



# JOURNAL OF TALES

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Founded by April Lynn Downey, M.A.

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## Happy Holidays!

Wishing everyone a warm, healthy, and happy holiday season!

## Let the Journey Begin!



German man on bicycle, 1920s

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Fabulous online resource for avid travelers, to help them make the most of their travel, how best to experience the culture and history, and more. I will have an article about sacred spaces in the near future on their site.

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# The Journal

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## The Belsnickel



*A Christmas Belsnickel from Manheim, Pennsylvania. (Photo: from the Manheim Historical Society)*

The excitement for Christmas gifts and delicious family dinner weighs heavily on wide-eyed children, trying to remain calm, sitting upon the wooden floor in front of the fireplace. Their mother dabbles with her crochet, while father smokes a pipe, glancing nervously at each other now and again. The cold winter air thumps against the thin glass windowpanes and trees creak through a songless dance. There in the distance, a faint tinkling is heard. Was it their imagination? But no, it gets louder, and clearer - bells! Then a larger thump at the window and father opens up the door to let in wind and snow and ..... the Belsnickel! Mother smiles, but quickly glides into the kitchen doorway, away from the fur covered, grungy man with a sack of treats and a long, wooden stick for whacking. The Belsnickel does a jig around the living room, hooting and hollowing, his bells clanging, getting the children in a roar. Then he stops abruptly and stares at the children straight in their eyes, and with a deep, stern voice, bellows "Have you been good?!"

The Belsnickel is a character from German folklore who visited village folk during Christmas time. His name is sometimes spelled Peltznickel and (in both spellings) it means "Nicholas in pelts (animal skins)". Like most holiday traditions, the exact details of the folktale and how this tradition was celebrated varied by region and time, but essentially he was a character much like Santa Claus and was often equated with him. However, unlike what we typically think of as Santa Claus, the Belsnickel was a bringer of both mirth and terror, merry revelry and nervous fear. He also did not



arrive invisible, while the little ones were in bed. He would arrive on Christmas Eve and was invited into the house. There he would toss various treats like candies and nuts on the floor and as the children scrambled to get them, he would use a stick or whip to either hit them or threaten them to be good. The tradition of a person dressing as the Belsnickel and visiting neighboring homes was carried from Germany to America. It became popular in the Pennsylvania Dutch countryside in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although there was a significant decline in the early part of the 1900 hundreds.



*~ Belsnickel ~*

(Photo: Byers Choice Ltd. [www.byerschoice.com/christmas-traditions/pennsylvania-dutch](http://www.byerschoice.com/christmas-traditions/pennsylvania-dutch) )

The level of harshness varied with each particular Belsnickel. Sometimes the Belsnickel would require the children to sing or to pray. Despite the lashing and spanking the children might endure, they were often quite thrilled with their treats. However, some children were always afraid of him and even older kids would be wary to venture out past sunset on Christmas Eve in case they crossed the Belsnickel about.



(Photo: Scary Christmas <https://scarylittlechristmas.wordpress.com/2013/12/23/belsnickel/> )

Oftentimes, the Belsnickel did not arrive as a solitary man but in a cavalcade of revelers, masquerading as a group of belsnickels. Their frolicking through the streets was called "belsnickeling". Their attire would be animal skins, furs, or old clothes and rags. Their faces would be hidden beneath masks or darkened with charcoal or shoe polish. One account describes a belsnickel covering his face with a stocking with holes cut out for his eyes. Sometimes women too would dress up as the Belsnickel as well. While visiting neighbors, it was common for the belsnickels to receive treats and drinks from the homeowners.

One account of belsnickeling described in the book *The Folklore of World Holidays* tells of a most rambunctious scene from the La Have Islands in Nova Scotia. After sundown on Christmas Eve, several people from the town would dress up in masks and costume and parade through town with bells, whistles, firecrackers, and horns. They would call out to homes, asking to be let in. Once inside, they would provide a dizzying display of revelry with clumsy and uninhibited dancing, boisterous music, and sometimes off-colored flirting with the ladies of the house.





A Belsnickel arriving to entertain a family on Christmas Eve. (Photo: <https://paheritage.wpengine.com/article/der-belsnickel-nicholas-in-furs-or-hairy-devil/> )

Many children were afraid of the belsnickles which suited the parents just fine, because the threat of “the belsnickels will get you” helped keep the children well behaved throughout the year. During a belsnickle visit, one of the masqueraders would ask the children if they had been good all year. Of course, they professed their innocence and would receive a tasty treat for their good behavior.

So this Christmas Eve, as you cozy in, dunking cookies and watching TV specials, keep an ear out for the distant sounds of bells and prepare your testimony ..... for the Belsnickel may be approaching!

Written by April Lynn Downey

To read about the Amish, a sect of the Pennsylvania Dutch, please click [here](#).



A traditional Belsnickel. (Photo: NY State Parks & Historic Sites. <https://nystateparks.blog/2019/12/23/belsnickels-christmas-furry-palatine-giftgiver/>)



A group of Belsnickels. (Photo: Museum of the Shenandoah Valley)

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# Jewish Incantation Bowls

## INTRODUCTION: MAGIC AND RELIGION

A frequent area of debate are the borders of religion and magic and if there are indeed any borders at all. It is in trying to establish a distinction between the two that often causes a conundrum for religious scholars and anthropologists. Texts and artifacts often lie in this gray area and scholars are forced by the nature of our vocabulary to choose how to label them. In his late 19<sup>th</sup> century article "Relation between Magic and Religion", Harvard professor Crawford H. Toy described the three leading views on magic and religion as: "...that magic is a degraded form of religion; that it is the parent of religion; and that the two are independent, mutually unrelated systems." However, he went on to explain why these segregations are not so simple and one must be open-minded to the gray areas magic and religion derive from. While magic seems to conjure a certain form of chaos and religion propagating order, they seem to have sprung up in humanity together. Reverend Witton T. Davies, a professor of Biblical Literature, also points out magic and religion's close ties by describing the parallels between incantation and prayer and burning materials in spells and religious sacrifices. Davies wrote that magic may be described as "... the attempt on man's part to have intercourse with spiritual and supernatural beings, and to influence them for his benefit." Indeed, when thinking about it in these terms, it is quite easy to see the parallel between practicing magic and practicing religion. For what religion does not involve itself with the supernatural world in order to either influence it or to be influenced by it?

## JEWISH INCANTATION BOWLS - AN OVERVIEW

Since first discovered in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Jewish incantation bowls - simple clay bowls with Aramaic and Hebrew ink incantations - have perplexed scholars. Questions about the relationship between magic and religion immediately arise when studying the bowls. Other questions also emerged, such as, how exactly were the bowls used? What influence do the surrounding cultures and religions play in their creation and use? Although the discovery is nearly a century and a half old, the scholarship on the subject is still in its relative infancy.

This article offers an introduction to the bowls and a discussion of various questions that are being taken into consideration by scholars. One of the questions at hand is, what exactly was the ritual process in using the bowls? One long time theory is that the bowls were drank out of in order to ingest the words written in them. The consumption of powerful words in a mystical experience is reminiscent of the book of Ezekiel, when God told Ezekiel, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." (Ezekiel 3:1) In Jeremiah 15:16, the prophet Jeremiah also "eats" the words of God. However, at the conclusion of this paper, we will see why this theory is not gaining ground.

The Jewish incantation bowls – with more than 2,000 found by archaeologists – are an intriguing look into ancient Jewish magic. They have been found in Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey and even one in Egypt. The bowls were crafted starting in either the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century CE up until the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century CE. The bowls were identical to all other commonly used bowls in Sasanian Mesopotamia which has led Professor Gideon Bohak to conclude that the bowls were bought in large quantities in the marketplace and then modified to be used for the enchantments. The bowls are made out of clay and were crudely formed between 8-12 centimeters in circumference with ink incantations on the inside. Most commonly, the text was written in a spiraling pattern away from the center. Another fairly common pattern is the text being splitting the bowl into three equal sections. Rare patterns of text include four equal divisions, a sun shape, star/flower shape, and man shape. All the bowls found were completely covered with writing and drawings on the interior and so it seems an important aspect of the practice was to make use of the entire available surface. Some had instructions on the outside of the bowls as to where the owner should place them in the house.

Some bowls contain figures in addition to the text and the most common images are those of shackled demons. Dr. Dan Levene describes these drawings in detail, “Many of the demons thus depicted are identifiable as being female and possessing feathered bird-like left with claws. In other bowls, there are what appear to be depictions of fierce angels, much like those described in early Jewish mystical texts, such as are in the Hekhalot and Merkabah literature.” Other animal and hybrid figures were found as well.

While most of the bowls found were surface finds, many bowls were found in their archaeological context and the majority of which were placed upside down in the corners of rooms, in doorway thresholds, and at tent entrances. The website of the impressive Schøyen Collection, which houses 654 incantation bowls, says the bowls were “demon traps”, in which demons became trapped underneath the bowls, which explains their unusual placement. It is interesting to note that some the demonic entities named in the bowls were previously known as local deities, such as the Mesopotamian goddess Innana and the *shed*, from the Akkadian word for a “protective deity” or “household god,” *sheddu*. All but a few incantation bowls are specifically against demons while those outside this majority contain curses against other human individuals. On a very rare occasion, the incantation was meant to magically coerce someone to love another. Many of the bowls are a type of divorce certificate, separating a demon from the client or clients’ house. In one bowl, an eggshell was found and believed to be a sacrifice to the trapped demons. A few discoveries revealed two bowls being bound together, rim to rim, with either bitumen or ropes.

The bowls contain about two hundred Aramaic quotes from the Hebrew Bible and nearly half of which constitute the earliest written forms of these verses as they were not found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. However, the bowls’ inscriptions of Bible verses possibly defy the Talmud, which condemns the recitation of biblical verses for magical purposes. These bowls certainly provide a glimpse into the world of Sasanian Jewish mysticism. According to incantation bowl expert Shaul Shaked, “The bowls also have the earliest examples of Hekhalot or Jewish mystical texts, as well as part of the Shema prayer or extracts from the Mishna.” Additionally, they provide us with the only



remaining Jewish epigraphic material from Babylonia during this time. See figures below for examples of the Jewish incantation bowls.



Figure 1. MS 1911 / 1  
Jewish-Aramaic book script. Mesopotamia, 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> c.  
"Incantation Bowl: Bible, Incantation & Drawing" The Schøyen Collection



Figure 2. MS 2053 / 198  
Incantations against demons. Near East, 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> c.  
"Incantation Bowl to Ward Against Demons" The Schøyen Collection



Figure 3. M66  
Bound demon within text. "Curse or Blessing: What's in the Magic Bowl?" Dan Levene

Although multiple other types of magical artifacts have been found from the same time period - amulets written on metal lamellae (thin sheets of lead, bronze, silver, or gold), aggressive and erotic spells written on metal lamellae or on clay sherds, magical gems, magical papyri, books of magic, and inscribed human skulls - the incantation bowls are by far the most numerous. In addition to the inarguably magical items as mentioned above, Witton Davies speculated in 1898 that the Jewish traditions of phylacteries, tassels, and mezuzah were originally to fend off demons and were only later rationalized as being laws of God. He also speculated that moonlets worn around necks of women and camels and the bells at bottom of high priest's garments may have been protection against demons. Dr. Wellhausen called these sort of magical demon protections "*Gegenzauber*" (countercharm).

In *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition*, Shaul Shaked dissects definable parts of a standard incantation and solidifies terminology used for each category such as formula, spell, and segments. He defines formula as "...an ideal structure of a text which the practitioner aims at reproducing." A spell is defined as a "building block" for the incantation, each with a different formula. A subdivision of each spell is called a segment. "The term *invocation* means a direct appeal to different powers or person, sometimes with a supplication that they should act in a manner sought by the practitioner or the client." Shaked also contends that the repetition of spells and backwards spells suggests that the practitioners may have had a lack of confidence in his incantation and that he was in a sense doubling up on the protection.

#### INFLUENCES

There is no doubt that the surrounding non-Jewish environment influenced the Jewish creators of the bowls. It is also true that the Jews may have had a counterinfluence on those that surrounded them as well. Although unusual, contemporary Christian incantation bowls have also been found in the same upside-down position from the same period and locations. See figure 4 below. Zoroastrian bowls from this time period were also found upside down and under floors and in thresholds as well. See figure 5 below.





Figure 4. MS 1927 / 54  
Proto-Manichaean script. Mesopotamia, 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> c.  
"Christian Incantation Bowl" The Schøyen Collection



Figure 5. MS 2056/12  
Zoroastrian incantations against demons. Near East, 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> c.  
"Zoroastrian Incantations Against Angra Mainu" The Schøyen Collection

However, out of the various religious groups using incantation bowls at the time, those from Jewish authors are in the majority. The incantation bowls do not provide us with the names of their authors; however, most of the client names on the bowls were Persian. Each bowl was uniquely created for a particular owner. Some people owned multiple bowls, created by practitioners with different languages and cultures. Bohak points out that the authors can be identified as Jewish from their use of "Jewish terms, concepts, and stories... and passages from the rabbis' Mishnah." In addition to Persian owners, several of the bowls have been inscribed for people with the prefix "rabbi." Rabbis also appear in the text of the bowls, called upon as exorcists to quell the offending demon at hand. This is surprising considering the negative view the Talmud had regarding magic and condemned it as being dangerous. Verses from the Tanakh also condemn magical practices.

Although it is nearly impossible for the Jews in Babylonia to have been completely isolated from outside cultural influences, the Talmud focuses almost solely on rabbinic issues and has little to say about the surrounding cultures. For this reason, and that the study of ancient Iran has played a small role in North American academics in the past, a large majority of Talmudic studies have been insular or placed against the background of the Greco-Roman world. Shaul Shaked, a prolific author on the subject at hand, also noted that scholars, for various reasons, "can only manage to reconstruct a small portion of variegated religious heritage of ancient Iran." While noting the relevance of these issues, Dr. Jason Mokhtarian in his book *Rabbis, Sorcerers, Kings, and Priests* contends that it is significantly important to take into consideration the Sasanian and Zoroastrian cultures when studying the rabbis and the Talmud in the Sasanian Empire of Babylonia, 224-650 C.E. Though bowls have been found with multiple religious motifs and languages, they had a confined use within this time and geography.

There are many reasons why the surrounding cultures of the Jewish incantation bowls should not be dismissed. While the Talmud may attempt to isolate the rabbis from their neighboring cultures, in reality the rabbis and the Jewish people were not isolated. Along with sharing geography and community, they shared this mysterious practice of incantation bowls. In addition to other religions having their own incantation bowls, Jewish practitioners also used the names of pagan gods and the Christian Holy Trinity. Levene wrote about the fascinating discovery of three texts, written in Jewish Aramaic, Syriac, and Mandaic, but all containing nearly the same formula. However, Mokhtarian also points out that too much enthusiasm for comparative studies can be disadvantageous and result in an unfortunate filter of over-interconnection. It is often the case that comparative studies result in the exploitation of similarities while diminishing the importance of differences.

However, symbolic influence should not be overlooked at as well. We know that imagery was used throughout rabbinic Judaism, despite the Talmudic laws against it. The Tannaim (Mishnaic rabbi sages) prohibited symbols and forms of mysticism that they judged to be pagan but did not oppose ones they felt were appropriately Jewish. Similarly, they distinguished amulets to be either outlawed or appropriate. Unfortunately, we do not know if the incantation bowls were deemed appropriate or if they were condemned by the Tannaim. Avigail Manekin Bamberger makes a very interesting note in her article "Naming Demons: The Aramaic Incantation Bowls and Gittin": "Although the incantation bowls are not mentioned explicitly in the Talmud, the use of amulets is mentioned in several places in rabbinic literature, and the bowls refer to themselves as amulets, as can be seen from a common formula that appears on a number of them: **הדין קמיע** - 'this amulet.'" Jacob Neusner, in his book *Early Rabbinic Judaism*, proposed the theory that the destruction of the temple in 70 CE caused some Jewish people to reach out to pagan symbolism despite Tannaitic law. Neusner contended that the influence of Hellenization contributed to the use of pagan symbology and that the circle of influence of the rabbis may have shrunk during this time. Perhaps it is within this vacuum of shrinking rabbinic influence that made room for incantation bowls.

## A QUESTION OF TRANSMISSION



Whether the spells cast in the bowls originated from an oral or written tradition is another question not answered yet. No magical instruction books were found in Babylonia, but the fact that the Babylonian Talmud includes sections regarding magic spells gives us an indication that these books may have existed there. (The Mishna has little to offer regarding magic, divination, and demonology, but the Talmud and other post-biblical writings delve into these subjects with much more detail.) Jewish magical formula instruction texts from other parts of the Jewish world were found, dating from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. The Oxyrhynchus Inscription, appearing to be a part of a collection of spells like the Babylonian incantation bowls, is further evidence of that the incantations may have been transmitted textually. The Oxyrhynchus inscription, dating from 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century in Egypt, is believed by Mark Geller to be part of a recipe collection since the first part of the inscription seems to be addressing the demon Shemhaza while the second part, after a few indecipherable lines, is in regard to a dog bite. (This is not an uncontested opinion though, as Gideon Bohak believes that the format and fold lines suggest that the lines are all part of one spell.) However, this does not exclude the possibility that spells were handed down orally and, while some of the incantations' authors were finely literate, some struggled with handwriting and spelling, perhaps suggesting an oral background to the text. Also, the repeated mistakes in biblical verses should be taken into consideration when contemplating an oral transmission.

## LABORATORY TESTING

Moïse Schwab, in his 1917 article "Amulets and Bowls with Magic Inscriptions", states that people would drink from the bowls to protect themselves from the demons making them sick. However, we do not have the evidence to conclusively concur with this hypothesis. While it is uncontested that the writings in the bowls are magical incantations, exactly how the bowls were used and why they are so different from other magical amulets is still in debate a century later. As mentioned previously, a current primary theory is that they were traps for demons. While this does seem to make sense considering the figures, the spells, and their upside-down placement within homes, conclusive evidence is still lacking. At the very least, one should question why apparently ordinary bowls were used as opposed to a "trap" that was custom built. It is plausible for both theories to be true as one could easily imagine a person drinking or eating from the enchanted bowl to ingest the power of the spell as well as placing it under the floor for the purpose of a trap. However, further laboratory testing would be needed to discover if food residue were in the bowls. A common method of residue testing uses a mass spectrometer. Unfortunately, though, this testing requires scraping material from the clay which would damage the inscriptions.

I asked a few experts previously mentioned above - Dr. Jason Mokhtarian, Dr. Shaul Shaked, and Martin Schøyen - if testing had been done on the bowls to determine if they once held food, oil, or wine.

Dr. Mokhtarian, who is a current scholar on Sasanian Jewish society, said that he was unaware of anyone doing this sort of testing, but does not believe that the bowls were used for food or drink.

Dr. Shaul Shaked also doubted they were used for food and expanded on the subject. He said that while studying the bowls in The Schøyen Collection, he had never come across any

evidence of food residue in the bowls and that laboratory testing would most likely damage the inscriptions, as mentioned above. In his letter, he said that in the Islamic period, metal bowls with incised incantations were sometimes drunk out of, but that it is unlikely practitioners would have done that with the Jewish bowls, considering the way they were used for the incantations. Dr. Shaked felt a more important test would be on the material of the bowls themselves and compare it with earth samples from the area to determine if a precise location of production could be discovered. Neutron activation analysis could find trace elements in clay to produce this study. Another possible test is petrographic analysis, which can look at the physical composition of clay. However, Dr. Shaked pointed out that the logistics for such a large-scale project are not practical at the moment because of security risks in the Middle East.

Martin Schøyen stated that none of the 654 bowls in his collection were tested for food substances. He felt that perhaps food residue might be found if the bowls had been used prior to the inscriptions being made; however, conservation of the bowls would have destroyed this evidence. He also said that bowls that have not gone through the conservation process may show signs of ash, because some archaeologists in the Middle East - not impressed by the bowls - used them as ash trays.

In summary, a few of the leading bowl scholars of today believe that the potential damage to the inscriptions and the difficult logistics are not worth the risk of doing further testing at the moment.

## CONCLUSION

The bowls leave us with a unique and challenging view of Jewish life in the Sasanian Empire. As we can see, the questions far outweigh the answers. We are thwarted by the rudimentary and destructive practices of previous archaeologists and by the political climate of today's world. We live in a time where chemical analysis can give us grand and conclusive results, but the price of destroying the antiquities is just too high. Despite the obstacles, there is no doubt that there will be important progress in the days to come, as scholars around the world peer into an ancient culture where emerging rabbinics and Jewish magic collide.

Written by April Lynn Downey

To read about Zoroastrianism, please click [here](#).

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## Winter Holidays from Around the World

December 6: St. Nicholas Day - Northwest Europe

December 8: Bodhi Day - world, Buddhist

December 7-15: Hanukkah - Jewish

December 12: Feast Day of Our Lady Guadalupe - Mexico, Catholic

December 13: Santa Lucia Festival - Sweden and parts of Italy, Catholic

December 16-24: Simbang Gabi - Philippines, Catholic

December 21: Winter Solstice - world, cosmic

December 21-January 1: Yule - world, Wiccan / Neo-Pagan, traditionally Norse festival

December 25: Christmas - world

December 26: Zarathosht Diso - world, Zoroastrian

December 26-January 1: Kwanzaa - South Africa, Caribbean, United States

December 31: Omisoka - Japan

January 6: Three Kings' Day / 12<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas - Spain & Latin America, Christian

January 15: Makar Sankranti - India, Hindu

January 21: World Religion Day - world, Baha'i

February 10: Lunar New Year - China, some other Asian countries

February 13: Mardi Gras - United States, Brazil

March 6: Purim - world, Jewish

March 7: Holi - world, Hindu

March 10-April 8: Ramadan - world, Islam



# The Archives

## St. Augustine's "City of God" – 1446-82



From The Metropolitan Museum of Art: "This volume is one of three containing the complete Spanish translation from the Latin of Saint Augustine's City of God (De Civitate Dei), written in the early fifth century, after the sack of Rome by the Visigoths. Augustine, bishop of Hippo in North Africa, developed the concept of the Church as a spiritual heavenly City of God in contrast to the material earthly City of Man." The artist was Cano de Aranda who produced this work between 1446 and 1482 C.E.



## The Belsnickel – The Evening Star - 1902

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arouses curiosity.

For family gatherings on Christmas eve there is no merrier custom than that followed by the Pennsylvania Dutch—that of receiving a visit from old Santa Claus, or, as he is called, "Belsnickel." His approach is heralded by the sound of sleigh bells. Nearer and nearer they come, until the old saint makes his entrance through a convenient window. To come through the door would spoil the illusion. If he is the real Dutch saint, he will wear no furs, save his shaggy cap, and his outer garments will be flaming red. He carries a pack filled with trifles for indiscriminate distribution and plenty of goodies.

His most important function is to show his fondness for the little folks by using his switch on their elders and reserving all his favors for children. In families where this practice has prevailed for generations, the exchange of gifts is delayed until morning, but "Belsnickel" distributes all the toothsome goodies.

If something elaborate is desired try

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This 1902 news article shows a growing confabulation between the Belsnickel (described on page 4 of this edition) and Santa Claus.



# Dictionary of Modern Slang, Cant, and Vulgar Words – 1860

108

A DICTIONARY OF

**BUNDLE**, "to BUNDLE a person off," *i.e.*, to pack him off, send him flying.  
**BUNG**, the landlord of a public-house.  
**BUNG**, to give, pass, hand over, drink, or indeed to perform any action; **BUNG UP**, to close up—*Pugilistic*; "BUNG over the rag," hand over the money—*Old*, used by *Beaumont and Fletcher*, and *Shakespeare*. Also, to deceive one by a lie, to **CRAM**, which see.  
**BUNKER**, beer.  
**BUNTS**, costermonger's perquisites; the money obtained by giving light weight, &c.; costermongers' goods sold by boys on commission. Probably a corruption of *bonus*, **BONE** being the slang for good. **BUNCE**, *Grose* gives as the cant word for money.  
**BURDON'S HOTEL**, Whitecross-street prison, of which the Governor is or was a Mr. Burdon.  
**BURERK**, a lady. *Grose* gives **BURICK**, a prostitute.  
**BURKE**, to kill, to murder, by pitch plaster or other foul means. From Burke, the notorious Whitechapel murderer, who with others used to waylay people, kill them, and sell their bodies for dissection at the hospitals.  
**BURYING A MOLL**, running away from a mistress.  
**BUSKER**, a man who sings or performs in a public house.—*Scotch*.  
**BUSK** (or **BUSKING**), to sell obscene songs and books at the bars and in the tap-rooms of public houses. Sometimes implies selling any articles.  
**BUSS**, an abbreviation of "omnibus," a public carriage. Also, a kiss.  
**BUST**, or **BURST**, to tell tales, to **SPLIT**, to inform. **BUSTING**, informing against accomplices when in custody.  
**BUSTER** (**BURSTER**), a small new loaf; "twopenny **BUSTER**," a twopenny loaf. "A pennorth o' **BEE'S WAX** (cheese) and a penny **BUSTER**," a common snack at beershops.  
**BUSTER**, an extra size; "what a **BUSTER**," what a large one; "in for a **BUSTER**," determined on an extensive frolic or spree. *Scotch*, **BUSTUOUS**; *Icelandic*, **BOSTRA**.  
**BUSTLE**, money; "to draw the **BUSTLE**."  
**BUTTER**, or **BATTER**, praise or flattery. **TO BUTTER**, to flatter, cajole.  
**BUTTER-FINGERED**, apt to let things fall.

MODERN SLANG AND CANT WORDS.

109

**BUTTON**, a decoy, sham purchaser, &c. At any mock or sham auction seedy specimens may be seen. Probably from the connection of *buttons* with *Brummagem*, which is often used as a synonyme for a sham.  
**BUTTONER**, a man who entices another to play.—*See* **BOX-NETTER**.  
**BUTTONS**, a page,—from the rows of gilt buttons which adorn his jacket.  
**BUTTONS**, "not to have all one's **BUTTONS**," to be deficient in intellect.  
**BUZ**, to pick pockets; **BUZ-FAKING**, robbing.  
**BUZ**, to share equally the last of a bottle of wine, when there is not enough for a full glass for each of the party.  
**BUZZERS**, pickpockets. *Grose* gives **BUZ COVE** and **BUZ GLOAK**, the latter is very ancient cant.  
**BUZ-BLOAK**, a pickpocket, who principally confines his attention to purses and loose cash. *Grose* gives **BUZ-GLOAK** (or **CLOAK** ?), an ancient cant word. **BUZ-NAPPER**, a young pickpocket.  
**BUZ-NAPPER'S ACADEMY**, a school in which young thieves are trained. Figures are dressed up, and experienced tutors stand in various difficult attitudes for the boys to practice upon. When clever enough they are sent on the streets. It is reported that a house of this nature is situated in a court near Hatton Garden. The system is well explained in *Dickens' Oliver Twist*.  
**BYE-BLOW**, a bastard child.  
**BY GEORGE**, an exclamation similar to **BY JOVE**. The term is older than is frequently imagined, *vide Bacchus and Venus* (p. 117), 1737. "Fore (or by) **GEORGE**, I'd knock him down." A street compliment to Saint George, the patron Saint of England, or possibly to the House of Hanover.  
**BY GOLLY**, an ejaculation, or oath; a compromise for "by God." In the United States, small boys are permitted by their guardians to say **GOL DARN** anything, but they are on no account allowed to commit the profanity of **G—d—g** anything. An effective ejaculation and moral waste pipe for interior passion or wrath is seen in the exclamation—**BY THE-EVER-LIVING-JUMPING-MOSES**—a harmless phrase, that from its length expends a considerable quantity of fiery anger.



forget one's part in a performance—*Theatrical*; **STICK ON**, to overcharge or defraud; **STICK UP FOR**, to defend a person, especially when slandered in his absence; **STICK UP TO**, to persevere in courting or attacking, whether in fisty-cuffs or argument; "to **STICK** in one's gizzard," to rankle in one's heart; "to **STICK TO** a person," to adhere to one, be his friend through adverse circumstances.

**STICKS**, furniture, or household chattels; "pick up your **STICKS** and cut!" summary advice to a person to take himself and furniture away.—*Cumberland*.

**STICKS**, pistols.—*Nearly obsolete*.

**STICK-UPS**, or **GILLS**, shirt collars.

**STICKINGS**, bruised or damaged meat sold to sausage makers and penny pie shops.—*North*.

**STICKY**, wax.

**STIFF**, paper, a bill of acceptance, &c.; "how did you get it, **STIFF** or *hard*?" *i.e.*, did he pay you cash or give a bill?

**STIFF FENCER**, a street seller of writing paper.

**STIFF 'UN**, a corpse.—*Term used by undertakers*.

**STILTON**, "that's the **STILTON**," or "it is not the **STILTON**," *i.e.*, that is quite the thing, or that is not quite the thing; —polite rendering of "that is not the **CHEESE**," which see.

**STINGO**, strong liquor.—*Yorkshire*.

**STINK**, a disagreeable exposure.

**STINKOMALEE**, a name given to the then New London University by Theodore Hook. Some question about *Trincomalee* was agitated at the same time. It is still applied by the students of the old Universities, who regard it with disfavour from its admitting all denominations.

**STIPE**, a stipendiary magistrate.—*Provincial*.

**STIR**, a prison, a lock-up; "IN **STIR**," in jail. *Anglo Saxon*, **STYR**, correction, punishment.

**STIR UP SUNDAY**, the Sunday next before Advent, the collect for that day commencing with the words "Stir up." Schoolboys, growing excited at the prospect of the vacation, irreverently commemorate it by stirring up—pushing and poking each other. **CRIB CRUST MONDAY** and **TUG BUTTON TUESDAY** are distinguished by similar tricks; while on **PAY-OFF WEDNESDAY** they retaliate small grudges in a playful facetious way. Forby says, good housewives in Norfolk consider themselves reminded by the name to mix the ingredients for their Christmas mince pies.

**STOCKDOLAGER**, a heavy blow, a "finisher." *Italian*, **STOCCADO**, a fencing term.

**STODGE**, to surfeit, gorge, or clog with food.

**STONE JUG**, a prison.

**STOOK**, a pocket-handkerchief.

**STOOK HAULER**, or **BUZZER**, a thief who takes pocket-handkerchiefs.

**STOP**, a detective policeman.

**STORY**, a falsehood,—the soft synonyme for a *lie*, allowed in family circles and boarding-schools. A Puritanism that came in fashion with the tirade against romances, all novels and stories being considered as dangerous and false.

**STOTOR**, a heavy blow, a **SETTLER**.—*Old cant*.

**STOW**, to leave off, or have done; "STOW IT, the gorger's leary," leave off, the person is looking. See **STASH**, with which it is synonymous.—*Ancient cant*.

**STOW FAKING**! leave off there, be quiet! **FAKING** implying anything that may be going on.

**STRAW**. Married ladies are said to be "in **THE STRAW**" at their *accouchements*. The phrase is a coarse allusion to farm-yard animals in a similar condition.

**STRAWING**, *selling* straws in the streets (generally for a penny) and *giving* the purchaser a paper (indecent or political), or a gold (!) ring,—neither of which the patterer states he is allowed to sell.

**STREAK**, to decamp, run away.—*Saxon*. In *America* the phrase is "to make **STREAKS**," or "make **TRACKS**."

**STREAKY**, irritated, ill-tempered.

**STREET PITCHERS**, negro minstrels, ballad singers, long song men, men "working a board" on which have been painted various exciting scenes in some terrible drama, the details of which the **STREET PITCHER** is bawling out, and selling in a little book or broadsheet (price one penny); or any persons who make a stand in the streets, and sell articles for their living.

**STRETCH**, abbreviation of "STRETCH one's neck," to hang, be executed as a malefactor.—*Bulwer's Paul Cliford*.

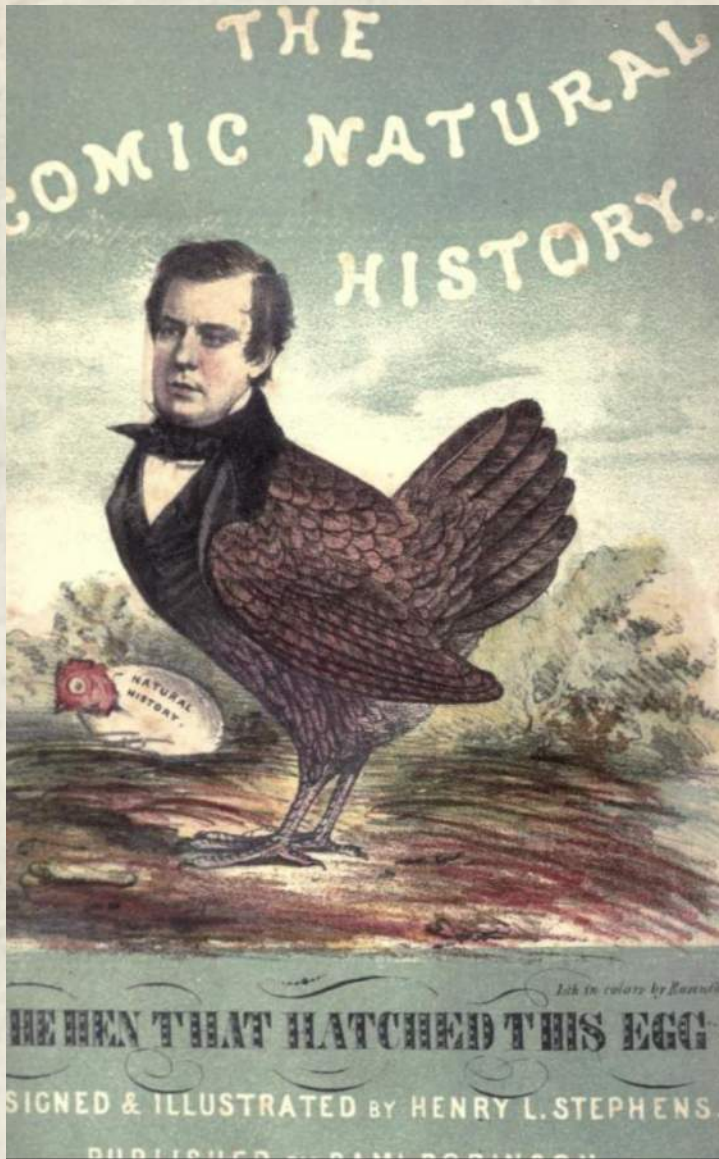
**STRETCH**, twelve months,—generally used to intimate the time any one has been sentenced by the judge or magistrate. **ONE STRETCH** is to be imprisoned twelve months, **TWO STRETCH** is two years, **THREE STRETCH** is three years, and so on.

**STRETCHER**, a falsehood.

Written in London by John Camden Hotten.



*The Comic Natural History of the Human Race – 1851*



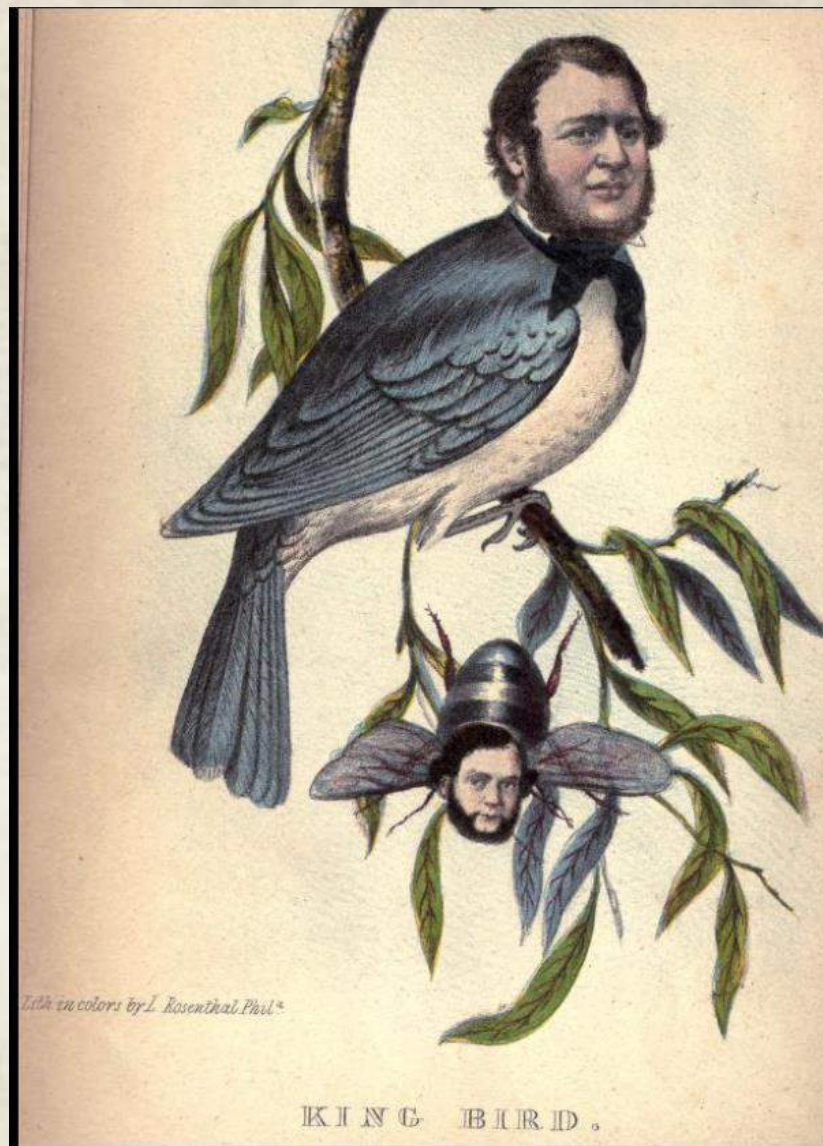
THE  
COMIC  
NATURAL HISTORY  
OF THE  
HUMAN RACE:

DESIGNED AND ILLUSTRATED BY

HENRY L. STEPHENS.

PHILADELPHIA:  
S. ROBINSON, No. 9 SANSON STREET.





From the Public Domain Review: " 'Transmigration is held to be very marvelous', reports H. L. Stephens in *The Comic Natural History of the Human Race*. And while these 'kaleideiscopical' experiences are often attributed to 'Hindoos, and other far-off outsiders', he sets out to prove that metempsychosis can occur closer to home in Philadelphia. Lampooning well-known local and national personalities of the mid-nineteenth century, [H.L.] Stephens and the lithographer Max Rosenthal transformed them into exotic hybrid caricatures: forty human heads mounted on bugs, fish, and bats.



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# The Museum

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## Toltec Eagle Relief

Mexico, 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Found at the Metropolitan Museum of Art



<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/307599>

Made with andesite / dacite stone and paint. Overall dimensions are 24-1/2" x 30-1/2" x 2-1/2".

# The Adoration of the Shepherds

Italy, 14<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Found at The Metropolitan Museum of Art



<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/470600>

A tempera painting on poplar wood with gilding, created by Bartolo di Fredi in 1374 CE.  
69-1/8" tall x 45-1/8" wide.



# Plaque with Scenes from Life of Jesus

Germany, 12<sup>th</sup> century CE

Found at The Metropolitan Museum of Art



<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464399>

This is a plaque from a portable altar, showing scenes from the life of Jesus. It is made out of champlevé enamel and copper-gilt, from Cologne, Germany between 1160-80 CE.

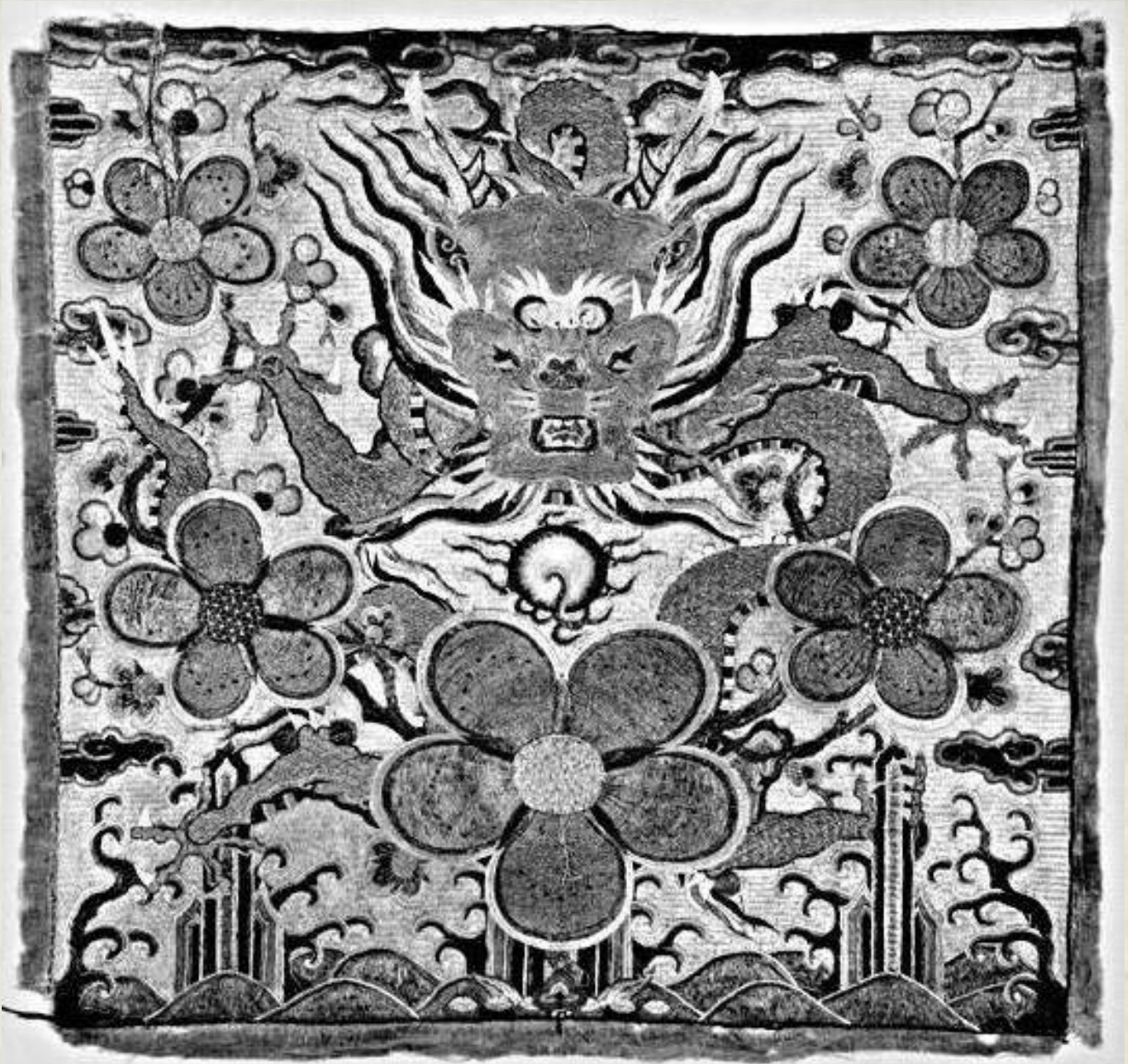


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## Badge with Dragon and Plum Blossoms

China, late 16<sup>th</sup>-early 17<sup>th</sup> Century

Found at The Metropolitan Museum of Art



<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/44117>

According to the Met: "Badges with festival symbols were not used at the Chinese court after 1644, and those showing plum blossoms are especially rare. Plum-blossom badges were appropriate for the winter solstice, a festival of the eleventh lunar month. Both the form of the dragon's head seen here and the embroidery technique have close parallels in the finds from Dingling, the tomb of the Ming-dynasty Wanli emperor (r. 1573–1620)." Dimensions are 15" x 15".



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# The Gallery

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## Brussels, Belgium

Founded in 979 CE, Brussels has a long and rich history and is filled with architectural beauty.

















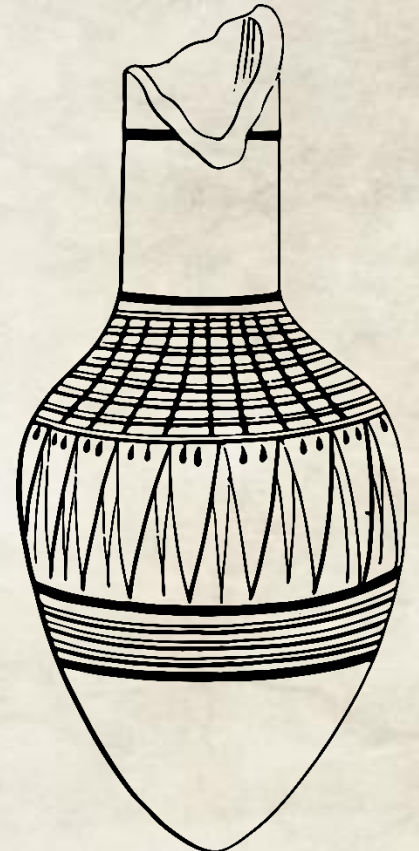
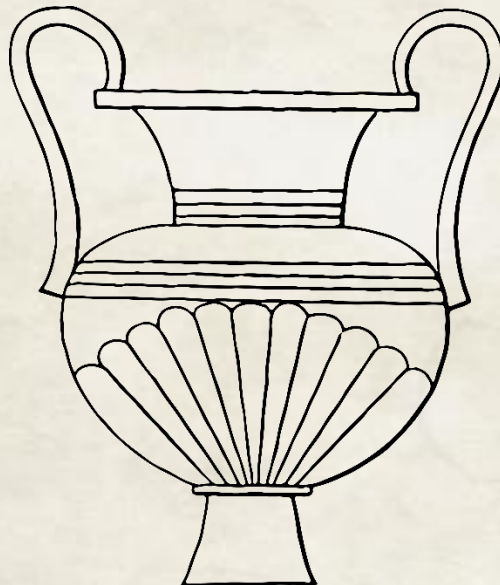
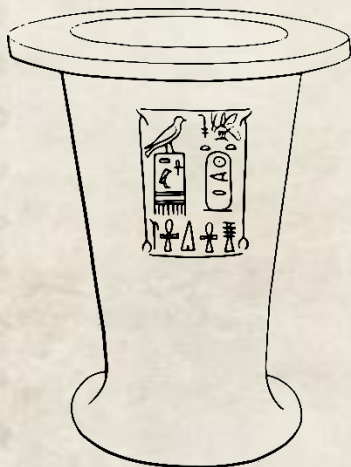
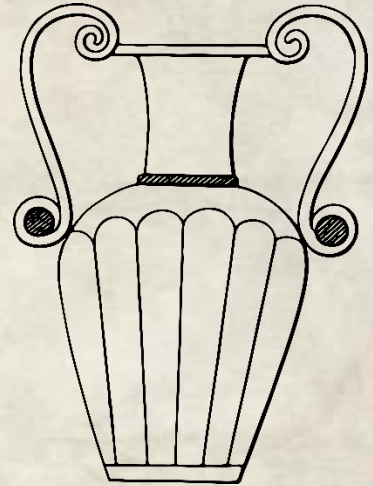
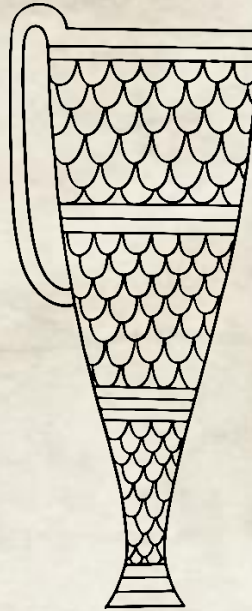
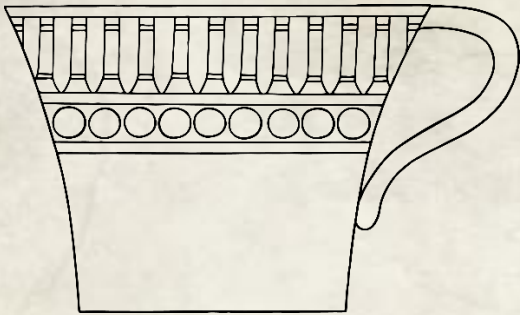
Photography by April Lynn Downey

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# Activities

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## Ancient Style Pots – Coloring Page





## Medieval Word Search

U N D Q U T T F M N Z M Y S I B O G J J A Z E Z F A S N R O  
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ILLUMINATED

MANUSCRIPTS

BYZANTINE

MEDIEVAL

RELIGION

CRUSADES

CHIVALRY

VIKINGS

LAMBKIN

BURGESS

VASSAL

KNIGHT

CASTLE

CHURCH

GOTHIC

FEUDAL

PLAGUE

WARS

ROME

GAUL

POPE

# Ornamental P Monographic – Coloring Page

The letter "P" reproduction of the work of Lukas Kilian from 1627 CE

