

Historical Significance of the Door Knockers of Al-Mansurah, Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract

This is a modest attempt to unveil the mystery of the four bronze doorknockers discovered from a remote Islamic archeological site of the early Umayyad period known as al-Mansurah and is located in Sindh, Pakistan. A few recently published articles and the books¹ on Islamic arts and architecture, which included metal objects of the Umayyad and Abbasid periods but omitted these superb pieces of Islamic Metalwork, are the main reason for writing this article. The objects included in the aforementioned publications are fine representative of the early stages of the Islamic metal work mostly in copper and brass, however, invariably the main stream publications miss out the earliest and the most impressive bronze doorknockers found from the site of al-Mansurah. In the recent years, however, couple of research papers have included the al-Mansurah “Doorknockers” but none of these papers have been able to catch the reality of these objects shrouded in mystery. Attempt has been made to unveil the very mystery associated with these doorknockers. It is hoped that the exercise will highlight the significance and the importance of the objects, as they deserve i.e. the Bronze doorknockers of al-Mansurah.

The Arabs founded a great circular city in 728 called al-Mansurah, which pre-dates circular Baghdad and had a similar internal layout of streets and bazaars. In time, the ties with central authority loosened, and in the 9th century the local governorship became independent and hereditary. The second Emir of the newly established Habbarid line, Abdullah ibn Umar (r. 883-913 AD) carried out an extensive building program, enlarging the Friday mosque and constructing the Royal Palace, Dar ul Imara

¹ Metropolitan Museum of Art 2011. *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York; Rogers, J., M. 2010a. *The Arts of Islam: Masterpieces from the Khalili Collection*. London, Rogers, J., M. 2010b. *The Arts of Islam: Treasures from the Khalili Collection*. New York.

- literally, "the Abode of Emir"². ‘Amr the son of ibn al- Qasim al-Thaqafi, the Arab conqueror of Sind, founded the town of al-Mansurah³. The town has been reported to have flourished for nearly four centuries until after Mahmud of Ghazna annexed it in 1025 AD. Later it was destroyed by an earthquake⁴, around the middle of thirteenth century AD⁵. The site was first discovered by A.F. Bellasis in 1852 AD, who carried out preliminary excavations at al-Mansurah in 1854 and the excavated material was then deposited by him at the British Museum in 1856. Nearly half a century later another British archaeologist, Henry Cousens, excavated the site in 1897 and produced a voluminous work known as “The Antiquities of Sindh” published in 1929. Finally after the foundation of Pakistan, the department of Pakistan Archaeology undertook the excavations of the site from 1966-98⁶.

Recently while discussing on the subject at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, with my host supervisor Professor Dr. Jonathan Mark Kenoyer, I found out two publications on the Doorknockers of Mansurah. One of the two publications, was produced by Christie’s Auctioneers, London in October⁷ 2000, but the other which made me curious was the latest publication of the Geological Society of America⁸ in 2010 namely:

“Door Knockers of Mansurah: Strong shaking in a region of low perceived seismic risk, Sindh, Pakistan” by Roger Bilham⁹ and Sarosh Lodhi¹⁰.”

²Khan, A., N. 1990, 1-15; Khan, A., N. 1990, 6-8, photograph P.2; Zebrowski, M. 1998, 29.

³ All sources; cited by Rajput S.A. 2009, 31-32

⁴ Rajput S.A. 2009, 36

⁵ Rajput S.A. 37-42

⁶ Rajput S.A. 46-47

⁷ A Spanish Islamic Door Knocker of 11th Century, Christie’s Catalogue, King Street, London, 10 October 2000.

⁸ Bilham, R., and S. Lodhi. 2010, 29-37.

⁹ Bilham is associated with the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Science and Department of Geological Sciences, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, USA

¹⁰ Lodhi hails from the Department of Civil Engineering, NED University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, Pakistan

What these two have done is something commendable in the sense that they have brought out the artifacts of al-Mansurah to the limelight through the publication of their paper but what they have done sort of otherwise is that the platform they have chosen for the doorknockers is inappropriate. It is obvious that no geologist will have any attraction for the doorknockers in the research journals on geology and no historian, the art historian, the metallurgist or art collector will ever go to read the geological survey in search of the archaeological finds such as the Doorknockers.

The other point that I want to mention here regarding the above paper is the historical information that they have used is indifferent e.g. they have mentioned in their paper that al-Mansurah could hardly flourish for merely 200 years and the date of destruction of al-Mansurah was given in their paper is 980 AD¹¹. They started their paper with this information, which needs immediate attention. Besides, their paper is on reporting a strong earthquake in the low perceived seismic risk, Sindh, which is relevant to be published in the Geological Society of America (GSA). However, the historical information in this paper is far from reality. Had they read the reports of A.F. Bellasis, Sykes and Henry Cousens carefully which they have included in the list of references of the paper under discussion, their findings would have been different. Despite their shortcoming (as they are not historians or archaeologists) they have done a good job to promote the site of al-Mansurah, which is an important archaeological site of the early Islamic Period on which I completed my PhD thesis.

However, the information on the Doorknockers of al-Mansurah is mere repetition of the information given by Dr. Ahmad Nabi Khan in his monographs titled “Al-Mansurah: A Forgotten Arab Metropolis in Pakistan” published in 1990. There is no mention of the latest publication on al-Mansurah, published by this author in 2009, titled “History of Islamic Art based on al-Mansurah Evidence”. As mentioned earlier the paper of Bilham and Lodhi under discussion, is not meant for the Doorknockers but

¹¹ Bilham and Lodhi, 29.

on the earthquake that caused the destruction of the city somewhere during the 13th century¹² and not in the 10th century as is mentioned in the (GSA) paper¹³.

As far as the publication of Christie's of London on a copper doorknocker of 11th century from Spain, published in the year 2000 for sale is concerned, the copper doorknocker was included in the catalogue of Christies with following description:

“A SPANISH ISLAMIC DOOR KNOCKER, 11TH CENTURY

Heavily cast, the back plate with pronounced large lion's head grasping the ring in his maw, the features engraved with details, the mane flowing out in tiers of curls onto the backplane, in a broad border of Kufic calligraphy surrounded by meandering leafy vine on a silver niello ground, between raised bands, the ring with lower terminal formed of spiralling forms below the head of a cockerel or falcon.

17½in (44.3cm.) diam. Estimate: £200,000-£300,000 (\$290,000-\$435,000) PL.1”.

The technical detail and the stylistic features of the Doorknocker follow the above information at length, which is irrelevant to repeat at this place. Then there is a large paragraph on the Western sources of the Doorknocker, and there is a mention in this publication that the Doorknockers with the ring held in the mouth of a lion are a well known Roman motif and are found in numerous examples of 10th and 11th centuries within Christian Europe and this argument is supported by the following examples:

“The famous bronze doors of Saint Michael's Hildesheim, dating from around 1015, have as their focal point lion door-knockers after the antique (Lasko, Peter: *Ars Sacra*, 800-1200, London,

¹² Rajput S.A, 37-42.

¹³ Bilham and Lodhi, 29-37.

1972, pl.111). The bronze doors of the cathedrals and churches of such far-distanced places as Verona (circa 1135-40), Novgorod (1152), Gniezno in Poland (circa 1175), and Benevento (circa 1200) show the universality of the motif in the Christian world. The mausoleum of Bohemund (died 1111) in Canosa, Bari, South Italy, has a very interesting added feature. Around the lion's head, which itself is closer to the antique than those mentioned above, is a band of decoration, which must derive from a kufic inscription (Gabrieli, Francesco and Scerrato, Umberto: *Gli Arabi in Italia*, Milan, 1979, pls.337 and 338). We have the same elements as those found here, but with a very different aesthetic. For a brief discussion of the Islamic influences in Southern Italy see Garton, Tessa: "Islamic elements in early Romanesque sculpture in Apulia", *Art and Archaeology Research Papers (aarp)* no.4, December 1973, pp.100-116”.

Finally to our interest the Eastern sources of origin of such doorknocker are produced based on the two sources mentioned elsewhere in this paper namely: (Khan, Ahmad Nabi: *Al-Mansurah, A Forgotten Arab Metropolis in Pakistan*, Karachi, 1990; Zebrowski, Mark: *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India*, London, 1997. Both of these two sources are discussed in this paper analytically.

Christies, catalogue describes the al-Mansurah Doorknockers as more massive than their Spanish counterpart, measuring just over 55cm in diameter. The central head of each is surrounded by a band of deeply engraved *Kufic* religious inscription, beginning with the *bismillah* and in at least one of the four cases continuing to the *shahada*. The execution of these four doorknockers is unlike that of the Spanish doorknocker. The faces are highly stylised, almost human in caricature. Technically also these Eastern doorknockers are very different, the bronze having a high lead content averaging between 16.7 and 18 %.

After the province was conquered by the Ummayyad adventurer Muhammad b. Qasim, his son 'Amr founded the city in 728 AD. The city is recorded as thriving under

the Habbari dynasty in the 9th and 10th centuries. By the 11th century it is only mentioned in passing and in the 14th it is recorded as being completely ruined (Friedmann, Y. "Al-Mansura", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, Leiden, 1991, vol. VI., pp.439-440). While their geographical position gave the rulers considerable autonomy, they bore allegiance to the Abbasid caliphs and, in the second half of the 10th century, also recognised the authority of the more local Buwayhid dynasty. The Doorknockers are thought to have been made for the palace of the Habbarid *Emir* 'Abdallah ibn 'Umar (r.883-913). The Doorknockers produced under his aegis clearly derive from an earlier prototype. And finally the Christie's catalogue concludes the introduction of its Spanish doorknocker with this line¹⁴, "It is tempting to think that both those and ours derive from a common presumably Umayyad Arab original".

In all honesty the point of Christies' catalogue publication was to highlight and enhance the value of their own item for auction for the sale of a much later (11th c.) copper doorknocker from Spain – representing a much inferior quality - rather than adding to the bronze Doorknockers of al-Mansurah.

Finally the more recent and so far the latest publication, as far as known to this author, which includes the Mansurah Doorknockers needs also be mentioned here before reaching to the conclusion or shall we say the mystery associated with the "Doorknockers" under discussion. The publication is none other than "*A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture*" edited by Rebecca M. Brown and Deborah S. Hutton, 2011 published by Blackwell publishing Ltd, UK¹⁵. In this publication there is a chapter No. 15 on pp. 365-392, written by Finbarr Barry Flood under the heading of "Conflict and Cosmopolitanism in 'Arab' Sindh". In his chapter Finbarr Barry Flood mentions the Doorknockers of al-Mansura¹⁶.

¹⁴ This is a speculation of the catalogue writer and not supported with any reference.

¹⁵ Rebecca M. Brown and Deborah S. Hutton, eds. *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture*, 2011, Blackwell publishing Ltd, UK

¹⁶ Flood, F., B. "Conflict and Cosmopolitanism in 'Arab' Sindh", 365-392.

He mentions that among the finds of al-Mansurah are four spectacular cast bronze doorknockers. Each measures 20 inches in diameter, weighs around 70 pounds¹⁷ and consisting of three distinct sections soldered or bolted together: a central three-dimensional boss featuring anthropomorphic or zoomorphic head and inscribed silver plate¹⁸ and a hexafoil knocker that hangs from the lower jaw of the face. The rim of each bears an inscription incised in angular Kufic script. These bronze were recovered from dar al-imara (gubernatorial palace) of Mansura, and are believed to have adorned its entrance. The marginal inscription on the bronzes all bear the name of *Emir Abd Allah ibn Umar*, the Habbarid ruler of Sind. Abd Allah was the second of the Habbrid *Emirs*, is named on some of the copper and silver coinage of Mansurah, and is known from traveller's account to have been ruling around 883¹⁹. The bronzes can thus be dated to the early 880s at the latest²⁰.

He continues further saying that the dating is particularly important as there is nothing, in quality and scale, from the contemporary Islamic world with which to compare the Mansurah Bronzes. At present, the early history of Islamic metalwork is represented by a generally unimpressive array of bronze ewers and incense burners from the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. The Mansura bronzes have the potential to re-write this history. As product of the geographically peripheral region of the caliphate, it has been assumed that some or all of the Mansura bronzes were imported from Iraq²¹.

There is, however, little to compare with Mansura bronzes from the entire Islamic world contemporary or otherwise to this day. The fact of the matter is that there is no reason to think that these bronzes or part of it was imported from the central

¹⁷ I would like to mention here that these four doorknockers weigh between 50-55 kg, averaging 53 kg each, which equals 116 pounds each and not around 70 pounds. This information of Flood, F.B., on the weight is incorrect.

¹⁸ Everything in these doorknockers is of bronze including the inscribed outer rings and not of silver.

¹⁹ It is well known by all sources that Abd Allah ruled at al-Mansurah between 883-913 AD.

²⁰ Flood F., b, 374

²¹ Flood F., b, 374

Islamic lands. And one can agree with Finbarr Barry Flood (p. 374) as do all other sources that there was thriving industry of metallurgy in medieval Sindh is indicated by finds such as a three-foot brass Brahma image from Mirpur Khas, and references to the coppersmith's bazar in tenth-century Multan suggest that Sind was a major metalworking center before and after the Arab conquest²². In addition the appearance of the Habbarid *Emir's* name on the bronzes, and parallel between their style of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic faces and terracotta figural ornaments found on Sindhi Stupas and temples (specifically the ubiquitous lion-faced *kirtimukha* or samba) suggests that some or all of their components were manufactured locally²³.

There are certain facts which the writers above mentioned don't necessarily know very much about as most of them are not necessarily archaeologists. The readers would like to know that department of Pakistan Archaeology embarked upon the excavation of the site of al-Mansurah under the supervision of Dr. F. A. Khan in the year 1966. Since then the department has continued the excavation with small intervals. It has been noticed, from the published reports, the main focus of the department has been to establish the fact that al-Mansurah was found on the virgin soil and not on the immediate ruins of the Hindu city called Brahminabad²⁴.

From the ruins of one of the buildings of al-Mansura, four bronze doorknockers, which might have been affixed to its entrance gates, have been excavated Pls. 2.1-2.4. A young archaeologist Farzand Masih²⁵ discovered these doorknockers in 1987. He published his report in the Felicitation Volume of Ancient Pakistan, University of Peshawar in 1993. The volume was dedicated to Professor A. H. Dani.

²² This is the most important point that Flood F., b. has brought about to which other writers have not been able to pay much attention. Presence of metal Industry and a thriving bazar indicate to the evidence that the doorknockers of Mansura are the local production rather than import from elsewhere of which we don't find prototype.

²³ Flood, F., B, 375.

²⁴ Rajput, S.A, 61-74

²⁵ Farzand Masih was young archaeologist in 1987 but later he completed his Ph.D. in archaeology and now he is the Head of the Department of Archaeology at the University of the Punjab, Lahore

The Doorknockers consist of a central disk with a figure and an outer ring with Arabic inscription. Each central disk measures 36 cm in diameter, bearing a stylised grotesque mask, based on the human face, in very high relief. The mouth or chin of each mask is pierced to hold a thickly cast six lobed ring-the actual knocker. Around the edge of this central medallion is an outer disk, a full 50 cm diameter, on which is carved the *bismillah*, the profession of faith, and the name of the Ruler, Abdullah ibn ‘Umar. The Arabic script is in superb, bold, Kufic style, which compares favourably with the best Umayyad and Abbasid inscriptions from the Middle East proper. Each of the Doorknockers weighs over 52 Kgs.

Mark Zebroski²⁶ describes these remarkable items are arguably the most significant bronzes yet discovered from the early centuries of Islam, not just from the sub-continent but also from the entire Muslim world. Aesthetically, they are thrilling. They are also surprising and very curious. *Thrilling*, because they are masterpieces of design and metal casting. Their quality and size surpass that of other early Islamic bronzes - not excluding such masterpieces as the eighth century ewer in Cairo, which was probably part of the treasure of the last Umayyad Caliph Marwan II; the aquamarine in the form of a bird from Iraq, dated AD 796-7, in St. Petersburg, or the falcon-shaped incense burner from eighth or ninth century Iraq, in Berlin. *Surprising*, because these superb objects were not unearthed from the ruins of Damascus or Baghdad, the capital cities of the Caliphate, but far off Sindh, and also because they represent the very beginning of the great tradition of Islamic animal sculpture. The bronze lions of Khurasan and Muslim Spain of the eleventh and twelfth centuries follow the conventions established by these doorknockers. *Curious*, because the four pieces represent two very distinct styles, two of the doorknockers, although having exaggerated grimaces and protruding eyes to convey demonic qualities are relatively realistic, not far removed from the structure of the human face Pls. 2.3&2.4. There is a real sense of weight and volume, which is characteristic of Indian medieval sculpture. The other two masks, vaguely leonine, are emphatically Islamic in their rejection of naturalism Pls. 2.1&2.2. The flattened faces avoid any suggestion of weight or volume,

²⁶ Zebroski M. 20-30; also cited by Rajput. 36

while delicate curls on chin and head show a developing interest in the Islamic arabesque, with little evocation of real hair or fur. Their tiny pointed ears and horizontally stretched mouths and eyes are the origins for similar motifs in the great bronze lions of Khurasan and Islamic Spain, produced a few centuries later.

Zebroski continues²⁷ further as how do we account for such opposing styles in objects of identical size, format and function? There can be only two possible explanations. One is that two different workshops or two artisans in the same work-shop were responsible. One worked in a traditional Indian mode, continuing to use local style connected with the production of Hindu and Buddhist sculpture; the other employed deliberately Islamic idiom and was well aware of stylistic development in the central Islamic lands possibly having immigrated from there. This two-fold manner corresponds to the situation in the Mughal paintings atelier of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, where artists of Persian origin worked in a modified Persian style alongside local painters working in a more naturalistic Indian way.

The second possibility is that the two "Islamic-style" masks were sent to al-Mansurah from Iraq to decorate the *Emir's* new palace, either as a gift from one prince to another, or as an outright purchase. Seeing the need for another pair – that is, to provide one for each of the four entrance gateways – the Emir then commissioned two more to be made in a Sindh workshop. The local artisans, trained in a different style, did their best to copy the spirit and format of the imported pieces, but could not avoid giving their commission Indian Artistic values. This second theory, however, does not satisfactorily account for the presence of the excellent (and identical) Arabic script on the rims of all the medallions²⁸.

Mystery of the Doorknockers of al-Mansurah

The mystery associated with the four Doorknockers made in bronze is many folds. Firstly the discovery is unique in its own merits and was unexpected to be found at a

²⁷ Rajput 2009, 36

²⁸ Rajput 2009, 36-37

place, which was considered as a peripheral part of the then Islamic Empires vis-à-vis Damascus and Baghdad of the 7th to 13th centuries AD. Secondly, since the discovery of al-Mansurah Bronze is unparalleled therefore everyone (Ref to above mentioned publications) is trying to include it in their publications whether or not it makes any relevance such as the two examples of GSA and Christies' mentioned elsewhere in this paper. Thirdly, its manufacture owes a great deal to the skills of the local Indian artisans who were familiar with making such items in their workshops at Multan and Sindh even before the arrival of the Arabs. One would dare to mention an important and serious point on part of the art historians who are often quoted but their approach in writing the history of India is found biased. Had it not been the case there would have been a mention of advance metallurgical technology of India in their histories²⁹.

Historical significance and importance of the Doorknockers

Al-Mansurah Bronze Doorknockers are unique in design, manufacture and scale and not only they are unparalleled in Indian subcontinent but they have no match in the entire Islamic world. Their manufacture sets the superiority of the Indian art over the early Islamic world and even later to this day as nothing of this type has ever been found from any other Islamic sites as a prototype for Mansura but Mansurah Bronze has established the prototype for the later Islamic cities such as has been found from 11th century Spain. Most of the Scholars are still uncertain of their local manufacture and one follows the other blindfold. Time has come that this trend is changed and research is forwarded with evidence both physical and historical. This paper has provided enough proof for the existence of healthy industry of metallurgy in Sindh and Multan to break the mystery.

The local manufacture of the Mansurah Doorknockers is further established and strengthened from the fact that some more examples of similar bronze doorknockers were also found from al-Mansurah although in much smaller size, providing local miniature copies which might have been created through the envy of the large

²⁹ This is my personal experience that the historians of the Muslim court have been biased throughout, either during the Arab rule or the Turks or the Mughals, the historians have been biased else perhaps they would have to admit the superiority (at least in technology and other sciences) of their subjects -God knows the best.

Doorknocker fixed on the city gates of Mansurah. It appears that the inhabitant of Mansurah followed the prototype and replicated it on the entrance doors of their own houses. There are number of door handles, hinges, small and large nails in bronze all found from al-Mansurah by A.F. Bellasis in 1854-6 and now form a large collection in the B.M. Bellasis published the drawings or etchings of all these items in the London Illustrated News 1856, Pls. 4.1-4.5. These finds provide us ample and convincing evidence that the workshops of al-Mansurah were very active in producing all sorts of valuable and intricate accessories. Moreover, by comparison the craftsmanship and size of the Doorknockers of al-Mansurah testify the finest example of Metalwork in the entire Islamic world and establishes the superiority of metallurgy industry of India, which hitherto has not been given its due acknowledgement. The discovery, however, provides us on the one hand an evidence for the advance skill in craft of Islamic art and on the other a rich cultural and social life of the people of al-Mansurah living side by side with the more skilful Hindu neighbours of Sindh and Multan.

It may also be mentioned here that the epigraphy on the circular discs attached with the Mansurah bronze needs a special attention. So far the type of technique employed for writing in Arabic script on the out discs is unique. It appears that the artisans have chiselled out the name of *Emir* Abdullah bin Umar alongside other Quranic quotations in the same manner as the woodcarving or stone engraving were known in the area for quite some time. No other example has so far surfaced depicting the same technique from any other site of the entire Islamic world. Punch techniques however is commonly seen as is the embossing technique shown on the 11th century Spanish doorknocker mentioned elsewhere in this paper. A recent article of the Cambridge Archaeological Journal is worth a read on the bronze on similar period³⁰.

Finally it may be remembered that the town of al-Mansurah was spread on an area of 274 hectors of which hardly 10% has been excavated so far. One of the additional reasons of writing this paper is to highlight the existence of the superior metallurgy industry - manifested through the unparalleled Door-Knockers of al-Mansurah - of the Indian subcontinent present at the time of Arab invasion in 711 AD

³⁰ Higham, C. 2011, 365-389.

and also alert the archaeologists elsewhere who may be interested to undertake future excavations at al-Mansurah as an extremely promising site of the early Islamic period. It is certain that further excavations and studies may lead us to the discovery of more unusual industrial products. There is a large scope of further excavation on this virgin site of earliest Islamic period and the chances are that the history of Islamic arts will find new evidence for its better appreciation³¹.

³¹ If interested to become member to my team to participate in the excavations of the site, please contact me at my email:

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PL. 1. Spanish Doorknocker of 11th Century, published by Christie's, London



PL. 2.1



PL. 2.2



PL. 2.3



PL. 2.4

Four Bronze Doorknockers of al-Mansurah

Writing of the Bronze Doorknockers of al-Mansurah



PL. 3.1, Original Arabic writing on the outer discs of the Doorknockers after Ahmad Nabi Khan, 1990.

- 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالْأَمِيرُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالْأَمِيرُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالْأَمِيرُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالْأَمِيرُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ
- 3

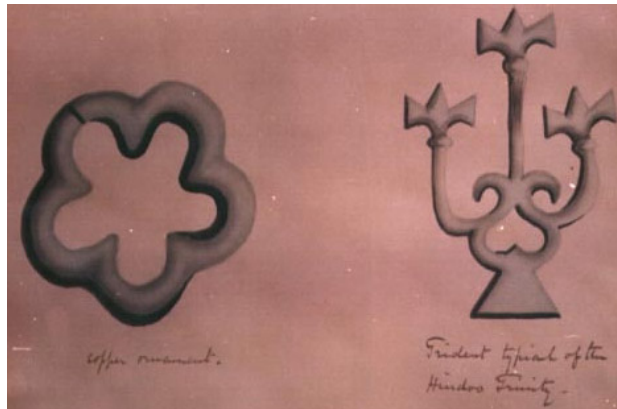
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالْأَمِيرُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالْأَمِيرُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ
- 4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالْأَمِيرُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ

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PL. 3.2, Rendering in Naskh script from the original above, after Ahmad Nabi Khan, 1990.



PL. 4.1 Bellasis's Panting of a bronze knocker



PL. 4.2 bronze Handles and

Knocker

The above items are in the collection of British Museum,

Photographed by the author 1991



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PL. 4.3 – 4.5 Bronzes of al-Mansurah, Sindh, Pakistan

