

Chapter 10 of Category III

It is the basin of the slave and is divided into two sections

Section 1

Description of its outside appearance and functioning and the construction of the dais (kursī) and the slave

It is a square-shaped dais about 1 sp. high and 2 sp. by 2 sp. in area. On it is a kneeling slave holding a pitcher in his right hand and a towel and comb in his left, which is raised, covering his upper arm. On the corners of the dais are four columns which support a handsome castle with a dome on top of it and a bird on top of that. Directly beneath the pitcher is a half basin, soldered to the dais – many basins are positioned like that. In the floor of the basin is a handsome, crouching duck, its tail pressed against that side of the basin which adjoins the dais. Its neck is raised then bent [down] from the middle so that its beak touches the floor of the basin. So much for its appearance, now for its functioning: the servant fetches it and brings it in front of the master, the bird whistles and water pours from the pitcher's spout. He [i.e. the master] performs his ritual ablutions until they are completed. The water collects on the floor of the basin and the duck drinks it all. The slave extends his hand with the towel and the comb. He takes the towel and dries himself with it, uses the comb and puts it back on his hand. The servant takes the basin away from the company. In the side of the dais is a tap, and he opens it to extract the water, all of which was drunk by the duck.

A square-shaped dais is made from copper, 1 sp. high and 2 sp. by 2 sp. in area. Upon it is placed a kneeling slave holding a handsome brass pitcher in his right hand. This pitcher is divided in the middle into two chambers, a chamber from the middle down and a chamber from the middle up. It is closed at the top by a plate. Two holes are made below the handle, and [two pipes] are fitted to them: one pipe goes from the handle through the palm into the upper arm of the slave and a whistle's ball is fixed to it; and a pipe which goes through the palm and is bent down at the slave's elbow and terminates below the slave's skirt, for the time being. At the position of the spout a hole is made, in which the end of a siphon is inserted until it almost touches the [dividing] plate. It rises one finger's length inside the body of the pitcher and is then bent down until its end is lower than the end which is inside the pitcher. The visible part is adorned, and resembles the head and neck of a peacock – or something similar.

The left hand moves on an axle, the ends of which are fixed firmly in the sleeve at the elbow. The extension of the elbow goes into his cavity and on it [i.e. the extension] is a staple which is mentioned below. Then four columns are placed on the corners of the dais, each column slightly higher than the slave's head. Above the columns a handsome castle is installed, above which is a dome, and on the dome is a dainty bird. This castle is thoroughly soldered, to serve as a tank. A cover is placed on top of it. To the floor of the castle a pipe is fixed which goes down through the right-hand column which is behind the slave, is turned under the deck of the dais and rises into the hollow of the slave. Its end is connected to the end of the pipe which comes up from the pitcher's handle and [goes] through the palm and sleeve of the slave. This pipe should be the same width as the pitcher's siphon so that water does not rise into the whistle's ball. If some water is poured into the castle it runs down through the pipe then rises through it and flows into the pitcher. It drives out the air which is in the pitcher, and this has no outlet except the pipe which rises from the pitcher's handle into the upper arm of the slave, and which has the whistle on it. This whistles and the whistling is thought [to come] from the beak of the bird on top of the dome.

Then a float is made, as described in a number of previous chapters. In the centre of its [upper] circle a staple is fixed, to which is [attached] a chain or a stout string. It is placed on the floor of the dais and a hole is made in the deck, vertically below the staple in the extension of the slave's left arm. The chain is lifted through the hole in the deck of the dais into the hollow in the slave and its end is attached to the staple on the extension of his arm. When the float is resting on the floor of the dais its weight pulls the extension of the slave's elbow and lifts his hand with the towel and comb until his palm and fingers almost touch his shoulder. When water runs into the dais the float rises and the slave's hand sinks.

Section 2

On the construction of the basin and its contents

A basin is made shaped like half a basin, having a wide floor and short sides, with a pedestal which rests on the ground. Its diameter adjoins the dais and it is at the same level as the dais. It is soldered securely to the dais. Then a handsome duck is made, having no legs. When it is placed on the floor of the basin its neck rises as far as the middle [of the neck] and is then bent down

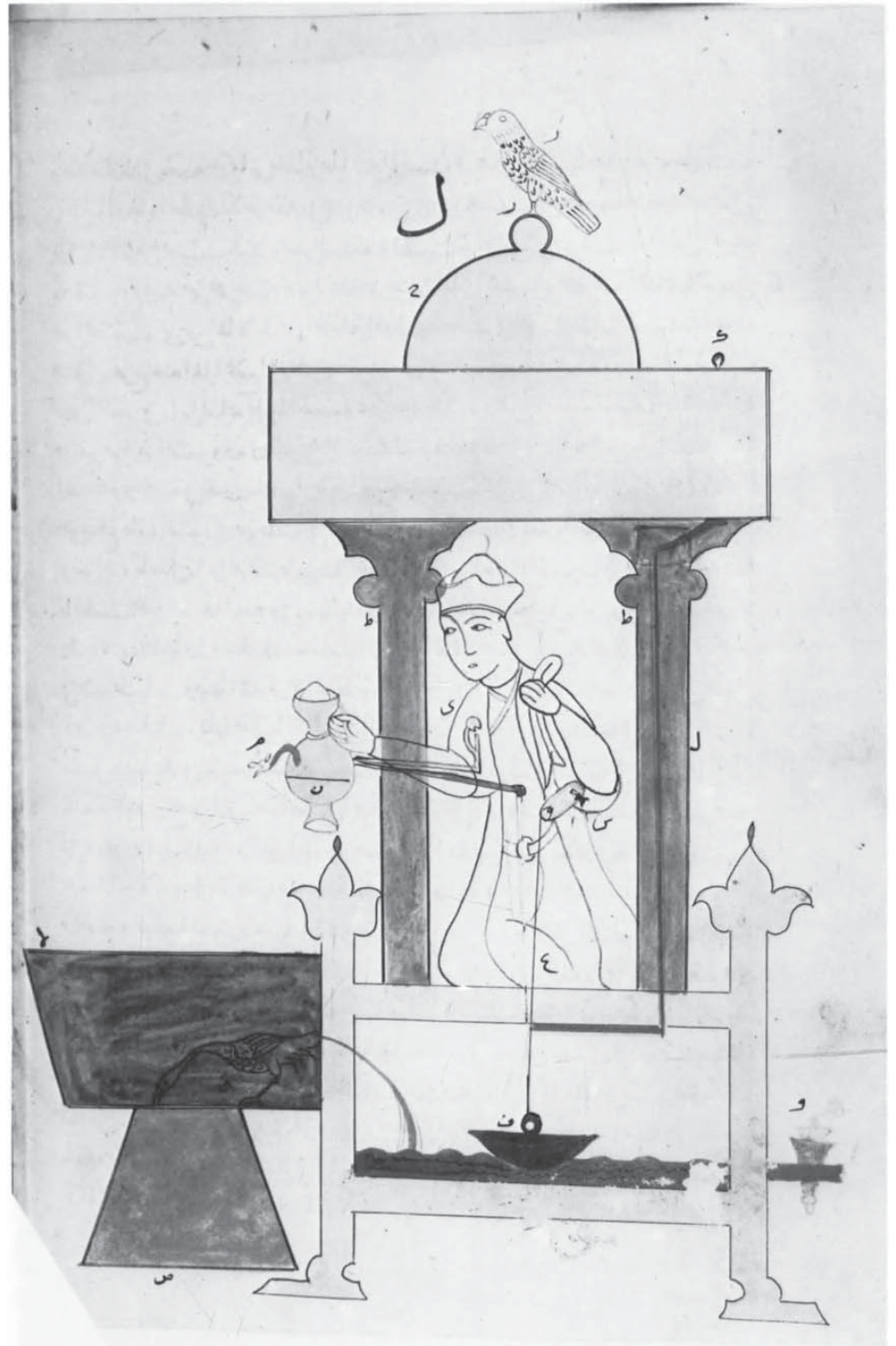
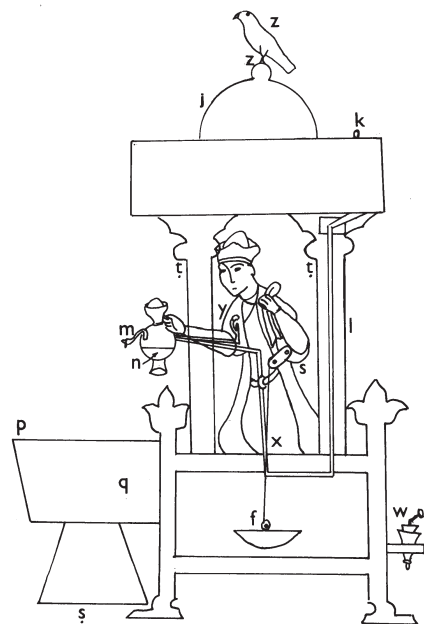


Fig. 119.

until its beak touches the basin's floor. A narrow siphon is inserted in its neck – one end of the siphon is the tip of the beak. The other end goes through its rump, through the side of the basin into the hollow of the dais, and is brought down a little lower than the level of the basin's floor. It is firmly soldered to the basin and to the dais. When water is poured into the floor of the basin it rises until it covers the bend in the duck's neck, [whereupon] it runs through the siphon into the hollow of the dais. No water can leak out of the basin, because the siphon is securely soldered to the basin. To the side of the basin near the bottom a tap is fitted from which, when it is opened, the water collected in the dais can be extracted.

Then an upright valve (*faythūn*) is fitted to the upper end of the pipe which descends from the floor of the castle, as follows: it is a valve seat (*tanūr*), half of which is [pushed] down over the end of the pipe, while the other half rises above the floor of the castle. In it is a plug which has an extension [rod] on its top which goes up to the top of the castle; and which has something on its end for turning the plug. In the centre of the [side of] the seat a hole is drilled laterally, as far as the centre [line] of the plug. Then a hole is made lengthwise through the plug from its underside to meet the hole from the seat. When water is poured into the floor of the castle it runs down through the hole in the valve into the pipe. When the extension on the top of the plug is rotated a little, the valve is shut and nothing flows from it into the pipe.

I have shown the picture of that [Fig. 119]: the basin *p*; the duck *q* with a siphon in its body; the dais *s*, with the float *f* inside it, upon which is a staple connected to the extension to the slave's arm by a chain *x*; the slave's hand *s* which moves on an axle in his sleeve, and which has a towel and a comb in it; then the pitcher – the plate *n* which divides the pitcher into two chambers; the spout *m* in which is a siphon going down into the upper chamber, its end almost touching the plate; the pipe *l* connected to it [i.e. the pitcher] which goes up from its handle, through the palm and sleeve of the slave, down through his hollow, turns under his skirt along the dais, and rises through column *l*; the top of the valve and its plug's extension *k* which goes up to the top of the castle; another pipe *y* which rises with this [i.e. the above mentioned] pipe from the pitcher and terminates at the end of the slave's upper arm, with the whistle's ball [fixed] in its end; three columns *t*; the castle *j*; the dome *z* with the bird *z* on top of it.

It is very clear that: water is poured into the castle while valve *k* is closed; the whole assembly is placed in front of the master and the servant opens valve *k* without being noticed, and then stands aside. The water descends and rises in pipe *l* and flows into the pitcher, covering the end of the siphon. The air in the pitcher is driven out and rushes through pipe *y*. The ball whistles and it is thought that the whistling comes from the bird's beak. This continues until the water rises above the bend in the siphon and flows out of the peacock's beak over the hands of the one who is performing his ritual ablutions. It collects in the basin until the water in the castle is almost exhausted, whereupon the duck drinks all the water that is in the basin. The slave holds out his left hand, with the towel and the comb. He [i.e. the master] dries himself and uses the comb, then puts them back into his hand. The servant takes the basin outside the company, opens the tap, and drains the water out of the dais.

That which requires painting is painted, that which requires scraping is scraped, and everything is coated with [Sandarac] oil.

That is what I wished to describe clearly.

[Now] I will describe what I made, namely a fountain which changes its shape at known intervals.

[End of Category III]