Traditional Artefacts

Special Project
M. Des.

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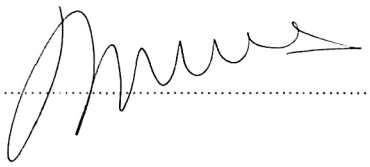
Approval Sheet

The Special Project entitled ‘Traditional Artefacts’ by Pooja Masurkar (Roll no. 136250014) is approved, in partial fulfilment of requirements of the Masters of Design degree in Visual Communication in Industrial Design Centre of Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

Guide  .....

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Date: 25th March, 2015

Acknowledgements

I thank my project guide, Prof. Ravi Poovaiah. I am grateful to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya and Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum for allowing photo documentation of artefacts. My sincere thanks to Industrial Design Centre and Indian Institute of Technology for providing the opportunity and resources to work on this project.

Thank you,
Pooja Masurkar

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Introduction

I visited Chhatrapati Shivaji Vastu Sangrahalaya and Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum to document various artefacts in social interaction. The following report exemplifies various types of artefacts used in India.

The artefacts documented in this report are:
i) Jewellery boxes
ii) Vases, Jars and Flasks
iii) Coins
iv) Trays
v) Miscellaneous artefacts

Jewellery Boxes

Jewellery Boxes

At different points of time in history, various types of jewellery boxes have been made to keep jewellery safe. The style, decorations and patterns adopted on these boxes were based on the preferences of the society and the degree of interest shown by rulers in patronizing art. Boxes were made by hand up until the 1800s. These boxes were usually customized for the individuals for whom they were being made for. In the early 1900s the boxes were inspired from art nouveau designs and stylized floral motifs. Various metals were used to make these boxes such as copper, electroplated gold, silver, ivory enamel, etc.

Apart from art metal jewellery boxes the other types of jewellery boxes were tramp art boxes which flourished from late 1800s through World War II. A few boxes were also made to commemorate certain events such as 1904's World Fair. Tramp art boxes were embellished with various objects such as glass, shells, pebbles nails and screws. Art Deco was popular in the 20th Century. Different types of man made materials were used to make jewellery boxes such as alabaster, bone, horn leather, tortoise shell, bakelite, ivory etc.

The jewellery boxes as observed in the museums that I visited were made of sandalwood which had intricate carvings with fine details of foliage, pattern and motifs. The jali patterns are seen on the ivory jewellery box of the Mughal era.

Reference: *http://antiques.lovetoknow.com/Rare_Jewelry_Boxes*

Sandalwood Jewellery box at Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum

Sandalwood Jewellery box at Bhau Daji Lad

Jali Ivory Jewellery Box at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalay

Jewellery Box at Chhatrapati Shivaji Vastu Sangrahalay

At Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

Vases, Jugs and Flasks

Vases, Jars and Flasks

Chinese vases comprise of ceramics made of strong bone white porcelain. The greenish glow of jade was replicated with celadon fired over earthenware and stoneware. Porcelain came into its own during the Song and Yuan dynasties which stretched between 960 and 1368. The first imperial porcelain vases were produced during the early part of this period. The colour blue could withstand the high heat while firing porcelain. Illustrations in the same cobalt blue colour adorned white porcelain vases with themes of fish, insects, birds stories and poems. There was an uprise of innovative polychrome designs during the Ming dynasty.

These vases from China and Japan were expressive and depicted design motifs ranging from dragons, narrative scenes, floral designs, dripping glazes, abstract patterns, spiritual figures and literature. Cloisonne was one of the techniques that emerged during the Ming dynasty which involved filling cloisons with glass paste that was made out of several metallic oxides for various colored enamels such as blue with cobalt, purple with manganese, orange with uranium. Enamels were also used as glaze on vases to create overglaze enamel porcelain.

In the 17th Century the Japanese ceramists were involved in creating Imari porcelain by developing their original overglaze enamel techniques to create vases with blue underglaze and topped with overglazes of gold and orange. In the 19th century Satsuma vases were exported to the west. Hirado vases were not heavily glazed but were bone white with simplistic blue designs on the surface with dragons, chrysanthemum petals on their bases and necks. The Qing dynasty witnessed the classification of painted porcelain based on the colour palette such as famille verte (green and iron red), famille rose (pink and purple), famille noire (black ground) and famille jaune (yellow ground).

Reference: *http://www.collectorsweekly.com/asian/vases*

Brass Vase at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

Brass Vase at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

Brass Vase at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

Brass Vases and Jar at Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum

Vases at t Dr. Bhaudaji Lad Museum

Jug at Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum

Vase at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

Vase at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

Vases at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya

Kettle at Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum

Flasks at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya

Kettle at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya

Vases at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya

Vases at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya

Vases, Jugs and Urns at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya

Vases and jugs at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya

Jugs, vases and pots at Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum

Jug at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya

Vases at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya

Coins

Indian Coins

The history of Indian coins provides us a glimpse into the various kingdoms that ruled the land and set forth their coins. Some of these dynasties managed to attain the status of empires while few of them ruled small territories. The coinage system of the yesteryears reveals variety of coins of various metals.

Gupta Coin

The coins are immensely helpful in determining dates in archaeology as well as furnish a lot of information about an individual, the socio-political, economic and cultural aspects of the era it was in use. Coins can also play a crucial role in revealing the religious history of the times for eg. The coins of Kushanas depict effigies of a number of Buddhist, Greek, Iranian, Brahmanical Gods and Godesses. The coins of Kanishka represent Buddha in the human form for the first time. Deities such as Goddess Durga, Lakshmi and Ganga are seen on the coins of the Gupta Empire. The study of coins has helped authenticate several historical events cognized from literature and archaeological findings. Ancient rocks and other inscriptions could be read by historians due the decrypting of Kharosthi and Brahmi scripts which enabled in demystifying the history of ancient India.

Coins Issued by Chandragupta I

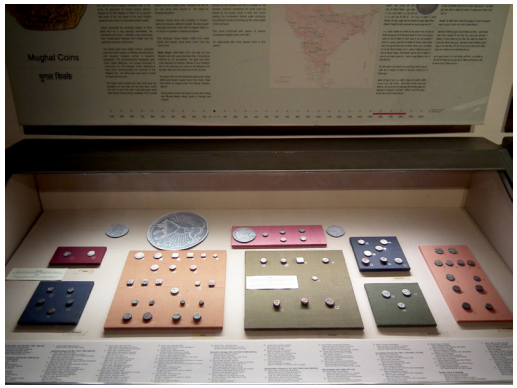
If we scan the evolvement of Indian coins, the middle ages were characterized by the powerful Gupta Empire dominated by emperors such as Chandragupta I, Samudragupta and Skandagupta. The arrival of Muslim invaders from places like Arab, Turkey and Persia led to the diminished dominance of Hindu rulers. Eventually the Delhi Sultanate altered the scenario of Indian coinage and mint. Medieval Indian coins reflect the economic scenario of those times. For eg Sultans such as Ala ud din Khilji and Qutb ud din Albak had their treasuries full of pillage and plunder of southern kingdoms and had issued a variety of gold and silver coins. Mughal mintage ushered India to global fame after their advent in the early 16th century beginning from emperor Zahiruddin Mohammed Babur and flourishing under the reign of Jalaluddin Mohammed Akbar.

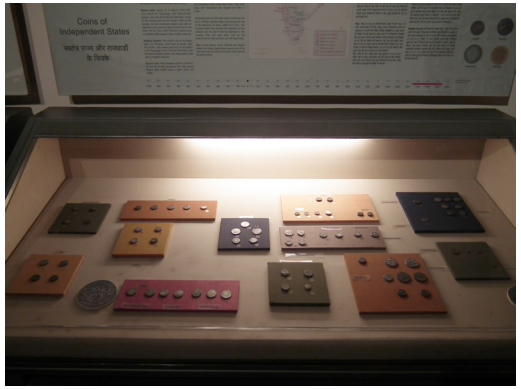
Coins of Mughal

A major breakthrough in Indian coinage was witnessed under the British Empire after the pre colonial era characterized by the downfall of the Mughal dynasty and the anarchy that reigned supreme after the death of Aurangzeb when several Indian states tried to rule such as Oudh,

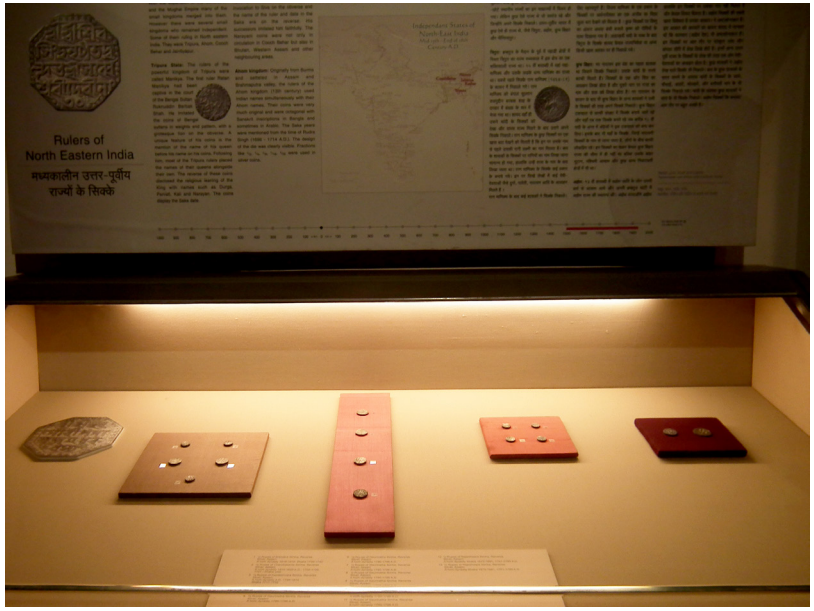
Hyderabad, Mysore and Gwalior and Rajputana.
The arrival of modern coins in India was marked by the British casting of coins. In 1906, the Indian coinage Act was passed which ordered the establishment of Mints and coins that would be issued and the criteria that would be maintained. The issuance of paper currency notes of one rupee and two and a half rupees by the British government due to the shortage of silver as a drawback of World War I was a significant step in breaking the historic system of coining in India.
After Independence India retained the monetary system of the previous colonial period. India's distinguishing coins were brought out on 15th August, 1950. 'Paise' and 'Anna' were introduced for the first time in nickel, bronze, aluminium and eventually stainless steel. Later the paper currency was also introduced.

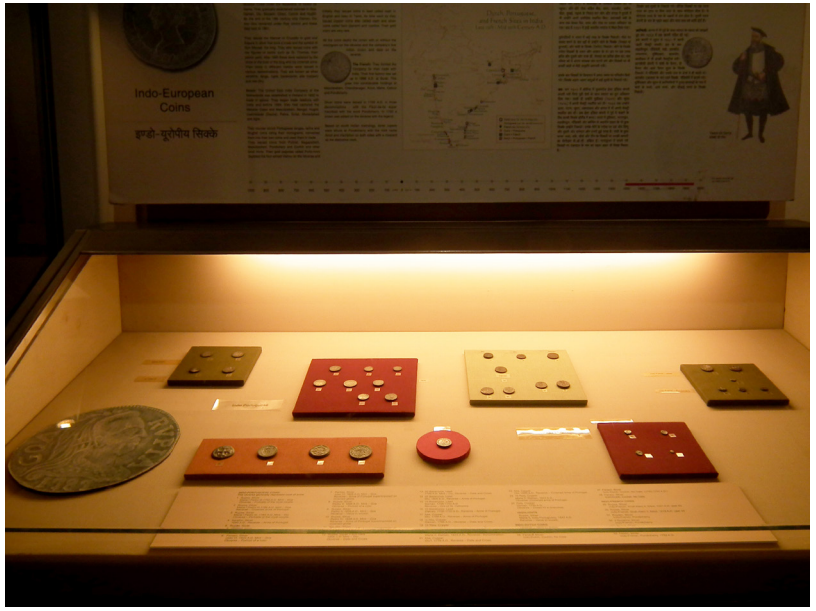
Reference and pics courtesy: *http://www.indianetzone.com/2/indian_coins_coinage.htm*

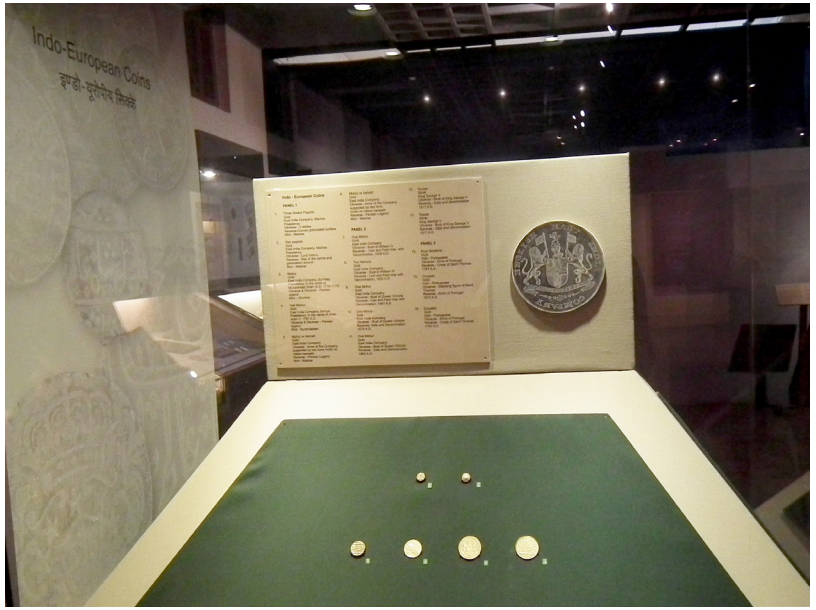




Coins at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya







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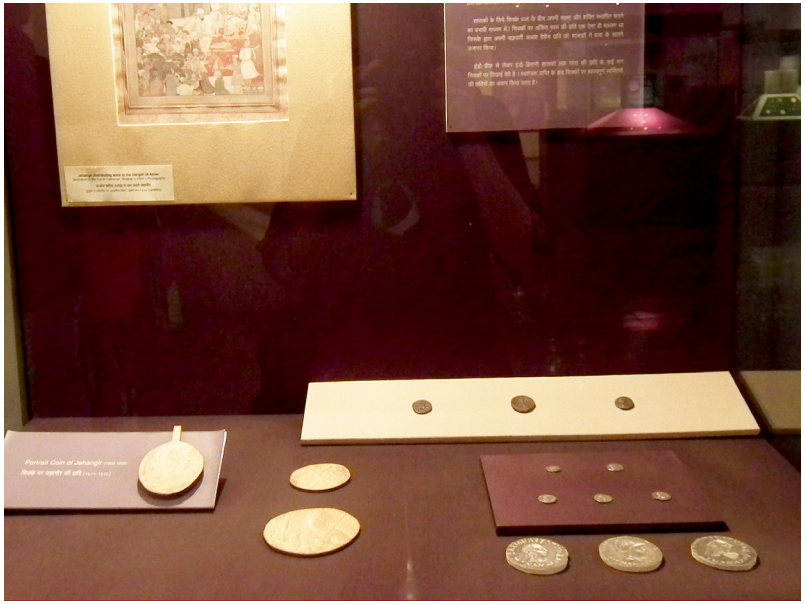

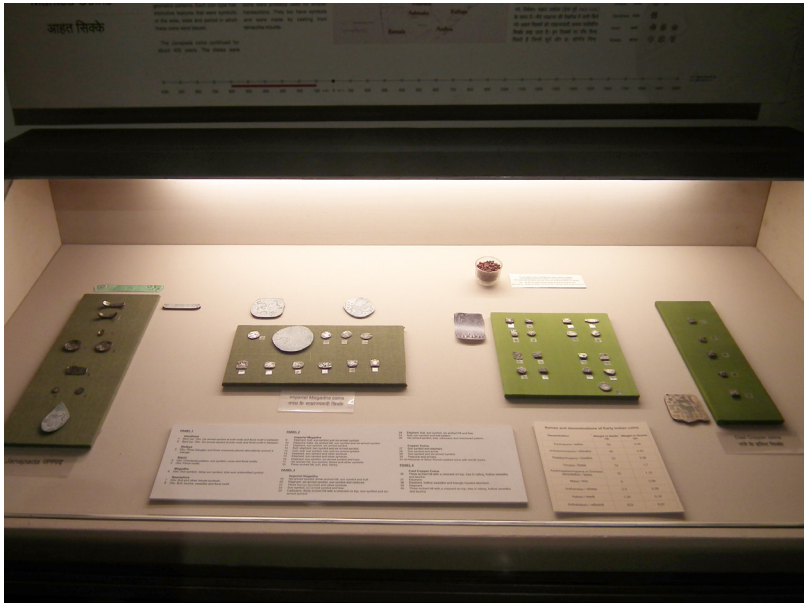

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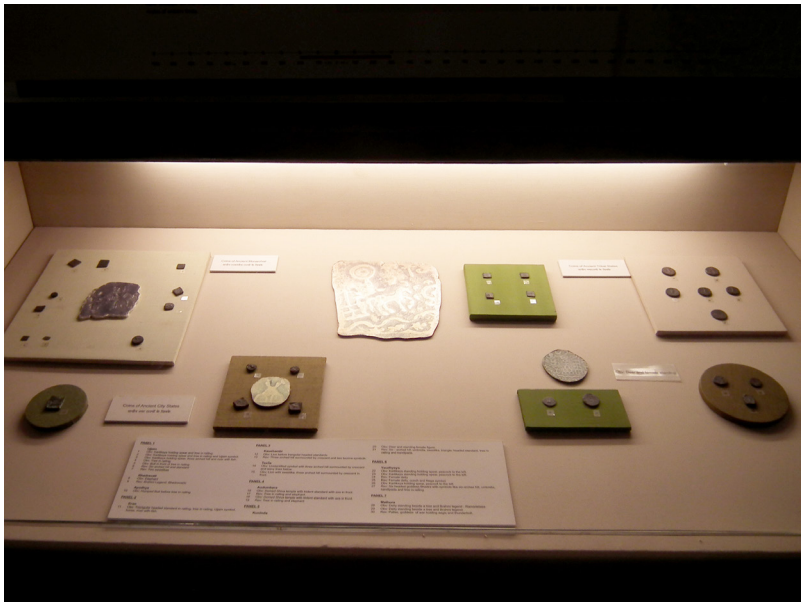

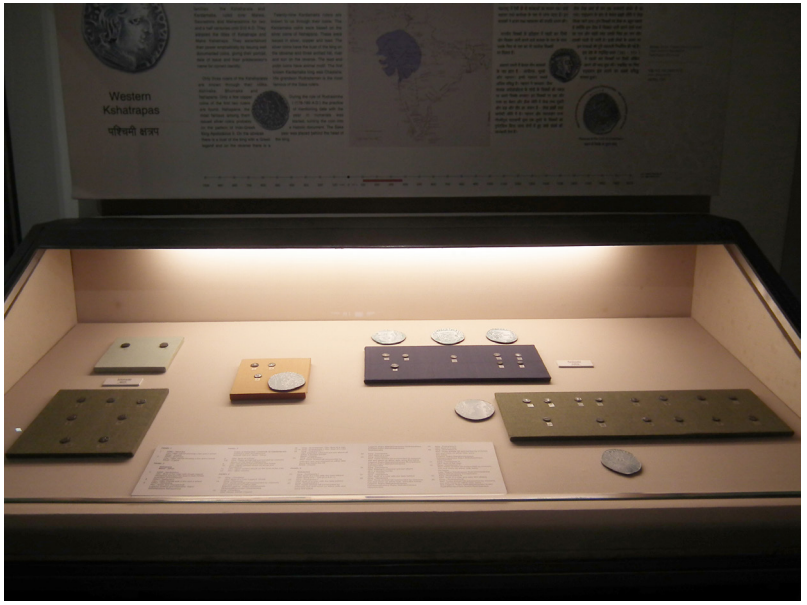

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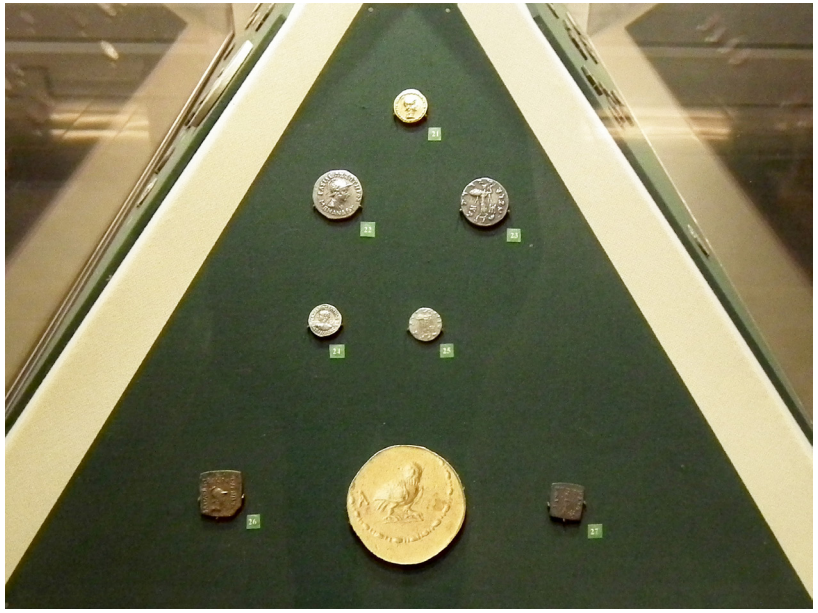

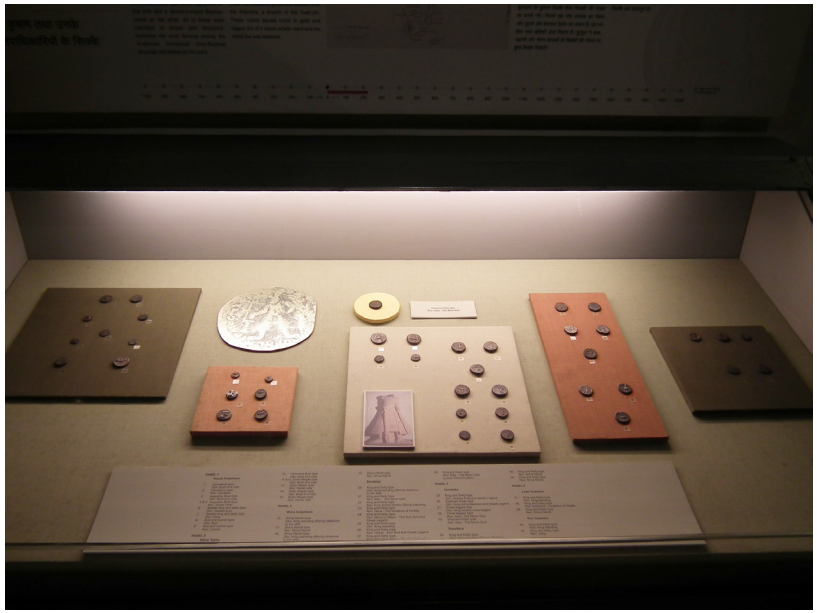

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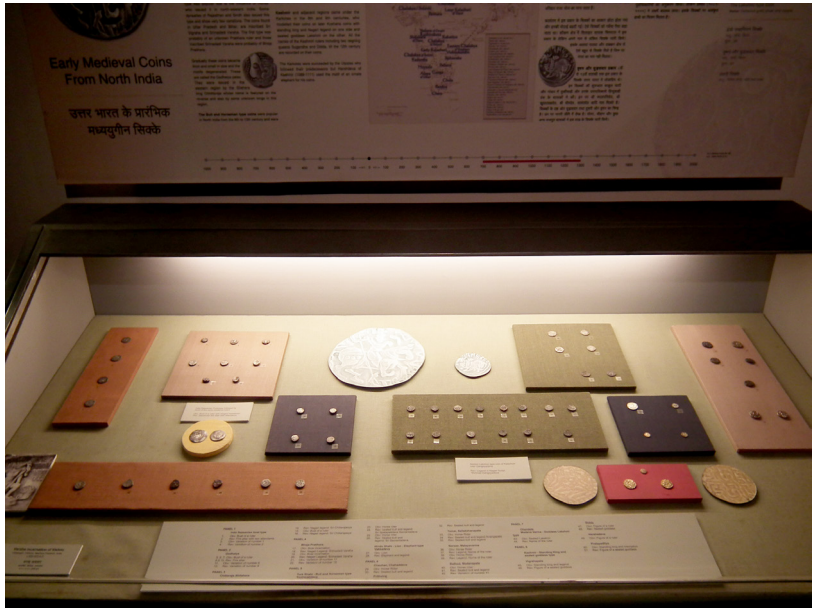

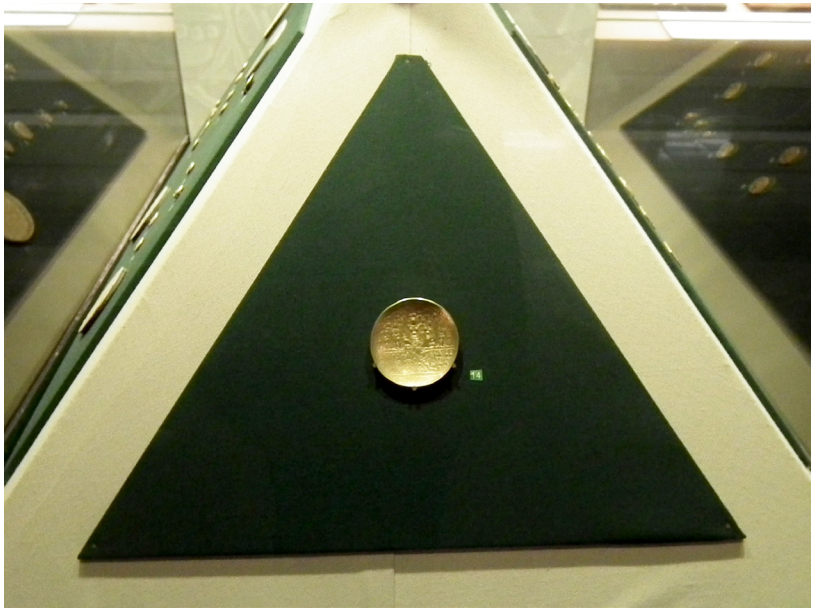

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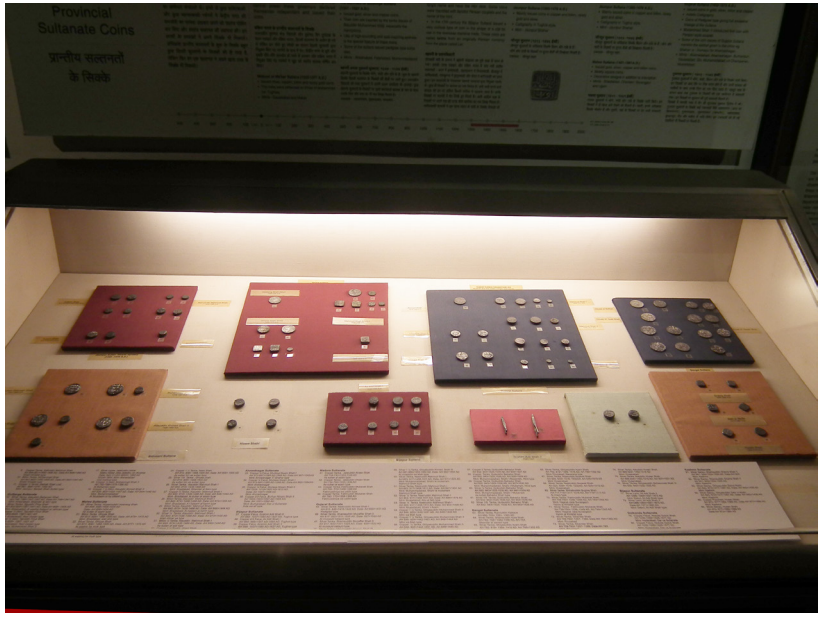

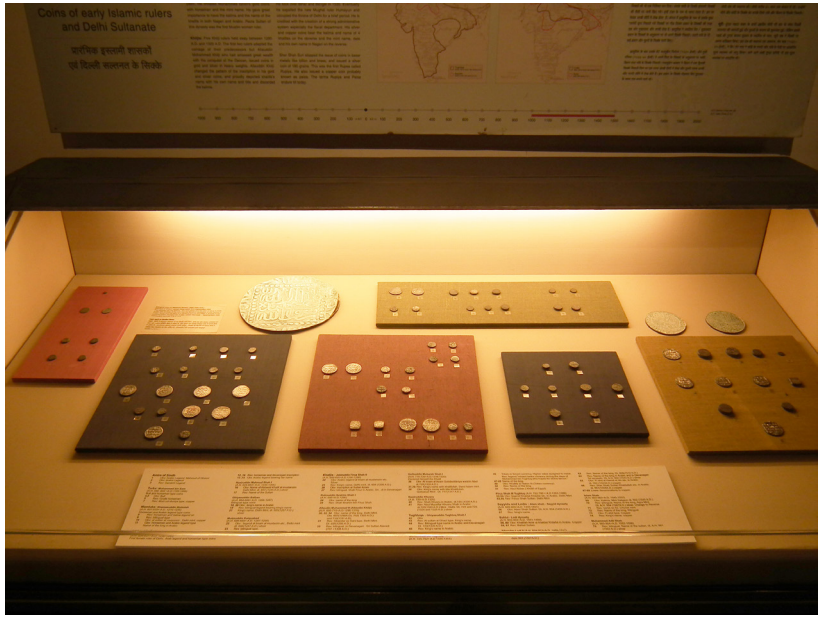

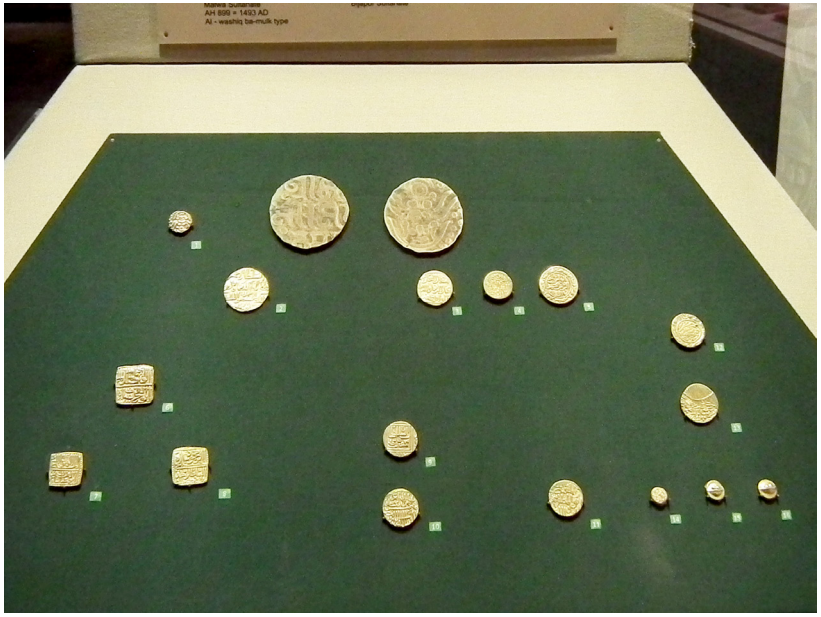

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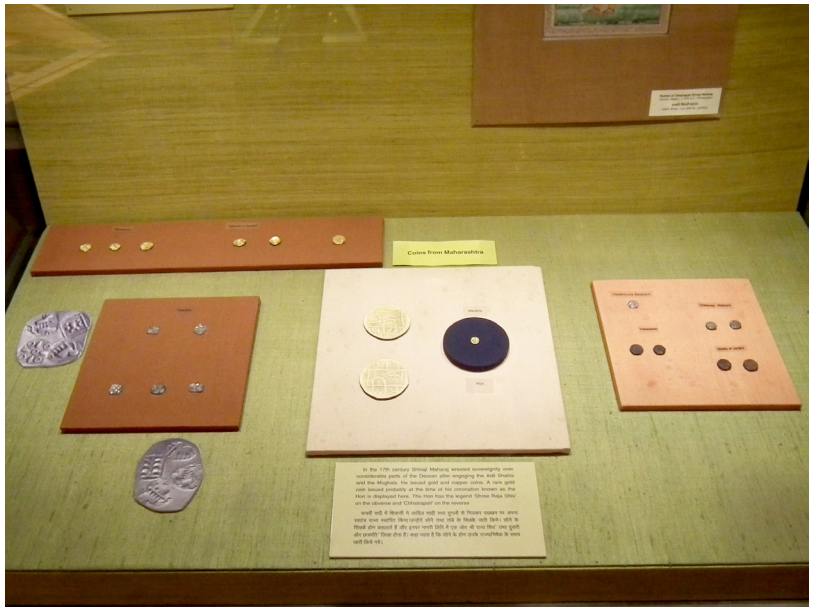

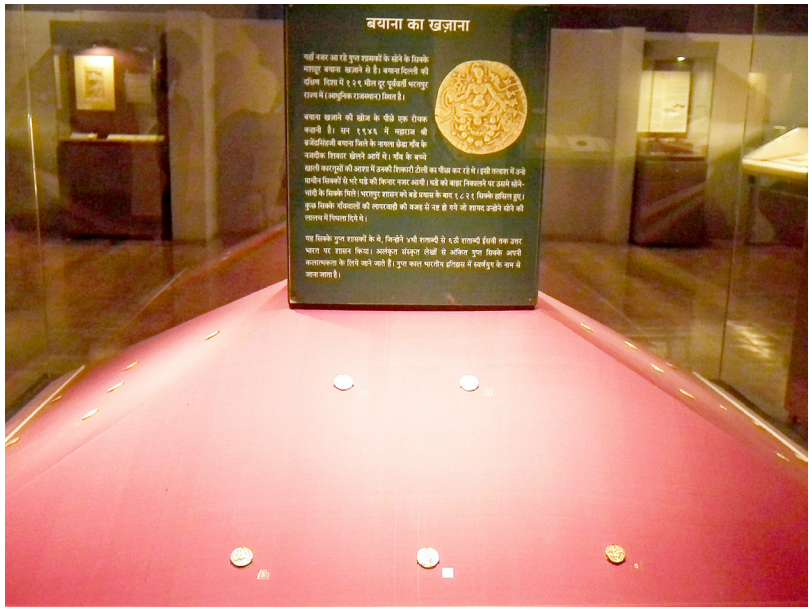

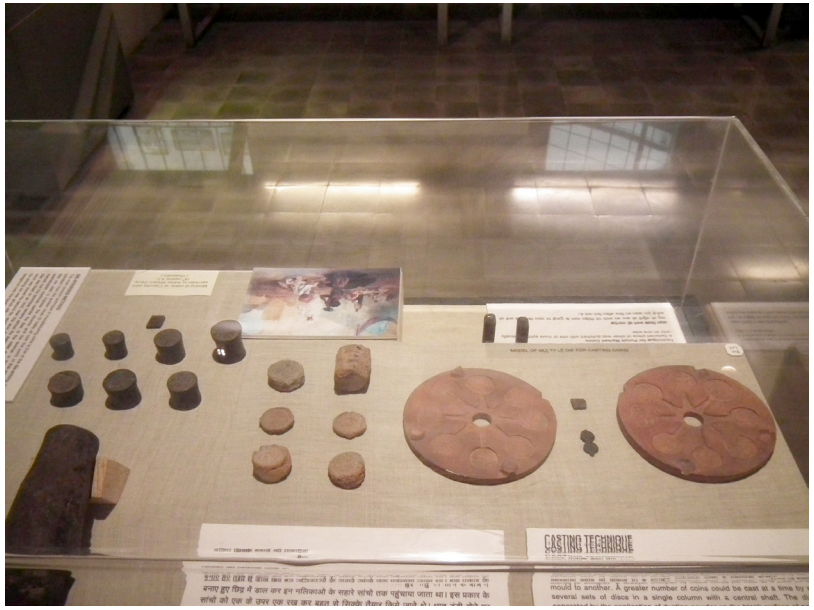

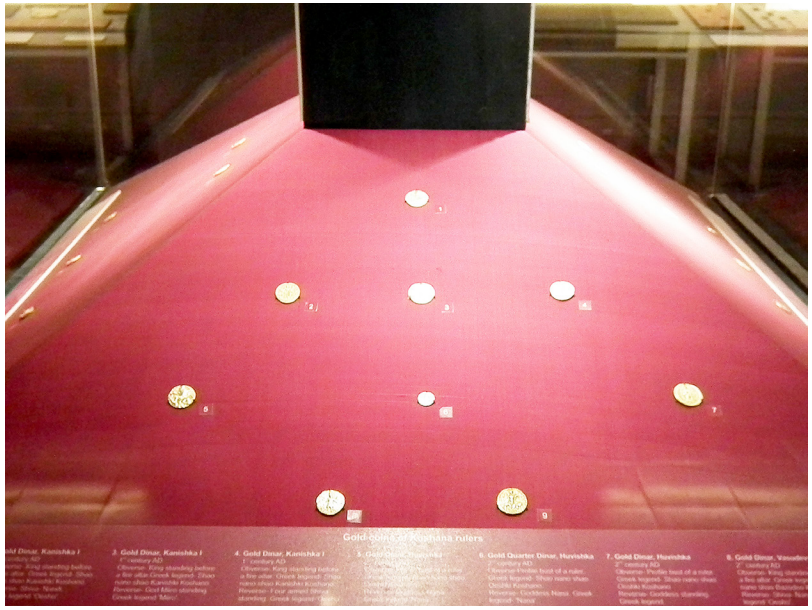

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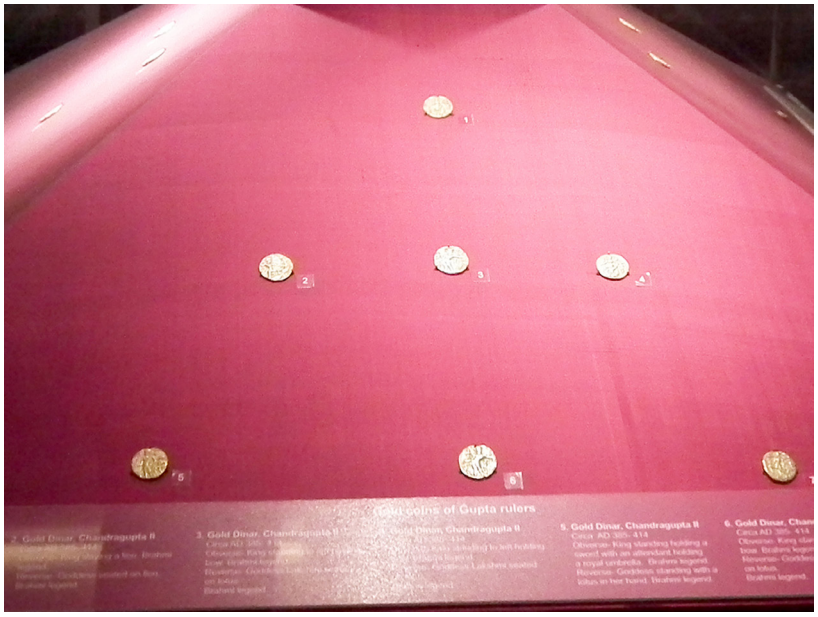
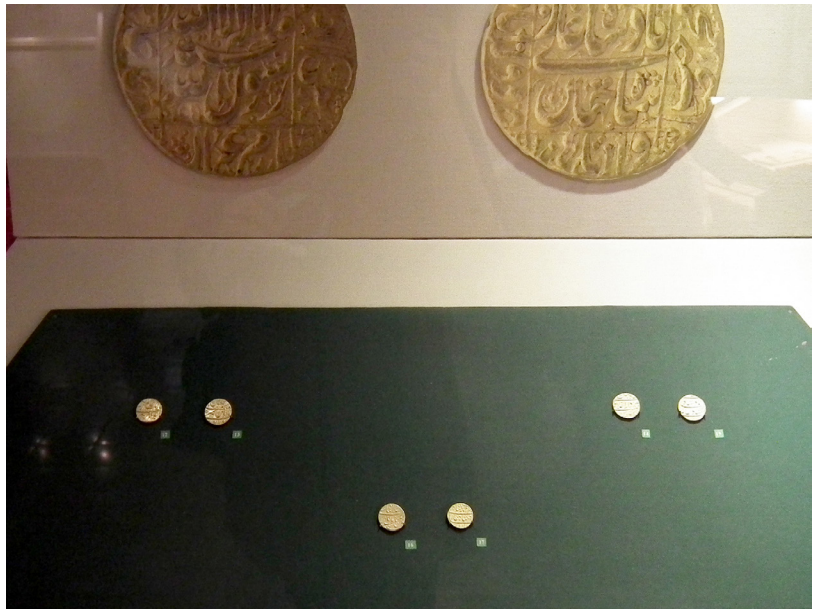




Coins at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya

Trays

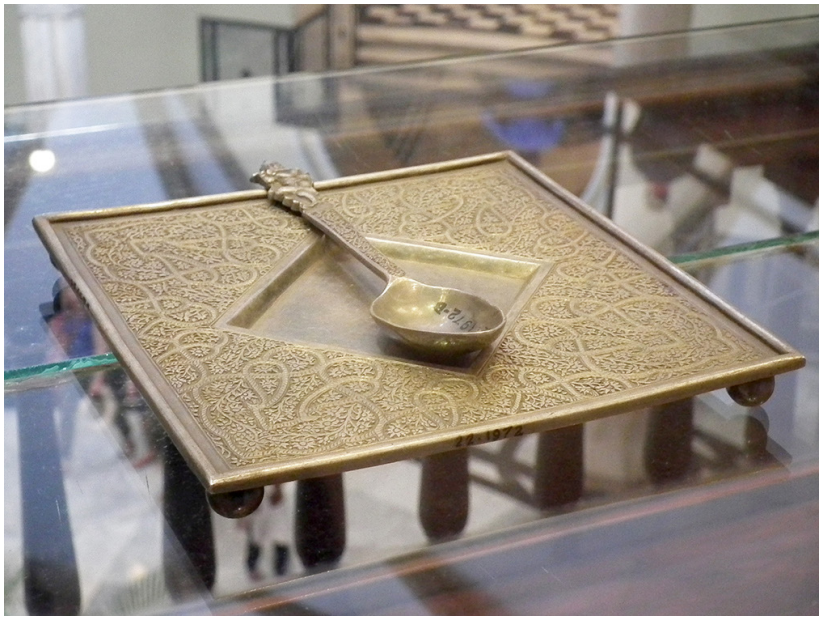
Trays

Trays are artefacts that we use in our daily life to serve tea or carry glasses of juice for guests. They were always in use even in ancients eras for similar purposes such as royal offerings of flowers, fruits and other holy rituals at temples or as gifts or presentation to the emperors or while handing out betel leaves during occasions such as weddings or get-togethers.
Different types of trays were observed at the museums. The material and the design motifs on the trays depend on the makers of the tray and convey the era during which they were made. Eg. The jade tray by the Mughals has the motif of a poppy flower as design for decoration on the tray set in *pietra dura* technique. Eg. Japanese motifs such as a large peacock like a tail outspread are also used on the trays.

Reference: ***http://www.craftrevival.org/CraftArtDetails.asp?CountryCode=Sri%20Lanka&CraftCode=003531***

Trays at Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum

Trays at Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum



Trays at Chhatrapati Shivaji Vastu Sangrahalaya

Miscellaneous artefacts

Miscellaneous artefacts

Ganjifa

Ganjifa is an ancient Indian card game that originated in Persia (modern Iran). Several techniques are used by individual users while processing and designing of Ganjifa cards. Expensive materials may be used by the artist while designing it for wealthy clients. Various other materials such as ivory, engraved brass discs, mother of pearls, lac wafers, tortoise shells are used to craft it and they are decorated with precious stones and metals.

In the 16th century the game became popular under the Moghul Emperors. The game was a popular pastime of ancient India. At the court it would be played in the form of lavish sets of precious stone inlaid ivory or tortoise shells. Cheaper sets made of wood, palm leaf or pasteboard would be used by general public as it spread to them later.

Betel boxes

The chewing of paan was always popular and is common in the Indian sub-continent known for providing a slightly narcotic effect on the user. The betel box or the pandan was made for storing the paan. The purpose of the box is generally to store in its compartments the ingredients required to make paan such as sliced areca nut, cardamom, clove, chuna(lime) and it also contains a small spoon to take the ingredient out.

Conch shells

The Conch shell holds a important place in the Indian culture and is related with Hindu traditions and rituals. It is also known as the Shankha. Conch shells played a significant role in history for eg. During the Gupta Empire, they were used as war horns. It was also used very effectively in the national movement to warn co-workers in the pre independence days. Conch shells are also used for warning during natural calamities. In Hindu mythology, Lord Krishna appears in the battlefield with his conch shell, panchajanya. A conch shell is seen in one of Mother Durga's ten hands. Blowing a shank has always been associated with Hindu rituals and the practice is carried out even today.

Reference:

- *http://www.konkandirect.com/1_socio_cultural/Arts_Ganjifa_Cards.html*
- *http://www.alexandermerchantart.co.uk/pandans.htm*
- *http://www.importantindia.com/6830/importance-of-indian-conch-shell/*

Ganjifahs at Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum

Conch Shells at Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum

Betel box at Chhatrapati Shivaji Vastu Sangrahalaya

Miscellaneous artefacts at Chhatrapati Shivaji Vastu Sangrahalaya

Betel boxes and miscellaneous artefacts at Chhatrapati Shivaji Vastu Sangrahalaya

Conclusion

The articles shown in the project have been used in various forms of social interactions in various different points of time in history. Their designs, patterns and motifs have been influenced by the cultural social, political and economic factors during the time the artefacts were in use.

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