib Qiran muntakhab jawahir khana Hindustan 1152 ("Armlet of the King of Kings, the Sultan Nadir, Lord of the Conjunction, a selected [piece from the] Jewel-Treasury of Hindustan A.D. 1739–40")⁴
- (f) Al-'izza lillah ("Glory be to God") As-Sultan Sahib Qiran Fath Ali Shah Qajar
- (g) As-Sultan Nasir ud-Din Qajar

Case 11, No. 53

Red spinel in upper mount of scabbard (page 86): Alamgir Padshah Ghazi 1070 (A.D. 1659–60)

Case 11, No. 59

String of red spinels (page 66); ten are inscribed:

- 1 La 'l jalali ("glorious spinel")⁵
- 2 Two inscriptions:
 - (a) Shah Jahan [son of] Jahangir Shah
 - (b) Alamgir Shah 1071 (A.D. 1660–61)
- 3 Three inscriptions:
 - (a) Jahangir Shah [son of] Akbar Shah
 - (b) Shah Jahan [son of] Jahangir Shah
 - (c) Alamgir Shah 1076 (A.D. 1665–66)⁶
- 4 Alamgir Shah ibn ["son of"] Shah Jahan⁷
- 5 Two inscriptions:
 - (a) Jahangir Shah 1015 [son of] Akbar Shah (A.D. 1606–7)
 - (b) Sahib Qiran Sani 1039 (A.D. 1629–30)
- 6 Jahangir Shah [son of] Akbar Shah
- 7 Jahangir Shah [son of] Akbar Shah
- 8 Jahangir Shah [son of] Akbar Shah
- 9 Jahangir Shah 1014 [son of] Akbar Shah (A.D. 1605–6)
- 10 Ahmad Shah Durr Durran 1168 (A.D. 1754–55)

Case 24, No. 41

Irregular, shallow, rose-cut, colourless diamond, unset, 21.3 x 19.4 x 7.7 mm., 22.93 carats; inscribed on a narrow face cut across one end:

Nizam Shah Burhan Sani 1000 (i.e. Nizam Shah Burhan II, A.D. 1591–92)⁸

Case 27, No. 4

One of two seals (page 119). The two seals, nearly identical, bear the date 1244 (A.D. 1828–29). This seal (our "b"), in addition, bears the inscription:

Khusrau Sahib Qiran⁹

Case 27, No. 32

Egg-shaped emerald (page 64).

On the side exposed in the illustration, two inscriptions:

- (a) Jahangir Shah [son of] Akbar Shah¹⁰
- (b) Ahmad Shah Durr Durran 1168 (A.D. 1754–55)

On the side hidden in the illustration:

Jihat tasbih Shahshahan Nadir Sahib Qiran bar taskhir Hind az jawahir khana intikhab shud 1152 ("For the rosary of the King of Kings, Nadir, Lord of the Conjunction, at the conquest of

India, from the Jewel-Treasury [this] was selected,
A.D. 1739–40¹¹

Case 30, No. 50

Circular, flat, deep blue-green emerald seal, unset, 49 mm.
diameter x 8.62 mm., 189.22 carats; drilled.

Central roundel:

Abu'l-Muzaffar Nur ud-Din Jahangir Padshah Ghazi 1016
(A.D. 1607–8)¹²

Surrounding roundels, clockwise, from top:

- (a) Ibn Akbar Padshah
- (b) Ibn Humayun Padshah
- (c) Ibn Babur Padshah
- (d) Ibn Shaikh Mirza
- (e) Ibn Sultan Abu Sa'id
- (f) Ibn Sultan Mirza Muhammad
- (g) Ibn Miran Shah
- (h) Ibn Amir Timur Sahib Qiran

Case 33, No. 12

Bowl cover (page 116). One of the large red spinels on the surround
is inscribed:

Shah Jahan 1041 [son of] Jahangir Shah (A.D. 1631–32)

Case 34, No. 2

Darya-i Nur diamond (page 53). On one of the facets of the pavilion
is inscribed:

As-Sultan Sahib Qiran Fath Ali Shah Qajar 1250 (A.D. 1834, the
year of his death)

Case 36, No. 1

Kiani Crown (page 72). The large red spinel in the lozenge-shaped
plaque on the left side of the crown is inscribed:

Jahangir Padshah

Case 37

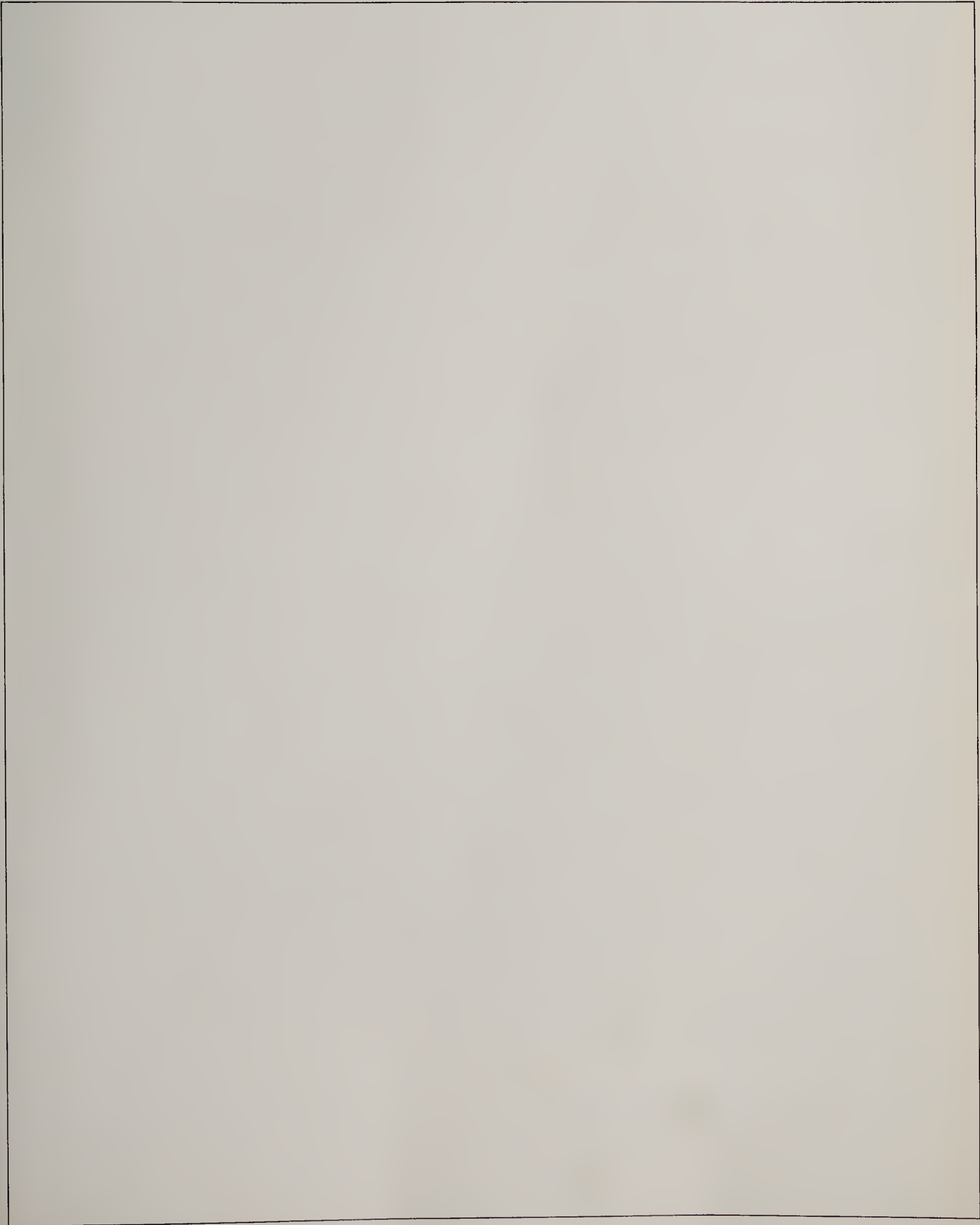
World Globe (page 140). Two inscribed stones were noted:

- 1 Emerald, in the Pacific Ocean, north of Japan:
Jahangir Shah 1018 (A.D. 1609–10)
- 2 Red spinel, horizontally drilled, north of the Tropic of Cancer,
directly above southeast Asia:
Jahangir Shah 1022 (A.D. 1613–14)





Jewels of the Collection



Imperial Regalia



Overall height (to top of finial): 19.8 cm. (7.8 in.)

Overall width: 19.8 cm. (7.8 in.)

Emeralds

Octagonal, shallow emerald-cut, buff-top, 35 x 28 mm. (est. 100 carats), velvet green; set in sunburst at rear.

Oval, carved flower motif with deep radial fluting, 28.2 x 27.8 mm. by about 12 mm. deep (est. 65 carats), dark green; set as finial ornament.

Three hemispherical 16 mm. cabochons (est. 14 carats each), velvet green; set at base of plume and one to each side of front sunburst.

All five emeralds are of magnificent colour and quality and undoubtedly came from Colombian mines.

Diamonds

Cushion brilliant, 25.8 x 14 mm. deep (est. 60 carats), yellow and very clean; set in centre of front sunburst.

Two cushion brilliants, 14 mm. (est. 12 carats each), yellow, fine; each in centre of a side-panel motif.

Marquise, 23 x 12 mm. (est. 10 carats), colourless; set above front sunburst.

Sapphires

Two octagonal, mixed-cut, pavilion exposed, 16 x 14 mm. (est. 20 carats), blue; set in the dividers to left and right of the rear sunburst.

Pearls

Bottom row: 87 matched, averaging 7.2 mm. diameter (10.5 grains).

Row at top of headband: 94 matched, averaging 6.6 mm. diameter (8.1 grains).

Band at top of crenellations: 188 matched, averaging 5.5 mm. diameter (4.7 grains).

[Case 34, No. 1]

Pahlavi Crown

At the supreme moment of his coronation on October 26, 1967, His Imperial Majesty Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi Aryamihr, donned the Crown of State. His father, Reza Shah the Great, had commissioned it specially for his own coronation in 1926 which established the Pahlavi dynasty. Fittingly it occupies the focal position at the front of the display of the Crown Jewels in the National Bank in Tehran.

Of its reported 3380 diamonds the largest is a pale yellow brilliant of some 60 carats, mounted in the front panel in a sunburst of lesser stones. Other major gems – diamonds, emeralds, sapphires – glow at the centres of the three other sunbursts, between the panels, at the base of the plume, and in the spacers of the headband. The four flaring points and the headband are outlined by 369 matched natural pearls, mounted in platinum bands inset with more diamonds. Surmounting the red velvet cap is a fine emerald finial, its surface engraved with petals. The black and white detail shows the sunburst in the left panel of the crown.

By adopting the title Pahlavi, Reza Shah recalled the last true Iranian dynasty. The name was borne by several princely families of the Sasanian monarchy, which in the third to seventh centuries A.D. extended the empire to make Persia a world power.

The design of the crown also evokes those days of ancient glory. The four stepped panels, like crenellations, imitate the form of many Sasanian crowns. The sunbursts recall the "glory" or rays which emanated from the god Mithra and the legitimate king. The rings or hoops, with fluttering ribbons, in the side panels below the sunbursts are Sasanian symbols of kingly power: they can still be seen on coins and seals and on the great rock carvings at Naqsh-e Rostam (near ancient Persepolis, north of Shiraz) and Taq-e Bostan (near Kerman-shah). The device which forms the gold and diamond clasp of the white egret plume, and which appears at many other places on the crown, is probably a conventionalized lotus blossom, also derived from Sasanian motifs.

The Pahlavi Crown therefore symbolizes the continuity of Iranian royal power and declares the establishment of a new regime dedicated to rejuvenation, to the resumption under the Shahanshah, the King of Kings, of Iran's important place in the community of nations.





Emerald Belt

The royal belt of woven gold, with its spectacular emerald buckle, was worn by Nasir ud-Din Shah in the last half of the nineteenth century, as photographs show. It could be adjusted to encompass a waist of almost 47 inches (119 cm.), and therefore was probably made for him or for his father Muhammad Shah. Certainly it was not created for Fath Ali Shah, who prided himself on his tiny waist as much as on his long, glossy beard.

The heart-shaped emerald, set in a diamond-studded gold mount, is just over two inches high. It is slightly hollowed in a vertical line on its face. This may be the result of polishing to remove a scar or flaw, or perhaps to remove evidence of boring if the stone was once suspended on a cord.

It is by no means the largest emerald in the collection, yet its size and form make it stand out. We have one clue to its possible history. In November 1616, while travelling in India, Sir Thomas Roe beheld the splendour of the Emperor Jahangir: "On his head he wore a rich Turbant with a Plume of herne tops, not many but long; on one syde a ruby unsett, as bigg as a Walnutt; on the other syde a diamond as great; in the middle an emralld like a hart, much bigger."¹ The emerald on this belt could well be the one that once adorned the Indian emperor, carried away from Delhi to Persia with other treasures by Nadir Shah.

Though worn in this form by Reza Shah, the buckle was attached to a new belt for the coronation of Muhammad Reza Shah.

Emerald

Flat, somewhat heart-shaped, cabochon-cut, 52 x 43 mm. (est. 175 carats), velvet green with considerable jardin; groove from top to bottom on front; needs repolishing; magnificent stone. [Case 34, No. 3]

Darya-i Nur

The *Darya-i Nur* (Sea of Light) is the most famous gem in Iran and one of the great historic stones of the world. With its sister diamond, the *Kuh-i Nur* (Mountain of Light), it was carried off from India in 1739 as part of Nadir Shah's fabulous booty. Soon after his death, however, the histories of these two great diamonds diverged. The *Kuh-i Nur* found its way back to India and thence to England, where it now forms part of the British Crown Jewels.

The *Darya-i Nur* remained in Persia. Sir Harford Jones Brydges handled and described it in 1791, when it was paired with the *Taj-i Mah* (page 68) in the armbands of Lutf Ali Khan Zand.² From that time, its history is well documented: seized by Agha Muhammad Khan, worn by Fath Ali Shah,³ probably depicted in the armbands of Muhammad Shah and Nasir ud-Din Shah.

When fashion changed in the latter's reign and great jewelled armbands ceased to be worn, the *Darya-i Nur* falls temporarily out of sight, although it was probably kept in the Golestan Palace Museum.⁴ It appears in public again, apparently for the first time in its present setting, as an ornament in Muzaffar ud-Din Shah's karakul hat when he visited England in 1902.⁵ Since then, it has been worn in the same way by his successors. Reza Shah, the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, wore it in his military cap to his coronation in 1926, as did his son, Muhammad Reza Shah, in 1967.

The *Darya-i Nur* came, undoubtedly, from the famous Golconda diamond fields in South India. It is a pink, rectangular tablet and its flawlessness and limpidity are almost unbelievable. The table occupies almost the entire spread and the pavilion consists of a few unmatched step facets terminating in an off-centre tabular culet nearly one inch square. Reported weights of 182 and 186 carats lie within the range of calculated weight based on exact measurement, photographs, and sketches. On one of the facets of the pavilion is the inscription, in Persian: "The Sultan, Sahib Qiran, Fath Ali Shah, Qajar 1250" (A.D. 1834, the year of his death).

The data acquired during the recent study and the information provided by Jones Brydges have recently been combined to support a new hypothesis concerning the history of the *Darya-i Nur*.⁶ The conclusion reached is that the "Great Table" diamond, which Tavernier saw in Golconda in 1642, was recut (probably in 1834); that the major portion constitutes the *Darya-i Nur* we know today; and that the remainder supplied the material for the lovely *Nur ul-Ain* in the diamond tiara on page 139. If this theory (outlined on pages 27–29) is correct, the *Darya-i Nur* has a recorded history of at least 325 years.

Even in its reduced form, the *Darya-i Nur* is surpassed in size by only five diamonds whose whereabouts are known. These are the Cullinan I and II in the British Crown Jewels, the Orlov in the Kremlin collection, and the Jubilee and the Nizam, both privately owned.⁷ Although the Cullinans and the Jubilee are substantially larger and, to Western eyes, of superior cut, they are modern South African stones with none of the *Darya-i Nur*'s long and fascinating history. The Orlov and the Nizam are indeed of Indian origin, but only the former appears to have a history comparable with that of the *Darya-i Nur* and neither is readily available to public view.



Height, overall, of setting: 7.2 cm. (2.8 in.)

Width, overall, of setting: 5.3 cm. (2.1 in.)

Darya-i Nur

Rectangular, step-cut tablet, 41.4 x 29.5 x 12.15 mm., off-centre culet about 25 mm. square (est. 175–195 carats), pink, flawless, extraordinary limpidity; inscribed on a pavilion facet (see page 47). [Case 34, No. 2]



Nadir Throne

There are three thrones in Tehran.⁸ The great Marble Throne and the so-called Peacock Throne, both in the Golestan Palace, follow a traditional Persian and Indian type: they are ornate raised platforms on which the shahs knelt. The Nadir Throne, which was used in the coronation in 1967, preserves an even more ancient form of royal seat. Darius had a chair throne 2500 years ago, and so in the sixteenth century did the Safavid shahs.⁹

The Nadir Throne is made of wood overlaid for the most part with gold which has been enamelled and encrusted with remarkable gems. It is essentially a square box, with another box in front serving as a step or footrest. The high, ornate back ascends to a plumed finial at the peak and bears jewelled "suns" on its shoulders. The lower part of the back panel is framed by S-shaped bodies of composite beasts, which have parrot heads at the top and duck-billed heads at the bottom. A pair of beasts with similar duck-billed heads, six legs, and coiled tails serve as brackets on either side and above the step, while parrots perch in the midst of ornate open-work foliage on the side panels. The three panels of the step are embellished with couchant lions in relief. Great jewelled medallions with interlacing foliage decorate the back of the chair and the front panel of the seat of the throne. The wooden carcass can be dismantled, reportedly into twelve sections.¹⁰

The history of this throne is not entirely clear. The very name is misleading. We know that Nadir Shah caused a facsimile of the famous Indian Peacock Throne to be made, and it was called by his name,¹¹ but it was not a chair throne. Moreover, a long laudatory poem, carried on sixteen enamelled plaques running below the armrests and around the inside above the seat, ascribes this piece quite definitely to Fath Ali Shah; and we know, from paintings and the descriptions of early travelers, that he did possess such a throne.¹² How did the confusion arise? A suggestion may be made: the word *nadir* means "rare, wonderful, marvellous." It was the name of the great conqueror (in its original form, Nadir Quli, "Slave of the Wonderful," i.e. God), but it could well have been applied as a description of this throne. In time, the "wonderful throne" became the "Throne of Nadir."

In its present form it may be even more recent than Fath Ali Shah's reign. The ruby-red translucent enamel which forms the background of the gold inscription on the plaques is typical of his time, but occurs nowhere else on the throne. Possibly, it was rebuilt and further embellished in the time of Nasir ud-Din Shah (as was the "Peacock Throne") and the original plaques were reused.

Height: ca. 2.25 m. (88 in.)

Width and depth (to outer edges of feet): 95 cm. (37 in.)

GENERAL NOTES

Circle of Spinels: The large ring of spinels in the back is 42 cm. in diameter.

There are about 40 spinels of various cuts about 14 x 10 mm. in dimensions.

Rubies: Cabochon-cut rubies appear frequently throughout the decoration and are set almost in profusion in the animal and bird forms. One in the left armrest is 20 mm. in diameter (est. 35 carats), and others are estimated to weigh as much as 10 carats.

Sapphires: There are a few small blue sapphires set in the chest and around the pupils of the eyes of the lion below the step. In the narrow panel above the step are two blue oval step-cut, pavilion-exposed sapphires. One is 20 x 14 mm. (est. 26 carats) and the other 15 x 13 mm. (est. 16 carats). There are two pale blue sapphires in the narrow panel immediately below the seat.

Diamonds: Diamonds are used throughout the decoration but in the narrow panel below the seat and in the one above the step there are a number which range from 10 to 25 carats in weight. Further data overleaf

BACK REST

Emeralds

Centre of major pattern: High, oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 47 x 40 mm. (est. 225 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Set of four as centres of florets in large ring of spinels (clockwise from top)

High, oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 43 x 34 mm. (est. 170 carats), blue-green, magnificent stone.

Shallow, round step-cut, pavilion exposed, 37 mm. (est. 130 carats), blue-green, some jardin, beautiful stone.

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 35 x 32 mm. (est. 100 carats), pale green, some jardin (not the equal of the others in the set).

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 37 x 35 mm. (est. 125 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Set of four as centres of florets between and a little outside the circle of the previous four (clockwise from upper right)

Step-cut drop, pavilion exposed, 34 x 24 mm. (est. 60 carats), green, with bad bruise.

Step-cut drop, pavilion exposed, 37 x 24 mm. (est. 70 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Step-cut drop, pavilion exposed, 30 x 19 mm. (est. 40 carats), blue-green, very little jardin.

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 32 x 24 mm. (est. 60 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Twelve other emeralds which appear in the back, as the centres of florets or buds, exhibit various shapes and cuts and vary in estimated weights from 35 to 90 carats, with the average about 45 carats.

Spinel

Set of four inside large circle of spinels (clockwise from upper right)

Oval cabochon, 28 x 24 mm. (est. 65 carats), deep red, fine quality.

Oval cabochon, 23 x 21 mm. (est. 45 carats), red, some flaws.

Oval cabochon, 22 x 20 mm. (est. 35 carats), red, some flaws.

Oval cabochon, 28 x 24 mm. (est. 65 carats), red, some flaws.

Six other spinels, which appear as the centres of florets or buds, exhibit various shapes and cuts and vary in estimated weights from 24 to 44 carats, with the average about 30 carats.

Rubies

Irregular cabochon, 20 x 20 mm. (est. 35 carats), purplish red; centre of fan-shaped finial at top of throne back.

Two cabochon rubies about 18 x 16 mm. in dimensions and weighing about 20–25 carats are located slightly above and to left and right of the second emerald described above. The left one is asteriated. There are several other rubies of similar size and cut set in the back.

Four cabochon-cut rubies of about 25 carats each form the centres of diamond-petalled florets located across the bottom of the back.

Diamonds

There are countless numbers of diamonds, but these are relatively small in size. The one outstanding diamond in the back is located just below the fan-shaped finial and is itself the centre of a diamond-petalled floret. This diamond is a colourless crystal about 15 x 13 mm. It gives off so much fire that the measurements (optically) were less precise than usual.

FRONT PANEL BELOW SEAT

Emeralds

All the major stones are emeralds, of which the five most important are:

Centre: Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 31 x 24 mm. (est. 55 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Set of four large emeralds surrounding above stone (clockwise from top)

Round cabochon, 23 mm. (est. 37 carats), blue-green, considerable jardin.

Round cabochon, 24 mm. (est. 40 carats), blue-green, considerable jardin.

Round cabochon, 24 mm. (est. 40 carats), green, much jardin.

Round step-cut, pavilion exposed, 22 mm. (est. 30 carats), blue-green, considerable jardin.

[Case 17]





Crown of the Empress

Following his own coronation in 1967, Muhammad Reza Shah crowned the Empress Farah. By this act he officially confirmed her as Regent-designate. No woman in Persian history had ever been so singled out for honour and responsibility. It was therefore necessary to provide a new crown for this ceremony, and Pierre Arpels of Paris received the commission.

Following established practice, the required gemstones (two of which appear also on page 64) were selected from the quantities of unset stones in the collection. This richly bejewelled platinum crown with its emerald-green velvet cap is the result. (Photograph: Mehdi Seyfolmoolooki, Tehran)

The crown was commissioned after our study had been completed. Of the several emeralds and red spinels of important size which it contains, four emeralds had been studied in detail by us in their unset form. The additional data are derived from information supplied by the Bank Markazi.

Emeralds

Radially fluted hexagon, 42 mm. (across the points) x 18.3 mm., 91.32 carats, dark green, some jardin; front.

Step-cut, buff-top hexagon (mounted with pavilion exposed), 37 mm. (across the points) x 18.6 mm., 66.35 carats, dark green, some jardin; side (also illustrated on page 64).

Step-cut, buff-top hexagon (mounted with pavilion exposed), 36 mm. (across the points) x 18.0 mm., 63.83 carats, dark green, some jardin; side.

Scallop-fluted, cabochon drop, 32.0 x 23.5 x 9.4 mm., 46.73 carats, dark green, some jardin; front (also illustrated on page 64).

Spinel

Two oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 32 x 26 mm. (ca. 83 carats each), red; one each side.

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 23 x 19 mm. (ca. 17 carats); rear.

Other gems

Thirty-two emeralds.

Thirty-three spinels and rubies.

One hundred and five pearls up to 22 mm. long.

One thousand four hundred and sixty-nine diamonds.

[Case 35, No. 1]

Arms of Conquest

Nadir Shah Buckler

The shield and sword of Nadir Shah are among the most important emblems of Persian royalty. Armed with them, he invaded India in 1739 and carried away the gems which form the bulk of this collection.

Nadir Shah was a warrior. His sword and shield were weapons of war and would originally have been adorned only as befitted his importance without interfering with their function. His bow, still preserved in the Golestan Palace in Tehran, is simply lacquered. Only later, in tribute to his achievements, were the buckler and sword lavishly encrusted with gems. His successors sought vicarious glory by including them in the imperial regalia, to be carried by pages at great audiences and on other solemn occasions.

The buckler, about 18 inches in diameter, is said to be of rhinoceros hide. Emeralds, diamonds, red spinels, and rubies have been affixed to its face in patterned profusion. Even the outer edge, invisible in the photograph, is rimmed solidly with square emeralds. The star-shaped jewelled boss culminates in a tremendous ruby-red spinel which ranks among the largest in the world.

The four large emeralds between the points of the star conceal the ends of rivets, which pass through the leather to the back. Here, on the reverse, the original utilitarian purpose is revealed. The rivets end in heavy gold bosses. These in turn have rings to which are secured two heavy straps, which Nadir Shah may well have used to carry the shield in battle.

Diameter of shield: 45.5 cm. (17.9 in.)

Spinel

Octagonal step-cut, pavilion exposed, 34 x 34 x 20 mm. exposed (est. 225 carats), purplish red, some inclusions; centre of boss.

Set of four: Step-cut, pavilion exposed, 23 x 18 mm. average (ca. 45 carats), red, nearly clean.

Set of eight: Step-cut, pavilion exposed, 18 x 16 mm. average (ca. 25 carats), red, nearly clean.

Emeralds

Set of eight (clockwise from top)

Rectangular, shallow step-cut, pavilion exposed, 33.5 x 30.5 mm. (est. 90 carats), blue-green, nearly clean.

Square step-cut, pavilion exposed, 38 mm. (est. 140 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Oval rose-cut, 41 x 29 mm. (est. 90 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Shallow, hexagonal step-cut, pavilion exposed, 35 x 35 x 34 mm. across the points (est. 70 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Rectangular cabochon, 35 x 32 mm. (est. 90 carats), blue-green, considerable jardin.

Rectangular rose-cut, 42 x 27 mm. (est. 85 carats), blue-green, considerable jardin.

Oval rose-cut, 43 x 28 mm. (est. 95 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Hexagonal, low cabochon, 39 x 37 x 37 mm. across the points (est. 70 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Set of four (clockwise from upper right)

Off-round step-cut, pavilion exposed, 27 x 26 mm. (est. 50 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Rectangular cabochon, 26 x 21 mm. (est. 45 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Rectangular cabochon, 27 x 24 mm. (est. 48 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Irregular, oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 29 x 26 mm. (est. 55 carats), blue-green, considerable jardin.

Diamonds

There are a great many diamonds, mostly rose-cut, but a few mogul-cut. Although there are no diamonds of outstanding size, there are several dozen weighing from 6 to 8 carats. [Case 28, No. 3]





*This world-conquering sword, a mine of jewels,
In war is a crescent of victory*

Nadir Shah Sabre

Traditionally this is the sword carried on his campaigns by the conqueror of India.

The scabbard and guard are covered on the outer side, and the handle and pommel are encrusted all round, with diamonds arranged in formal patterns against gold. Even the short red velvet handstrap supports links of gold inset with diamonds.

The reverse is completely covered with enamels. At the cross of the hilt is a portrait of Fath Ali Shah, wearing a black lamb-skin hat with jewelled tiara and *jiqas*. Presumably it was in his reign that the decorations were fashioned. The guard bears four cartouches: they contained an inscription of which only the two lines quoted above have been preserved.

The hanger clasps are pointed ovals, each bearing a portrait medallion of a young prince in the tall *karakul* hat of the Qajars. Their names are given and they are probably sons of Fath Ali Shah, that philoprogenitive monarch who had at least fifty sons and a hundred daughters.

On the shoe of the scabbard is a self-portrait of the craftsman, holding the sword he embellished. Above it is a signed inscription in triangular form: "This face which is seen on the sabre of the Shahanshah is the portrait of one of the servants, fallen at the knees of the king so that he may be immortal: Abdullah." At the tip of the shoe, a lion attacks a gazelle.

The blade of the sabre, only an inch broad at the hilt, is of beautifully watered steel. It bears a medallion inlaid in gold containing the inscription: "The Sultan Fath Ali Shah Qajar, Father of the Sword (Abu us-Saif)."

Strangely, no known portrait of Fath Ali Shah shows him wearing this sabre. But in the Marble Talar of the Golestan Palace there is an equestrian portrait, signed and dated "Ahmad 1260" (A.D. 1844–45), of Muhammad Shah, his successor, carrying it.

Overall length: 100 cm. (39.4 in.)

Diamonds

Oval rose-cut, 20 x 14 mm. (est. 16 carats), colourless; cross-bar of handle. Rectangular tablet, 19 x 15 mm. (est. 15 carats), colourless; upper hanger clasp.

Rectangular tablet, 18 x 14 mm. (est. 13 carats), colourless; lower hanger clasp.

Rose-cut drop, 24 x 15 mm. (est. 20 carats), smoky colour; about 20 cm. from tip.

Over 750 diamonds were counted, but in addition there are a great many in the interstices.

[Case 24, No. 19]



Warrior's Treasure



Here and on the following pages are gems which were probably carried off by Nadir Shah as part of the spoils of Delhi.

There are thousands of emeralds in the collection. Several trays contain unmounted polished stones – mostly drilled longitudinally – of good to excellent quality. Although most are lumps, a few retain their original hexagonal crystal form and a few have been carved, engraved, or otherwise fashioned. This treatment suggests that at some time they were used as beads or mounted in jewellery.

Emeralds

Carved, hexagonal bead, 33.0 mm. (point to point) x 28.9 mm. long, 188.48 carats, blue-green, jardin; left rear of right compartment.

Drilled, polished lump, 31.5 x 29.0 x 24.5 mm., 184 carats (includes small lead plug in one end of drilled hole), blue-green, jardin; large lump in centre of right compartment. [Case 30, No. 24]

In the upright plaque are thirteen finger-rings, a form of personal jewellery which is relatively rare in the collection. In the seventeenth century, according to Sir John Chardin, rings were extremely popular among the Persians: "You will see them sometimes with fifteen or sixteen Rings upon their Fingers, five or six upon one Finger only."¹³ Yet for all their love of jewellery, the Qajar monarchs and their officials almost never wore them;¹⁴ and their women, at least in the early part of the nineteenth century, seem to have followed their example. One reason may have been the custom then prevalent of keeping the hands covered as a sign of decorum and respect. Fashion decreed triangular bejewelled cuffs which extended down over the back of the hand. Rings would not show, so were not worn. Most of those displayed probably betray a change in feminine fashion dictated by European influences in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Emeralds

Top row (left to right)

Asymmetric, high, oval cabochon, 17 x 14 mm. (est. 12 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Round tablet, step-cut, 18 mm. diameter (est. 10 carats), pale blue-green, jardin in lower half.

Thin, oval cabochon (inscribed), 22 x 17 mm. (est. 12 carats), pale green, clean.

High, oval cabochon, 15 x 14 mm. (est. 11 carats), blue-green, very clean.

Middle row (left to right)

High, oval cabochon, 18 x 15 mm. (est. 15 carats), blue-green, nearly clean.

High, round cabochon, 14 mm. diameter (est. 9 carats), blue-green, nearly clean.

Oval tablet, inscribed, 23 x 17 mm. (est. 20 carats), blue-green, much jardin.

High, oval cabochon, 14 x 13 mm. (est. 8 carats), pale blue-green, nearly clean.

Round cabochon, 17 mm. diameter (est. 15 carats), blue-green, nearly clean.

Bottom row (left to right)

High, oval cabochon, 16 x 10 mm. (est. 6 carats), blue-green, nearly clean.

High, pear-shaped double cabochon, 20 x 14 mm. (est. 25 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

High, oval cabochon, 17 x 16 mm. (est. 16 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Hemispherical cabochon, 14 mm. diameter (est. 10 carats), green, clean. [Case 30, No. 23 East]





Though the history of many gems must remain hypothetical, we are on firmer ground when a stone bears an inscription. Such is the case with the drop-shaped bead in the upper left of this group. It is inscribed: "For the rosary of the King of Kings, Nadir, Lord of the Conjunction, at the conquest of India, from the Jewel-Treasury [this] was 'selected. 1152'" (A.D. 1739–40). It is probable also that gems which have been carved – with flower, shell, or melon motifs – are of Indian provenance.

String of 47 emerald beads plus tassel

Total weight: 765 carats (153 grams — 5.4 oz.)

Largest bead: 18 x 16 mm. (est. 35 carats)

Smallest bead: 10 x 8 mm. (est. 8 carats)

Loose emeralds

Drilled, irregular cabochon drop, 34.5 x 34.5 x 13.0 mm., 144.44 carats (including small gold cap), green, some jardin; centre.

Drilled, irregular, inscribed cabochon drop, 33 x 25 x 11 mm., 59.22 carats, green, some jardin; left upper.

Scallop-fluted cabochon drop, 32.0 x 23.5 x 9.4 mm., 46.73 carats, green, some jardin; left centre (now mounted in crown, page 57).

Drilled, fluted cabochon drop, 48.0 x 39.0 x 21.3 mm., 303 carats, dark green, considerable jardin; left lower.

Step-cut hexagon with large slightly curved table (buff-top), 37 mm. (across the points) x 18.6 mm., 66.35 carats, deep green, some jardin; right upper (now mounted in crown, page 57).

Shallow, square double cabochon, 26.0 x 23.0 x 6.4 mm., 36.35 carats, deep green, nearly clean; right centre.

Ovoid cabochon bead, 43.5 x 41.0 x 19.4 mm., 320 carats, dark green, jardin; right lower.

[Case 27]



Until the end of the eighteenth century, eastern lapidaries rarely faceted the precious stones on which they worked. The string of red spinels illustrates a technique they frequently used.

The rough gems were polished without any attempt at faceting or making the shape symmetrical. Each then was drilled. A gold wire was passed through the hole and twisted into a ring from which the gem could hang. Often, as here, the jeweller added a gold cap.

Many of these stones bear the names of Moghul emperors and dates which give some insight into their early history (see page 46).

The two spinels in the brooches in the centre have received more modern treatment, though the left one still bears the drill hole of earlier service.

Necklace

Total weight including gold caps and cord: 2310 carats (462 grams — 16.3 oz.).

The dimensions of three of the largest spinels are: 35 x 25 x 25 mm., 35 x 30 x 21 mm., and 35 x 25 x 19 mm. (est. 175–200 carats each).

[Case 11, No. 59]

Brooches

Left: Irregular oval mixed-cut tablet, 27 x 25 x 7.0 mm. (est. 50 carats), R.I. 1.715, purplish red, some feathers, drilled, very low crown, with edges somewhat abraded.

Right: Octagonal step-cut tablet, 32.5 x 27.0 x 7.6 mm. (est. 80 carats), R.I. 1.715, purplish red, some feathers, abrasions on crown and pavilion.

[Case 11, Nos. 33, 41]

The stone on the left is the largest red gem spinel known – 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches across, 500 carats in weight – magnified for greater appreciation of its magnificent colour.

The spinel on the right weighs 270 carats. It is the fourth largest on record, the second (414 carats) being in the Kremlin Museum and the third, the world-renowned Timur "Ruby" (361 carats), now in the British Crown Jewels. Historically, it is far more important than its larger companion. Three hundred and fifty years ago the Moghul Emperor of India Jahangir had his name carved on its surface. When his favourite wife chided him for defacing a magnificent "ruby," he replied: "This stone will perhaps carry my name farther down through time than the empire of the house of Timur."¹⁵ His prophecy proved true. The empire and dynasty established by Tamerlane perished within 150 years, but Jahangir's name is perpetuated on more than a dozen gems in the Iranian collection and on others outside it.

The larger spinel is pierced, but the openings are now plugged. It bears no inscriptions, but Dr. Feuvrier, physician to Nasir ud-Din Shah in the 1890s, provides some information. When the Shah showed it to him, he observed that it was pierced but the opening plugged with "cristal" (diamond? – now missing). He adds: "His Majesty told me that the hole closed by this stopper was pierced to take a cord by which it could be hung around the neck of the Golden Calf, adding that 'this ruby came from a king of Abyssinia, and had been brought back from India by Nadir Shah.'"¹⁶ Such legend, although romantic, is a poor substitute for documented history.

In contrast, the smaller spinel is documented by seven inscriptions, of which the earliest belongs to Jahangir. Another declares proudly that this stone was selected "from the Jewel-Treasury of Hindustan" for the armlet of Nadir Shah in 1739.

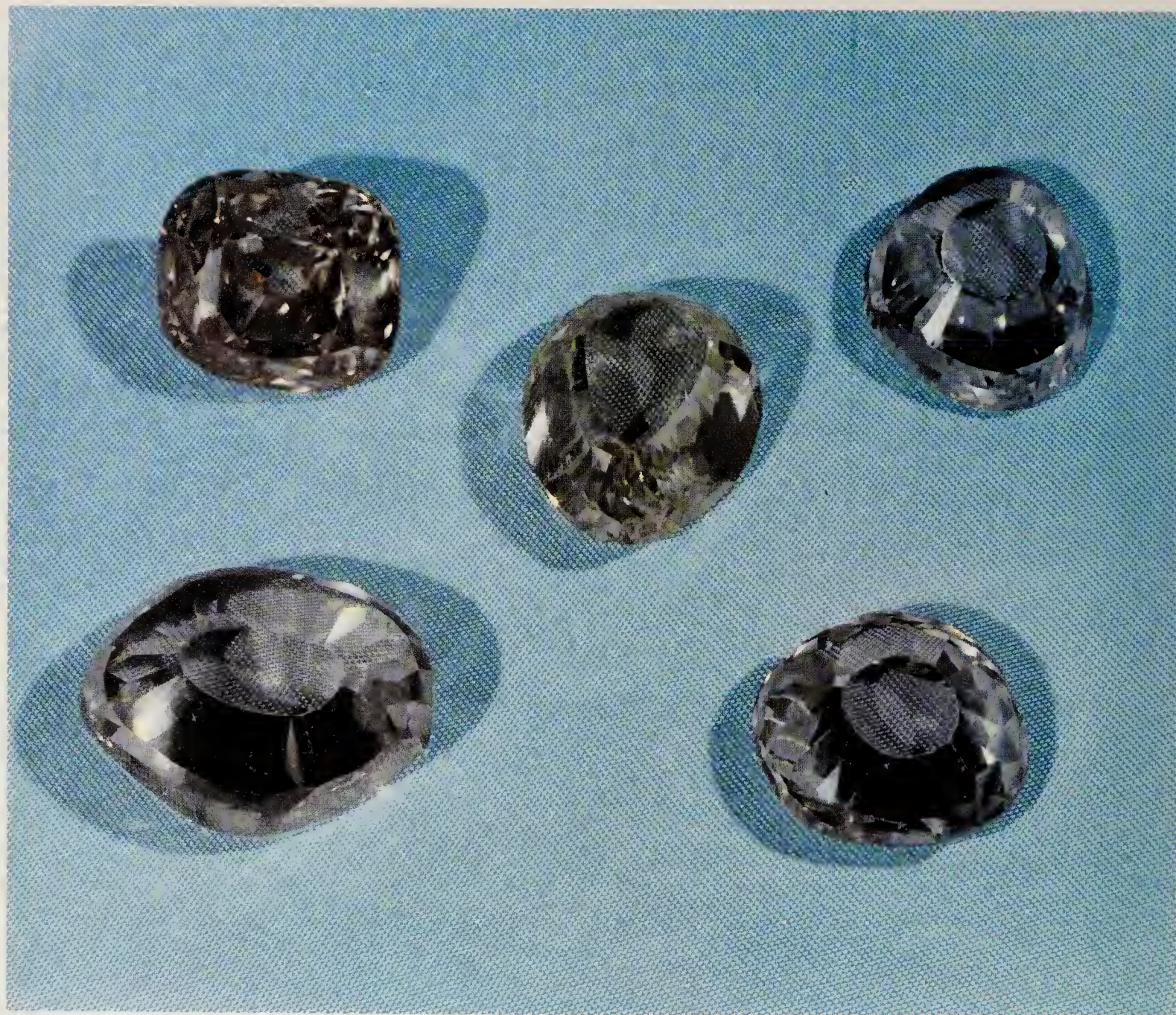
Historically spinels have come from Badakhshan, a district of Afghanistan in the upper reaches of the Amu Darya (Oxus River).¹⁷ (Photograph: Varouj Yazejian, Photo Vahe, Tehran)

Left: Polished lump with one large flat face, 54 x 36 x 33 mm., 500 carats, R.I. 1.715, deep purplish red, some inclusions, drilled and plugged.

Right: Polished lump, 45 x 40 x 21 mm., 270 carats, R.I. 1.715, S.G. 3.6, deep purplish red, some inclusions, crack near surface, drilled near one edge, inscribed.

[Case 11, Nos. 38, 35]





Thousands of unmounted diamonds are displayed. Most came from India, the principal source when the collection was built. The high quality of the major gems and the characteristic mogul-cut further attest their origin.

It is likely that most of the Indian diamonds were mined in the time of the great Moghul emperors, but we can only speculate about their histories. Only three bear identifying names which assist in identification and historic research, the *Darya-i Nur*, the *Nur ul-Ain*, and the *Taj-i Mah*. The last, at lower left in this photograph, is a magnificent, imposing stone, "The Crown of the Moon," the largest unmounted Indian diamond in the collection.

All four of the mogul-cut diamonds are of that most famous quality "Golconda stones."

Taj-i Mah (lower left): Irregular oval, mogul-cut, 32.0 x 24.3 x 14.7 mm.
115.06 carats, colourless, finest quality, slightly worn on top; Golconda stone.

Centre: Irregular pear-shape, mogul-cut, 25.9 x 22.0 x 13.9 mm., 72.84 carats, slight champagne tinge, extremely limpid, finest quality, slightly worn on surface; Golconda stone.

Upper right: Irregular oval, mogul-cut, 24.69 x 21.83 x 12.27 mm., 54.58 carats, colourless, finest quality, worn on surface; Golconda stone.

Lower right: Rounded triangular, mogul-cut, 24.0 x 21.3 x 9.44 mm., 47.31 carats, colourless, finest quality, slightly worn on surface; Golconda stone.

Upper left: Cushion brilliant of the old high proportions, the double-decked pavilion resembling the Cairo-cut, 22.3 x 20.0 x 14.4 mm., 54.35 carats, slight peach tint, finest quality; probably has been recut from larger Indian stone.

[Case 24, No. 36]



Nasir ud-Din's coat was sometimes covered with precious stones from shoulder to waist: "a glittering breastplate" in the words of his French physician, who added that "diamonds as big as walnuts are used for buttons."¹⁸ A news report of that monarch's visit to Queen Victoria at Windsor in 1873 related that he "wore five rows of brilliants, with four large rubies, on the breast of his uniform coat."¹⁹ Several illustrations show him, and his successors Muzaffar ud-Din and Muhammad Ali, wearing plaques of diamonds on their coat fronts and set like great studs on their shoulder-boards.

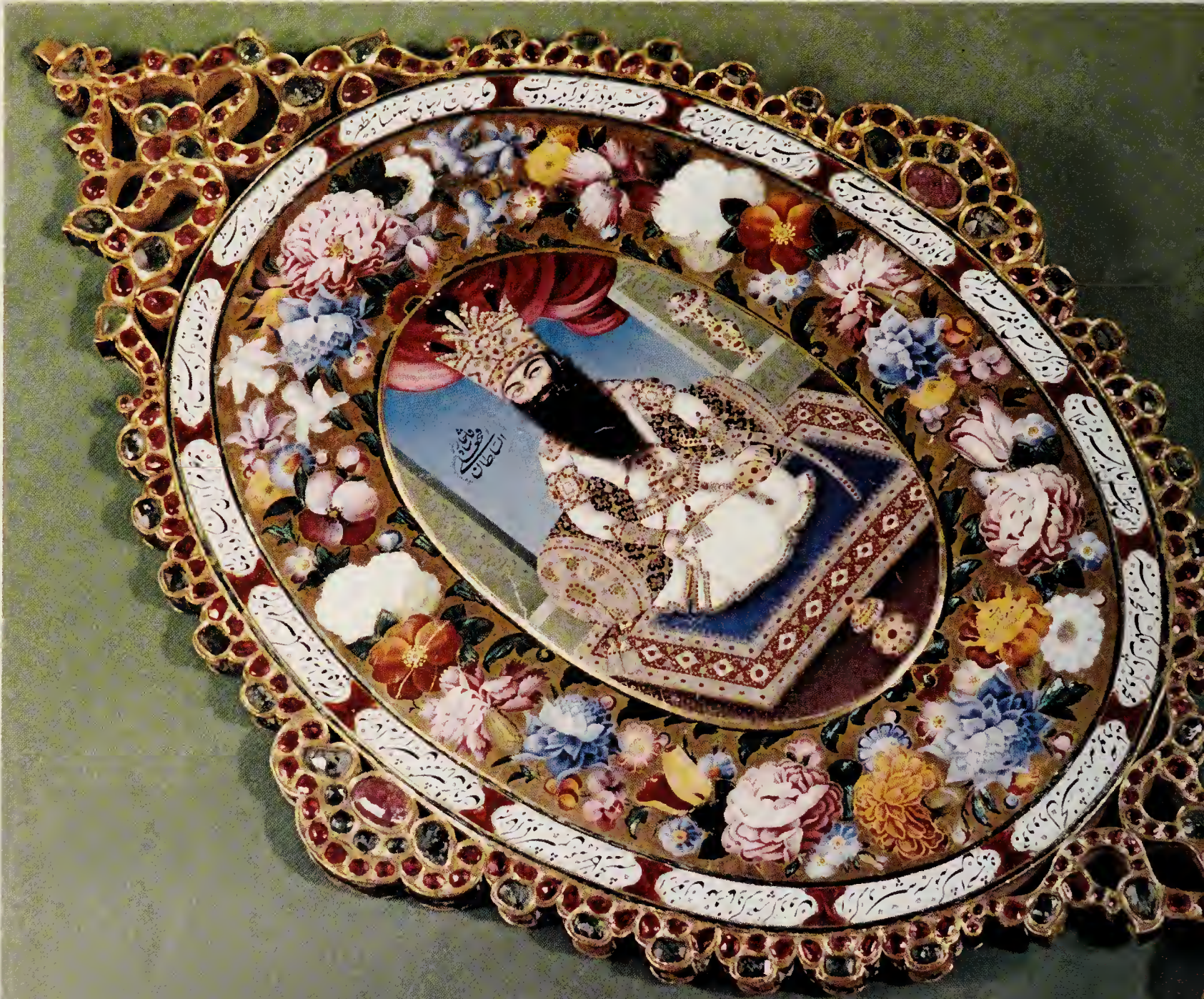
Fashions change. Today the diamonds lie, unmounted, in the collection. In addition to the scores of stones large enough to be displayed individually, there are thousands piled in circular trays.²⁰ Indeed, there are so many that when hundreds were recently removed from two trays to be set in the new crown for the Empress, there was no obvious diminution!

Probably all are Indian in origin. They reveal a variety of cuts, from polished crystals and cleavage pieces to symmetrical rose-cuts.

The tray in the photograph (approximately four-fifths natural size) was chosen because it was the least crowded. It is about eight inches across, and even the smallest diamond on it is roughly 4 carats.

[Case 24]

An Imperial Connoisseur





Here, portrayed in enamels on the back of a handsome mirror, is the man most responsible for the Crown Jewels as we now know them. Fath Ali Shah was a connoisseur of the arts and it was in his reign (A.D. 1797-1834) that many of the most striking and beautiful pieces were created. Several items in the regalia depicted in this portrait are illustrated on the following pages. The *Darya-i Nur* and the *Taj-i Mah* glitter in his armlets. Pearls and jewels are embroidered on his rug and bolster.

The raised oval plaque, on which the portrait is painted, is bordered by a garland of blossoms (one of which bears the name of the enamellist, *ghulam khanazad* Ali) and a series of cartouches, in white enamel separated by ruby-red translucent enamel, which carry a poem in praise of the Shah. A similar inscription surrounds the glass on the other side.

The white jadeite handle is in the form of a vase, with two lotus buds and a lotus blossom projecting from the top.²¹ The finial and the lozenge-shaped frame are of gold inset with rubies and emeralds.

Length of mirror: 41.3 cm. (16.2 in.)

[Case 33, No. 38]



Kiani Crown

This was the royal crown of the Qajar house. Though replaced by the crown of the Pahlavi dynasty, it was displayed at the coronation ceremonies of Reza Shah, when it was borne in state on a cushion.

Except for its crimson velvet cap, it is covered solidly with thousands of gems – diamonds, pearls, emeralds, rubies, and red spinels. Many are of fine quality and large size.

The crown consists essentially of four parts; a headband, a pearl pavement, a series of points, and the velvet cap. The gems encrusting the first three are set into lozenge- or triangular-shaped white metal plaques. Each plaque is backed by pink metallic foil and is absolutely flat – not even slightly curved to conform to the shape of the crown. The plaques, as well as the pearls, are sewn to a stiff cloth backing; the jewelled arches, which intersect at the top beneath a magnificent ruby-red spinel finial, are sewn to the cap. In fact, the whole crown seems to be held together with bits of thread and cord.

This strangeness of construction may explain several apparent anomalies. Many representations of Fath Ali Shah show him wearing crowns similar in form to this one but different in detail. Artistic license may explain some of the variations, and it is possible also that there were several similar crowns of which the present Kiani is the only one preserved,²² but another possibility is that the individual plaques were interchangeable and were, at different times and for different purposes, arranged in different ways.

When worn by Fath Ali Shah, the Kiani Crown was frequently surmounted by the *jiqa* on page 79 and the three black heron plumes which only a shah could wear. The two *jiqas* which now tower above the crown are not original but were affixed probably for the coronation of Muzaffar ud-Din Shah in 1896.

The twenty-one curving spikes of emeralds in the larger *jiqa* spring from a boss consisting of a large emerald tablet half-hidden in the illustration. The reverse of this boss is enamelled, and it is secured to the crown by two vertical prongs which appear to be inserted into sockets originally intended for plumes.

The eleven diamond plumes of the other *jiqa* spring from a diamond clasp, *tremblant*, at the centre of which is an 80-carat emerald. To the sides are pendant emeralds and diamonds, and below is a diamond tassel. This *jiqa* is secured to the domed velvet of the cap by fine gold chains terminating in diamond clasps and, probably, by a now-invisible prong or prongs inserted into the crown itself. On the basis of style, the emerald *jiqa* may be of the time of Fath Ali Shah or earlier; the other *jiqa* is probably later.

It is reported that the finial spinel once adorned the throne of the Moghul emperor Aurangzib and formed part of Nadir Shah's loot. After his death, it came into the possession of his blinded grandson, Shahrukh, who after hideous tortures surrendered it to Agha Muhammad Khan, the founder of the Qajar dynasty.²³

Height without *jiqas*: 32 cm. (12.6 in.)

Diameter at base: 19.5 cm. (7.7 in.)

Pearls

About 1800, in all, ranging from 7 to 9 mm. in diameter (10 to 20 grains); 1200 of these are in the pearl pavement.

Emeralds

About 300 emeralds in all. The most important are:

Shallow, round, buff-top step-cut, 35 mm. diameter (est. 80 carats), blue-green, some jardin; at the base of the diamond *jiqa*.

Thin tablet, about 30 x 19 mm. average dimensions (est. 30 carats), blue-green, some feathers; partially visible at the base of the emerald *jiqa*.

Faceted tabular drop, 32 x 15 x 3 mm. (est. 15 carats), green, clean; to left of main emerald.

Faceted tabular drop, 29 x 16 x 2 mm. (est. 10 carats), green, some jardin; to right of main emerald.

Set of eight cabochon drops located on top of the eight points of the crown: average dimensions 21 mm. high x 14 mm. diameter (est. 25 – 30 carats), green, jardin.

Set of four pear-shaped cabochons set in gold and sewn to the red velvet cap between the four arches: about 20 x 17 mm. (est. 15 carats), green, some jardin.

Spinel

About 1500 red stones in all. The cabochon-cut and small faceted ones are rubies; the few dozen large faceted ones are spinels, of which the most important are:

Irregular polished lump, 32.2 x 25.0 x 16.0 mm. (est. 120 carats), dark red; finial.

In the pearl pavement

Octagonal step-cut, 23 x 23 mm. (est. 65 carats), purplish red, very clean; over right ear.

Octagonal step-cut, 27 x 23 mm. (est. 80 carats), red, some inclusions, inscribed (see page 47); over left ear.

Rectangular, buff-top step-cut, 20 x 14 mm. (est. 25 carats), red; rear.

Octagonal step-cut, pavilion exposed, 21 x 15 mm. (est. 30 carats), brownish red, clean; front left.

Irregular step-cut, pavilion exposed, 21 x 16 mm. (est. 30 carats), red, nearly clean; front right.

Lower headband

Oval mixed-cut, 24 x 15 mm. (est. 25 carats), red, some inclusions and feathers; front centre.

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 20 x 19 mm. (est. 25 carats), red, clean; left of front centre.

Octagonal step-cut, pavilion exposed, 21 x 16 mm. (est. 30 carats), red, nearly clean; right of front centre.

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 20 x 15 mm. (est. 20 carats), red, nearly clean; over left ear.

Rectangular step-cut, pavilion exposed, 17 x 15 mm. (est. 20 carats), red, nearly clean; over right ear.

Diamonds (most important)

Irregular rose-cut, 22.5 x 19.0 mm. (est. 23 carats), pale pink, clean, Golconda stone; front centre.

Triangular areas projecting into pearl pavement

Irregular mogul-cut, 19 x 17 mm. (est. 20 carats), pale yellow; upper right front.

Polished crystal cleavage, 22 x 16 mm. (est. 20 carats), pale yellow, some inclusions; lower right front.

Irregular rose-cut, 22 x 14 mm. (est. 18 carats), colourless, some inclusions; lower left front.

Pear-shaped mogul-cut, 24 x 14 mm. (est. 20 carats), pale yellow, clean; upper left rear.

Rectangular step-cut, pavilion exposed, 23 x 13 mm. (est. 25 carats), colourless, some inclusions; lower left rear.

Irregular mogul-cut, 19 x 16 mm. (est. 20 carats), yellow, clean; lower right rear.

[Case 36, No. 1]



The favourite sabre of Fath Ali Shah, unmistakable in design and colours, appears in most of his portraits. Abrasions on the large red spinel, the principal stone in the gem-encrusted hilt, testify to heavy use.

The sabre's value lay in more than ornamentation. Its blade was crafted by one of Persia's most renowned swordsmiths, who with his father worked for the great Shah Abbas and his successors in the seventeenth century. Travellers have recorded how highly these early blades were esteemed for beauty, keenness, flexibility, and balance.

There is at least one other blade²⁵ fashioned by him among the weapons on display. Both are of beautifully watered steel and bear inscriptions, inlaid in gold: "Work of Kalb Ali, son of Asadullah Isfahani" and "The Sultan Fath Ali Shah Qajar, Father of the Sword." Both also bear the magic square (*buduh*), which appears frequently on Persian blades of the Safavid period. On this sword, after the second inscription, is the date 1213 (A.D. 1798–99).²⁶

On the scabbard, the gem-encrusted hanger clasps, florets, and ruby-studded gold shoe stand out against a solid background of pearls. This arrangement is echoed on the reverse, but here the two hanger clasps and the cross of the hilt bear medallion portraits of young women. A solid row of rectangular step-cut red spinels runs along the upper edge of the scabbard and of the handle.

Overall length: 102 cm. (40 in.)

Spinels

Octagonal step-cut, pavilion exposed, 20.4 x 19.0 mm. (est. 40 carats), red, clean, worn facet edges; cross-bar of handle.

Two oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, about 19 x 14 mm. (est. 20–25 carats), red; hanger clasps (the upper spinel is considerably abraded).

[Case 15, No. 12]

Conspicuous in almost every portrait of Fath Ali Shah, whether full-size or miniature, is his heavy bejewelled mace. A symbol of his sovereign power, it sometimes lies on the floor in front of him, or is held in one or both hands across his body.

It occurs in the earliest of his known portraits, that of the folding mirror on page 94,²⁴ and is, therefore, one of the oldest pieces in the regalia.

It is almost solidly encrusted with diamonds, red spinels, and rubies against a background of green translucent enamel and is one of the few major pieces in the collection in which there are no emeralds.

Length: 73 cm. (28.8 in.)

Diamond

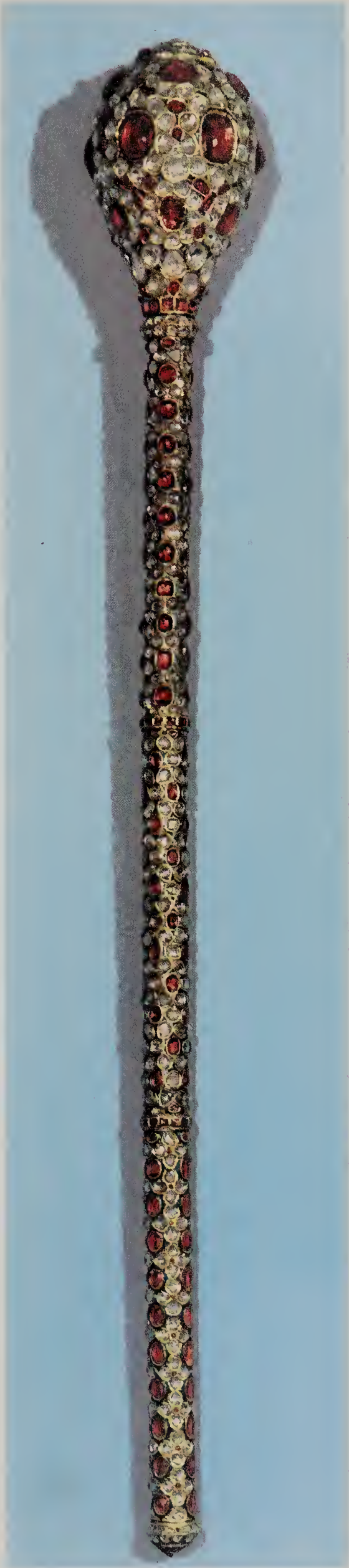
Oval, high rose-cut, 18 x 16 mm. (est. 17 carats), off-white; finial of the knob.

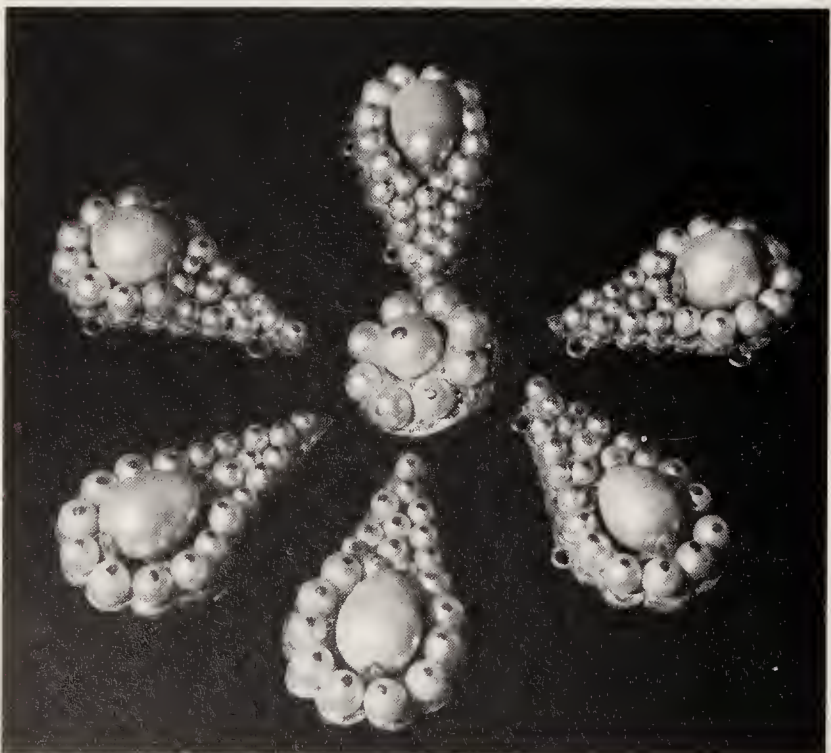
Spinel

Oval, step-cut, pavilion exposed, 19 x 13 mm. (est. 15 carats), red, scratched; finial of the shaft.

Six step-cut, pavilion exposed, up to 24 x 19 mm. (ca. 40 carats), red; around equator of knob.

Six irregular, step-cut, pavilion exposed, up to 18 x 15 mm. (ca. 20 carats), red; in group above the equator of the knob. [Case 36, No. 4]





Pearls have long been a prerogative of royalty, and nowhere more so than in Persia. Portraits of Fath Ali Shah show him wearing a girdle of pearls with pendant emeralds. Triple ropes of large pearls hang about his neck and cross over his chest; the yoke and cuffs of his gown are a solid mass of pearls, and the rest of his robe is embroidered with yet more pearls. Even when he was sombrely dressed, as on a visit to the tomb of Fatima at Qum, and had removed all jewellery, it is said that he carried in his hand a rosary of large pearls "of the most beautiful water and symmetry."²⁷ His successors have shown a similar appreciation.

But pearls were used also in other ways. The bolsters against which the shahs reclined, and the rugs on which they knelt, were embroidered with precious stones against a ground of pearls. One such bolster and two such rugs are preserved in the Golestan Palace Museum. Pearls adorn bottles, dish-covers, book-covers, candlesticks, boxes, weapons, and even a parasol. Tassels of pearls, usually with emerald pendants, were worn at the belt as a symbol of royalty and once dangled from the rail of the "Peacock Throne" and the arms of the Nadir Throne. Baroque pearls were sometimes mounted in jewellery forms suggested by their natural shapes.

This is one-third of a large case devoted to pearls in the Crown Jewels exhibition. Most of the pearls came from the Persian Gulf, particularly those fisheries off the shores of Bahrain Island.

Because of the difficulties involved, these objects were not removed for study and no precise measurements were obtained.

Floral ornament

Spheroidal, baroque pearl, 32 x 29 mm. (est. 600 grains); centre, above tassels of pearls.

Rope of pearls (third from top in set of four in centre)

Largest pearl is pear-shaped, 29 mm. long x 14 mm. diameter. [Case 13]



Jiqas



Nadir Shah Jiqua

The Crown Jewels include a rich assortment of *jiqas* or aigrettes, a typically Eastern form of jewellery used to adorn turbans and other head-dresses. They served as clasps to secure ornamental plumes, as jewelled imitations of such plumes (as here), or both.

The fine jewel known as the Nadir Shah *jiqa* is just over five inches in height. The central stone is a magnificent round emerald, some 65 carats in weight. Beside and below it appears a trophy including cannon, spears, drums, and banners tied together with a ribbon motif, the whole inset with diamonds. Coloured foils placed behind some of the diamonds add delicate but significant tints: the flagstaves are pink and the flags themselves have equal horizontal stripes of (from top to bottom) red, white, and green. The gems are mounted throughout in gold or white metal. The reverse is of white metal, absolutely plain: there are no attachments by which it could have been secured to a hat or crown.

The martial motif, unique in the royal collections, is suited to the great warrior shah who so vigorously expanded the borders of his kingdom. Probably it was the design which led to the attribution. But, for a number of reasons, it is difficult to believe that Nadir Shah ever used the *jiqa*. In its present form, the jewel could not have been worn. It is not attested in any portrait of Nadir Shah or his successors to the end of the Qajar dynasty or in the accounts of travellers. The use of military trophies is not documented for Iran until about 1880,²⁸ in the reign of Nasir ud-Din Shah. The flags, specifically, betray a comparatively recent origin. Except that the red and green stripes are transposed they duplicate the modern flag of Iran, which was not officially adopted until 1907.²⁹ Even if we admit the possibility that such a flag was used unofficially somewhat earlier, this *jiqa* cannot antedate the late nineteenth century. It is, nonetheless, a fitting tribute to the last great conquering shah of Persia.

Height: 12.8 cm. (5 in.)

Emeralds

(All matched for colour and quality and probably from the Chivor Mine, Colombia.)

Shallow, round cabochon, 30 mm. in diameter (est. 65 carats), deep blue-green, some jardin and pyrite crystals, excellent quality.

Polished drop, somewhat flat on rear surface, 16 x 14 mm. (est. 20 carats), deep blue-green, some jardin, excellent quality; top left pendant.

Four polished drops, approximately 13 x 10 mm., deep blue-green, some jardin, excellent quality. [Case 34, No. 4]



The most magnificent *jiqa* in the collection was a favourite of Fath Ali Shah. Its distinctive form makes it readily identifiable with the *jiqa* affixed to the Kiani Crown in many of his major portraits.³⁰ The major gems are of superb quality. The reverse is of plain, coppery gold, beautifully fashioned. Two long (4 in.) vertical pins with points down, and another (2.4 in.) with point up, were used to secure it to the crown.

In all the portraits, the *jiqa* is surmounted by three black heron plumes, symbols of royalty, brought from Turkestan.

Overall height: 20.5 cm. (8 in.)

(All principal stones are in closed settings.)

Emeralds

Oval, shallow-crown, mixed-cut, 31 x 26 mm. (est. 55 carats), blue-green, some jardin; left.

Oval, shallow-crown, mixed-cut, 32 x 25 mm. (est. 55 carats), blue-green, a little jardin; right.

Round mixed-cut, 14 mm. (est. 7 carats), blue-green, magnificent stone; lower left.

Oval mixed-cut, 16 x 14 mm. (est. 9 carats), blue-green, magnificent stone; lower right.

Spinel

Oval, shallow-crown, mixed-cut, 32 x 21 mm. (est. 65 carats), R.I. 1.715, red, very clean; upper.

Oval, shallow-crown, mixed-cut, 28 x 23 mm. (est. 60 carats), R.I. 1.715, red, very clean; lower.

Diamonds

Rounded square brilliant, 16 x 14 mm. (est. 16 carats), pale yellow.

Double rose, 22 x 12 mm. (est. 22 carats), colourless; to left of lower spinel.

Double rose, 22 x 13 mm. (est. 25 carats), colourless; to right of lower spinel.

Rubies

Step-cut and cabochon-cut; in three plumes.

[Case 7, No. 39]



Plumes of diamonds set in gold spring from the central sunburst; around it runs an inscription in tiny rubies. The *jīqa* was secured to the shah's tall *karakul* hat by two heavy vertical prongs and by two pins on rosettes at the ends of gold chains. (One rosette is missing.)

The inscription provides us with a clue to the jewel's origin. It reads: "The Sultan, Son of the Sultan, Fat Ali Shah 'ajar." There are two misspellings: the final "h" of Fath is missing, and the first consonant of Qajar is replaced with '. Both suggest a craftsman who did not know Persian very well. Could this be one of "three diamond plumes of exquisite workmanship" which were among the gifts presented to Fath Ali Shah in 1817 on behalf of the Russian Emperor Alexander I?³¹

Height: 20.5 cm. (8 in.)

Diamonds

Rose-cut, slightly irregular, 16 x 15 mm. (est. 12 carats), colourless; centre of sunburst.

Double rose-cut drop, 14 x 10 mm. (est. 5 carats), colourless; hanging from top plume.

Double rose-cut drop, 13 x 10 mm. (est. 4 carats); hanging from lower plume.

[Case 10, No. 20]



One *jiqa* is not Persian but Indian in type. The face is of mogul-cut diamonds arranged in symmetrical florets and rows, with a cresting of pearls, rubies, and pendant emeralds. The side-pieces and top are hinged so that the jewel will fit neatly to a rounded turban. The enamelled reverse is typical of the work of Jaipur in Rajasthan: ruby-red, royal blue, and green translucent enamels against opaque white depict roses, lilies, and other flowers. In the central medallion a blue and gold hawk attacks a white bird.³²

If this was part of Nadir Shah's booty, it is an early example of Jaipur work, for that city was founded only in 1728. We know, however, that most of the jewellery he seized was broken up, the gold melted into ingots, and the gems bagged for easy transport back to Iran. It seems more likely that this *jiqa* was given to some later shah by an Indian ruler or by a representative of the British Raj in India such as Sir John Malcolm.

Overall height with pendants: 17 cm. (6.7 in.)

Overall width: 15 cm. (5.9 in.)

Emeralds

Bottom, left to right (front view)

Drilled, polished lump, rather flat, 18 x 15 mm. (est. 20 carats), green, some jardin, fractured.

Drilled, polished lump, 21 x 15 mm. (est. 30 carats), green, much jardin.

Drilled, polished lump, 21 x 18 mm. (est. 40 carats), green, considerable jardin.

Drilled, polished lump, 19 x 15 mm. (est. 25 carats), yellow-green, much jardin.

Drilled, polished lump, 18 x 15 mm. (est. 25 carats), green, relatively little jardin.

Top

Two drilled polished lumps, about 14 x 12 mm. (est. 12 carats), green, with inclusions.

[Case 7, No. 23]



A portrait of Nasir ud-Din Shah, dated 1276 (A.D. 1859-60), shows him wearing this *jiqa* on his tall black lamb's wool hat, with white egret plumes rising behind and to either side of the central laddered motif.³⁴

It is of white metal inset with diamonds, except for the rectangular step-cut emerald in the ribbon-knot and the twelve emerald pendants — six cabochon drops with gold caps, and six faceted drops in gold frames. The caps and frames in each case are inset with diamonds. The reverse is of reddish gold. It bears a vertical spring clip at the base as well as rings for securing to the hat, and a small sleeve for the plume at the top.

Height: 26.5 cm. (10.5 in.)

Emeralds

Rectangular step-cut, 19 x 11 mm. (est. 11 carats), green, a little *jardin*.

Cabochon drops, 18 x 16 mm. (est. 30 carats), blue-green, considerable *jardin*; two largest pendants.

[Case 7, No. 33]

Perhaps no jewels in the collection are more satisfying to current Western taste than those that have eschewed a flamboyant display of many gems to concentrate on the innate beauty of one.

Here emeralds gleam softly against plain gold – an unusually chaste treatment even if the design is somewhat clumsy. All five plumes terminated originally in emerald pendants. The reverse is completely enclosed with plain gold, but there is a two-pronged pin (with points down) and two small eyes (on the spines below and the central feather above) for securing to the head-dress.

There is no documentary evidence for the piece, but the touches of pink and white painted enamel on the gold caps of the pendants suggest strongly that it is Persian, and it may well be of the time of Fath Ali Shah.³³

Height: 16 cm. (6.3 in.)

Emerald

Kashmir-cone shaped cabochon, 38 x 28 mm. (est. 60 carats), blue-green, some jardin; closed setting. [Case 7, No. 15]



Of Sport and War

Imperial Sword

This spectacular gem-studded sabre was a gift to Nasir ud-Din Shah from his Prime Minister, the Amin us-Sultan (Trusted of the Sovereign), who served in the same capacity under succeeding shahs until his assassination in 1907. He received the high title of Atabek-i 'Azam from Muzaffar ud-Din Shah in 1900.

The regard in which he was held by his royal masters was not shared by the rank and file of the Persian people. Though graft was endemic in Persian society at all levels, the Amin us-Sultan, from the many offices he held – Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior, Minister of the Imperial Court, the Treasury and Customs, concessionaire of the Royal Mint and, for all intents and purposes, Minister of Foreign Affairs – was able to amass an immense fortune from which he could afford to make so lavish a gift to his sovereign.

The embellishment of the hilt and upper part of the scabbard is typical of the entire piece. The rest of the gems which solidly encrust the scabbard – some 3000 in all, it is said – are as spectacular as those shown in the illustration. Their quality and finish for the most part are superb.

The three curving bands of the basket-hilt proper end in diamond-set serpent heads with ruby eyes. On the scabbard, between the jewelled hanger-clasps, an emerald-centred boss bears an open-work inscription in diamonds: "The Sultan, Sahib Qiran, Nasir ud-Din Shah, Qajar."

The reverse of the scabbard is of gold incised with scroll, floral, and foliate motifs and an inscription stating that the sword was made for the Shah by the chief court goldsmith Mirza Ali Naqi in 1306 (A.D. 1888–89). Apparently it was not presented until 1312 (A.D. 1894–95).³⁵

As the Imperial Sword it was girded on by Muhammad Reza Shah during his coronation ceremonies, October 26, 1967.

Length: 103 cm. (40.2 in.)

It is impractical to attempt to give specifications for more than a few of the major gems.

Emeralds

Rectangular mixed-cut, 34 x 32 mm. (est. 110 carats), blue-green, some jardin; the central stone in the scabbard.

Rectangular mixed-cut, 37 x 28 mm. (est. 100 carats), blue-green, some jardin; near top of scabbard (visible in illustration).

Round mixed-cut, 22 mm. (est. 30 carats), blue-green, a little jardin; in the upper part of scabbard (visible in illustration).

Sapphires

Of the three sapphires, all in the lower part of the scabbard, the largest two are:

Oval, brilliant-cut, 30.0 x 23.2 mm. (est. 75 carats), Kashmir blue, nearly clean.

Round step-cut, pavilion exposed, 18 mm. (est. 30 carats), Kashmir blue, clean, some scratches; in tip of the scabbard.

Spinel

Slightly irregular, rectangular mixed-cut, 24 x 21 mm. (est. 55 carats), R.I. 1.715, bright raspberry-red, clean; first stone below the diamond-studded inscription on the scabbard.

Ruby

High, oval cabochon, 16 x 14 mm. (est. 15 carats), purplish red (probably Burmese); upper part of scabbard (partially visible in illustration).

Diamonds

The four largest are colourless double rose-cut drops, and are set in pairs in the upper hanger ornament. The two largest measure 20 x 14 mm. (est. 35 carats) and the two smaller are 16 x 13 mm. (est. 20 carats).

[Case 30, No. 48]



The handle, guards, and pommel of this traditional curved Persian dagger are encrusted with red spinels and diamonds, the interstices between them being filled with small cabochon-cut emeralds. The mounts of the black velvet scabbard are also of spinels and diamonds, but these are set against green translucent enamel. On the under-side, the handle and mounts are ornamented with formal patterns in white and blue opaque, and orange-red, dark blue, and green translucent enamels, with bouquets of flowers in painted enamels against the burnished gold. The signature of the enamellist, "*ghulam* Baqir," dates the dagger to the time of Fath Ali Shah.³⁶

Length: 44 cm. (17.4 in.)

Spinels

Rectangular step-cut, pavilion exposed, 24 x 16 mm. (est. 35 carats), red, table inscribed (see page 46); central stone, top of scabbard.

Octagonal, shallow step-cut, pavilion exposed, 27 x 18 mm. (est. 40 carats), red; tip of pommel.

Octagonal step-cut, pavilion exposed, 28 x 19 mm. (est. 60 carats), red, nearly clean; centre of handle. [Case 11, No. 53]





Burmese rubies, mounted in gold, flame on the handle and against the dark blue velvet scabbard of a dagger. The blade, which is not inscribed, has a deep central groove running the whole length on both sides. There is no direct evidence for dating, but the massing of cabochon-cut rubies in simple gold mounts is reminiscent of the large buckle on page 117, which was probably made in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Length: 57 cm. (22.4 in.)

Rubies

Typical larger stones measure 16 x 12 mm., and 14 mm. in diameter (ca. 10 carats), mostly cabochon-cut but some faceted with pavilion exposed.

[Case 11, No. 32]



Turquoises, finely matched and of superb quality, have been used to good effect in these three pieces.

The handle of the dagger is of black horn with three jeweled mounts. The scabbard, of dark purple velvet, is almost completely covered with three mounts of gold bordered with rubies and inset with turquoises; the under-side is of matt gold embossed in foliate and floral motifs. The single hanger clasp is encrusted with rubies and diamonds. According to extant records it was purchased by Nasir ud-Din Shah from Muhammad Baqir.

Length: 60.3 cm. (23.8 in.)

Ruby

Oval cabochon, 13 x 9 mm., deep red (Burmese), nearly clean; centre ornament in scabbard.

Spinel

Elongated brilliant, 10 x 7 mm., red, clean; centre ornament in handle.

Tourmalines

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 15 x 12 mm., deep green; lower ornament in handle.

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 14 x 10 mm., deep green; upper ornament in handle.

[Case 5, No. 42]

The epaulettes consist of flat boards, covered with red cloth and a sheet of gold embossed in formal patterns. On each is mounted a large *tughra*³⁷ form of gold inset with turquoises, reading: "The Sultan Ali, the son of Musa, ur-Riza." Ali ur-Riza was the eighth of the Imams of the Shiite branch of Islam to which most Iranians belong, and his tomb at Meshed has for centuries been a place of pilgrimage. The epaulettes probably date from the time of Nasir ud-Din Shah.

Length: 17.5 cm. (6.9 in.)

[Case 5, No. 25]



The sabre blade, although it bears no marks, is of watered steel and of excellent quality. It may have been crafted as early as the seventeenth century in northeast Iran (see page 41). The ivory handle may be contemporary with the blade, but the encrustation of the hilt is probably later, as is the whole scabbard. The latter is of gold with turquoises *en pavé*, against which are encrusted hanger clasps and jewels with ruby, red spinel, or emerald centres. The reverse is of plain gold embossed with scrolls and foliate patterns.

Length: 97 cm. (38.2 in.)

Rubies

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 15 x 9 mm. (est. 9 carats), deep purplish red; centre of the ornament between the two hanger clasps.

All small red stones are rubies.

Emerald

Octagonal step-cut, pavilion exposed, 10 x 9 mm., green; centre of second jewel below lower hanger clasp.

Spinel

Rectangular step-cut, pavilion exposed, 12 x 9 mm., red, badly scarred; cross-bar of the handle.

[Case 5, No. 20]



Enamels, gems, gold, and ivory complement one another in a very fine dagger typical of the period of Fath Ali Shah.

The ivory handle is encrusted with a row of rectangular red spinels and yellow sapphires, and with smaller diamonds, emeralds, and rubies. An oval faceted spinel is set in the pommel.

The sheath of burnished gold bears naturalistic floral motifs, the bust of a young man in European dress, two wrestlers in blue trousers, and a Persian beauty – all common motifs except for the athletes. They may well represent men of the Zurkhana, that ancient fraternity whose rather ritualistic exercises with Indian clubs, energetic dances, and other feats of strength and grace are still admired throughout Iran.

The dagger is similar to one now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 1602–1888), which Fath Ali Shah presented to Sir John Malcolm when he left Tehran in 1800 after his first mission as Envoy of the Government of India to Persia.

Length: ca. 40 cm. (16 in.)

Spinels

Bottom to top

Rectangular, deep step-cut, pavilion exposed, 14 x 10 mm. (est. 10 carats), red, a few inclusions.

Rectangular, deep step-cut, pavilion exposed, 18 x 13 mm. (est. 20 carats), red, a few inclusions.

Square, deep step-cut, pavilion exposed, 14 mm. (est. 15 carats), red, a few inclusions.

Pommel: Oval, shallow step-cut, pavilion exposed, 17 x 13 mm. (est. 13 carats), red.

Sapphires

(Identifications are based on visual inspection only.)

Lower: Rectangular, deep step-cut, pavilion exposed, 18 x 11 mm. (est. 20 carats), golden yellow, clean.

Upper: Rectangular, deep step-cut, 19 x 13 mm. (est. 25 carats), golden yellow, clean. [Case 19, No. 2]

Iran's skilled smiths could turn their hands not only to swords and daggers but also to fire-arms – even cannon. The watered effect on the steel of gun-barrels and cannon had a different origin from that in blades (see page 41), but the arms were embellished in the traditional way: with engraving and gold inlay, chiselling, and encrustation of precious stones. Wooden stocks were of the finest grain and finish, frequently of Circasian walnut. The locks and other associated fittings might be imported from Europe but were often further embellished.

This carbine was made in Persia though it has a French lock and, possibly, trigger. The trigger guard (ornamented with rococo designs, and encrusted with small gems) is a typically European feature but may be of native make.

The lock plate bears the signature of Fatou, a Paris maker of about 1800, who is known to have specialized in the making of rich fire-arms for the Orient.³⁸ The decoration in gold, enamels, and gems is the work of Hajji Muhammad Haft Khan.

Length: 86 cm. (33.9 in.)

Six large stones in butt.

Emeralds

Crystal section cut *en cabochon*, 24 x 21 x 21 mm. across the points (est. 20 carats), blue-green, some jardin; right face.

Ovoid, fluted in shell pattern, 16 x 14 mm. (est. 10 carats), blue-green; top.

Square step-cut, 16 mm. (est. 17 carats), blue-green, badly fractured by a blow; left face.

Square cabochon, 12 mm., blue-green; bottom.

Diamond

Octagonal table-cut with step-cut pavilion, 20 x 18 mm. (est. 30 carats), R.I. > 1.82, deep yellow; right face.

Sapphire

Octagonal, chamfered table, step-cut pavilion, 24 x 13 mm. (est. 26 carats), R.I. 1.76, deep yellow, inscribed but undeciphered; left face.

[Case 25, No. 7]





Early travellers often remarked that Fath Ali Shah, despite his love for women, paid more attention to his horses. This saddle-horn is one reminder of his life in the field, whether hunting or warring, for both were traditional royal pursuits.

Chardin tells us of the magnificent trappings with which the shahs of the seventeenth century adorned their horses: their harness and saddles were encrusted with precious stones — emeralds, rubies, and diamonds; the cloth housings which hung down almost to the ground were of gold brocade embroidered with pearls; they were tethered by silk and gold ropes to gold stakes, and even the mallets for driving in the stakes were of solid gold; the watering troughs and their supports together with the buckets used to fill them were of gold or silver.³⁹

Paintings showing Fath Ali Shah and his sons enjoying the hunt often depict them wearing crowns (or sometimes the tall *karakul* hat adorned with jewels and *jiqas*), encrusted armlets and weapons, and clothing heavily embroidered with pearls and other gems. Their horses are caparisoned to accord: saddle-cloths, saddles, girths, head-stalls, bridles, cruppers, and head ornaments appear to be of rare cashmeres, metallic cloth, or fine leather, and bear heavy jewelled bosses and ornaments.

This pommel was cut from a lacquered saddle. Its wooden frame is overlaid with gold and green translucent enamel and encrusted with emeralds, rubies, and diamonds. The reverse, the side next the rider, is of horn, similarly embellished.⁴⁰

Height: 19.5 cm. (7.7 in.)

[Case 1, No. 44]

From the Imperial Household



Two of the most exquisite small objects in the collection are shown on this page.

For its size, the little box is probably the most valuable of all the jewels, apart from the *Darya-i Nur*. Its gold framework, inset with rose-cut diamonds, secures ninety-two emeralds. Perhaps it held pills, or it may have been purely ornamental: no use is documented. Nor is its date known for certain, though it is unlikely to be earlier than the reign of Nasir ud-Din Shah. In plan it is rectangular, with the lid and base in the form of very shallow truncated pyramids. The centre of the lid is a single, beautiful mixed-cut stone; the corresponding area on the base is filled with smaller, step-cut emeralds.

The stem-cup is composed entirely of rubies, more or less rectangular step-cut, graduated in size and set within vertical gold ribs. The base is of gold pierced in a formal floral open-work pattern. The rim, which undulates slightly, and the edge of the base consist of horizontal rows of rubies set in gold. The beauty and craftsmanship are self-evident. The use to which the cup was put is by no means so clear. In form it resembles the holders used for coffee-cups (see page 99), but it seems too fragile ever to have served such a purpose. Perhaps utility was the furthest thing from the jeweller's mind, and this precious little tour de force was created for beauty alone and the pleasure it would give its royal owner.

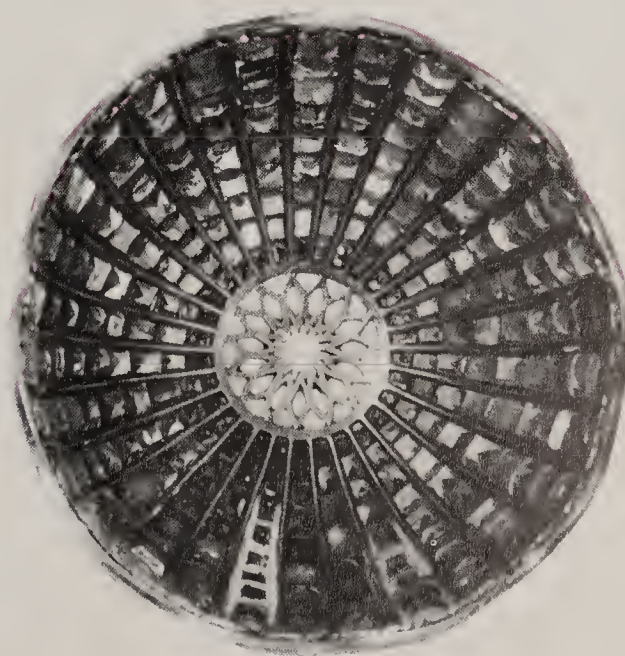
Dimensions of box: ca. 6 x 5 x 3 cm. (2.4 x 2 x 1.2 in.)

Emerald

Octagonal mixed-cut, pavilion exposed, 25 x 18 mm. (est. 35 carats), blue-green, some jardin. [Case 27, No. 11]

Height of cup: 4 cm. (1.6 in.)

[Case 11, No. 8]







Adorning a small gold travelling-mirror is one of the earliest reported portraits of Fath Ali Shah. It is dated 1212 (A.D. 1797–98), the year he ascended the throne.

As in the portrait previously shown, he kneels in the Persian manner on a rug and leans against a bolster, both embroidered with pearls and other gems. His crown, with its three black heron plumes, resembles the Kiani and he holds the jewelled mace. In the corners of the border, and to the left of the portrait, he is lauded in poetry. Flowers, leaves, and birds cover both outer surfaces in a brilliant enamelled profusion; in their midst, on the front, a young woman disports herself. Around the edge of the frame is an inscription which gives the date and the name of the enamellist, *kamtarin* Muhammad Muhsin Amir Kalhor.

The cup is of gold, with floral patterns in open-work inset with diamonds and rubies and with petals of green translucent enamel outlined in gold on the stem. It probably once had a porcelain or glass liner and was used for drinking tea.

Mirror

Height: 18 cm. (7.1 in.)

Width: 12.7 cm. (5.0 in.)

Thickness: 1.3 cm. (0.5 in.)

Weight: 1334 grams (3 lb.)

[Case 29, No. 28]

Cup

Height: 7.5 cm. (3.0 in.)

[Case 29, No. 10]



There is an intriguing mystery about this showy little ball. It is 3 inches in diameter, hollow, without any discernible opening.

Considerable care has been taken in its decoration. On top, a rose-cut diamond is surrounded by rectangular cabochon rubies. Around the equator are six panels, outlined in cabochon rubies, each containing an oval step-cut red spinel in a circlet of diamonds. The interstices on the surface are filled with rubies, emeralds, and green and dark blue translucent enamels.

It is a beautiful little piece, but what purpose did it serve? In at least three portraits of Fath Ali Shah it lies near him on the floor, but no clue is given to its use.⁴¹ It is natural to think that it was an orb, a symbol of world power, but there is no evidence that an orb was ever part of the Persian regalia. It is not a pomander, for there is no opening.⁴²

There is one possible clue. When the ball is shaken, it rattles. Perhaps part of the fabric has broken within; but if the sound is caused by loose seeds or something similar inside, the ball may simply be a rattle with which the great Shah, the King of Kings, could amuse himself.

Diameter: 7.5 cm. (3 in.)

Weight: 257 grams (9.1 oz.)

[Case 35, No. 6]

A Persian character in fiction compares European and local eating habits: "they sit on little platforms, whilst we squat on the ground; they take up their food with claws made of iron, whilst we use our fingers."⁴³ The description comes from *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, a romantic but perceptive novel about Persia published in 1824 by James Morier after several years' service in the British Embassy there. The Persian custom, as Morier says elsewhere, had great advantages for it made for much quieter meals, but it did place a special importance on washing the hands both before and after the meal.

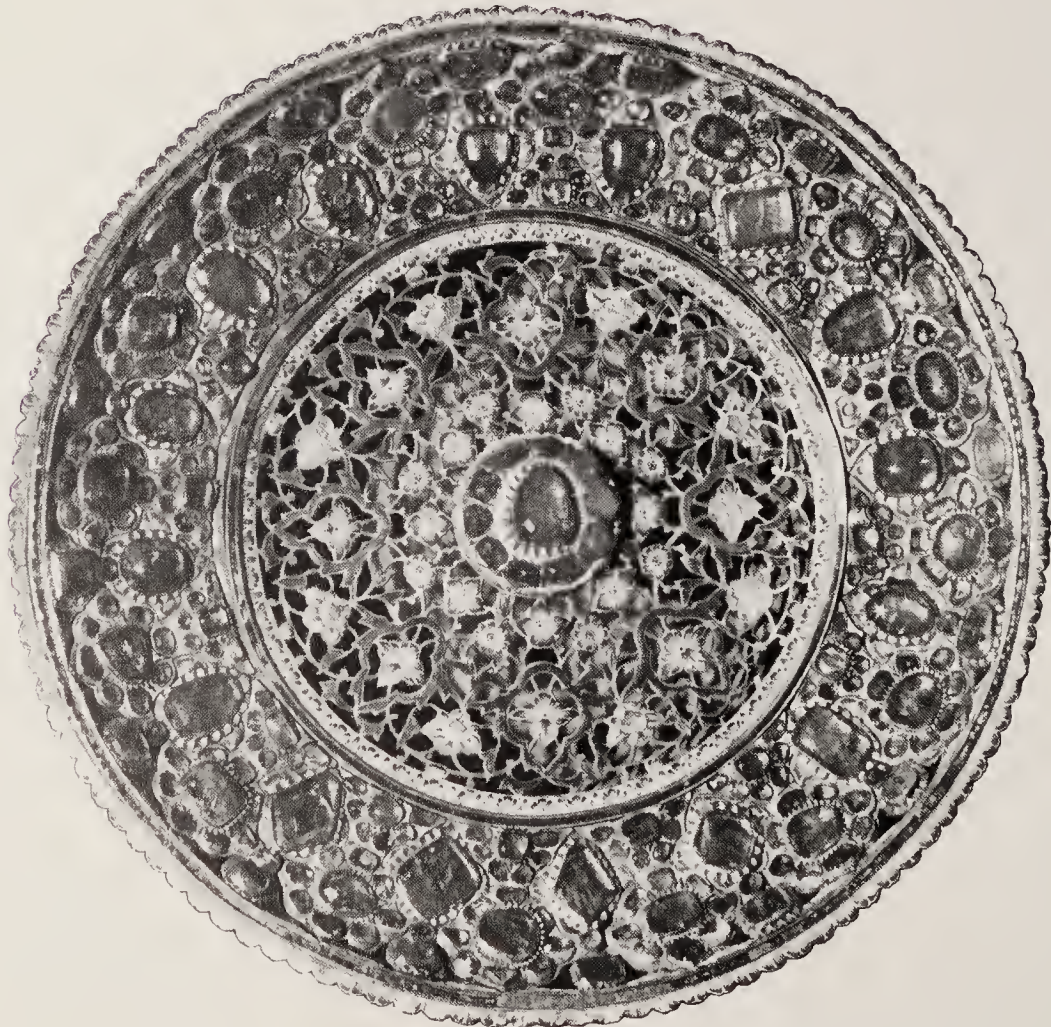
Persians of all ranks and classes, from peasant to shah, from tent-dwelling nomad to urban householder, poured water over their hands into a basin. The only difference was in the vessels used: they might be of the simplest materials – tinned copper or bronze – or of great value. In the homes of the well-to-do, a servant would pour warm water, often scented with rose-water, over the hands of the guests while the basin was held beneath. An open-work lid on the basin allowed the soiled water to pass through and concealed it from sight.

This ewer and basin set is unique in several ways. Not only is it of gold heavily encrusted with gems and enamel, but it appears to have been part of the regalia. Pierre-Amédée Jaubert, the special emissary of Napoleon to Fath Ali Shah, tells of the great levée in the summer of 1806 at which he paid his respects to the Shah and mentions "several young pages, also dressed in satin robes and wearing at their belt daggers embellished with diamonds. Each carried in his hand one of the various attributes of supreme power, which were the sword, the dagger, the mace, the javelin, the buckler, the ewer and the basin for ablutions."⁴⁴

Morier also describes how the ewer and basin were carried in procession before the shah with other objects – his pipes, shoes, cloak, and opium box – when he went to have dinner with his chief physician.⁴⁵ There can be little doubt that in both cases the reference is to this fine set, for the encrusting and enamelling are both typical of the time of Fath Ali Shah.

The open-work drain, which is entirely covered with enamels, is held in position by a boss consisting of a large emerald set in enamels surrounded by rubies; this boss screws into an upright column rising from the interior of the basin.

Ewer	Basin
Height: 42.5 cm. (16.8 in.)	Height: 10.5 cm. (4.1 in.)
Weight: 4224 grams (10 lb.)	Diameter: 29.5 cm. (11.6 in.)
	Weight: 1870 grams (4.4 lb.)
Emeralds	
Set of four around equator of ewer: Various cuts, about 25 x 18 mm. (est. 25 – 30 carats), green, jardin.	
Oval step-cut, 25 x 21 x 6 mm. (est. 30 carats), blue-green; top of handle of ewer.	
Round, fluted, 18 x 8 mm. (est. 20 carats), blue-green; finial of ewer.	
Drop-shaped step-cut, pavilion exposed, 23 x 18 mm. (est. 25 carats), blue-green, some jardin; centre of boss in basin.	
About two-thirds of the green gems in the rim of the basin are emeralds; the remainder are foil-backed beryls.	
Rubies and spinels	
Set of six above equator of ewer: Various cuts and shapes, about 18 x 14 mm.; four red spinels and two rubies – one asteriated (est. 22 carats), hidden from view.	
[Case 33, No. 18]	







Persian turquoise has been world-famous since at least the first century A.D., when it was described by Pliny the Elder. It was esteemed for its beauty and for its reputed talismanic power.

In spite of its renown, stones of fine quality have never been common. Tavernier wrote in the middle of the seventeenth century: "Turquoise occurs only in Persia, and it is obtained in two mines. One of them which is called 'the old rock' is three days' journey from Meshed towards the north-west and close to a large town called Nichabourg; the other, which is called 'the new', is five days' journey from it. These stones from the new are of an inferior blue, tending to white, and are little esteemed, and one may purchase as many of them as he likes at small cost. But for many years the King of Persia has prohibited mining in 'the old rock' for anyone but himself."⁴⁶

As in Tavernier's day, the Meshed and Nishapur district, in northeastern Iran, remains the principal source of Persian turquoise, and the supply of good turquoise is still extremely limited.

A hemispherical bowl clearly illustrates the quality and beauty of the true Persian stone, and the taste and skill of the Persian jeweller. The pure blue stones contrast richly with the gold in which they are set. Within the roundel formed by the flat base is an intricately woven Persian inscription: "The Sultan Nasir ud-Din Shah Qajar."

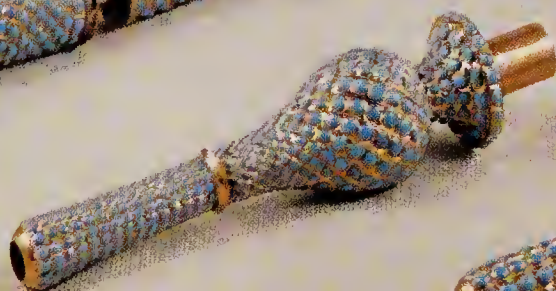
Diameter: 18.7 cm. (7.4 in.)

Height: 5.5 cm. (2.2 in.)

[Case 5, No. 5]



The collection contains many small stemmed cups, shaped like Western egg-cups, of which these, from a set of twelve, are the finest examples. Of white metal, overlaid with gold and inset with turquoises, they are the holders for small, handleless china coffee-cups. Sir William Ouseley, writing of the practice in Iran a hundred and fifty years ago, noted that the coffee berry was brought from south Arabia – that is, Mocha coffee – and “the Persians sip it, extremely strong and hot, without milk or sugar, out of small china cups.”⁴⁷ Sir Harford Jones Brydges, describing a supper he attended in Shiraz in 1791, says that “coffee was then brought, and served to me in a gold enamelled *sous coupe*, ornamented with small precious-stones.”⁴⁸ C. J. Wills also tells us that “small silver filigree cup-holders, the size of egg-cups, were handed round on a tray; and placed in each was a smaller vessel of china, holding about a liqueur-glassful of strong sweet black coffee, flavoured with cloves.”⁴⁹ The practice of serving hot coffee or tea in a china or glass cup within an outer metal container is still followed today.



Throughout the East, the water-pipe has been a favourite method of smoking tobacco. In Iran, it is often called a *qalyan*, presumably from the bubbling sound produced. The smoke passes through water, often perfumed, which purifies and cools it, and then is inhaled by means of tubes or pipes. Sir John Chardin, writing of the Persia in which he travelled extensively in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, explains this usage: "As the Air is more warm and dry there than in Europe and Turkey, and the Animal Spirits of the People more subtile, the Tobacco would be too heady for them, if they took it as we do, because they are at it continually."⁵⁰

The bottle and vertical pipe of one handsome specimen are set with alternate spiralling rows of turquoises and rubies, beautifully graduated in size. The flaring head which held the tobacco is decorated with enamels, including four oval portraits of young women. The three mouthpieces are also inset with turquoises; one is attached to a long gold tube on which are strung cylindrical ferrules for securing the mouthpiece to a flexible tube.

The set probably dates from the time of Nasir ud-Din Shah. Feuvrier, who was his private physician for three years, describes how, at a levée held by the Shah in 1889, "the most profound silence reigns while His Majesty smokes the Kalia, which is of remarkable workmanship and great richness with its incrustations of turquoises of the purest blue."⁵¹

Height of bottle: 27 cm. (10.6 in.)

Overall length of mouthpieces: 15 cm. (5.9 in.) [Case 5, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 32]



The decoration of *qalyan* heads was a major occupation of the many enamellers at work in Tehran a century ago.⁵² One of the finest craftsmen of the time was Qazim ibn Najaf Ali, who signed and dated the example at left in 1280 (A.D. 1863–64). The two oval medallions bear representations of the Holy Family (a young woman, an old bearded man, and a child) and, possibly, of the Virgin and Child with John the Baptist (the latter dressed in Western uniform with epaulettes!) and two cherubs observing from the clouds. If such representations appear strange in Persian works, we must remember that the Virgin Mary was, and is, highly regarded among the Moslems. She was one of the four perfect women of Islam. Such representations of Christian and biblical themes are not confined to enamels but appear on the lacquers of the time and even in paintings.⁵³

Yet enamelling at the time of Nasir ud-Din Shah was only a renaissance of that which flourished during the reign of Fath Ali Shah, from which all other examples on this and the facing page are taken. The *qalyan* bottle (at the right, above) is made of leather with mounts of enamel on gold. Such bottles were used for travel and copied the shape of the traditional glass vessels.⁵⁴ The leather, according to one English traveller, was usually buffalo or rhinoceros. This bottle is signed twice and dated "Muhammad Jafar 1233" (A.D. 1817–18).⁵⁵ All of these enamels are typically Persian; the techniques are *champlevé* and painted, the colours are brilliant, and the subject matter includes naturalistic flowers in profusion, birds, animals, and human beings.

The stem-cup and saucer (signed by Husain Ali), the carafe (signed by *khanazad* Ali), and the dish-cover (with its depictions of the Shah and four princes) are similar in style and

workmanship. They may be a set, made by one artist: if so, he left one piece unsigned, used two of his names on a second, and on the other used only one preceded by his title, which can perhaps be translated "court artist" in this context. On all three pieces appear young women dancing, playing musical instruments, and performing acrobatics. We are reminded of Hajji Baba's Zeenab, who was given by her master to the shah. She was to be trained in all these arts for royal enjoyment.⁵⁶ Strangely, Sir John Malcolm wrote in 1815: "Dancing girls were once numerous in Persia; and the first poets of that country have celebrated the beauty of their persons and the melody of their voices. They continued to form a part of the amusement at every entertainment till the reigning family ascended the throne; but at present they are not allowed at court, and are seldom seen, except in provinces at a distance from the capital."⁵⁷ Malcolm, however observant he may have been normally, probably did not consider the possibility of private displays in the *anderun*.

The tray has a central roundel depicting two young women and (perhaps) their page, surrounded by six medallions of couples (young men and women, and women with children) interspersed with bouquets and birds. The piece is neither signed nor dated, but one of the male figures is clearly in Regency costume, which suggests the early nineteenth century.

Height of <i>qalyan</i> head (with wooden stem): 15.5 cm. (6.2 in.)	[Case 2, No. 1]
Height of <i>qalyan</i> bottle: 22.5 cm. (8.9 in.)	[Case 2, No. 2]
Height of stem-cup and saucer: 12.2 cm. (4.8 in.)	[Case 2, No. 36]
Height of carafe: 21 cm. (8.3 in.)	[Case 31, No. 11]
Height of dish-cover: 11 cm. (4.3 in.)	[Case 31, No. 27]
Diameter of tray: 25 cm. (9.9 in.)	[Case 31, No. 7]





The Persians also called the water-pipe *nargila*, from the coconut (*nargil*) they sometimes used for a bottle. In this example the coconut is preserved, decorated with low-relief carving of flowers, birds, and animals.

The lower part of the vertical pipe and the transverse connection (for the flexible tube or the straight cherry-wood stem) are carved from dark green nephrite and constitute one of the few pieces of jade in the collection. The remainder of the vertical pipe, the head which held the tobacco, and the bottle mountings are of gold enamelled with pictures of flowers and young women. The chains hanging from the head may be purely ornamental or may once have secured an enamelled lid.

Obviously this pipe had to be held by the smoker, or more likely by a servant, while in use. It probably dates from the early nineteenth century.

Height: 37 cm. (14.6 in.)

[Case 31, No. 39]



The bowl of this beautiful ladle is of off-white Burmese jadeite, its under-side carved with blossoms, leaves, and stalks. The matt gold handle is decorated with rococo motifs in burnished gold and is encrusted with rubies, diamonds, and a green tourmaline. The clasp joining it to the bowl bears a faceted ruby with diamonds against enamels.

Sir John Chardin exclaimed at "Drinking-Cups made like Ladles" when he inspected the Shah's household goods in the seventeenth century. "What seem'd most Royal to me," he added, "was a Dozen of Spoons a Foot long, and large in Proportion made, to drink Broth out of, and other Liquors; the Bowl of the Spoon was of Gold enamel'd, the Handle was cover'd with Rubies, the end was a large Diamond of about six Carats. . . . One must not wonder that the Handle of these is a Foot long, because as throughout the East, they eat on the Ground, and not upon Tables, one would be oblig'd to stoop too low to take up the Broth, if the Spoons were not so long."⁵⁸

Persian sherbet – a chilled fruit-juice, sometimes scented with rose-water – was drunk from intricately carved wooden ladles in the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ There can be little doubt that this great spoon,⁶⁰ and a similar one on display, were used to drink hot or cold liquids, presumably at Fath Ali Shah's court.

Length: 26.2 cm. (10.3 in.)

[Case 1, No. 32]

The most magnificent enamel in the collection may also be the most important historically.

An early date is suggested for the decanter both by technical details and by its ornamentation. The champlevé cutting is very fine and the enamels are of excellent quality and colour: translucent ruby red, royal blue, reddish brown, gold, and green; and opaque white, light blue, and black. The motifs – bouquets in bowls or jars, birds and animals,⁶¹ idealized busts of young men and women, and hunting scenes (just below the rim of the bottle) – display a skill and imagination rarely equalled on other Persian enamels. One should note, too, that the head-dresses of the men in the medallions or hunting scenes are never the karakul hat common in Qajar times, but the tall, narrow turban of the Zand period, or, in one case, a European tricorne.

Such evidence suggests that the bottle may have been made for a Zand ruler during the second half of the eighteenth century. Unfortunately, it bears no signature or date to substantiate this attribution.

The earliest dated Persian enamels come from the reign of Fath Ali Shah, but there can be no doubt that the art flourished there at an earlier period. If we are right in attributing this decanter to the Zand dynasty, it is the unique example of Zand enamelling on gold and an important document in the history of Persian art.

Height: 44 cm. (17.3 in.)

[Case 2, No. 5]





Candlesticks and lamps were usually placed on the floor because "the Persians of all classes and distinctions kneel, and sit-back on their heels, preserving their bodies in an upright posture, and holding their hands across their girdles, or on their daggers."⁶² At meals, their dishes were laid out on low trays or on the floor in front of them. Sir William Ouseley, describing a dinner he attended in 1811, remarked that the candles were of tallow, "very thick and above four feet long."⁶³

This candlestick is one of a pair (the other is Case 32, No. 1), each about 16 inches high and some 11 pounds in weight. While supporting the tall candles without any danger of tipping, they would give a good light at a convenient height. Probably at royal receptions they would have rested on pedestals, for at such times the shah would occupy an elevated throne and his courtiers would be standing.

They are made of gold, almost solidly encrusted with emeralds, rubies, red spinels, and diamonds, all under 20 carats in weight. From the type and quality of decoration, they undoubtedly were made no later than the reign of Fath Ali Shah.

Height: ca. 40 cm. (15.8 in.)

Weight: 5 kilograms each (11 lb.)

[Case 3, No. 1]



There are comparatively few articles of filigree in the collection, although Iran has been famous for this type of metalwork for centuries. These are teacup holders, resembling in form and purpose the turquoise coffee-cup holders on page 99, and are embellished with rubies, diamonds, and green translucent enamel. A set of ten similar cups is preserved in the Hermitage Museum, complete with their china liners.⁶⁴

Height: 8.5 cm. (3.3 in.)

[Case 31, No. 19]

Jewelled bottles often appear as details in portraits of Fath Ali Shah, but rarely in this form. The long neck suggests a wine decanter, and similar vessels are often depicted in miniatures which show the courtly life of Persia from at least the fifteenth century on. There is no doubt that, at that time, these bottles did hold wine. Yet the Prophet had forbidden Moslems to drink it, and Fath Ali Shah would not countenance its use at his court.

In a famous mural, now destroyed, which showed Fath Ali Shah at a great levée, one of the six attendant pages, bearing the regalia, carried a bottle of this form.⁶⁵ Possibly it was used on occasion to hold non-alcoholic liquids such as chilled fruit-juices, but the fact that it was considered a piece of the regalia suggests that this bottle is older than the time of Fath Ali Shah.

Height: 46.0 cm. (18.2 in.)

Breadth: 15.4 cm. (6.1 in.)

Emeralds

Equator: Oval, flat cabochon, 31 x 30 mm. (est. 45 carats), blue-green, some jardin; one facing, three others equivalent.

Base of neck: Drilled cabochon drop, 28 x 22 mm. (est. 45 carats, heavier still if a bead), green, a little jardin; one facing, three others equivalent.

Lower part of bottle: Shallow, round cabochon-cut, 22 mm. (est. 25 carats), green, some jardin; left of centre, three others equivalent, but some faceted.

Spinel

Shallow rose-cut triangle, 20 mm. to side (est. 15 carats), R.I. 1.715, red; finial.

Equator (left to right)

Octagonal step-cut, pavilion exposed, 21 x 16 mm. (est. 30 carats), red, two large inclusions.

Square step-cut, pavilion exposed, 16 mm. (est. 20 carats), red, a large inclusion.

Square step-cut, pavilion exposed, 19 mm. (est. 35 carats), red, some inclusions.

Oval mixed-cut, 21 x 16 mm. (est. 25 carats), deep pink, some inclusions.

Four equivalent stones on rear.

Above equator

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 21 x 18 mm. (est. 35 carats), red, some very small inclusions; to left.

Oval step-cut, 27 x 19 mm. (est. 45 carats), R.I. 1.715, red, some inclusions; to right.

Two equivalent stones on rear.

Below equator

Octagonal step-cut, pavilion exposed, 23 x 20 mm. (est. 35 carats), red, nearly clean.

Three other equivalent stones.

[Case 33, No. 16]



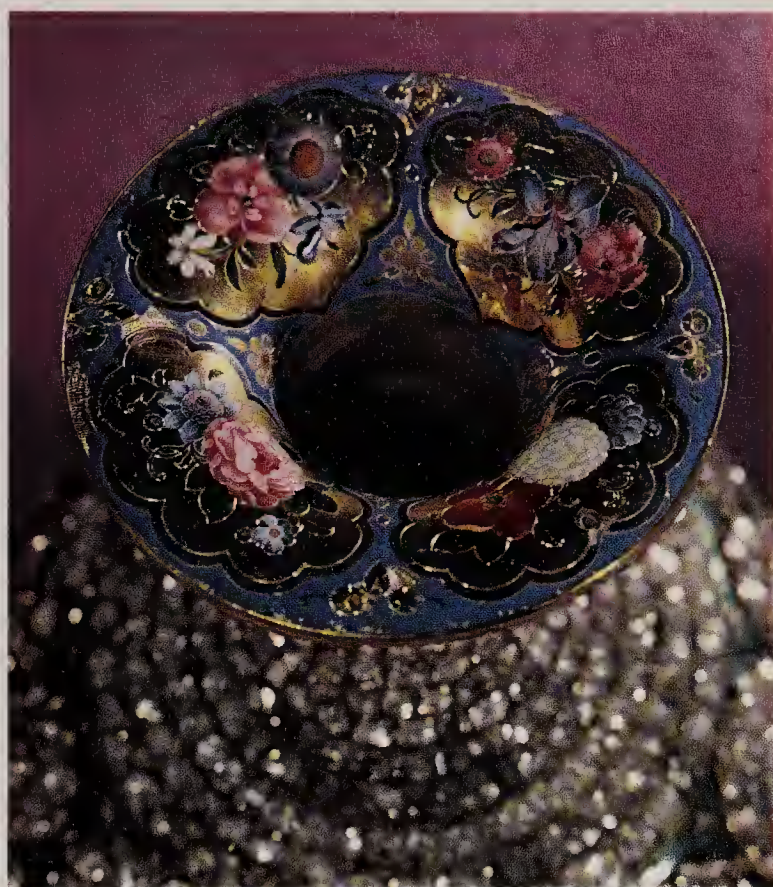


This very showy gold bottle is decorated with diamond florets and rows of rubies and diamonds against green translucent enamel. The finial canopy of the lid supports five drop-shaped pearls and one diamond and is topped by a shallow cabochon ruby. The inside of the neck is enamelled with naturalistic bouquets.

Bottles of similar form, but with wider necks and larger gems, appear in many portraits of Fath Ali Shah, resting on or beside his embroidered pearly rug. The enamels of this bottle, however, suggest a later date, possibly in the reign of Nasir ud-Din Shah.

Height: 32.5 cm. (12.8 in.)

[Case 27, No. 1]





An inscription around the rim explains that this lovely hemispherical bowl was created in 1274 (A.D. 1857–58) to commemorate the capture of the ancient and historic city of Herat by the forces of Nasir ud-Din Shah in the previous year, an act which led directly to a fruitless war with Great Britain.

The bowl is a jeweller's masterpiece. It is of gold, plain and burnished on the interior except for the enamelling and an engraved band of interlaced vine leaves, tendrils, and bunches of grapes. The simplicity of design focuses attention on the boss, a large, roughly circular, faceted (but abraded) emerald.

In contrast, the exterior is heavily encrusted with rubies, emeralds, and diamonds in the form of an arcade with eight trilobed arches enclosing floral patterns against dark blue enamel. Seven of the florets have red spinel centres, the other a ruby. The low, flaring pedestal is enamelled in geometric patterns.

Diameter: 17.9 cm. (7.0 in.)

Height: 8.5 cm. (3.4 in.)

Emerald

Slightly ovoid, shallow, step-cut, pavilion exposed, 38 x 36 mm. (est. 110 carats), deep blue-green, many inclusions, surface worn.

Ruby

Rectangular, cabochon, 15.8 x 12.0 mm. (est. 12 carats), deep red (probably Burmese).

Spinel

Seven faceted of various dimensions. The two largest are step-cut, pavilion exposed, 12.5 x 10 mm. (est. 8 carats), red.

[Case 33, No. 29]





Food was served in bowls; at upper-class meals, there could be hundreds of them, usually of porcelain imported from China. Their contents were kept clean and hot by covers; at court these were of gold, richly decorated. The bowls were brought from the kitchens to the shah in locked trays to prevent poisoning.

Of all the many bowl-covers in the collection, this is the most splendid in the quantity and size of its gems. In form it is typical, in that it has a broad, flat surround and a domical centre crowned with a finial. The large emeralds and red spinels are surrounded by great numbers of rose-cut and mogul-cut diamonds, with ruby and emerald cabochons set in the interstices, the whole against green translucent enamel. The finial is a cluster of eight pearls surrounding a deep mogul-cut diamond.

Such jewelled dish-covers were certainly used in the time of Fath Ali Shah,⁶⁶ and this one could well have belonged to him.

Diameter: 18.9 cm. (7.5 in.)
Height overall: 10 cm. (3.9 in.)

Rubies

Four cabochon-cut, approximately 16 x 12 mm. (est. 12 carats), purplish red, Burmese; in the boss.

Emeralds (all in closed settings)

In surround (clockwise from top)

Rectangular with corners rounded, mixed-cut, 25 x 14 mm. (est. 25 carats), dark blue-green, nearly clean, magnificent stone.

Rectangular with rounded corners, tablet step-cut, 22 x 19 mm. (est. 25 carats), green, a little jardin.

Rectangular with rounded corners, tablet step-cut, 24 x 18 mm. (est. 25 carats), blue-green, considerable jardin.

Hexagonal tablet, step-cut, 26 x 26 x 23 mm. point to point (est. 30 carats), blue-green, some jardin.

Square tablet, step-cut, 17 x 16 mm. (est. 15 carats), dark blue-green, nearly clean.

Square tablet, step-cut, 19 mm. (est. 20 carats), dark blue-green, some jardin.

In the boss

Four rectangular cabochon-cut, approximately 13 x 12 mm., blue-green, some jardin.

Spinel (all in closed settings)

In surround (clockwise from top)

Hexagonal step-cut, 17 x 17 x 15 mm. point to point (est. 15 carats), nearly clean.

Octagonal, flat step-cut, 18 x 16 mm. (est. 20 carats), purplish red, nearly clean, inscribed on lower surface (see page 47).

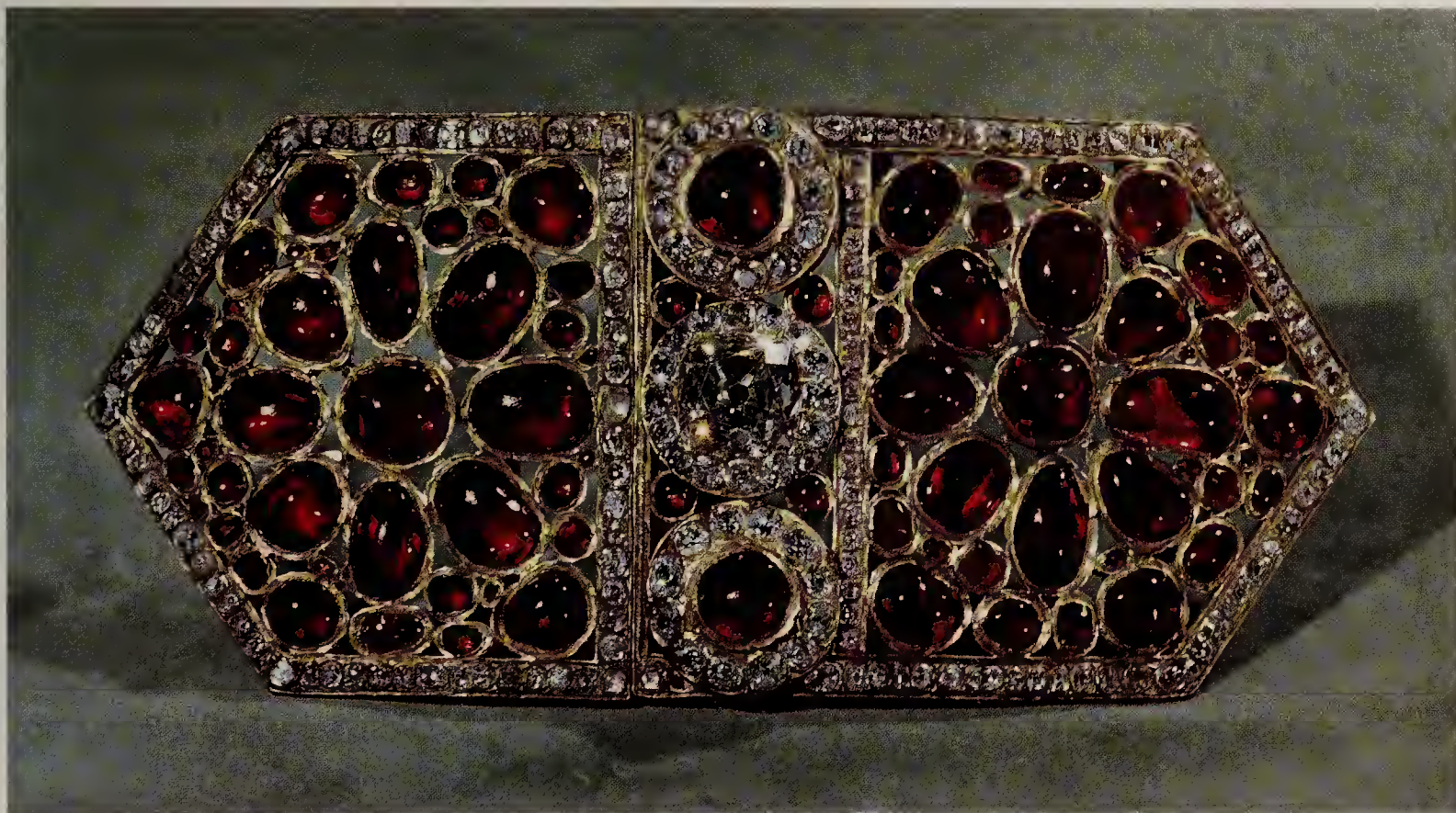
Buff-top, octagonal step-cut, 20 x 14 mm. (est. 25 carats), very clean.

Octagonal step-cut, 16 x 13 mm. (est. 17 carats), nearly clean.

Oval, step-cut, pavilion exposed and very asymmetric, 18 x 16 mm. (est. 20 carats), a few inclusions.

Flat, rectangular, rounded on edges, 18 x 12 mm. (est. 15 carats), purplish red, scratched surface, dirt in setting shows through. [Case 33, No. 12]

Jewellery



A royal ransom in rubies glows in this buckle. Few jewels in the world can match the size and outstanding quality of its stones.

Eighty-four cabochon-cut Burmese rubies are set in an open-work pattern of large florets. The central gem is a beautiful, pale yellow, cushion brilliant diamond, and smaller faceted diamonds are set in the gold framework all around the edges and on both sides of the central vertical panel.

The buckle, slightly curved, is in two parts, joined along the line to the left of the central panel by two heavy hooks. There are flat loops on the plain gold reverse through which a belt or sash may be passed, and a photograph shows Muzaffar ud-Din Shah wearing it on a diagonal sword-strap across his chest.⁶⁷

Length: 16.7 cm. (6.6 in.)

Diamond

Cushion brilliant, 15.8 x 15.3 mm. (est. 17 carats), pale yellow, beautiful stone.

Rubies

The two largest of the total of 84 Burmese rubies are:

Round cabochon-cut, 13 mm. (est. 11 carats), deep red, excellent; centre of left floret.

Oval cabochon-cut, 15 x 11 mm. (est. 11 carats), deep red, excellent; to right of above ruby.

[Case 35, No. 4]



Where thousands of larger and more spectacular gems capture the visitor's attention, the rubies may appear to play a rather lowly role. But fine Burmese rubies of more than 10 carats have seldom been found and are today no longer available from the mines.

The Iranian Crown Jewels are unique in the quality, size, and number of these gems.

The plaque of thirteen magnificent rubies is matched by another nearby. There is little doubt that these stones once graced more ornate pieces of jewellery, but in their present simple nineteenth or early twentieth century ring mounts, nothing can detract from their intrinsic beauty.

Top row (left to right)

High, oval cabochon, 14 x 13 mm. (est. 11 carats), a few inclusions.

Asymmetric cabochon, 15 x 12 mm. (est. 11 carats), a few inclusions.

Oval cabochon, 13 x 11 mm. (est. 8 carats), very dark red, some inclusions.

Oval cabochon, 14 x 12 mm. (est. 10 carats), nearly clean.

Middle row (left to right)

Round cabochon, 13 mm. (est. 10 carats), rather pink, a few feathers.

Asymmetric cabochon, 16 x 15 mm. (est. 16 carats), dark red, a few inclusions; silver mount.

Nearly round cabochon, 16 x 15 mm. (est. 16 carats), a few inclusions.

Round cabochon, 13 mm. (est. 10 carats), some feathers; the mount is very high and carved.

Round cabochon, 14 mm. (est. 12 carats), some feathers.

Bottom row (left to right)

Nearly round cabochon, 13 x 12 mm. (est. 9 carats), purplish red, some inclusions.

Nearly round cabochon, 14 x 13 mm. (est. 11 carats), purplish red, some inclusions.

High, asymmetric cabochon, 14 x 11 mm. (est. 9 carats), nearly clean.

High, asymmetric cabochon, 13 x 11 mm. (est. 8 carats), dark red, nearly clean.

[Case 11, No. 1 East]



Two halves of a single emerald crystal, sawn lengthwise, and carved and polished, form the lid and base of the exquisite little box in the centre of the photograph. The gold diamond-set mount bears the mark of Michael Perchin,⁶⁸ who was Fabergé's workmaster from 1886 to his death in 1903. The box was probably used to hold pills.

The watch (lower left) has on its cover a large cabochon emerald, surrounded by diamonds. It was made by Maison B. Haas Jeune Brevetée of Geneva and Paris.

The clasp (top right) was worn by Muzaffar ud-Din Shah as an ornament on a diagonal strap running across his chest from shoulder to waist. The very high, round cabochon emerald is mounted in a frame of diamonds set in white metal.

The two seals are of the same form, domical with a hinged finial, diamond-set. The enamel background is blue on seal "a" (lower right) and green on seal "b" (top left). Both seal-stones are probably of rock crystal and bear on their faces Chinese dragons, of different forms, and the date 1244 (A.D. 1828–29). Seal "b" also bears the inscription "Khusrau Sahib Qiran," a title used by Fath Ali Shah on his coins from 1825 to 1829.⁶⁹

BOX

Length: 5.2 cm. (2 in.)

[Case 27, No. 9]

WATCH

Emerald

Round cabochon, 30 mm. diameter x 7.0 mm. deep (est. 55 carats), blue-green, jardin.

[Case 27, No. 5]

CLASP

Height: 5.2 cm. (2 in.)

Emerald

Very high, round cabochon, 35 mm. diameter x 21 mm. deep (est. 150 carats), blue-green, a little jardin; amazingly fine.

[Case 27, No. 31]

SEALS

Probably rock crystal, backed with green foil.

[Case 27, No. 4]



ORNAMENTS

Emeralds

Above yataghan (left to right, excluding centre)

Oval, high cabochon, 23 x 20 mm. (est. 35 carats), green, some jardin.

Round, engraved cabochon, 27 mm. diameter (est. 50 carats), green, jardin.

Flat oval, 48 x 33 mm. (est. 100 carats), green, jardin; inscribed.

Round, step-cut, pavilion exposed, 22 mm. diameter (est. 35 carats), green, some jardin. [Case 30, No. 36]

Below yataghan (left to right)

Round, step-cut, pavilion exposed, 19 mm. diameter (est. 20 carats), green, surface worn.

Irregular, nearly round cabochon, 21 mm. diameter (est. 25 carats), green.

Round, step-cut, pavilion exposed, 18 mm. diameter (est. 18 carats), green.

[Case 30, No. 34]

YATAGHAN

Length: 73 cm. (28.7 in.)

[Case 30, No. 35]

EPAULETTES

Length of each epaulette across top: 17.3 cm. (6.8 in.)

Emeralds

Crystal section, tablet-cut, 43 x 43 x 40 mm. point to point (est. 100 carats), deep blue-green; left epaulette.

Crystal section, shallow rose-cut, 39 x 39 x 38 mm. point to point (est. 80 carats), deep blue-green; right epaulette. [Case 30, No. 37]



Some idea of the wealth of emeralds in the collection can be gained from a general view of part of one side of one of the two cases devoted to this type of gem. On the upper shelf, amidst trays of unset emeralds, stands the panel of rings shown on page 62.

In the foreground is a yataghan, a short, almost straight sword. Plaques of ivory are secured to either side of its tang with rivets, the heads of which are capped with gold bosses inset with emeralds. The scabbard too is of gold encrusted with emeralds and diamonds. The reverse of the scabbard is engraved.

Inscriptions on the scabbard and blade report that the sword was presented by Reza Quli Khan to Muzaffar ud-Din Mirza, the Crown Prince, in 1291 (A.D. 1874–75), and that the gems were added in 1315 (A.D. 1897–98), after his coronation. The blade, of beautifully watered steel, is said to have been forged in the Caucasus. It is signed but the signature is indecipherable.

Above the yataghan is a pair of magnificent epaulettes. Each contains more than 300 diamonds, set in gold with touches of green and red enamel. The two central gems are large hexagonal emeralds of a deep blue-green colour, most likely of Colombian origin.

The epaulettes represent a departure in Imperial costume. While Fath Ali Shah favoured traditional Persian dress, his successor, Muhammad Shah, was usually depicted in western military uniform except for the Qajar head-dress, the tall *karakul* hat. He shared, however, his grandfather's love for jewellery. Not only were his *jiqas* larger (and less tasteful) than his predecessor's, but he could not resist adorning his uniform with the traditional large armlets, jewelled belts, ropes and tassels of pearls. His epaulettes were in keeping. He appears in a portrait, hanging in the private quarters of the Golestan Palace in Tehran, wearing diamond and emerald epaulettes similar if not identical with these.⁷⁰ His successor, Nasir ud-Din Shah, wears the same epaulettes in a life-size portrait hanging in the Chehel Sutun Palace in Isfahan.⁷¹

On the lower shelf below the epaulettes are five brooches or dress ornaments (the central one of which is described and illustrated on page 122) and below the yataghan are three more circular ornaments.

On the upper shelf, to the left and right of the panel of rings, are three large aquamarines, a gem related to emerald. One has been left in its natural crystal form and two have been fashioned into knife handles, the one on the right being further decorated with eight rows of rubies.



Each of the two large emeralds weighs in the neighbourhood of 250 carats. Both have been carved – the one at the top to represent the petals of a rose, and the one below with a poetic inscription praising Fath Ali Shah dated 1226 (A.D. 1811–12).

The gold frame of the upper emerald is in the form of three interweaving ribbons, two of them set with diamonds, the third with rubies; on the reverse are two vertical rectangular loops for fitting the jewel to a belt. There is no direct evidence to date this piece, but a very similar buckle was at times worn by Muhammad Shah.

Length: 10 cm. (3.9 in.)

Emerald

Hexagonal with corners rounded, flat, engraved, 58 mm. diameter (est. 250 carats), green, considerable jardin; mended. [Case 30, No. 36]

The lower emerald has been mounted in a necklace. A plain gold chain terminates in a series of links, each an open quatrefoil with a central diamond and lateral pendants of a pearl between two tiny blue beads. In front, these links descend in a triple strand to support the hexagonal pendant from which hang three other, pear-shaped, emeralds in gold mounts. The present setting is probably somewhat later than the date inscribed on the principal gem.

Emeralds

Hexagonal, inscribed cabochon, 61 mm. across the points x 9.65 mm. thick (est. 250 carats), green, considerable jardin.

Drilled drop, 25 x 19 mm. (est. 60 carats), green, some jardin; centre drop.

Pair of drilled drops, each 19 x 15 mm. (est. 30 carats), green, some jardin.

[Case 30, No. 42]



These emeralds share two characteristics apart from size and quality. All are carved in melon pattern, and all are bored. Probably all came from Delhi.

Most portraits of Fath Ali Shah show him wearing a broad jewelled belt with a fringe of pendant emeralds.⁷² That belt is no longer in the collection, but some of its constituent elements may be. It is tempting to think that the stones now strung as a necklace may once have graced his trim waist.

The central jewel has utilized bored emerald beads, within a framework of gold inset with diamonds, to form an ornate pendant to be worn on a chain around the neck. It probably dates from the second half of the nineteenth century.

CENTRAL PENDANT

Length: 10.7 cm. (4.2 in.)

Emeralds

Drilled, oblate melon-fluted spheroid, 23 mm. diameter x 20 mm. (est. 70 carats), blue-green, some jardin; upper.

Drilled, melon-fluted bead, 16 x 13 mm. (est. 15 carats), blue-green, slight jardin; centre.

Melon-fluted drop, 27 x 21 mm. (est. 80 carats), blue-green, some jardin; lower.
[Case 30, Nos. 29, 43]

Although the eye is inevitably captured first by such a profusion of top-quality pearls, it is soon drawn to the chest from which they spill. It is of wood overlaid with gold and enamelled. The lid has, at the corners, four nude dancers with scarves; at the centre, a formal floret in white, pink, blue, and green enamels; over the rest of its surface a variety of flowers; and a border of dark blue enamel cartouches alternating with quatrefoils of light blue or green enamel. Similar designs adorn the back, front and sides. There is a gold hasp and padlock on the front.

In the border of the lid, at the centre of the front and back, two of the quatrefoils bear intricate koranic inscriptions and the date 1273 (A.D. 1856–57). The name of the enamellist is unknown, but the box appears to be an excellent example of the renaissance in the craft which occurred under Nasir ud-Din Shah.⁷³

Length: ca. 42 cm. (16.5 in.)

Width: ca. 32 cm. (12.6 in.)

Height: ca. 20 cm. (7.9 in.)

[Case 15, No. 1]







Armlets were worn by both sexes in Iran and often contained talismans – perhaps a text from the Koran or a pinch of holy earth from Kerbela, southwest of Baghdad, where Husain, grandson of the Prophet, was martyred. The shahs for centuries wore great jewelled armbands as an important part of their formal costume; these were often the settings for their most important gems, such as the *Darya-i Nur*. The practice appears to have died out about 1860 during the reign of Nasir ud-Din Shah,⁷⁴ and they are conspicuously absent from all his later portraits and those of his successors.

The armlet illustrated is one of a pair, by no means identical in detail but having the same shield form and hinges on the bands and similar fine enamel-work on the reverse. In the one, diamonds, red spinels, and rubies glitter against blue enamel; the other has diamonds and emeralds. Neither shows any sign of wear, which suggests that they may have been made – but little used – about the middle of the nineteenth century.

Height of shield: 14 cm. (5.5 in.)

Width of shield: 10.3 cm. (4.0 in.)

Spinel

Octagonal step-cut, 16 x 13 mm. (est. 15 carats), R.I. 1.715, red, nearly clean, table scratched; upper.

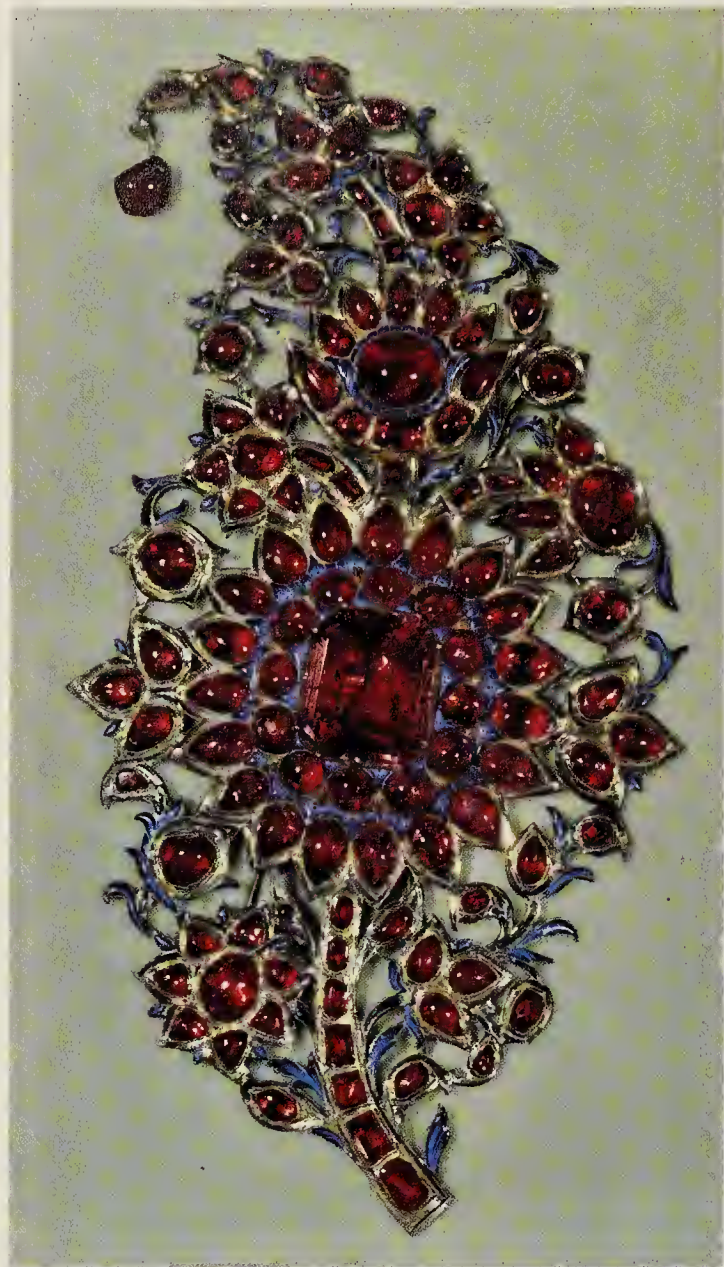
Octagonal step-cut, 13 x 12 mm. (est. 11 carats), R.I. 1.715, red, very clean; lower.

All other red stones are rubies.

Diamond

Oval rose-cut, 19 x 17 mm. (est. 20 carats), colourless, some inclusions; centre.

[Case 35, No. 2]



It is by no means clear whether this jewel was designed as a hat ornament or a brooch. The general form is that of a *jiga*, but instead of the usual feather pattern, flower motifs have been used.

The gold framework contains a great many fine rubies, most of them cabochon-cut. The large central gem is a rectangular red spinel. Twigs and settings for the gems are picked out in green translucent and blue and white opaque enamels.

There is no conclusive evidence as to provenance or date, but the technique suggests that the piece was made in Persia, probably in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Height: 14 cm. (5.5 in.)

Spinel

Rectangular step-cut, 17 x 14 mm. (est. 20 carats), red, nearly clean.

Ruby

Oval cabochon, 10 x 9 mm. (est. 4 carats), deep red. [Case 23, No. 37]



It seems to have been a fashion in Iran, around the end of the nineteenth century, for men to wear a pair of jeweled clips on the breast of the frock-coat—not hooked together but at some distance apart. There are several sets in the collection, and some of them can be identified in photographs, including a pair belonging to Nasir ud-Din Shah. The pair illustrated are very similar to those shown in a preserved photograph on the breast of an unidentified official of the time of Muzaffar ud-Din Shah.

They are of a shell pattern with ribs and borders outlined in diamonds and holding graduated tablet step-cut deep blue sapphires. The hook and eye are concealed by a small jewel of diamonds. On the reverse are rings for sewing to the garment.

In proportion to emeralds, spinels, rubies, and diamonds, sapphires are not numerous among the Crown Jewels. However, both blue and yellow sapphires are found unmounted in Case 24 and blue sapphires are also present in the world globe, the Imperial Sword, the throne, and in some other pieces.

Sapphires

Tablet step-cut, 14.3 x 11.0 x 5.3 mm. (est. 10 carats), deep blue, nearly clean; largest in each clip.⁷⁵ [Case 29, No. 22]



The flawless tablet diamonds in these hat ornaments must have been fashioned from cleavage pieces of thicker stones, possibly some of those reported by Tavernier and other travellers but now lost. Several photographs show Nasir ud-Din Shah wearing the ornament on the right attached to his karakul hat. The similarity of the setting of the other diamond to that of the *Darya-i Nur* indicates that it, too, is of the late nineteenth century.

Left

Height: 7.5 cm. (3.0 in.)

Diamond

Rectangular tablet with two corners truncated, 28 x 26 x 1.81 mm. (est. 20 carats), colourless, clean, somewhat undulating surface and simple faceting on edges.

[Case 20, No. 40]

Right

Height: 8 cm. (3.2 in.)

Diamond

Narrow egg-shaped tablet, 35 x 17 mm. (est. 15 carats), colourless, clean, narrow triangular facets around edge.

Thirty-two diamonds are missing from the setting.

[Case 20, No. 29]



Coloured gems other than emeralds, rubies, red spinels, and turquoises are rare in the collection. When they do occur in excellent quality and important size, as in these two pieces, they demand attention.

The simplicity of the upper bracelet emphasizes the size, beauty, and quality of the large garnet carbuncle. Its design and decoration with black enamel suggest that it was made in Europe (possibly in Russia) in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

In the lower piece, the large central sapphire is flanked to the left by a tourmaline and to the right by a fine chrysoberyl cat's eye; the outermost gems are sardonyx and onyx.⁷⁶ All are mounted in gold frames, set with diamonds or rubies, and hinged together. The sturdy rings, one on each of the outer frames, suggest that this is an armlet once secured by a cord or ribbon. The date is probably the first half of the nineteenth century.

Garnet carbuncle

Oval cabochon, 30 x 22 mm. (est. 70 carats), deep red, nearly clean.

Sapphire

Oval cabochon, 27 x 15 mm. (est. 35 carats), R.I. 1.76 (spot), medium blue, some feathers and inclusions.

Chrysoberyl

Oval cabochon, 20 x 16 mm. (est. 25 carats), grey-green, excellent sharp line.

Tourmaline

Hemispherical cabochon, 17 mm. (est. 20 carats), R.I. 1.63 (spot), green, surface worn. [Case 23, Nos. 17, 19]



A splendid, but delicate brooch is another of the few sapphire-set objects. All the gems are faceted, with the diamonds in white metal mounts and the sapphires in gold. On the reverse, at the top of the lower oval section, is a horizontal hinged gold pin for securing the jewel to clothing. The piece was made probably in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, possibly in Europe.

Height: 12 cm. (4.7 in.)

Sapphire

Oval mixed-cut, 16 x 12 mm. (est. 12 carats), light blue, a few feathers.

Red in stones derives from the background on which the jewel was photographed. [Case 7, No. 24]



Dr. Feuvrier, who joined Nasir ud-Din Shah's retinue in 1889 as his personal physician, lived in the Golestan Palace and has given us a good description of its various parts and the activities which went on within them. "At the far end of this court," he wrote at one point, "are the royal workshops of diamond cutters, where I have seen enormous yellow Cape cabochons being cut which were purchased in Europe during the [Shah's] last visit." The trip he referred to also took place in 1889.

Several dozen large South African stones are displayed in groups on the floor of the diamond case. For security reasons, only one group could be removed for study at a time, and it was therefore impossible to photograph all the largest of them together. The centre stone here (135 carats) is surpassed in weight by one of 152 carats and almost matched by three others of about 120 carats each. These "cape" and "silver cape" stones owe their strong and pleasing yellow colour to their size.

Top row (left to right)

Cushion brilliant, 22.5 x 22.2 x 14.9 mm., 57.15 carats, yellow (silver cape), very clean.

Rounded brilliant-cut, 19.3 x 19.0 x 13.9 mm., 36.31 carats, yellow (cape), very clean.

Double-deck brilliant-cut, 19.6 x 19.5 x 14.0 mm., 39.02 carats, yellow (cape), very clean and brilliant.

Middle row (left to right)

Rounded triangular brilliant-cut with 12-fold symmetry, 30.92 x 13.34 mm., 86.61 carats, yellow (cape), very clean.

High (old) cushion brilliant with extra facets around the culet, 31.7 x 26.7 x 21.0 mm., 135.45 carats, yellow (cape), very clean and brilliant.

High (old) rectangular, cushion brilliant, 25.4 x 22.7 x 17.9 mm., 78.96 carats, yellow (cape), very clean.

Lower row (left to right)

Rectangular (old) brilliant-cut, 20.7 x 19.2 x 15.0 mm., 44.49 carats, yellow (cape), very clean.

Rounded rectangular (old) brilliant-cut, 25.4 x 22.7 x 16.7 mm., 65.65 carats, yellow (cape), very clean.

Square (old) cushion brilliant with extra facets around culet, 23.4 x 23.3 x 17.7 mm., 75.29 carats, yellow (cape), very clean. [Case 24, No. 33 (part)]



This magnificent and heavy tiara was designed to be worn around the base of the tall, black lamb's wool hat which Fath Ali Shah, like the poorest of his subjects, wore on most occasions. It is depicted in several of his major portraits⁷⁸ and in miniatures on painted enamel. At the front, two great plumes converge to support a central vertical crest. Their outer extremities are Kashmir-cone motifs. The tiara is composed of red spinels, rubies, and diamonds set in gold against green translucent enamel. On the reverse of the crest there is a gold socket to hold a plume – probably of white egret feathers to stand out against the black hat.

Height (to the top of crest): 13.5 cm. (5.3 in.)

Diamond

Asymmetric rose-cut, 16 x 14 mm. (est. 10 carats), colourless.

Spinels

All the large red stones are spinels, but both rubies and spinels are used for the smaller stones.

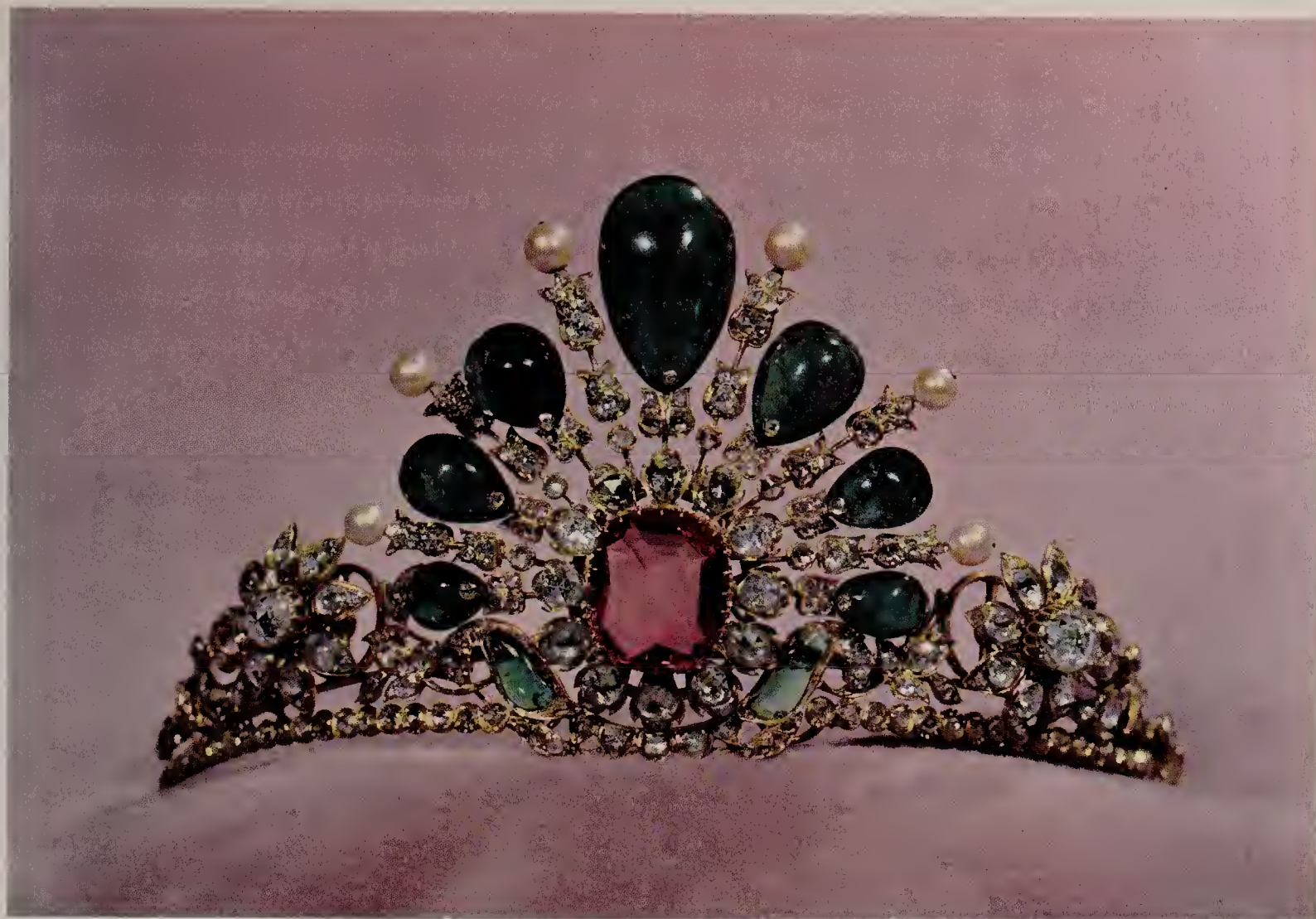
Octagonal step-cut, pavilion exposed, 23 x 20 mm. (est. 50 carats), deep raspberry red, clean; upper front.

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 22 x 16 mm. (est. 30 carats), deep raspberry red, clean; lower front.

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 17 x 14 mm. (est. 15 carats), deep raspberry red, clean; left front.

Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 19 x 16 mm. (est. 20 carats), deep raspberry red, clean; right front.

[Case 11, No. 3]



Through a printer's error the following text was omitted on page 133 of the 1974 reprinting of *Crown Jewels of Iran* by V.B. Meen and A.D. Tushingham.

Another tiara was probably intended to be worn by a woman, although there is no documentation for it. A rose-pink spinel, in a high diamond-framed gallery, forms the centre of a sunburst from which spring golden spikes decorated with diamond-set blossoms. The spikes terminate alternately in pearls and drop-shaped emeralds.

The motif of radiating spikes was used in *jigas* during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the tiara probably dates from that time. The emeralds have small holes plugged with diamonds: like so many other stones in the collection, they apparently have been used previously in other settings.

Height, in front: 7.2 cm. (2.8 in.)

Emeralds

Flat-backed cabochon drop, 26 x 16 mm. (est. 20 carats), blue-green, some jardin; drilled at pointed end; centre stone.

The six flanking stones are flat-backed also.

Spinel

Octagonal, mixed-cut, 18 x 16 mm. (est. 25 carats), R.I. 1.715, pink, 7 mm. feather in upper left.

Pearls

Two largest are 6 mm. in diameter (6 grains).

[Case 30, No. 3]



When the present Shah, then Crown Prince, was married in 1938 in Tehran, a special commission was established to supervise the creation, by Iranian and French jewellers, of new jewels for the use of members of the Royal Family. This necklace of platinum and diamonds was made for Her Imperial Majesty the Queen, now the Queen Mother.

Many of the stones are of modern cut and have a fine lustre, but the nine briolette pendants show, on close examination, the effects of much wear. They are scratched and chipped. At some time, they must have been carried about loose and allowed to rub and strike against one another or against other diamonds. Such damage suggests the rough treatment suffered by many gemstones in the collection in ordinary use or, even more, as they passed from hand to hand in commerce, war, or robbery.

Diamonds

Briolettes (left to right)

Pear-shaped, 13 x 9 mm. (est. 10 carats), colourless, some carbon inclusions; slightly abraded surface.

Nearly spherical, 13 x 12 mm. (est. 15 carats), colourless; surface abraded and chipped.

Pear-shaped, 16 x 12 mm. (est. 20 carats), colourless, clean; surface chipped and abraded.

Pear-shaped, 17 x 13 mm. (est. 25 carats), colourless, clean; surface chipped and abraded.

Pear-shaped, 23 x 14 mm. (est. 45 carats), colourless, clean; surface excellent, a lovely stone; centre.

Pear-shaped, 18 x 14 mm. (est. 34 carats), colourless, clean; surface slightly abraded.

Pear-shaped, 18 x 11 mm. (est. 20 carats), colourless, fracture filled with brown stain; surface abraded.

Pear-shaped, 17 x 12 mm. (est. 22 carats), colourless, clean; surface slightly abraded.

Ovoid, 13 x 9 mm. (est. 10 carats), colourless, some carbon inclusions.

[Case 26, No. 25]

A necklace of emeralds and diamonds is another of the jewels reserved for the use of members of the Imperial House. The neckband consists of articulated silver links inset with diamonds – single at the back, double at the front – alternating with rectangular emeralds graduated in size and set in gold. From the front of the band fall rigid festoons of silver set with diamond brilliants; where these intersect, there are square emeralds, and between the loops hang emerald pendeloques set in gold mounts. At the lowest point is a fine rectangular emerald mounted in gold against a frame of silver inset with diamonds.

On stylistic grounds, the necklace must be nineteenth century, and records indicate that it belonged to Qamar-i Saltana (Moon of the Kingdom), but no further identification has been preserved. Such a title would be applied only to a woman of the highest rank. The most likely candidate is the Qajar princess who was the granddaughter of Fath Ali Shah, the wife of Nasir ud-Din Shah, and the mother of Muzaffar ud-Din Shah.

Emeralds (centre, top to bottom)

- Oval mixed-cut, 16 x 12 mm. (est. 7 carats), blue-green, fine quality; clasp in neckband.
- Octagonal, emerald-cut, 15 x 12 mm. (est. 9 carats), blue-green, magnificent quality; centre of neckband.
- Briolette, 17 x 10 mm. (est. 6 carats), blue-green, some jardin.
- Pendeloque brilliant, 15 x 10 mm. (est. 7 carats), blue-green, some jardin; to right below briolette.
- Pendeloque brilliant, 15 x 10 mm. (est. 7 carats), blue-green, drilled at top, some jardin; to left below briolette.
- Rectangular, emerald-cut, 16 x 12 mm. (est. 10 carats), blue-green, diagonal feather, fine quality; in pendant. [Case 26, No. 15]





When the Shah and the Empress Farah were married in 1958, several new items of jewellery were made for the occasion. One was a tiara created by Harry Winston of New York.⁷⁹ Obviously the Empress delights in it for she has worn it in most of her official photographs and on many occasions, including the state visit to Canada and the United States in 1965.

The heart-shaped lower border is of platinum inset with baguette diamonds. Above it two irregular rows of various-shaped diamonds (yellow, pink, and colourless) support a cresting of seven magnificent large emeralds enclosed in diamond frames.

The tiara combines the old and new in gems and the gem cutter's art. The emeralds, South American in origin, may have been cut in India before Nadir Shah's triumph. Most of the diamonds are brilliants. The larger ones are rather high and were probably recut in the nineteenth century from Indian diamonds in the collection, but some may have been more recent acquisitions. The baguette diamonds and the brilliants framing the emeralds are modern in cut and are probably South African.

Emeralds (left to right)

Oval cabochon, 16 x 15 mm. (est. 10 carats), blue-green, nearly clean; a magnificent stone.

Oval cabochon, 19 x 18 mm. (est. 18 carats), blue-green, nearly clean.

Round cabochon, 25 x 24 mm. (est. 44 carats), blue-green, nearly clean.

(Centre stone) Oval step-cut, pavilion exposed, 30 x 28 mm. (est. 65 carats), blue-green, some jardin, surface slightly scratched; a magnificent stone.

Oval cabochon, 26 x 25 mm. (est. 48 carats), blue-green (best colour of the seven), nearly clean; a magnificent stone.

Round cabochon, 20 x 20 mm. (est. 24 carats), blue-green (paler than one to left), some jardin.

Round cabochon, 15 mm. (est. 10 carats), blue-green, very clean.

Diamonds

All are old-fashioned brilliants which appear to be heavy, i.e. deep for the spread. Two examples are:

To the left below central emerald: Cushion brilliant-cut, 15 x 14 mm. (est. 15 carats), faint yellow, clean.

To the right below central emerald: Cushion brilliant-cut, 15 x 14 mm. (est. 15 carats), colourless, clean.

[Case 26, No. 14]



The *Nur ul-Ain* (Light of the Eye), the world's largest recorded rose-pink diamond of brilliant cut, is the central stone in a second tiara created by Harry Winston for the Empress Farah at the time of her wedding. It is possible that this gem, together with the *Darya-i Nur*, once formed the single stone called the "Great Table" by Tavernier.

It is now mounted in platinum, flanked by irregularly placed yellow, pink, and colourless diamond brilliants of various shapes above an undulating band of colourless baguettes. (Photograph: Varouj Yazejian, Photo Vahe, Tehran)

Diamonds

Nur ul-Ain: Slightly drop-shaped, oval brilliant-cut, 30 x 26 x 11 mm. (est. 60 carats), pink, very limpid, incipient cleavage in pavilion; centre.

Pendeloque brilliant, 15 x 12 mm. (est. 10 carats), yellow, veil in broad end; centred above *Nur ul-Ain*.

Square brilliant-cut, 15 mm. (est. 16 carats), yellow, clean; first left above headband.

Cushion brilliant, 16 x 15 mm. (est. 17 carats), yellow, clean; fourth from left above headband.

Round brilliant-cut, 15 mm. (est. 13 carats), yellow, clean; to left in crest.

Rectangular brilliant-cut, 15 x 13 mm. (est. 14 carats), yellow, clean; first right above headband.

Square brilliant-cut, 16 mm. (est. 18 carats), yellow, clean; far right above headband, over ear.

Cushion brilliant, 17 x 16 mm. (est. 19 carats), pink, clean; to right in crest.

[Case 26, No. 2]

The Great Globe

Surely this is the most resplendent globe ever created! Some eighteen inches in diameter and forty-three inches high, it is almost solidly encrusted with precious stones. It is said that Nasir ud-Din Shah commissioned it as a decorative means of safeguarding some of his loose gems which might otherwise be lost.

It contains, we are told, more than 51,000 gems set in 75 pounds of pure gold. Many are of astonishing size, even for this collection.

The oceans, seas, and large lakes are composed of emeralds. The land masses are generally of rubies or red spinels; but Iran, Britain, France, and part of southeast Asia are made up of diamonds, and Africa south of the Sahara and part of Egypt are of blue sapphires. The equator, the ecliptic, and the outlines of continents are marked in diamonds. Meridians and parallels of latitude are in rubies. Major geographical features are named in diamond-studded raised gold Persian script.

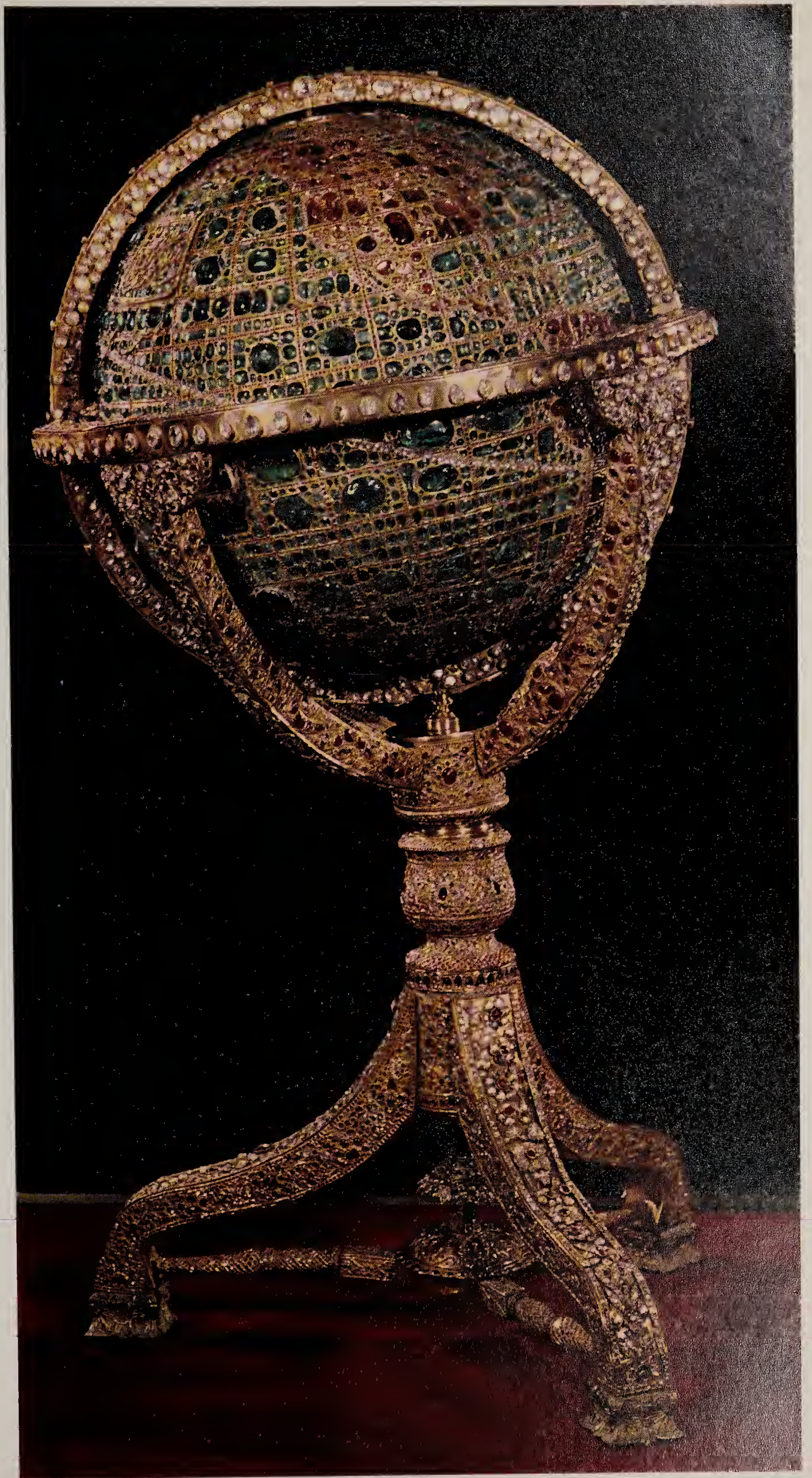
The frame and pedestal are mostly of wood, completely overlaid with sheet gold in which gems are thickly set.

Some of the stones are carved with geometric, floral, or scale patterns; some are inscribed with koranic or other texts; some are drilled, indicating an earlier use in personal jewellery. According to a Bank official, when the globe was being readied for display in 1960 a few stones were found to be missing: they had been removed for other use. More than a hundred emeralds, a few large spinels, and two sapphires were substituted.⁸⁰ Such replacements hint at the numbers and quality of loose gemstones still available.

A plaque, set in the north Pacific Ocean near the coast of Asia, bears the inscription: "Nasir ud-Din Shah, the Sultan, Son of the Sultan, May God Perpetuate His Reign, 1291" (A.D. 1874-75).

Lord Curzon, later Viceroy of India, commented in the 1890s that, "It is a little difficult to determine the respective countries amid the flash of various stones; nor does the artist appear to have been as good a cartographer as he was a craftsman."⁸¹ But this globe was never intended for geography lessons (although a prince of the former dynasty recalls spinning it in its frame when he was a young boy). It is simply a tour de force – remarkable even for the Crown Jewels of Iran.







Overall height of stand: ca. 110 cm. (43 in.)

Diameter of globe: ca. 45 cm. (18 in.)

Details of only a few of the largest and finest gemstones can be given as illustration.

Rubies

Oval cabochon, 28 x 25 mm. (est. 75 carats), purplish red; North Africa, latitude 23°–30° North.

Oval cabochon, 30 x 20 mm. (est. 55 carats), purplish red, asteriated; the largest stone in a group of five other rubies and one red spinel, all cabochon-cut; in Central Africa, latitude 10°–15° North.

Very high, oval cabochon, 27 x 15 mm. (est. 45 carats), purplish red, asteriated; western tip of South America, below the equator and just visible behind the vertical support.

High, oval cabochon, 35 x 15 mm. (est. 50 carats), purplish red; Central Africa, latitude 10°–15° North.

Spinel

Drilled, nearly cylindrical bead, 30 x 18 mm. (est. 110 carats), raspberry red, nearly clean; south-central United States (largest visible in full illustration).

Drilled, nearly spherical bead, 30 x 28 mm. (est. 200 carats), raspberry red, nearly clean, inscribed; above Southeast Asia (the largest spinel on the globe; visible in close-up).

Round step-cut, pavilion exposed, 27 x 12 mm. deep (est. 80 carats), raspberry red, nearly clean; finial on the ornament in the base.

Emeralds

Drilled, drop-shaped bead, 44 x 25 mm. (est. 175 carats), blue-green, nearly clean, superb quality, chip out of top; visible in full illustration between equator and ecliptic, first emerald to left of South America. (This and the next emerald are the largest on the globe.)

Drilled, drop-shaped bead, 44 x 25 mm. (est. 175 carats), blue-green, nearly clean, superb quality, dimple in small end; visible in full illustration to left of emerald described above.

High, oval cabochon, 40 x 30 mm (est. 125 carats), dark blue-green, very clean, superb quality; in the central South Pacific Ocean between two hexagonal emeralds. (There are a number of other emeralds of equivalent or greater weight and of similar outstanding quality.)

Tablet, 28 mm. square (est. 80 to 100 carats), deep blue-green, inscribed; northwest Pacific Ocean against Asian coast, latitude 60°–67° North.

Sapphires

Octagonal, square step-cut, pavilion exposed, 18 mm. (est. 35 carats), dark blue; east coast of Africa, latitude 15°–20° South.

Irregular step-cut, pavilion exposed, 19 x 17 mm. (est. 30 carats), dark blue; Central Africa, latitude 6° North.

Diamond

Rose-cut, 18 x 16 mm. (est. 15 carats), colourless; on the north side of the meridian support at the zenith (visible in illustration). [Case 37]





Notes and Appendices

Notes

Historical Outline

- 1 The Sunnites and the Shiites are the two main groups within Islam. The former accept a line of caliphs descending from Muhammad through a process of election which eliminated his direct descendants – with the exception of his son-in-law Ali – from the succession. The vast majority of the Shiites in Iran belong to the “Twelvers,” who recognize twelve Imams or spiritual leaders, all blood descendants of Ali and Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. The last of these Imams “disappeared” or was “occulted” in A.D. 878. It is believed that he, as the “hidden” Imam, will return as the *Mahdi*, the “Guided One,” to purify Islam, conquer the world, and usher in the millennium. As the tombs of Ali and his son Husain and the place of “disappearance” of the twelfth Imam are all in Iraq, the Safavids established as important sacred shrines within Iran the tombs of Ali ur-Reza, the eighth Imam, at Meshed and of his sister the holy Fatima at Qum. Great pilgrimages are still made to these shrines.
- 2 See E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (4 vols.; Cambridge University Press, 1959), IV, 5f.; Sir E. Denison Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1933); and G. Le Strange, *Don Juan of Persia* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1926).
- 3 George Mainwaring, in Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley*, 209ff. A throne of this period is preserved in the Kremlin Museum in Moscow. A present from Shah Abbas to Boris Godunov, it resembles a four-legged stool with very low sides and back, made of wood but overlaid with gold in which are set many precious and semiprecious stones. See Arthur Upham Pope (ed.), *A Survey of Persian Art* (6 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1939), VI, Plate 1478A. There are, also in the Kremlin, two other Persian thrones of the seventeenth century, likewise of wood, overlaid with gold, and inset with stones.
- 4 See *The Six Voyages of John Baptista Tavernier* (London: Printed for R. L. & M. P., 1678) and *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, trans. by V. Ball, 2nd ed. by William Crooke (2 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1925).
- 5 Though born and reared in Paris, he was later appointed Court Jeweller to Charles II of England and knighted in 1681.
- 6 *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient* (4 vols.; Amsterdam, 1735), IV, 240ff. and Plate LXXIX (trans.).
- 7 N. M. Penzer (ed.), *Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia* (London: Argonaut Press, 1927), 93.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 105f.
- 9 Of native authors, Sir William Jones has given in the fifth volume of his *Works* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1799) a translation into French of a Persian history of Nadir Shah written by his friend, adviser, and general, Mirza Muhammad Mahdi Khan.
- 10 Abraham, Catholicos of Crete, *An Historical Record of What Happened to Him and to Nadir Shah of Persia* (Vagharshapat: Press of the Holy See of Etchmiadzin, 1870), 68. For the translation of sections of this work from the Old Armenian, we are indebted to Miss Knarik Avakian of the Bank Markazi, Tehran.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 48f. and 69f.
- 12 *Histoire de Thamas Kouli-Kan, Roi de Perse, augmentée d'un supplément* (Milan: Benjamin Sirtori, 1747), 257 (trans.).
- 13 Jonas Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea* (4 vols. bound as 3; London, 1753), I, 254f. Hanway also tells us (IV, 214) that Nadir sent an embassy to Russia in 1740 to acquaint the Empress Catherine with his conquest of India and to convey to her “a specimen” of his spoil, “elephants, jewels, and other valuables.” Many of the fine Indian enamels and bejewelled vessels preserved today in the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad are presumably a part of the presentation made on that occasion.
- 14 There seems little reason to doubt this history, although many early travellers say, quite specifically, that the *Kuh-i Nur* was in the possession of Fath Ali Shah and worn in one of his armbands. The *Kuh-i Nur* (in the form it then had) and the *Taj-i Mah* could be easily confused. We should therefore accept the statements of Sir Harford Jones Brydges and Sir John Malcolm, who were in a position to know, that this stone was the *Taj-i Mah*.
- 15 *The Dynasty of the Kajars* (London: John Bohn, 1833), cxxivff.
- 16 E.g. the fine miniature included in the ms. of Fath Ali Shah's poems presented by that monarch to the British Prince Regent (later George IV), now in the Royal Library at Windsor (Ms. A/4) and painted by Mirza Baba probably in about 1802 (see B. W. Robinson, “The Court Painters of Fath Ali Shah,” *Eretz-Israel*, VII [1964], 104*); and the mural of Agha Muhammad enthroned, with other members of the Qajar tribe, in the Sulaimaniyeh Palace, Karaj, probably painted – like the matching mural of Fath ‘Alī Shāh in the same building – by Abdullah, 1228 (A.D. 1813). It is possible, of course, that these paintings contain anachronisms, attributing to Agha Muhammad Khan items in the regalia actually created after his death.
- 17 A crown ascribed to Agha Muhammad Khan is preserved in the Golestan Palace Museum. It is of copper, leather lined and padded; it is similar in shape to those depicted in the portraits and terminates in a knob finial. As it is now decorated only with rather poor enamels, it is probable that the jewels which presumably once adorned it – and especially the pearls – were removed for use in the new crown, the Kiani, which Fath Ali Shah commissioned for himself at the beginning of his reign.
- 18 It is possible to trace a history of modifications in this “Peacock Throne” from its creation to the present day. Sir James Morier, *A Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor to Constantinople in the Years 1808 and 1809* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1812), 191f., gives us the earliest detailed description as he saw it in 1809. This is not the famous Indian Peacock Throne constructed for Shah Jahan and carried off by Nadir Shah. The latter was apparently destroyed soon after Nadir's death.
- 19 Sir John Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia* (London: John Murray, 1845), 216 (writing of his experiences in Persia in 1800).
- 20 James Silk Buckingham, *Travels in Assyria, Media, and Persia*, 2nd ed. (2 vols.; London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), I, 415.
- 21 Malcolm, *Sketches*, 216ff., 231.
- 22 Pierre-Amédée Émilien-Probe Jaubert, *Voyages en Arménie et en Perse* (Paris: E. Ducrocq, 1821), 204ff. (trans.). On his reference to the *Kuh-i Nur*, see note 14.
- 23 The best treatment of Persian painting of this period is Robinson, “The Court Painters of Fath ‘Alī Shāh,” 94*–105* and Plates XXXIII–XXXIX.
- 24 An armchair, of European type, overlaid with gold and inset with turquoises, bears his name and titles and is displayed in the Golestan Palace Museum.
- 25 George N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question* (2 vols.; London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892), I, 314ff.

Study and Documentation

- 1 V. B. Meen, A. D. Tushingham, and G. G. Waite, “The *Darya-i Nur* Diamond and the Tavernier ‘Great Table,’” *Lapidary Journal*, XXI, No. 8 (Nov. 1967), 1000ff.
- 2 *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, trans. by V. Ball, 2nd ed. by William Crooke (2 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1925), II, 98 and Plate II, No. 3.
- 3 Sir Harford Jones Brydges, *The Dynasty of the Kajars* (London: John Bohn, 1833), cxxvii and cxxxvii.
- 4 *Ibid.*, cxxxvi.

Gems and Settings

- 1 *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, trans. by V. Ball, 2nd ed. by William Crooke (2 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1925), II, 82, footnote 2.
- 2 N. M. Penzer (ed.), *Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia* (London: Argonaut Press, 1927), 167. Balacchan is another form of writing Badakhshan.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 165. See also *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, II, 84–96 and 103f.
- 4 *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, 89.
- 5 No examples of the Indian method of setting gems with gold leaf were recognized; see Fred H. Andrews, “The Indian Craftsman,” *Indian Art and Letters*, New Series, XVII, No. 1 (1943), 50: “In setting jewel stones the usual Indian method . . . is to keep the sides of the collar-bezel upright and then to secure the stone by tightly packing gold leaf between the wall of the bezel and the stone.”
- 6 It is possible that silver was used more frequently in early settings which have since been broken up, for Sir Harford Jones Brydges mentions that

the armbands – containing the *Darya-i Nūr* and the *Taj-i Mah* and other large diamonds – of Lutf Ali Khan were, in 1791, set in silver; see *The Dynasty of the Kajars* (London: John Bohn, 1833), cxxx.

- 7 "On the small amount of evidence available one can only guess at the composition of white metal. My own guess is that it consists of tin hardened with antimony, which would give not only a hard but workable metal, but one which would retain its brightness for long periods of time." (Personal communication from Mr. E. S. Hedges, Director, Tin Research Institute, Fraser Road, Perivale, Greenford, Middlesex, England.)
- 8 Lead is, of course, used in solder – as for instance on the reverse of the Nadir Shah *jiqa* (page 78), which is completely enclosed with "white metal."
- 9 On the uses of tin foil, see Ernest S. Hedges, *Tin in Social and Economic History* (London: Edward Arnold, 1964), 117.
- 10 One can clearly see the foil behind the large emeralds in the *jiqa* on page 79. It is obvious that the foil here is not flat but crumpled; whether this is the result of poor workmanship, intention (to give play of light and shade), or the failure of the adhesive to hold the foil tightly against the reverse of the gem cannot be ascertained. Failure of this sort has been noted elsewhere, however, as well as the flaking off of the coloured varnish or lacquer.
- 11 Hedges, *Tin in Social and Economic History*, 14f. But, when the present Iranian Crown Jewels were being made, it is possible that the tin came from England (*ibid.*, 17–23).
- 12 See Cyril S. Smith, *A History of Metallography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 14ff.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 30ff.

Jewels of the Collection

- 1 William Foster (ed.), *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615–1619* (2 vols.; London: Hakluyt Society, 1899), II, 322.
- 2 Sir Harford Jones Brydges, *The Dynasty of the Kajars* (London: John Bohn, 1833), cxxviff.
- 3 Sir John Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia* (London: John Murray, 1845), 215, footnote.
- 4 The Museum was established by Nasir ud-Din Shah after his return from Europe in 1873 to house the regalia and other royal treasures. See George N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question* (2 vols.; London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892), I, 314ff.
- 5 *Illustrated London News*, August 30, 1902, 316 (see also January 12, 1907, 41).
- 6 V. B. Meen, A. D. Tushingham, and G. G. Waite, "The *Darya-i Nur* Diamond and the Tavernier 'Great Table,'" *Lapidary Journal*, XXI, No. 8 (Nov. 1967), 1000ff.
- 7 Weights: Cullinan I, 530.2 carats; Cullinan II, 317.4 carats; Nizam, ca. 277 carats; Jubilee, 245.35 carats; Orlov, 199.8 carats.
- 8 There is a fourth if we include the armchair of Muhammad Shah – covered with gold and gems – which is now in the Golestan Palace.
- 9 Three Safavid thrones are preserved in the Kremlin Museum; see Arthur Upham Pope (ed.), *A Survey of Persian Art* (6 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1938–39), III, 2651ff. The chair was used also in the traditional depictions of ancient worthies; for example, the portrait of Hormuz, son of Anushirvan Shah, signed and dated "Mirza Baba 1204" (A.D. 1789–90) in the Amery Collection, London and illustrated in B. W. Robinson, "The Court Painters of Fath 'Alī Shāh," *Eretz-Israel*, VII (1964), Plate XXXVII, 2. There is also a series of slabs, which once apparently formed a dado for part of the Golestan Palace of Karim Khan in Shiraz, but are now built into the foundations of a government building next to the Shiraz Museum. On these is depicted in low relief a series of named paladins of the past, some seated in chairs.
- 10 It was not possible to examine the throne's construction closely, which was unfortunate, for much of its earlier history might then have been revealed. There is no doubt, however, that the two beasts which form the brackets on either side of the step, the step itself, the two sides of the throne (including the arms), and the back of the chair are removable.
- 11 Sir William Jones, *Works* (6 vols.; London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1799), V, 323f.
- 12 E.g. the portrait of Fath Ali Shah, signed "Mihir Ali 1219" (A.D. 1804–5),

hanging in the Marble Talar of the Golestan Palace, Tehran; and the description by J. B. Fraser in *A Winter's Journey from Constantinople to Teheran* (London: Bentley, 1838), 102f.

- 13 N. M. Penzer (ed.), *Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia* (London: Argonaut Press, 1927), 220. See also reference to rings (in possession of Lutf Ali Khan Zand) in Sir Harford Jones Brydges, *The Dynasty of the Kajars*, clxxxi and clxxxv.
- 14 Only three male portraits of the whole Qajar period appear to show finger-rings: that of a young prince, possibly Abbas Mirza, the Heir Apparent to Fath Ali Shah, in the private quarters of the Golestan Palace (signed "Mirza Baba 1218" [A.D. 1803–4]); a portrait of Muhammad Shah in the British Museum (Or. Ms. 4938) signed and dated "Muhammad Hasan Afshar 1263" (A.D. 1846–47); and a posthumous full-length oil portrait of Nasir ud-Din Shah in the Qazvin Museum, signed and dated "banda-darga naqqash-bashi Semiromi 1319" (A.D. 1901–2).
- 15 Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindostan, Translated from the Persian* (3 vols.; London: B. McMillan, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden, 1803), III, 164.
- 16 Docteur Feuvrier, *Trois ans à la cour de Perse* (Paris: F. Juven, 1900), 209.
- 17 On the source of spinels, see V. Ball, *Economic Geology being Part III of A Manual of the Geology of India* (Calcutta: Geological Survey of India, 1881), 430; see also his *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, 2nd ed. by William Crooke (2 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1925), I, 303, footnote 3.
- 18 Feuvrier, *Trois ans à la cour de Perse*, 131.
- 19 *Illustrated London News*, June 28, 1873, 618. See also *ibid.*, July 27, 1889, 104f., and W. Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia* (New York: Century, 1920), opp. 290.
- 20 Their profusion is demonstrated by an account of a man who committed suicide in the early seventeenth century by drinking powdered diamonds! See Sir E. Denison Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1933), 21, footnote 1.
- 21 B. W. Robinson, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (personal communication), suggests that the jadeite handle may originally have belonged to an Indian dagger; such a dagger with an identical handle is to be seen in the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad.
- 22 Several similar crowns are documented. In 1809 Fath Ali Shah was reported wearing a crown of this type while another, similar, was held by a page (James Morier, *A Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor to Constantinople in the Years 1808 and 1809* [London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1812], 192). Three paintings show several of Fath Ali Shah's sons wearing similar crowns: the Negarestan mural (although this painting is destroyed, a copy is preserved in the India Office Library, London – see Robinson, "Court Painters," Plate XXXIII); the unpublished painting owned by Prince and Princess Firuz, in Tehran, dated 1244 (A.D. 1828–29); the unpublished mural in the Sulaimaniyeh Palace in the grounds of the Agricultural College in Karaj, signed and dated "Abdullah 1228" (A.D. 1813–14).
- 23 The history of the finial spinel is told in Sir John Malcolm, *The History of Persia from the Most Early Period to the Present Time* (2 vols.; London: John Murray, 1829), II, 195f.; P. M. Sykes, *A History of Persia* (2 vols.; London: Macmillan, 1915), II, 390; Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, I, 316.
- 24 See also the large portrait by Mihr Ali, dated 1212 (A.D. 1797–98), now in Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta, and that by Mirza Baba, dated 1213 (A.D. 1798–99), in Robinson, "Court Painters," Plate XXXVII, 1.
- 25 The second sword is in Case 22, No. 8.
- 26 Another sword by the same craftsman is in the Shiraz Museum; it bears also the name of Shah Safi, the grandson and successor of Shah Abbas. See further, L. A. Mayer, *Islamic Armourers and Their Works* (Geneva: Albert Kundig, 1962), 46ff., for a listing of other swords ascribed to the same man.
- 27 James Morier, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (New York: Random House, 1937), 251f.
- 28 The artillery medal struck in 1297 (A.D. 1879–80) bears the earliest. See H. L. Rabino di Borgomale, *Coins, Medals, and Seals of the Shāhs of Îrân (1500–1941)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), 76, No. 12; and *Album of Coins, Medals, and Seals of the Shāhs of Îrân (1500–1948)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), Plate 46, Nos. 69, 75.

- 29 Supplementary Constitutional Law of October 8, 1907, Article 5: "The official colours of the flag of Iran are green, white and red. The emblem is a Lion and Sun." It is unwise to use the Nadir *jiqa* as evidence for the use of these colours at the time of Nadir Shah as Yahya Zoka appears to postulate in *A Short History of the Changes and Transformations of the Banner and Emblem of Iran* (in Persian; Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Art, 1344 [A.D. 1966]), 48, footnote 38.
- 30 Three portraits are by the famous Mihr Ali: (a) Amery Collection, dated 1220 (A.D. 1805–6); see Robinson, "Court Painters," 100* and Plate XXXVI, 1. (b) Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, dated 1224 (A.D. 1809–10); *ibid.*, 100* and Sh. Y. Amirashvili, *Iranskaya stankovaya zhivopis* (Tiflis, 1940), Plate XXXIV. (c) Robinson Collection, undated; see Robinson, "Court Painters," 100* and Plate XXXVI, 3. It also appears in a portrait presented by Fath Ali Shah in 1806 to Pierre-Amédée Jaubert, Napoleon's emissary, of which an engraving is in the British Museum (BM 1895-4-8-75), and in an unpublished painting in the Residence of the British Embassy in Tehran, signed and dated "kamtarin Ahmad 1238" (A.D. 1822–23).
- 31 Moritz von Kotzebue, *Narrative of a Journey into Persia, in the Suite of the Imperial Russian Embassy, in the Year 1817*, translated from the German (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1819), 251ff. Two diamond *jiqas* of similar form, but with no inscriptions (Case 24, Nos. 8 and 13), may be the others.
- 32 There is a close parallel, in form and decoration, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Reg. No. 03175) dated to the eighteenth century.
- 33 Fath Ali Shah wears a *jiqa* of similar form (but not in emeralds) in the water-colour portrait painted from life by Sir Robert Ker Porter (British Museum BM 1875-7-10-3921) reproduced as a frontispiece in Sir Robert Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia, &c. &c. during the Years 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1820* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821–22), I; see also Robinson, "Court Painters," Plate XXXIX.
- 34 This portrait of Nasir ud-Din Shah, signed and dated "Muhammad Hasan Afshar naqqash-bashi 1276" (A.D. 1859–60), hangs in the Chehel Sutun Palace in Isfahan. It is possible that the *jiqa* can be traced even further back, to the year 1839, which is the date of a beautiful small portrait of Nasir ud-Din Shah as Crown Prince, now in the possession of Prince and Princess Firuz of Tehran, but the details of the hat and *jiqa* are not clear enough for certainty.
- 35 Nasir ud-Din Shah was assassinated in 1896, so it is not surprising that the first appearance of the sword in a royal portrait is in that of Muzaffar ud-Din Shah at his coronation. See General Hassan Arfa, *Under Five Shahs* (London: John Murray, 1964), opp. 16.
- 36 The same artist created the fine teapot of Case 4, No. 21 and the oval snuffbox of Case 4, No. 33, both of which bear portraits of Fath Ali Shah. B. W. Robinson, in an unpublished manuscript, "Qajar Painted Enamels," has listed the names of Persian enamellists and catalogued their known works.
- 37 The *tughra* form is usually reserved for the seal of the Turkish sultans, consisting of their names worked in very intricate fashion into the form of a hand, but it was also used, at least occasionally, in Iran; see Penzer, *Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia*, 75.
- 38 Private communication from Mr. Russell Robinson, Assistant to the Director of the Armouries, H. M. Tower of London.
- 39 Penzer, *Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia*, 83.
- 40 Such saddle-horns are illustrated in the large mural, showing Fath Ali Shah fighting the Russians, now hanging in the Archaeological Museum in Tehran, and on the back cover of British Museum Ms. Or. 2265, painted by Muhammad Baqir, and showing Fath Ali Shah hunting with his sons (B. W. Robinson, "A Pair of Royal Book-Covers," *Oriental Art*, New Series, X, No. 1 [1964], 3–7).
- 41 Portrait owned by B. W. Robinson, signed "ghulam Mihr Ali" (see Robinson, "Court Painters," Plate XXXVI, 3); portrait in British Embassy, Tehran, signed and dated "kamtarin Ahmad 1238" (A.D. 1822–23), unpublished; portrait in Musée Duplessis, Carpentras (Vaucluse), France, unsigned, undated, unpublished.
- 42 It has been suggested that it was a toy polo ball and that the staff lying nearby in the same case — with the foreparts of lion's bodies back to back forming the head — is the toy polo stick. But the form of the staff and particularly its head do not resemble in any way a polo stick, and the two objects never occur together in the portraits. In fact, the staff is probably a dagger similar to one in the Metropolitan Museum (No. 36.25.1001 a, b), which has a crutch hilt of jade, set with jewels, one arm terminating in the head of a lion cast in bronze and gilded.
- 43 Morier, *Hajji Baba*, 87.
- 44 Pierre-Amédée Émilien-Probe Jaubert, *Voyages en Arménie et en Perse* (Paris: E. Ducrocq, 1821), 206 (trans.).
- 45 *Hajji Baba*, 135.
- 46 *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, II, 81.
- 47 Sir William Ouseley, *Travels in Various Countries of the East: More Particularly Persia* (3 vols.; London: Rodwell and Martin, 1819–23), I, Appendix 5, 343.
- 48 *The Dynasty of the Kajars*, cxxxiv.
- 49 C. J. Wills, *In the Land of the Lion and Sun* (London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1891), 15.
- 50 Penzer, *Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia*, 144.
- 51 Feuvrier, *Trois ans à la cour de Perse*, 132 (trans.).
- 52 M. le comte Julien de Rochechouart, *Souvenirs d'un voyage en Perse* (Paris: Challamel Aîné, 1867), 253.
- 53 For further on Christian themes, see F. R. Martin, *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey* (2 vols.; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1912), I, 76 and II, Plate 173. Generally, on the interest of the Safavid shahs in European paintings (including the reproduction of Western and biblical subject matter), see Laurence Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia* (Cambridge University Press, 1958), 488–90.
- 54 On travelling *qalyans*, see Wills, *In the Land of the Lion and Sun*, 29ff.
- 55 A *qalyan* bowl by Muhammad Jafar, signed and dated 1234 (A.D. 1818–19), is displayed in Case 1, No. 22; he also decorated the fine circular dish in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. I.S. 09405) presented by the Shah to the East India Company.
- 56 The story is told in Morier, *Hajji Baba*, 158.
- 57 *History of Persia*, II, 424.
- 58 Penzer, *Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia*, 105f.
- 59 Wills, *In the Land of the Lion and Sun*, 91: "Huge china bowls of sherbet were placed down the centre of the *sūfrah* (tablecloth), and in each bowl was an elaborately carved wooden spoon, which were used indiscriminately; these spoons held a gill, and were drunk from, no glasses being used."
- 60 A very close parallel to this ladle is in the Oriental Treasury of the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, but a hinged mirror framed in diamonds covers the open side of the bowl. Its purpose and its relationship to this ladle are obscure.
- 61 Note particularly the Aesop fable illustration of the fox and crane on the lower part of the globular body in front.
- 62 James Silk Buckingham, *Travels in Assyria, Media, and Persia*, 2nd ed. (2 vols.; London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), I, 377. Buckingham was in Persia in 1816.
- 63 *Travels in Various Countries*, III, 144–5 (see also Miscellaneous Plate LXXII, Fig. 20).
- 64 Oriental Treasury, Hermitage Museum, Leningrad. The holders are of enamelled gold and the liners of Worcester china. The latter are hemispherical in form, have a low foot, and are handleless; they bear portraits of Fath Ali Shah and Abbas Mirza, his Heir Apparent.
- 65 The mural, painted by Abdullah Khan in 1812–13, once adorned the Negarestan Palace in Tehran, now destroyed. Copies, however, exist, one of which is in the India Office Library, London (Add. Or. 1239, 1240); see Robinson, "Court Painters," 102*f. and Plate XXXIII. It seems unlikely that this bottle is a rose-water sprinkler although examples of these, of somewhat similar form and encrustation, are known; see Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, VI, Plate 1396 C and Plate 1436 D (this example is probably Indian, not Persian).
- 66 A painting in the private quarters of the Golestan Palace depicts, as a detail, a china food bowl and a jewelled cover of the same form as this. The date of the painting is partly hidden by the frame, but it is signed by Mirza Baba, who was active around A.D. 1800.
- 67 The photograph is in the possession of Mr. Yahya Zoka, director of the Ethnological Museum in Tehran.
- 68 An indistinct mark on the gold edging of the lower half under the

- thumb-piece contains the initials of Michael Perchin; the number 72, which represents 18 carat gold; and the mark of St. Petersburg; see Henry Charles Bainbridge, *Peter Carl Fabergé* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1949), 124 and 141ff.
- 69 On the coins, see Rabino di Borgomale, *Coins, Medals, and Seals*, 64.
- 70 Muhammad Shah portrait, signed and dated "Hajji Muhammad naqqash-bashi, 1255" (A.D. 1839–40).
- 71 Nasir ud-Din Shah portrait, signed and dated "Muhammad Hasan Afshar naqqash-bashi, 1276" (A.D. 1859–60).
- 72 An early description is found in James B. Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan in the Years 1821 and 1822* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1825), 215ff. footnote: "His waistbelt, about two and a half inches broad, was one sheet of brilliants, and the lower edge was adorned by a range of pendant emeralds."
- 73 On enamelling in Iran at this time, see M. le comte Julien de Rochechouart, *Souvenirs d'un voyage en Perse*, 252ff.
- 74 The latest portrait in which armbands are worn appears to be the life-size oil painting of Nasir ud-Din Shah in the Chehel Sutun Palace, Isfahan, signed and dated "Muhammad Hasan Afshar naqqash-bashi 1276" (A.D. 1859–60). The armlets worn are completely different from those of his predecessors and are closer in form to the shield type illustrated.
- 75 One sapphire in each piece has been replaced with paste; that in the right clip is cracked. It is amazing that, of the hundreds of thousands of gemstones in the collection, fewer than ten imitations were noted, and these are of little significance.
- 76 The inscription on the sardonyx is koranic; the reading of the other is unclear, but it is not historical.
- 77 Feuvrier, *Trois ans à la cour de Perse*, 151 (trans.). We assume that by "cabochons" Dr. Feuvrier meant rough diamonds.
- 78 E.g. the life-size oil painting (707–1876) now hanging in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; see Robinson, "Court Painters," Plate XXXIV, 1.
- 79 The other pieces were a tiara (page 139), a diamond and emerald necklace (Case 26, No. 28), a diamond necklace, and ear-rings.
- 80 One emerald and one spinel have historical inscriptions (see page 47).
- 81 Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, I, 315.

Gem Inscriptions

- 1 Literally, "Second Lord of the Conjunction." Astrology played an important role in India and Iran. The success of the famous warrior Timur in winning a great empire was attributed to a fortunate conjunction of planets at his birth. He therefore adopted the title "Sahib Qiran," Lord of the [Auspicious] Conjunction [of the Stars]. Shah Jahan bore as his title "Second Lord of the Conjunction," but several of his successors in India as well as Nadir Shah and later Persian monarchs carried the title in its simple form as used by Timur.
- 2 After the assassination of Nadir Shah, in 1747, one of his generals, Ahmad Abdali, an Afghan, returned to his country and established a kingdom with its capital at Kabul. At this time, also, he changed his tribal and dynastic name from Abdali to Durrani. The title "Durr Durran" is a play on this name and is probably to be translated "Pearl of Pearls"/"Pearl of the Durran [tribe]."

- 3 Alamgir is not a proper name, but a title of the emperor Aurangzib. When followed by the adjectival "shahi," i.e. "royal," it is to be translated "royal world conqueror."
- 4 An identical inscription (but without the date) occurs on a large spinel published by V. Ball, "A Description of Two Large Spinel Rubies, with Persian Characters Engraved upon Them," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 3rd Series, III (1893–96), 381f. and Plate X, Fig. 1.
- 5 Abu'l-Fazl Allami reports that Mawlana Ibrahim, a seal-cutter of the time of the Emperor Akbar, "engraved the words la'ī jalālī, or the glorious ruby, upon all imperial rubies of value" (*Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Blochmann translation, 2nd ed. by D. C. Phillott [3 vols.; Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1927], I, 55).
- 6 The Carew spinel (I.M. 243–1922) in the Victoria and Albert Museum bears the names of the same four emperors and the dates 1021 (A.D. 1612–13) for Jahangir, 1039 (A.D. 1629–30) for Shah Jahan, and 107 (read as 1070, i.e. A.D. 1659–60) for Aurangzib. See Ball, "A Description of Two Large Spinel Rubies," 381 and Plate X.
- 7 The insertion of "ibn" occurs also on a spinel published in Stuart C. Welch, *The Art of Mughal India* (New York: Asia Society, 1963), Plate 49, and on the large emerald seal of Case 30, No. 50.
- 8 The "Shah" diamond, now in the Russian Treasury in Moscow, also carries the words "Nizam Shah" according to Ball, "A Description of Two Large Spinel Rubies," 391f. This diamond was carried as a gift from Fath Ali Shah to the Russian Tsar, Nicholas I, by Khusrau Mirza, the son of the Heir Apparent, Abbas Mirza, to placate him for the murder of the Russian Ambassador in Tehran on February 11, 1829.
- 9 This title was used by Fath Ali Shah on his coins from 1825 to 1829. See H. L. Rabino di Borgomale, *Coins, Medals, and Seals of the Shāhs of Īrān (1500–1941)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), 64.
- 10 A date follows the name of Jahangir Shah, but it is too abraded to be legible.
- 11 The rosary was the string of beads used for devotional purposes. It seems to have been borrowed by Islam from the Eastern Christian churches and to have passed to the Roman Catholic West at the time of the Crusades.
- 12 This is the full title assumed by the Emperor Jahangir on his accession. The seal is of interest both for its form and content. On it, the Emperor Jahangir traces his ancestry back to the illustrious Timur, better known in the West as Tamerlane, who established an ephemeral empire with its capital at Samarkand and died in 1405. He had invaded India in 1398 and, though his rule there was brief and circumscribed, the Moghul emperors considered him the progenitor of their line. A similar seal is depicted in William Foster (ed.), *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615–1619* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1899), II, 567; it is a drawing by Samuel Purchas apparently based on the silver seal sent with letters to King James I of England by the Emperor Jahangir by the hand of Sir Thomas Roe. The practice of inscribing seals with the names of the ruling emperor's ancestors can be traced back to the Emperor Akbar for Abu'l-Fazl, his confidant and biographer, reports (*Ā'in-i Akbarī*, I, 54) that "in the beginning of the present reign, Mawlānā Maqsūd, the seal engraver, cut in a circular form upon a surface of steel, in the *riqa'* character, the name of his Majesty, and those of his illustrious ancestors up to Timurlang."

Glossary

Agha: *eunuch* (Turkish).

Amal: *work*; found frequently with signatures of makers applied to metal-work, paintings, etc.

Anderun: the quarters in a Persian house reserved for the women (like the Arabic harem).

Aryamihr: title, *sun of the Aryans*.

Asteriated (starlike): a term applied to cabochon-cut gems which exhibit a four-, six-, eight-, or twelve-rayed star when viewed under a single point source of light.

Baguette: A narrow, rectangular step-cut form used on small gems, usually diamonds.

Balas ruby: a term once commonly used to denote the gem red spinel; its use is discouraged.

Banda-darga: *court slave*; used as a term of honour; see Ghulam.

Baroque: a term used to describe a pearl of very irregular form.

Bashi: *head* or *chief*; used with another word indicating a profession to designate the chief or superintendent of the guild of such craftsmen; e.g. "naqqash-bashi," *chief painter*.

Bazuband: armlet worn above the elbow; sometimes contained a talisman.

Brilliant-cut: a multifaceted form of cutting which has been derived from the octahedral form exhibited by many diamond crystals. The angle at the girdle between the crown and pavilion faces has been modified over the years to improve optical performance and to make the most of the dispersion or "fire" in the diamond. Except for the relatively large table and small culet, the facets are arranged usually in eightfold symmetry.

Briolette: a brilliant- or step-cut faceted elongated drop of circular cross-section.

Buff-top: a gemstone whose crown (but sometimes only the table) consists of a shallow, convex polished surface.

Cabochon: a dome-shaped smoothly polished unfaceted gem form, normally with a flat, unpolished base (such stones are cabochon-cut or cut *en cabochon*); the height is usually less than the radius but may be the same or higher. It is a double cabochon if convex on both the top and bottom.

Cairo-cut: an old form of brilliant with high crown, small table, and sixfold symmetry.

Caliph: title of the successors of the Prophet Muhammad accepted by the Sunnite Moslems. Last held by the Sultan of Turkey, but abolished with the sultanate after the First World War.

Cape: a term used to denote a diamond of distinct yellow tint but not yellow enough to be called a canary diamond.

Carat: a unit of weight used for gemstones; prior to 1914, it varied considerably but since that date it has been fixed internationally at 0.2000 gram, the value used in this book.

Carbuncle: a red garnet cut *en cabochon*.

Cat's Eye: in the trade signifies chatoyant chrysoberyl; properly it is any gem which when cut *en cabochon* and viewed

under a single point source of light exhibits a chatoyant or cat's eye effect.

Champlevé: the enamelling technique by which cells are cut in the solid metal to hold the vitreous substance.

Chelsea Filter: an optical filter of special glass, which transmits only deep red and pale yellow-green light, used to distinguish emeralds from other green gems and imitations. Most emeralds, when viewed through it, appear red or pink while most other green objects remain green. It is also known as an emerald filter.

Cloisonné: the enamelling technique in which cells are formed by soldering wire to the metal background to hold the vitreous substance.

Crown: the portion of a faceted gemstone which is above the girdle.

Culet: the small facet, at the tip of the pavilion, parallel to the plane of the girdle of a faceted gemstone.

Cushion Brilliant: a form of brilliant, the outline of which is essentially a square or rectangle with curved sides.

Damascus Steel: see Watered Steel.

Darya: *river, sea, ocean*; "darya-i nur," *sea of light*.

Dichroscope: a small optical instrument used for studying the colour transmission characteristics of gemstones.

Emerald-cut: a special form of step-cut which has two rows of eight facets in the crown surrounding the table and usually three similar rows in the pavilion.

En cabochon: see Cabochon.

En pavé: the style of setting in which areas are covered by small gems placed as close together as possible.

Feather: a cleavage or fracture in a gemstone.

Ghazi: title denoting a warrior fighting for Islam against infidels.

Ghulam: *slave*; used as a term of honour for and by all court officials and soldiers, as today we use "your obedient servant" or "Her Majesty's subject."

Girdle: the outline of the broadest part of a gemstone; the line dividing the upper portion (crown) from the lower (pavilion).

Hegira (anglicized form of Arabic "hijra"): the *flight* of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622; the lunar Moslem calendar dates from this event.

Hijra: see Hegira.

Imam: title of a Moslem religious leader or guide; specifically one of the authoritative successors of the Prophet accepted by the Shiites in opposition to the line of caliphs accepted by Sunnite Moslems.

Jadeite: a finely fibrous pyroxene which is one of the two gem materials known as jade, the other being nephrite.

Jardin: a term used to describe the mossy-looking inclusions often seen in emeralds.

Jiqua: *aigrette* or *plume*; usually bejewelled, either imitating the form of feathers or serving as a clasp for feathers (heron or egret).

Kamtarin: literally *least*; used as a term of abasement, but actually of honour; see Ghulam.

- Karakul (or Caracul): the black curly fur of young lambs of a breed of sheep for which Bukhara was famous; used in the more costly of the tall black hats worn by all ranks of Persian men in the nineteenth century.
- Khan (Mongol-Turkish): originally the title of a hereditary chief of a tribe; later a title of respect: *lord, prince*.
- Khanazad: literally *one born in the household*, i.e. a court slave; usually applied to a member of the imperial household staff.
- Khusrau: originally the proper name of two kings of the Sasanian dynasty; later used as a title: *prince*.
- Kiani: an adjective formed from the noun "kay" meaning *king*; a title borne by rulers of the legendary Kayan dynasty which first united Iran at the beginning of time. It has come to mean, simply, *royal* but still carries many of the overtones of its past significance. Also Kayani.
- Koran (or Quran): literally *reading*; the sacred scriptures of Islam, believed to be divinely revealed by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad.
- Kuh: *mountain*; "kuh-i nur," *mountain of light*.
- Marquise-cut: a double-pointed, boat-shaped, faceted form based on the brilliant.
- Majlis: *assembly, parliament*.
- Mirza: two meanings: (a) when it follows a proper name, *prince*; a title first used for descendants of Timur but later applied generally; (b) when it precedes a proper name, *secretary*; a civilian title which became almost the equivalent of *mister*.
- Mixed-cut: a style of gem cutting in which the crown is brilliant-cut and the pavilion is step-cut; the reverse is sometimes seen.
- Moghul: originally signified simply *Mongol*, but came to be used to designate the empire established by them in India in the sixteenth century. The term "Great Moghul" was used in the West to designate the Emperor of India. Also Mughal, Mogul.
- Mogul-cut: a rather lumpy form of cutting with a broad, often asymmetrical base, an upper termination consisting of a table or a set of four (usually) shallow facets, and two or more zones (parallel to the base) of strip facets oriented vertically (sometimes one zone exhibits another facet pattern).
- Naqqash: *painter*.
- Naqqash-bashi: *chief painter*.
- Nargila: *water-pipe* for smoking tobacco; named from form of bottle, which was or resembled a coconut ("nargil"). See Qalyan.
- Nephrite: a finely fibrous amphibole which is one of the two gem materials known as jade, the other being jadeite.
- Nizam: title, *ruler*.
- No Ruz: New Year, celebrated in Persia at the spring equinox.
- Nur: *light*; "nur ul-ain," *light of the eye*.
- Octahedral faces: the flat natural surfaces of the octahedron, a form often displayed by diamond and spinel.
- Old Mine-cut: an early form of the brilliant-cut using the octahedral angle and with a nearly square outline at the girdle.
- Orient: the delicately iridescent lustre of pearls.
- Padshah (or Padishah): title, *great king* (literally *lord-king*).
- Pahlavi: the family name of the present ruling house of Iran. The word meant, originally, *Parthian*, but from the days of the Parthian Empire, two thousand years ago, it has signified not only pure-bred Iranian stock but nobility. The root is still used in the sense of *athlete* or *champion*.
- Pavilion: the portion of a faceted gemstone below the girdle; "pavilion exposed" indicates a stone with the crown buried in the setting.
- Pearl Grain: a unit of weight used for pearls, equal to 0.0500 gram.
- Pendeloque: a brilliant distorted so that the girdle is pear- or drop-shaped in outline.
- Polariscope: an instrument used to determine whether a gemstone is singly or doubly refractive.
- Portrait Diamond: thin cleavage piece displaying two large parallel facets and slight bevel faceting around one face.
- Qajar (or Kajar): tribal and later dynastic name of family which had its origins in the plains at the southeast corner of the Caspian Sea and ruled Iran from 1794 to 1925.
- Qalyan: *water-pipe* for smoking tobacco; named from bubbling sound (hubble-bubble) of air passing through water; also Kalian, Kalyan. See Nargila.
- Qamar: *moon*; "qamar-i saltana," *moon of the kingdom* (a very high female title).
- Qizilbash: literally *red-head*; name applied to Turkmen supporters of the Safavid dynasty from their red, twelve-gored head-dresses of felt (the number twelve representing the twelve imams of the Shiite faith). Later, in the early eighteenth century, the hat had four points, and was the normal head-dress of the Persian cavalry.
- Quli: *slave* (Turkish).
- Refractive Index (R.I.): the measure of the amount light is bent in passing through a substance. "Spot" denotes a determination made on a curved surface.
- Refractometer: an instrument used to measure refractive index.
- Rosary: a string of beads used by Moslems in their devotions. The practice seems to have been adopted from the Eastern Christian Church and was taken to the Christian West by the Crusaders.
- Rose-cut: a type of cutting with a broad, flat base and a domical top covered with triangular facets arranged usually in hexagonal symmetry. A double rose-cut is two such forms cut base to base.
- Safavid: dynastic name of family which originated in plains at southwest corner of Caspian Sea and ruled Iran from 1501 to 1736. Also Safavi, Sefavid, Sefavean, etc.
- Sahib Qiran: title, *Lord of the* (auspicious) *conjunction* (of the planets); first used by Timur, but later by many Indian and Persian kings.
- Sahib Qiran Sani: title, *Second Lord of the* (auspicious) *con-*

- junction* (of the planets); title used by Shah Jahan, emperor of India.
- Salam (Salaam): literally *peace* or *prosperity* and used as a greeting or salutation; also the name given in Persia to the imperial levée at which the shah presented himself to his people on formal occasions, particularly at No Ruz, the Persian New Year.
- S.G.: *specific gravity*.
- Shah: title, *king*.
- Shahanshah (or Shahshahan): title, *king of kings*.
- Sherbet: literally a *drink* but used in Persia to denote a drink made usually of fruit juices chilled with ice.
- Shiite: name applied to Moslems, including those of Iran, who accept the Koran and the Tradition but differ from the Sunnites (q.v.) in accepting as the successors of Muhammad only his physical descendants through his son-in-law Ali. See also page 147, note 1 (Historical Outline).
- Silver Cape: a term used to denote a diamond of distinct yellow tint but paler than cape.
- Star Ruby (sapphire); a ruby (sapphire) which exhibits a six-rayed star when cut *en cabochon* (see *Asteriated*).
- Step-cut: a style of gem cutting in which the facets of both crown and pavilion are four-sided and arranged in steplike zones parallel to the girdle; also known as the trap-cut; a special form is called emerald-cut.
- Sultan: title, *ruler*; the root of the word signifies power or authority.
- Sunnite: name applied to those Moslems who follow the Tradition based on the way of life of the Prophet Muhammad ("sunna"), and the Koran, the revealed divine truth; they also accept the caliphs as the legitimate successors of the Prophet. See also page 147, note 1 (Historical Outline).
- Table: the horizontal facet, parallel to the plane of the girdle, at the top of the crown of a faceted gemstone.
- Tablet-cut: a faceted form bounded top and bottom by broad, parallel facets, the crown and pavilion faceting being of little significance.
- Taj: *crown*, not necessarily royal; particularly in Safavid times applied to the ornamental and often-bejewelled head-dress of the upper classes; "taj-i mah," *crown of the moon*.
- Talar: the traditional rectangular room, usually elevated, and open on one side, which has been a feature of Iranian building for over two thousand years. In the Persian palaces, it has been the traditional seat of the shah at the imperial levées or salams.
- Tughra: a monogram usually formed from the name of the king to resemble the palm of the hand; very common in Turkey but also used on occasion in Persia.
- Vakil: *agent, regent*; the title used by the rulers of the Zand dynasty, assuming the continued existence of a shah of the Safavid line.
- Watered Steel: steel with a fine wavy pattern, the result of the manufacturing process, and further enhanced by etching; sometimes called Damascus steel (see *Gems and Settings*, page 41).
- White Metal: (as used in this volume) a non-tarnishing metal which is silvery white with a mellow glow. It is probably an alloy of tin and antimony (see *Gems and Settings*, page 40).
- Zurkhana: the house, guild, or company of athletes which has been for centuries, and still continues today, a feature of Persian life. The activities include wrestling, exercises with Indian clubs, feats of strength and agility.

Chronology

Persian Dynasties and Kings

- Achaemenian Dynasty 550–330 B.C.
 - Cyrus the Great, founder, reigned 550–28 B.C.
- Persia ruled by Alexander the Great and successors to ca. 175 B.C.
- Parthian Dynasty (Arsacid) ca. 175 B.C. to ca. A.D. 226
- Sasanian Dynasty ca. A.D. 226–641
- Persia, from 641, a part of the Arab empire ruled by caliphs from Damascus or Baghdad, but in fact more or less independent under local kings or dynasties which did not last long. Later formed part of several short-lived empires. Ruled by Seljuq Turks ca. 1050–1225, by Mongols ca. 1225–1335, then by many minor dynasties, by Timur (Tamerlane) and his Timurid successors from 1395, and then by Black Sheep and White Sheep Turkman rulers.
- Safavid Dynasty 1501–1736
 - Ismail I 1501–24
 - Tahmasp I 1524–76
 - Ismail II 1576–77
 - Muhammad Khudabanda 1578–87 (abdicated)
 - Abbas I (the Great) 1587–1629
 - Safi I (grandson of Abbas) 1629–42
 - Abbas II 1642–66
 - Safi II (later recrowned as Sulaiman) 1666–94
 - Husain 1694–1722 (deposed; Persia ruled by Afghan invaders, Mir Mahmud 1722–25, and Ashraf 1725–30)
 - Tahmasp II 1729–32 (deposed)
 - Abbas III 1732–36 (deposed)
- Afsharid Dynasty 1736–49
 - Nadir Shah 1736–47 (assassinated)
 - Adil Shah (nephew of Nadir) 1747–48 (murdered)
 - Ibrahim (brother of Adil) 1748–49 (murdered)
 - Shahrukh (grandson of Nadir) ruler over Khurasan from Meshed 1748–95
- Zand Dynasty 1750–94
 - Karim Khan 1750–79 (defeat of rivals 1760)
 - Confusion and rapid succession of rulers
 - Lutf Ali Khan 1789–94
- Qajar Dynasty 1794–1925
 - Agha Muhammad Shah 1794 (crowned 1796) to 1797 (assassinated)
 - Fath Ali Shah (nephew of Agha Muhammad) 1797 (crowned 1798) to 1834
 - Muhammad Shah (grandson of Fath Ali) 1834–48
 - Nasir ud-Din Shah 1848–96
 - Muzaffar ud-Din Shah 1896–1907
 - Muhammad Ali Shah 1907–9 (deposed)
 - Ahmad Shah 1909–25 (deposed)
- Pahlavi Dynasty 1925–
 - Reza Shah 1925 (crowned 1926) to 1941 (abdicated)
 - Muhammad Reza Shah 1941 (crowned 1967)

Moghul Emperors of India

- Babur 1526–30
- Humayun 1530–43, 1555–56
- Akbar 1556–1605
- Jahangir 1605–27
- Shah Jahan 1627–58
- Aurangzib (also called Alamgir) 1658–1707
- Bahadur 1707–12
- Jahandar 1712–13
- Muhammad Farrukh-siyar 1713–19
- Muhammad 1719–39, 1739–48
- Ahmad Shah Bahadur 1748–54
- Alamgir II 1754–59
- Shah Jahan III 1759–60
- Shah Alam 1761–1803
- Akbar II 1806–37
- Bahadur II 1837–58

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