



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Brass and bronze in Sasanian metallurgy an archaeological assessment

DAVIS M. ^{1,2}, MONGIATTI A. ², SIMPSON S. ², MARTIN-TORRES M. ¹*

¹ The University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom

² The British Museum, London, United Kingdom

*Corresponding author

Abstract

Copper and its alloys were crucial materials in the Ancient Near East. Their importance is reflected in the wide range of object forms, but also in technological innovations and in the changing selection of different alloys. While bronze was the dominant alloy in Antiquity, brass was also widely used in the Roman, Byzantine and Islamic Near East. Unfortunately, we know comparatively little about equivalent Sasanian metalworking. Archaeological finds from sites across the Middle East and western Asia provide new evidence and a new opportunity to investigate these practices.

We present analyses of hundreds of excavated artefacts from regional sites dating from Late Antiquity to the early Islamic period, including the Persian Gulf port of Siraf and the city of Merv. Using XRF and SEM-EDS, we trace the different metals and alloys in circulation at different times and places, as well as the various manufacturing processes associated with their use. We also integrate these new analyses with a range of legacy scientific data from the eastern Mediterranean and Asia. This provides context and insights into the choices of metalworkers and consumers in this period, as well as changes in the nature and role of bronze and brass within these communities.

Keywords

Sasanian, Islamic, Brass, Bronze, Metallurgy

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