# Content and Character:
# Dikran Kelekian and Eastern Decorative Arts Objects in America

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**1. Introduction: From artifact to objet d'art**

An old photograph, yellowed through time, fastened to sheets of checkered paper with foxed and crumbling edges, is housed in an archive, almost forgotten [Image 1]. The photograph is of a plate, dimensions unknown, with a black rosette in the center. Five bands wrap the central medallion, revealed as black and pale yellow – elongated Persian script, heart-shaped forms linked and never ending, another band of calligraphy, a thin line of clouds or waves, and last, long flowing and scrolling lines. "Dated 885 = 1458 AD" is scribbled below the plate on the photograph. The attached pages bear notes, the translator's attempt to capture the nuances of classical Persian in French. *Reflexions d'un Roi, revant sous l'immensité des cieux à la fragilité de gloires terrestres. Que la fin soit noble, que l'on soit heureux.*[1] Written adjacent to the date is a clue to the color and majesty of the plate: "Turquoise," untranslatable in black and white photographs.

The plate is actually a saturated blue, with bold bands of turquoise and darker blue radiating from a central bloom, and is currently is displayed at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore [Image 2].[2] It is huge, shines, and commands the attention of the visitors who stand before the vitrine. The plate is the largest of the nine others in the display case, a museographic collection of Iranian ceramics. The museum label tells the viewer that the plate was made in Nishapur. This plate is part of a display that highlights the important centers of ceramic production in Iran and the technical accomplishments of Persian craftspeople. In the modern museum, the plate is representative of the excellence of an ancient ceramic tradition, which became known to the contemporary Western world at the end of the nineteenth century.

As this example demonstrates, the context of a decorative arts object is usually a rich one. An object has a long life – it is made, used, found, sold, collected, displayed – and through careful examination, provides a two-faced story. On the obverse, this plate shows us motifs and colors that can be traced through careful comparisons to designs that came before and after it. It is a late example of industry from Nishapur, an important center of ceramic production in central Persia between the ninth and twelfth centuries. The plate is dated 885 of the Islamic calendar and the clay's composition confirms this work to the fifteenth century. Bright blue and near-black silhouette wares decorated using an underglaze technique were made in Kashan, Iran throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and continued to be produced during the Timurid and Safavid dynasties in style later called Kubachi, or as this piece is identified, *Koubatcha*. Kubachi was previously believed to be a single class of ceramics, but is now considered as a representative style made in various centers in Persia.[3] A visual analysis reveals an orderly composition of hand-painted calligraphy and lines that are dynamic against a saturated hue. The calligraphy tells that the plate must have been created for an important person, perhaps used in the court of the warrior-emperor Timur.

The figurative reverse of the plate tells the story of European interest in *the Orient*, of increased scholarly pursuits of Islamic art, and of collecting such decorative arts objects in the West. The Persian calligraphy translated into French represents the market in the West, and a multi-lingual dealer who stood as a connection between the two cultures. The photograph and notes reveal this dealer's careful planning and presentation of enticing details and information to a potential buyer. His intimate knowledge of his client's collection informed him that this piece was an important one to own and would

fill a niche. The plate would round out a collection as a later example of ceramics from an important center of production. Unknowing to the dealer, the plate would one day occupy a central vitrine in a world famous art museum.

Dikran Garabed Kelekian (1868-1951), the careful hand behind the Persian translations on the yellowed photograph, exemplifies the multifaceted relationship of the arts of the East as collected in the West [Image 3]. His roles as a dealer, as an educator, and as a force behind placing these type of objects in important public collections demonstrates this. As a dealer, Kelekian sourced objects at auction and from archaeological sites and then resold them to discriminating collectors. As an educator, Kelekian formed exemplary collections and wrote important tomes that illustrated the history of the objects. Within a curatorial role, Kelekian was responsible for aiding collectors in forming collections of antiquities from Eastern lands that later became the basis of public collections. He also exhibited and sold directly to established museums. Today, Kelekian's success is measured by the placement of Eastern decorative arts objects in premier collections and in authoritative catalogues, which ensures their rightful place in the cannon of art history.[4] His long career, beginning with the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 to his death in 1951 was dynamic. He was a tastemaker that legitimized the collecting of Near and Middle Eastern art in the West and largely through his efforts, these decorative arts objects gained prestige.

The details of Kelekian's childhood are not well known, but do shed light on his background, upbringing, and the conditions that allowed him to emigrate from Constantinople to the United States. Kelekian was born January 19, 1868 in Talas, in Kayseri Anatolia, Turkey to Garabed and Mariam Kelekian.[5] His father's occupation has

been identified variously as a banker or a goldsmith, and antiquities dealer in Constantinople. As an amateur antiquarian, his father is remembered as having brokered the Tarsus Treasure, gold medals struck for Alexander the Great, to Napoleon III for the French national government.[6] Kelekian was born into a community of Armenian elites, *des gens prospères,* and studied at the American school Robert College in Constantinople and Paris.[7] There, he studied history of the Ancient Near East and learned English and French to complement Ottoman Turkish and his native Armenian. His preparatory education, coupled with his father's business, accustomed him to moving and speaking among the elites and eventually working as an apprentice to his uncle. Thus began his sixty-five year career as an art dealer.

Kelekian started his career in Constantinople and worked for his uncle, whose business card for Magasin Kéork Kélékian reads in four languages, French, Greek, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish, and offered *curiosités orientales, antiquités diverses*, and stated an address at the Grand Bazaar in Constantinople [Image 4].[8] Perhaps it was these early years that served as an impetus, and perhaps inventory and experience, for Dikran's 1893 trip to the United States for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which launched his career as a dealer of Eastern antiquities and art objects in America.[9]

Kelekian's success must first and foremost be attributed to his keen sense of business, ability to source fine and authentic objects, encyclopedic knowledge of art and history, and larger than life personality. Armed with these abilities, Kelekian capitalized on American interest in collecting antiquities and Oriental art at the turn of the century, being present at the right time and seizing and making opportunities. In no way passive, Kelekian at once created and captured a market. He accomplished this by working as a

dealer, educating his clients and peers, and ensuring that the objects he sold became part of the canon of art history by placing them in permanent collections. As he emphasized the intrinsic worth of objects such as Persian ceramics and Coptic textiles, he also elevated their status as decorative arts objects. This logic legitimized their inclusion in such institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Walters Art Museum. Ever the businessman, this elevation in status paralleled an elevation in price.

Kelekian was not the first to supply the West with Eastern objects, but rode in on a wave of Eastern fashion. He took advantage of America's fascination during the early nineteenth century with the Orient and success previous of World's Fairs held before his time. Islamic artworks, like pottery and textiles, had been imported into Europe onward from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and the interest in non-Western art objects continued to intrigue European collectors through the twentieth century. Trade and travel linked the Occident and the Orient and supplied vast amounts of goods, which established access and further desire for these curiosities.

In his early years Kelekian worked within the common understanding of the exotic East as part of his commercial appeal. Before Kelekian's time, the basis of the Western consumer's understanding of the East came in the form of illustrated travelogues, Orientalist painting, architectural surveys and sketches, and World's Fairs. Archaeology and collecting – the rising market value of Ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian, and Islamic art contributed greatly to this aspect – were the primary modes of study.[10] At the World's Fairs in Chicago and St. Louis Kelekian offered an array of antiquities that appealed to a new American taste for collecting oriental objects. He had to sell the taste and desire for the East and did so in context with *Orientalism.*[11] Kelekian's two booths in

Chicago were in the Turkish Pavilion and the popular Midway Plaisance – in the thick of exotic booths from faraway nations, a conglomeration of sights, smells, and sounds that most Americans had never experienced. In St. Louis, Kelekian displayed at the Persian Pavilion as Commissioner-General by order of the Shah of Persia. He wore official military dress and used an official seal, which enabled him to play a supporting role in the spectacular theatrics of the Fair. This was not an authentic glimpse of the East in any way, but more of a mirage, a romantic vision that was reinforced by the World's Fairs. This was the Orient that captured the American imagination, which Kelekian then capitalized upon.

Kelekian's exhibits in Chicago and St. Louis were well received. In Chicago, he was honored with several awards, which legitimized the objects he sold and solidified his reputation as an art dealer. Kelekian earned a blue-ribbon "Premium Award" from the Department of Ethnology in four categories: Collective Exhibit of Persian Antiquities; Assyrian Antiquities; Antique Coins; and Oriental Arms [Image 5].[12] These awards were not necessarily top prizes, as tens of thousands were bestowed on exhibitors and their exhibitions, but Kelekian used them as a self-promotional tool and reproduced his blue ribbons to give out at his shop, which he opened following such a good showing at the Fair.

Importantly, Kelekian distinguished himself among a prominent group of Americans that would later form a substantial part of his client base. Kelekian's connections in Chicago may have resulted from his close friendship with the American painter Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), who he most likely met in Paris. He made important acquaintances with museum officials and collectors in America following the Fair,

relationships that according to Kelekian transformed into "lifelong friends and customers."[13] Some of these friends were Henry Walters (1848-1931), Louisine (1855-1929) and Henry Osborne Havemeyer (1847-1907), and perhaps the journalist Charles A. Dana (1819-1897) and Henry Marquand (1819-1902). These people – sophisticated collectors, museum administrators, and high society – helped launch Kelekian's reputation and position as a dealer.

In 1898 Kelekian and his brother Keork established a permanent presence in the United States following a successful exhibition at the World's Fair. Kelekian opened his first store at 303 Fifth Avenue with his brother, who always advised him "to act quickly."[14] Le Musée de Bosphore was Kelekian's first gallery in New York, and was an instant success.[15] Similar to his booths at the World's Fairs, Kelekian's gallery played up Oriental themes, which catered largely to his growing audience. *The Collector* described Kelekian's gallery at 303 Fifth Avenue as a respite from the cold and dreary New York autumn and as "a palace transported on an enchanted carpet from the lands of legends."[16] The store sold rich carpets piled high, framed brocades and velvets, ceramic plates, ewers, and tiny objects, coins and jewelry, arranged intimately in glass vitrines.

Kelekian was one of the first art dealers in New York City dedicated to Near and Middle Eastern goods and soon became the foremost tastemaker of Eastern art. As a dual citizen of America and the Ottoman Empire and resident of Paris, he moved fluidly between the West and East. Owing to his own "otherness," objects he imported from the Islamic lands gained prestige by emphasized authenticity as they supposedly came directly from the source.[17] Kelekian brought objects to the United States from Turkey and Persia, which he announced in advertisements in *The Art Collector*.[18] He sourced objects

at field sites in Egypt, central Iran, and Syria and funneled them through his depot in Cairo. From Cairo, these objects were shipped to Paris and the United States where Kelekian kept formal storefronts and galleries.

Kelekian also purchased objects from auctions and important sales like the 1898 sale of the Charles A. Dana Collection of Oriental Ceramics in New York. An article in *The Art Collector* about the Dana Sale commented on Kelekian's keen eye during the auction and cited that a dealer like Kelekian who could identify and purchase the best plates, lamps, and teapots was "paid for his knowledge […] it is his reward for years and years of patient and arduous study and research."[19] The dealer sourced quality items at the best prices and then resold them for enormous profit. Specifically, Kelekian made $20,000 in profits from the sale.[20] The article also provided a little vignette from the sale: "There was a little broken blue and white teapot, which was scarcely noted by the thousands who attended the exhibition. It went begging at a hundred dollars, and Mr. Kelekian got it for a little more. To-day, that broken teapot is in the South Kensington Museum *without price* […]" [Image 6].[21] The article also identified the important American collections of Middle Eastern ceramics; among the Edward C. Moore Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Henry Marquand's personal collection was Kelekian's shop.

Kelekian's standards and tastes matured during his career, as expected of a connoisseur. In the first decade of the 1900s, Kelekian brought his focus to specialize in Turkish carpets and Persian Ceramics, and the quality of objects he was able to buy and sell rose. Consequently, he sold these objects at higher prices and to more discriminating clients. He collected Coptic textiles, Persian and Turkish rugs, antiquities from the

Ancient Near East, and ceramics from Persia. In a two-part process, Kelekian first formed collections, which exemplified the best examples as well as illustrated a history of development. He then published illustrated compendia of these collections that served as art volumes, educational pamphlets, and visual catalogues of his gallery.

One of Kelekian's earliest publications was *The Potteries of Persia: Being a Brief History of the Art of Ceramics in the Near East* (1909), which he illustrated with his best works. Kelekian's celebratory banter and educational language promoted pottery of "incomparable beauty, richness and charm."[22] When Kelekian wrote *Potteries of Persia,* little had been written about ceramics from central Iran, and even less on the trends of Islamic pottery production. This book served to teach a growing class of collectors. Kelekian wrote about the art-historical value of a study collection: "The collector who has had an opportunity to study for a term of years the Persian potteries as they have come out of the excavations, finds the history of their conception, perfection, and ultimate decline told in the character of the productions belong to the different epochs."[23] In this sentence, Kelekian touched upon a few themes that concern the collector. He could be referencing himself as this "collector," considering few had the opportunity to study and acquire as steady as he had. He commented on the continued exposure to "new" objects as they were unearthed. Having access to them, he was able to add to a survey of Persian pottery, instantly categorizing them by date and place. In forming a cohesive group, the collector could then study them and make inferences about style motifs, craftsmanship, and use. Thus the collector is transformed into the connoisseur, able to speak fluently about the potteries in his collection.

Kelekian illustrated his publications with objects from his collection. He also included objects that he had sold to clients. *Potteries of Persia* illustrated objects in the Havemeyer Collection and the Benjamin Altman Collection (both now at the Metropolitan Museum), the Charles L. Freer Collection, the Louvre, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. By the time Kelekian published *Potteries of Persia*, the status of these objects changed as they transitioned from the curio cabinets of the World's Fairs and into esteemed private collections. No longer "bric-a-brac," to use the vocabulary of the nineteenth century, these objects were elevated to status of "art". Removed from their contexts as functional objects (although Kelekian did acknowledge the everyday use of ceramics in *Potteries of Persia*), they became art objects in the West – hundreds of years after they were made. Additionally, by pairing his wares with scholarly tomes, Kelekian imbued these objects with a power based on their excellent craftsmanship and rarity.

Kelekian's published books were educational supplements to collections sold at his shop, "a veritable museum,"[24] referencing archaeology, exhibitions, and special collections that related to his ceramics, textiles, and miniatures. These small tomes illustrated his wares and the wares of his clients, captioning them with historical anecdotes and technical details. In this way, Kelekian's objects became points of reference in the history of art – objects that could be acquired by an educated collector – and not just dusty curios in a forgotten cabinet.

Kelekian worked hard to cultivate a presence in the New York art scene and was well known among his peers. He appeared in newspapers such as the *New York Times* that recalled his recent purchases at well-publicized auctions, travels to and from Europe and the Middle East, participation in World's Fairs, and his objects in exhibitions. He

was also cited in trade magazines like *The Art Collector*. His advertisements in *The Art Collector* and similar magazines were the only ones that presented Eastern antiquities for sale. An advertisement from 1894, declared "Premium Awarded in Every Branch at the World's Columbian Exposition."[25] It also stated "Paris" and "Constantinople," which referenced his international locations and emphasized his presence in important centers of art commerce. The advertisement also included a Persian seal, which no doubt caught the eye of connoisseurs who looked to *The Art Collector* for knowledge and guidance.[26]

An important aspect of Kelekian's personality was his obsession with art. Kelekian was obsessed with antiquities and often commented about his love for them. In 1939, *Art News* printed a series of memoirs on the growth of art and taste in America. Kelekian authored an article about dealing and in it, wrote: "Collecting has existed for thousands of years […] the love for beautiful objects cannot die."[27] He equated collecting with acquiring beautiful objects first and foremost. He reflected on the importance of seeing, and advised, "If you use your eyes, you can always be sure of spotting a good thing," referencing the importance of acknowledging beauty and an instinct for buying good art.[28] Kelekian's keen eye is also evident in his personal collection of modern art, primarily French and American. In the same article, he wrote, "I started to collect modern art after seeing that its origins were in my antiquities."[29] Here, he evidenced the importance of possession and ownership of antiquities following a long and successful career. He also acknowledged a continuity in the collecting, a subtle aspect valued by great connoisseurs, ones who can truly see the minute details as well as the historical continuum intrinsic in art.

Kelekian emphatically promoted objects that were at once his love and his livelihood. Kelekian's final line in the preface to *Persian and Analogous Potteries* (1910) stated his personal mission of collecting and educating:

> As it now exists, this collection is the most complete I know, and it is a record of my study of the Persian potteries covering a period of twenty-six years, and my work in collecting them up to the present time. If it succeeds in presenting these beautiful works of art in such a fashion as to make them better known and appreciated, I shall feel that my labors have not been in vain.[30]

Indeed, curators and scholars, although few and limited to the field of Middle Eastern Arts, have recognized Kelekian's life's work. Existing scholarship mentions Kelekian in footnotes, with due recognition of his contributions to permanent collections. Notably, Marianna Shreve Simpson's "'A Gallant Era': Henry Walters, Islamic Art, and the Kelekian Collection" published in 2000 in *Ars Orientalis* recognized his intimate role in curating Henry Walters' collection.[31] Additionally, "Collecting the 'Orient' at the Met: Early Tastemakers in America" by Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, published in the same journal, also acknowledged his influence on the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and his influence in the rising trend of collecting oriental goods.[32] Alison Field Ventura elaborated on the brief published mentions of Kelekian in her thesis "The Khan of American Collecting: How Dikran Kelekian Created a Market for Islamic Arts" (2011).[33] Her work focused on Kelekian's early years, beginning with his participation in the Chicago World's Fair and subsequent auctions. She also explored the political aspects of his occupation.

This work serves to expand on the published mentions of Kelekian into a larger narrative and present the effects of his efforts as a dealer. This thesis fills the lacuna of Kelekian's educational endeavors and contribution to the decorative and fine arts. He

merits recognition for legitimizing Middle Eastern decorative art objects to collectors and institutions in America at the turn of the century and the first decades of the twentieth century. The narrative presented here demonstrates Kelekian's contributions to this field by following the arc of his professional career. Each chapter of this thesis illustrates Kelekian's maturation from a young and determined émigré into a stalwart figure in his burgeoning, and now established field.

**2. Kelekian the Businessman: creating a market and captivating an audience**

The Oriental travelogue is a document that recalls a voyage to the East. In a travelogue, the writer presents a narrative of wonder, excitement, and adventure. His tale is familiar: a traveler leaves his home for an unknown world. In this new place, he experiences sights and sounds brand new. He annotates characters he meets, foods he tastes, and new objects he encounters and turns in his hands. The traveler also sketches archaeological wonders, landscapes, and cityscapes. He returns a changed man, forever affected by his new relationship to the East. Carefully, he journals his experiences to share with his compatriots back home. His readers, then, are allowed to take part in the enchanted journey – but from a distance. They read, transformed, of a faraway place that they too can visit in an afternoon.

Dikran Kelekian's shop was like a travelogue in the way that it transported his visitors to the East. In his gallery, Kelekian recreated the East through the decorative objects displayed in his rooms [Image 7]. Kelekian's shop was a respite; as one writer exclaimed:

> We are weary of this New York […] Let us lie in comfort here like true Lotos eaters, and listen to Fifth Avenue going by […] so let Mr. Kelekian accept our thanks for it, and give me a light for another cigarette from that Ottoman lamp whose perfumed oil is incense to the altar of art.[34]

A visit to Kelekian's gallery was transformative and above all, it proved to be a memorable experience. The visitors then purchased objects to bring back home with them – souvenirs of their journeys. Providing this delight to his clients, much in the manner of a curated experience that drew upon Orientalist themes, Kelekian was a tastemaker for this style of art. He was their tour guide, and his gallery was their holiday.

Kelekian lived and worked in a liminal era when knowledge of the cultures of the East was becoming available to the West – to the Western traveler, to the Western scholar, to the Western collector. For Kelekian, these early years at the end of the nineteenth century were imperative to him as a dealer. During this time, Kelekian was still coming into his own as an expert, and his focus was more on establishing himself as a businessman. At the turn of the century, Kelekian capitalized on the established stereotypes of the East and his foremost concern was in his role as a businessman and tastemaker, not yet embodying authenticity as he would by 1910. He had to make an impact in the industry by marketing desire and confirming the value of his objects as worthwhile investment to his clients.

First and foremost, Kelekian was a tastemaker and established a desire for the objects he sold. He marketed his objects at the World's Fair in Chicago as "an excellent collection of Oriental fine goods," which he emphasized with a classified advertisement in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*.[35] At the Fair, he produced a pamphlet for his booth, which served to further name the objects he sold as "art," and described them as the finest specimens available for purchase.

Following the successful showing in Chicago, Kelekian used the momentum from the World's Fair to establish a gallery and commercial space. He carefully curated his gallery spaces in New York to parallel the exotic experiences afforded at the Fair. At the shop, he welcomed visitors and established clients alike, and kept an impressive and continuously updated inventory. Kelekian transformed his gallery space into a voyage to the imagined East, and these Eastern objects into decorative arts objects for the Western consumer.

Kelekian's early career was very much attuned to Orientalism, that is, playing to the Western imagination. His early successes were a result of whetting his audience's appetites and then providing the delicious morsels they craved. Kelekian was a savvy businessman who understood how to captivate his audience. He used this new interest of "experiencing the East" as part of his active marketing campaign. He also tailored his own image during this time and emphasized the honorific title "Khan," bestowed upon him by the Shah of Persia. He used this title and all its benefits at the St. Louis Exhibition in 1904 and thereafter. It was only after his firm establishment within the market that he could turn his attention to education within a more authentic context.

Kelekian took an active role in shaping and representing the products he sold as well as the aura that came with each vase, coin, or statuette. Grand international exhibitions functioned to display and disperse new art objects, fine arts, technologies and innovation, and push a new consumerism by presenting to visitors a kaleidoscope of sensory arts. These World's Fairs also allowed dealers to show off their wares, and with a license to exaggerate and advertise publicly, enable recognition. Kelekian knew the power of participating in World's Fairs as economic opportunity and used it to his advantage.

Kelekian exhibited in two booths at the 1893 Chicago's World Fair, one in the respectable Manufacturers Building and the other on the more popular and exotic Midway Plaisance. At the Manufacturers Building, exhibitors had a chance to show off "man's unequalled handiwork."[36] In contrast to the Beaux-Arts style of the "White City," the Midway was a crazy quilt of national villages with sights and smells of afar. The Turkish Village, were Kelekian displayed, was also called The Business Street of

Constantinople and had theatres, restaurants, obelisks, a racetrack for horses, and a mosque.[37] The Turkish Pavilion, like other national pavilions, was a chance for the cultural display of arts and industry, selected by exhibitors as representations of their homeland for an American audience. The national villages allowed Americans to enjoy themselves as tourists, experiencing imported international culture. Americans also saw and met international "types," people imported to play the role of the native.[38]

John J. Flinn, in *World's Fair Grounds, Buildings and Attractions Illustrated* (1893), recalled a visit to the Turkish Village as follows:

> We are surrounded on all sides by mosques and minarets. One might easily imagine himself on the banks of the Bosphorus. Turks dressed in their native costumes are to be seen along the street in Constantinople. Everything is as real as it could possibly be made. Bazaars may be found here in abundance, and there is ample opportunity for spending a dollar or two in curiosities.[39]

Written very much like a travelogue, Flinn's description of the Turkish Village was about the experience of visiting a faraway land. The power of imagination captured the audience and transported them to an idealized Orient. Flinn's phrase "as real as it could possibly be made" is the most curious point, and reminds us that this bazaar was a constructed reality, finely tailored to the Victorian-era consumer, eager to spend "a dollar or two in curiosities" and souvenirs.

Kelekian's booths were not listed in *The Official Directory of the World's Columbian Exposition* (1893), so he sought to make his booth known publicly through an advertisement in *The Chicago Daily Tribune*.[40] The newspaper ran a small "article" – which was actually a classified advertisement most likely placed by Kelekian himself – titled "A Connoisseur's Advice" [Image 8].[41] This article in a daily newspaper advertised directly to middle-class Americans and was listed among various advertisements related

to the World's Fair. The unattributed article told of a connoisseur of antiquity who was "loud in his praise of a most excellent collection of Oriental fine goods owned by Mr. Dikran G. Kelekian at Booth No. 14, Turkish Village." The unidentified author shared details about Kelekian's previous sales, which all fetched high prices. The article mentioned Turkish silk carpet from Constantinople at the enormous price of $5,000, and the excellent "workmanship of experts" of the objects offered by Kelekian. The anonymous author advertised: "His exhibition constantly attracts a large audience of connoisseurs and artists," marketing the booth to people eager to become part of a class of educated art collectors. However, at the World's Fair, Kelekian's visitors were more casual and the objects presented at his booths were an assortment of mostly affordable antiquities.

In conjunction with his exhibition, Kelekian produced a small catalogue titled *Works of Art and Antiquities: Faiences, Carpets, Statuettes, Greek and Roman Old Coins, and Precious Stones.* [42] The pamphlet listed forty-three objects with descriptions and sale prices as part of a curated collection. This document was Kelekian's first publication; it was a guide to his booth with information about the objects for sale. It was also the beginning of Kelekian's self-marketing as an expert in his field and as an exclusive dealer of fine objects; this astute talent for self-promotion would later characterize the Khan's business strategy. The title page claimed "Houses in Paris and Constantinople," which suggested to his booth's visitors that Kelekian was an established dealer with galleries in important centers in the art world. Emphasizing his own "provenance" was congruent with his goal in the article, "A Connoisseur's Advice."

Since he came to America without established distinction, it was imperative that he stood out among the many other merchants.

At his booths, like in most of the Fair, cultural delineations blurred as Kelekian offered only a single Turkish engraved stone among Assyrian, Arabian, Rhodian, Roman, Greek, Byzantine, Egyptian, and Italian decorative arts.[43] His audiences were perhaps not interested in authentic artifacts from a singular region for the singular purpose of study, so he offered them a variety of objects to collect and admire. However, Kelekian's objects were consistently of high quality and authentically attributed. The first object he listed was the most expensive, "An Assyrian Tablet Stone with Cuneiform inscription 14th Century, B.C. (The text pronounced by Prof. Jules Oppert as being by King Adad-Nisar, living at the same date)" for $4,000. This alabaster tablet was clearly the most important object he offered and earned him mention in the Congressional Report, *The Report of Committee on Awards of the World's Columbian Commission* as "a fine specimen of cuneiform writing," and included a reproduction image.[44] In his description, Kelekian connected his object to a scholar, which emphasized not only the authenticity of the tablet but its cultural importance.[45]

Kelekian listed the other objects with short descriptions and emphasized their date and location. This wide array of decorative arts, catalogued with their dates and editorial comments describing them as "most beautiful," "most ancient," "splendid specimens," "best work known," and "rare piece" showed off Kelekian's ability to procure such quality objects, and more importantly, demonstrates his drive for business by emphasizing their splendor. The second object "An Arabia Lamp, enameled on glass. Of the 11th Century; very rare piece" was offered for $1,200. He used laudatory language

in his descriptions, but the emphasis was on the objects themselves. Among the remaining objects displayed and presented for sale were a polychrome faience plate from Damascus, a nargille, a "Persian faience bottle with metallic reflection," a head of Jupiter in marble, a bronze statue, a leather book cover, embroidered crosses, a silver coffee pot, an urn from a tomb, cylindrical seals, and a Byzantine weight. He sold all sorts of antiquities, not just Turkish ones as his booth implied. The embellished descriptions were necessary for to market these wares with such high asking prices, as the catalogue did not illustrate all objects available for purchase.

As Kelekian was successful at the World's Fair, he transposed the same experience-based model that was so successful at the World's Fair to his shops [Image 9]. Kelekian named his first shop Le Musée de Bosphore. The name of the gallery immediately transported the visitor away from New York City to the Bosphorus, a commercially and culturally important strait in Turkey that connects Europe and Asia. The shop, like the booth at the Chicago's World Fair, had objects piled high for visitors to admire, touch, and hopefully purchase.

Kelekian produced a pamphlet for the shop's opening in 1898 as a promotional item, a souvenir for his shop. Written by Wellesley Reid Davis, "Notes of Le Musée de Bosphore" spun a narrative of wonder to entice visitors.[46] Very much like a travelogue, "Notes" narrated a voyage to the East. Struck with green ink on quality paper, the thirty-four-page pamphlet included images printed on onionskin with the text.

The pamphlet began with a dreamy forward contrasting the cold New York City winters with the Oriental warmth found inside Kelekian's shop. Told through the eyes of a "wayfarer," this pamphlet is similar to other Orientalist writings in the way it recalled

long distanced memories of men in turbans, speaking of faraway places like "rough streets of Cairo and Damascus […] Greek and Persian bazaars [… and] the Sultan's palace."[47] By appealing to the reader's imagination, Kelekian's shop became a Palace of Wonders, and he himself as a "gentleman whose Oriental wealth had suggested fascinating reveries of a by-gone era."[48]

The narrative also spoke to the fine collection, and introduced the "quality and scope of Museum values," before presenting a catalogue of objects. Kelekian called his gallery a *musée*, "museum" in French. This emphasized the quality of the works beyond mere collectibles for an aristocrat's library, but rather as a collection of fine arts for study as well as admiration. Using the French word also lent an air of sophistication as France was always ahead of the United States in terms of the decorative arts and artistic taste. The pamphlet appealed to the good senses of his audience, and lauded the visitor, "thoroughly convinced that in the last analysis and final test, the matured connoisseur will turn to the Arts dominated by Oriental impulse and suggestion." The catalogue again highlighted Kelekian's competency, stating, "he takes the stand of an Educator toward the refined American Patron [and] his gallery proffers a rare opportunity and may be the source of a liberal education."[49]

The catalogue complemented the store, offering a means to describe and illustrate a "taste" as well as specific objects. First, the catalogue drew upon on the oriental travel narrative of exotic adventures to the East. By contrasting the bazaars of Cairo to the blustery streets of Fifth Avenue, the pamphlet invited the reader to feel the warmth and see the sights offered within Kelekian's shop. Desire is what brought visitors into the gallery, and then Kelekian appeared before them as a supplier of authentic and museum-

quality goods, ready to teach eager minds and cultivate developing tastes. In this early part of his career, Kelekian had to convince his growing audience of the worth of such objects and emphasize their value. He also had to market himself as an expert in the field who could offer his services as a dealer and educator. Clearly, there was an exchange of information occurring at this gallery as Kelekian's clients sought to elevate their cultural understanding by appreciating these Eastern objects and bringing them into their Western homes. At the shop, Kelekian gave everyone who walked in a hands-on history lesson.[50] The mention of museum quality also spoke to the fact that private collectors were some of the first to bring such objects into America and that these types of decorative arts objects were available to the buying public before they became the museum pieces to which we are now familiar. Not quite a mirage, the "wayfarer" was indeed satisfied with Kelekian's exotic bazaar in the heart of Manhattan.

Kelekian offered objects for sale at auction as well as in his shops. Sales were another avenue to display his wares to fellow dealers and collectors, as well as a way to publicize his expertise and solidify his reputation. In 1903, Kelekian auctioned much of the stock from Le Musée de Bosphore, the 303 Fifth Avenue store, which had been leased to Jacques Seligmann of Paris to become his New York City office.[51] This sale was held at the American Art Galleries between April 15 and18, 1903. It was the first public sale dedicated to Persian and complementary antiquities in the United States. Multiple sources acknowledged this. *The New York Times* called it "the most extensive and finest sale of the year."[52] *The New York Daily Tribune* ran a notice of the sale of over a thousand objects, "uncommonly even in quality."[53] The announcement lauded the "artistic value" of the collection and declared:

> It is not simply that there are some very important items in this part of the collection, but that the quality of the minor pieces is unusual […] Rarely does a dealer in material of the sort succeed so well in separating the wheat from the chaff.[54]

This demonstrates Kelekian's commitment to providing high-quality objects and to promoting their artistic merits to the buying public.

Other articles also commented on Kelekian's character. "Kelekian's Orientalia," in *The New York Times*, esteemed his reputation as "an expert […] dealing in trustworthy articles."[55] Kelekian knew that making a sale was more than just exchanging money for an object. His commerce was also based on his own impressions upon his clients. Articles like the ones mentioned above made Kelekian's name and reputation know to his peer group.

The dynamic Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar of Persia (r. 1896-1907) bestowed the honor of the khanate to Kelekian following l'Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900 where Kelekian served as a judge of Persian art and exhibitor at the Persian Pavilion.[56] The king of Persia was described by *The Art Amateur* as "one of the most cultivated monarchs, by European or by Eastern standards. He is an accomplished linguist, an excellent musician, and a good judge of our Western art and that of his own land."[57] Beginning around 1900, the government of Persia sought to strengthen relationships with the United States by granting the honorary title, "Khan" to prominent businessmen and men who were in similar positions to promote Persian arts and industry.[58] The Shah also accorded the Order of the Lion and the Sun upon Kelekian "for his distinguished services to Persian commerce," an economy that was steadily on the rise, primarily due to exports of antiquities to the West.[59] In a 1901 article, "Persian Textiles," in *The Art Amateur*, the

magazine acknowledged "no one has done more than the recipient to make known to the West, the beauties of Persian art."[60]

Kelekian further tailored his public image to emphasize exoticness and authority of Eastern art objects by publicizing his honorific title of "Khan." Kelekian used this title in conversation and correspondence, often using Khan in lieu of his given middle name, Garabed. Kelekian used his status as Khan for self-promotion, at which, as we have seen, he was quite adept, primarily in the early part of his career. His name matched his personage: a 1904 newspaper article described the "Persian dignitary" as "most picturesque," estimating his stature at over six feet tall and over 200 pounds.[61] *The Art Amateur*, which regularly featured articles about the dealer as well as advertisements, illustrated the Shah's official seal, which was presented to Kelekian [Image 10]. Since the seal was attached to the document, it may be assumed that Kelekian notified the magazine of his appointment.[62] Kelekian also reproduced the calligraphic seal in his classified ads.[63] Kelekian went beyond the use of his title and adopted the dress of an Easterner of some importance. In photographs following his appointment as Khan, Kelekian wore a dark blue military costume, complete with fez, a seven-pointed Star of the Order of the Lion and Sun medal, and ceremonial sword.[64] For those who did not know Kelekian personally, his portrait served as an introduction in publications such as magazines and in frontispieces of his books [Image 11].

On letterhead and invoices following his participation in the World's Fairs, Kelekian proudly advertised his important roles. A 1906 invoice to Mr. Henry Walters boasts "Member of Jury for Paris Exposition, 1900" and "Imperial Persian Commissioner General" under his name, Dikran G. Kelekian, Expert [Image 12]. Across the top of the

document reads “Premium awarded in every branch at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893.”[65] These same embellishments appear on Kelekian’s French language stationery as well. They served to remind clients of the value and authenticity of their new purchases, as well reinforce the importance and expertise of their dealer.

Augmenting this highly visible position of “Khan,” Kelekian served as the Consul of Persia at New York, an appointment assigned by President Theodore Roosevelt in November 28, 1902. The Persian Consulate was housed in Kelekian’s gallery. It is unclear as to what Kelekian’s official duties were at this time; one newspaper cited Kelekian as “in general change of Persian commercial relations in this country,” which coincided with promoting Persia at the St. Louis World’s Fair.[66] Kelekian also performed minor consular tasks.

In 1903, Kelekian received yet another recognition. The Legation of the United States in Tehran appointed “Tigran Khan, Persian Consul at New York” Commissioner General of Persia at the St. Louis Exhibition.[67] As Commissioner General at the Fair, Kelekian was responsible for curating a display of “the industries and manufactures of his country.”[68] Kelekian – an ethnic Armenian from the Ottoman Empire who lived in Paris and had American citizenship – aligned himself with Imperial Persia. This was useful as a significant portion of objects he sold were indeed Persian. At the Fair, Kelekian appeared in the opening ceremony in dark blue military dress. Kelekian’s costume was listed along with the other outfits of “Prominent Personages” at Opening Day.[69] As Commissioner General, Kelekian was also entitled to attend other public events such as receptions and grand balls.[70]

Although Kelekian did have a booth and sold objects in the capacity of a dealer, publications make him out to have been on "special edict" from the Shah of Persia. [71] Kelekian displayed his decorative arts objects at the Imperial Persian Pavilion in the Palace of Varied Industries and published a catalogue of one hundred ceramics, rugs, textiles, jewelry, and manuscripts. The catalogue also featured photographs of his displays including a table draped with carpets upon which ewers, tiles, and jugs were placed, and a vitrine of various ceramic objects [Image 13]. [72] This private collection of decorative arts was previously exhibited at le Musée Decoratif de Beaux Arts, a much more formal and prestigious arena that further conferred status on his collection and his role as a dealer.[73] As his exhibitions in Europe demonstrate, he was easily recognized overseas as a premier dealer, a status he strived to uphold in America.[74] Kelekian did not compete for prizes and ribbons in St. Louis as he did in Chicago because of his previous role as judge of Persian Art in the Paris Exposition.[75] Perhaps confirming his status judge, a connoisseur suited to impart his expertise, was enough.

Kelekian assessed the taste of American shoppers at his booths at the World's Fairs in *The Old and the New.* He lamented, "When I first came here, in Chicago, prospective buyers would hold up one of my rare rugs to see if there were any holes, and, when there were – exit the thought of acquiring it."[76] Importantly, this illustrates the changing taste and growing connoisseurship of American collectors. Kelekian had a mission to elevate American taste, which he revealed in a 1904 interview with *The Detroit Press*. He stated, "I like the Americans […] I think they are the best hearted, most generous people on earth and, for that reason, I am sorry to see that the [St. Louis World's Fair] is not better patronized. Foreign nations have been generous in their

contributions of money, men, and goods and have done all in their power to make the exposition a success."[77] As in Chicago, Kelekian promoted Persian arts as a means of elevating Western taste. However, the World's Fair in St. Louis was different than the Chicago's Fair through the presentation of more legitimate representation of foreign nations in contrast to Chicago's stereotype-ridden Midway.

Following the St. Louis World's Fair, the remainder of the objects from the Imperial Persian Pavilion were first displayed and then auctioned by order of "Dikran Khan Kelekian". The name took a prominent place on the catalogue's cover, which was printed in a larger typeface than even the title of the auction. The auction, held over five days at Fifth Avenue Art Galleries in New York, was successful and the 800 lots netted $13,739.50 – a handsome amount in 1905.[78]

The catalogue also provided a glimpse of the types of objects displayed at the Persian Pavilion as "Oriental" wares. The sale offered Italian textiles and embroideries, Hispano-Moresque ceramics, ancient Greek and Roman glass and bronzes, Javanese prints, enamels from Limoges, antique jewelry, and Spanish ivories. Some of the objects offered were from the 1898 Dana sale, which was a strong provenance in its own. This 1905 sale demonstrated the desire for antiquities and other decorative objects regardless of their origin, and in this case, shows that Kelekian sold more than just Persian arts at the Pavilion. *The New York Times* described commented: "pretty much everything that belongs to a bazaar in a town of Asia Minor or Persia is found at in this sale, which even contains a few recent paintings by modern painters such as Pointelin and Franzèn. But the predominate note is set by Persia and Armenia."[79] This mix and match sale is in stark contrast with Kelekian's careful annotation and historical valuation that would come just

a few years later as he grew his collection and distinguished himself as a scholar and not just a dealer.

**3. Kelekian the Educator: A dealer's maturation through educational publications**

Kelekian, as a dealer, embodied the roles of businessman, educator, and curator. Although these aspects of his career were always present at one time, at certain parts of his career aspects of each were pulled to the forefront. From 1893 to 1905, Kelekian committed himself to capturing an American market by providing desirable goods. During that time, he also established his reputation as a top tier dealer of quality objects. Between the years 1908 and 1910, Kelekian published three important books that showed off his collections.

Kelekian formed groups of objects focused on a specific material and published catalogues of them. These included Coptic textiles, Chinese porcelains, Oriental and Venetian textiles, and Persian ceramics. As a dealer, he made such groups available to individual buyers and museums, dispersing his decorative arts objects to private and public collections through sales and exhibitions. In his role as educator, Kelekian amassed a representative collection and wrote about the objects in his collections including historical notes, visual analysis, and critical opinion, all contextualized as a unified and visual history. These sumptuously illustrated books were then offered to a discriminating public. Kelekian's publications demonstrate his prowess as a collector to amass spectacular and representative survey collections as well as his ability to show off his collection to important audiences.

Kelekian's first publication, a very showy piece, was published in 1908. *La Collection Kélékian: Ettofes & Tapis d'Orient et de Venise* (1908) demonstrates his connoisseurship of textiles.[80] Without compromising the ardor of showmanship, Kelekian compiled 100 highest-quality plates, most in color, in a large and heavy folio collection.

This folio, printed in Paris in an edition of 300, would have been inordinately expensive for the time.[81] The folio represented Kelekian's textile collection, which had been displayed at le Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris in 1907. *La Collection Kélékian* is an example of Kelekian playing the role of educator by offering his collection for study.

The folio's preface (printed in English and French) was written by an expert, as Kelekian tended to have for his publications. Jules Guiffrey of the Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins, the renowned French tapestry makers, provided the preface and in it, included accolades of Kelekian's encyclopedic collection, which he considered the foundation of connoisseurship for textiles. Gaston Migeon, curator of decorative arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance at the Louvre, provided captions and classifications for the more than 100 textiles and rugs illustrated in the collection. Guiffrey recognized that the formal study of textiles was a young field and that museums dedicated to textiles had been in existence less than forty years prior to this publication. He also acknowledged the importance of public collections and lauded those who made their private collection available for study as well by connoisseurs and artists alike.

Elements of Kelekian's connoisseurship shine in this publication. Guiffrey praised the collection as one of the most complete, "richest in varied types that an amateur has ever formed."[82] Here, amateur does not refer to a novice, but rather, an individual not affiliated with an institution such as a school or museum. The collection is varied and shows the evolution of motifs like the central medallion, elongated to form an ogee shape. The plates also referenced borrowed design between East and West, such as parallel floral forms in Venice and Persia [Image 14]. This evidenced Kelekian's vast understanding of textile design to pair these two textiles next to each other, as well as his

ability to procure such fine examples. The fragments reveal amazing design, weave patterns, and craftsmanship as well knowledge of materials like silk and wool and technologies such as dyeing. Guiffrey thanked Kelekian for his invaluable work, stating:

> It is by carefully prepared publications like these – we cannot insist too strongly on this point – that we spread the knowledge and appreciation of these arts of the Orient of which Europe will always remain the tributary. One must feel profoundly grateful to this man of very refined tastes who has formed with an untiring perseverance this superb collection of carefully selected models.[83]

The two best examples of Kelekian's own writings are *The Potteries of Persia: Being a Brief History of the Art of Ceramics in the Near East* (1909) and *Persian and Analogous Potteries 1885-1910* (1910). In these works, Kelekian moved away from picturesque connotations of the East and focused exclusively on the objects themselves. Although these publications were catalogues of objects presumably for sale, Kelekian chose not to rely on exaggerations and imaginative hyperbole as he once did. Kelekian instead employed functionalism, stylistic analysis, and symbolism as means to describe each object in the context of decorative arts history. This shift in tone was significant in Kelekian's career. By emphasizing the historical development of these ceramics, Kelekian's catalogue offered a more scientific approach to collecting. In this context, Kelekian also showcased the objects for their function and decorative value, as examples of art rather than symbols of a mythic and magical East. He wrote for an educated and interested audience, serious private collectors and members of cultural institutions, and his goal was to teach them about Persian ceramics.

Kelekian's publications following *La Collection Kélékian* were some of the earliest surveys of Persian pottery, and it is important to remember that the potteries featured in the books, and similar Persian ceramics, had only been recently excavated and

made available for study. In many ways, these publications were groundbreaking because they served as reference books for the archaeological finds, which allowed readers and scholars to reference motifs and design and see change across centuries and regions. As these books do not have footnotes (but they do have references and acknowledgements to other key scholars) it may be assumed that Kelekian had a working knowledge of the history of Persian ceramics and increased his understanding as each piece was unearthed and could be studied.[84] He clearly stated that the majority of his research was primary and contingent upon the objects he had access to; in *Analogous Potteries* he wrote, "As it now exists, this collection is the most complete I know, and it is a record of my study of the Persian potteries covering a period of twenty-six years and my work in collecting them up to the present time."[85] Following publication of Kelekian's more encyclopedic tomes, his books became sources for curators and scholars and cited frequently.

Kelekian published *The Potteries of Persia: Being a Brief History of the Art of Ceramics in the Near East* in Paris in 1909. The book was a general interest publication for art connoisseurs; the primary audience was the educated and interested collector or scholar. As *Potteries of Persia* was not a catalogue for an exhibition and included objects that Kelekian did not own, the ceramics featured in the book were exemplary of cultures and eras, rather than objects for sale. Again, this emphasizes his role as an educator rather than strictly as a businessman.

In the following year, Kelekian published *Persian and Analogous Potteries 1885-1910*, an oversized folio of 101 copies, "printed for private circulation only".[86] *Analogous Potteries* is a showy publication with crisp black and white plates – 112 in all, and all from Kelekian's private and encyclopedic collection. This book, like *La Collection*

*Kélékian*, was just as much a collector's item as a reference book. In his essay, Kelekian wrote, "It has been my humble duty, and my very great personal pleasure to contribute my efforts towards introducing [Persian pottery] to an intelligent public."[87] There is some overlap between the two publications – Kelekian chose the finest to be included in both books.

In his first scholarly publication, *Potteries of Persia,* Kelekian included thirty-six illustrations of thirty-four objects, nineteen from his private collection and the balance from his clients' collections to illustrate his thirty-eight page essay. Listed alongside his possessions were ceramics belonging to Henry O. Havemeyer, Henry Walters, Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919), and Theodore M. Davis (1837-1915), excavator of Egypt's Valley of the Kings. Museum holdings in this book included the Louvre and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

In this book, Kelekian made the case for the richness of the arts and culture of the Near East. He explicated the complexity of technique and design as well as differentiating the variations per region, even if subtle. Kelekian, in this publication, played the role of scholar and employed the language of the Western art historian. He stayed largely outside the history he told, but with small interjections to claim an object as his possession, or ever the modern man, comment on the parallels between the palettes used by Rakka craftsmen and *plein air* Impressionists.[88] In the introduction, however, Kelekian left the voice of the subjective scholar and took on a persuasive tone to convince his readers that Persian artists were as "genuinely gifted as any that ever lived."[89]

Kelekian opened the *The Potteries of Persia* in the context of *fin de siècle*, and cited the recent accessibility of the Near East to Western explorers and archaeologists, who "introduced to the civilized world an art of incomparable beauty, richness, and charm, all that remains of a civilization of another epoch."[90] The objects that these Westerners found served as proof – they "bear testimony" – to when the civilizations of the East were at their height as "national, political, and intellectual powers."[91] The role of the archaeologist was to unearth and transport the artifacts to the West, where much to the delight of collectors, scholars then interpreted the objects. Kelekian understood this relationship, and assumed the role of the most valuable player in the game – a scholar from the foreign land who could speak the language of the West. He cited Persian travelers and poets, nodding to the intellectual history of Persia as well as scholars such as Dr. Daniel Marie Fouquet (1850-1921), who had a most important role in the excavations at Cairo, and Henry Wallis (1830-1916), English artist and ceramics collector.

In *Potteries of Persia*, Kelekian took a scientific approach to the history of Persian ceramics as he traced motifs and color choices from region to region and across time. He wrote about the interchange of technique and tradition to date works and organized them by era. Kelekian created a chronology beginning with the Fostat potteries, acknowledging the role of skilled Arabian and Syrian émigrés in establishing kilns in Old Cairo.[92] Kelekian focused on the important centers of pottery productions, cultural centers like Rakka, Sultanabad, and Rhages, all with archaeological sites to which Kelekian had familiarity. He did mention influences and similarities between other styles of pottery, like Damascus and Rhodian, and the varieties of wares produced at the

Koubatcha kilns. The narrative of this work began casually and most likely left the reader slightly confused and needing guidance – from a knowledgeable dealer, if you will – to accompany the collector through the geography of Persian wares.

This book was published in the throes of a strong market for decorative arts, domestic and foreign. Kelekian had to prove the legitimacy of Persian art at the intellectual and artistic level in order to compete in this market, not just at the monetary level as he did in his previous years. Because of this need, Kelekian attempted to legitimize Persian objects as art equal to an Old Master and as avant-garde as an Impressionist painting. Kelekian sought to translate the significance of these objects to his Western market. To appeal to his readers, Kelekian provided the premise, "The Persian art is nearer to the spirit of the time in which we live. It is more human than its predecessors. We understand it with the heart as well as with the intellect."[93] Kelekian exemplified the artistic merit of the makers of Rakka pottery by explaining their splendor. He wrote, "the native artisans had reached a degree of skill commensurate with the demands made upon them by these luxury-loving rulers."[94] In crediting the craftsperson, Kelekian acknowledged the skill necessary to make such objects, which appealed to connoisseurs. To appeal to collectors of fine objects, Kelekian reminded them of a royal provenance, eluding that these pieces were the finest made. It is not surprising that Kelekian's narrative touched upon these objects being owned and appreciates by royalty, a detail that would not have been lost on his readers. Although Kelekian was writing as an educator, he never could escape his underlying motivation as dealer.

Kelekian made poetic claims, and did indeed substantiate them. He placed Persian ceramics in the continuum of art history by tracing technique and design, as well as

historical conquests and migrations of artist-craftspeople. *The Potteries of Persia* was a history of ceramic production from Persia from the rise to the fall of the craft. Although his Western readers may not have known the detailed histories of the Persian Empire, they would have been able to recognize turquoise and lapis lazuli that had come to exemplify "oriental" ceramics. Those rich blues were borrowed from Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia and then acquired by the Spanish and Italian artists in later ceramics.[95] Kelekian made connections between Persian arts and the other collected items at the time, including Chinese porcelains.

Within this illustrated tome, Kelekian pushed these objects out of the realm of archaeological finds and into art history. Kelekian privileged the history of these objects but also their decorative qualities to show the splendor of the epoch and its accessibility to contemporary collectors. He credited the craftsperson, acknowledging their expertise in making objects of luxury, including their ability to expertly choose a palette and composition. Kelekian acknowledged the expression of art through the ornament of objects "associated with the daily lives of the people."[96] However, almost apologetically, he wrote that the decoration is not "Art for Art's Sake," or abstract, which had become so popular at the turn of the century as a testament to the evolution of the *art nouveau.*[97] He referenced the characteristic line of art nouveau, stating, "all lovers of beauty of line and color must allow that Persia's contribution to the art of all ages is singularly ingratiating."[98] He clearly understood the evolution of art styles, which he later evidenced in his repeated metaphor that modern art is the little child of antiquities.

This book, however, was not without examples of Kelekian's achievements as a dealer. Kelekian included a bowl in this book, citing it as the largest figure piece he had

seen from Sultanabad [Images 15 and 16].[99] The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston added this bowl to their collection the year the book was published. The dish depicting a wedding procession in is now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art [Image 17].[100] Kelekian wrote about the plate: "If this plate were intact it would be a priceless addition not only to the history of ceramics but to the history of costume as well."[101] Clearly Kelekian was not just referring to the value of a collectible, but to the historical value of this plate and its role contributing to the complete history of the arts and accomplishments of humankind. The plate was passed from Kelekian to his son Charles, and by Charles' wife Beatrice to the Metropolitan Museum in 1983. Nanette Kelekian, their daughter, fondly recalled that Charles considered the plate "the most valuable in the collection."[102]

*Persian and Analogous Potteries* has a much shorter essay and the 112 plates provided the educational value. It is the illustrative expansion of *The Potteries of Persia*, which was more text-heavy. In *Analogous Potteries*, Kelekian hoped the ceramics objects to speak for themselves. It served as a visual encyclopedia of "the best procurable examples" to show the development of Persian ceramics through time.[103] Here, it is implied that Kelekian held the finest examples of such ceramics, especially in contrast to "the scarcity of good specimens, their fragility, and the difficulty in procuring them."[104] Kelekian was not humble in his success of creating a sequential collection with exemplary pieces of craftsmanship. He admitted "immense expenditure of both money and pains" to fill in the gaps. He gathered objects from "innumerable sources," to complete his history of Persian pottery.[105]

Kelekian arranged *Persian and Analogous Potteries* chronologically, beginning with a Babylonian trophy cup from circa 1000 BCE. Although the book focused on

Persian pottery, Kelekian clearly valued the prehistory of the ceramics for study. He included fine examples of Egyptian, Greek, and Coptic pottery as well. The two-handled trophy cup, decorated in relief and glazed a turquoise blue, was also featured as the frontispiece of *The Potteries of Persia*.

In Kelekian's typical fashion, he used hyperbole in his descriptions, yet these accolades are indeed warranted. The ceramics illustrated in *Analogous Pottery* are objectively amazing – they are splendid pieces in great condition. The book really shows off his ability to curate a premier collection. In the book, Kelekian described not only their artistic value with attention to line and color, but their historical value as well. For Kelekian and his readers – contemporary and future – the objects illustrated in this catalogue are exemplary in their artistic merit and as historical documents, so to speak.

Kelekian referred to the Persian bowl illustrated in plate 23 as the "finest known specimen of the Rhages potteries," because of its detail and figurative subject matter [Image 18].[106] The thirteenth-century bowl depicts a king surrounded by eight women. Each woman, painted in full color, holds an instrument, wine, or other offering and is robed in a different costume. The bowl was clearly made for the court as works of art by talented crafts people, an aspect Kelekian privileged in his essay. Additionally, as ceramic objects are evidence of a bygone era, such figural illustrations of royal life have a historical value as well.

In this collection, Kelekian included a Persian mosque tile (plate 19). The eight-pointed star is turquoise blue and iridescent. The significance of this piece is that it is dated AH 515 (1121 CE), the "earliest known dated piece of pottery of Persian workmanship".[107] This piece was important to establish a timeline and a place to begin

the "evolution" of Persian ceramics, a theme that Kelekian sought to teach. Another honorable mention from this book is a Persian luster bowl (plate 75), also found at Rhages [Image 19]. Kelekian's connoisseurship identified that the bowl lacked the usual central medallion, and thus is "a useful addition to a collection of early potteries."[108] Similarly, a Persian plate (plate 81) excavated from Koubatcha in Daghestan, a region in the Caucasus Mountains now part of Russia, is included in the book because as a dated piece –873 AH, or 1468 CE – it fixes the date of turquoise and polychrome production in the region [Image 20].

Some of Kelekian's objects were sourced from archaeological sites and some were procured at auction. Kelekian purchased many fine wares at the Dana auction in 1898 before there was a strong established desire for Persian pottery. At the sale, he bought almost all of the Persian ceramics for low prices. In a newspaper article recalling the first day of the sale, the author reflected on the low demand of quality works: "It was the examples of this now lost art, specimens of which are almost unobtainable, that, according to experts, brought the most unsatisfactory prices, when the value of the ware is considered, in the sale."[109] This evidenced Kelekian's keen eye and smart judgment; he purchased items for his collection based on their quality and merit before the buying public knew their true value.

Kelekian's tomes provided as complete a survey as possible using limited sources of illustration and contemporary knowledge of a little studied subject matter. He did deposit books in various libraries, including the Library of Congress and the Metropolitan Museum.[110] They were artistic volumes with an educational slant and served a dual purpose of informing his audience and publicizing his collection. An important aspect to

consider is how the objects included in these two publications are still exemplar of Persian ceramics in the contemporary era. Many of these are illustrated in Oliver Watson's *Ceramics from Islamic Lands*, an indispensible catalogue of historically significant ceramics.

As for the objects of these collections, objects featured in *Persian and Analogous Potteries* was sent to the Victoria and Albert Museum as part of a Loan Exhibition in 1911 and stayed in London until Kelekian's death in 1951.[111] The collection was housed in a special gallery at the museum and importantly, protected during both World Wars. For reasons still unknown, Kelekian's estate was liquidated upon his death and the proceeds bequeathed to the Armenian General Benevolent Union. The collection was removed from the Victoria and Albert Museum, save for a few examples, and kept by Kelekian's son Charles. The collection was later sold in part to Sheik Nasser of Kuwait, and American Museum, and to private collectors.[112]

In these three highlighted publications, Kelekian took a tone remarkably different from his previous public writings for the Fairs and auctions. As an expert-educator, his concerns were with presenting a connoisseur's view of textiles and Persian ceramics rather than relying on stereotypical and sensory appeals needed to previously capture his market. Since he had an established a client base and had primed Americans for a more authentic experience, his books were well received and served to legitimize collecting the arts from the Near and Middle East.

**4. Kelekian the Curator – Sourcing and Selling to create ideal collections**

The dealer's role is one of service as well as business. Their role is to help shape collections, private and public, through their intimate knowledge of the market coupled with their client's taste. As for private collectors, the businessman with taste was the ideal American collector, a patron of the arts. Kelekian served as a "curator," for private collections, such as those of Mr. Henry Walters of Baltimore and Mr. and Mrs. Henry O. H. Havemeyer of New York. He also embodied a kind of curatorial role at the Metropolitan Museum of Art through his exhibitions, gifts, and sales to the Museum in its early years. Kelekian's curatorial accomplishments are not relegated to his lifetime as many prominent museums now have Kelekian objects in various departments. Institutions including the Textile Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Brooklyn Museum, the Louvre, the British Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum all have objects with a Kelekian provenance in their esteemed collections. Kelekian sold many of his best pieces to collectors and thus ensured that these objects were placed in prominent collections.

During the last part of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, dealers like Kelekian assumed the roles of educators and curators, as Islamic departments in museums and universities were not yet established. Dealers were not only the source of objects, but also provided knowledge about them. Specialization was their forte, which was valuable to the formation of budding collections.[113] They sourced objects either from archaeological sites or auctions, keeping a keen eye fixed on objects to create collections, which were then displayed or sold. Kelekian worked within this model in his collections of textiles, ceramics, and the like. He exhibited collections, wrote

catalogues, and acquired objects for collections – all roles now assigned to the contemporary curator.[114]

Kelekian fondly recalled his joy and good fortune of working in the capacity of a curator. He reflected: "From the day I sailed to America in 1893 […] I have had a marvelous time helping to form collections in the United States." In "The Old and the New" he wrote, "It has been my privilege to know (and sometimes fight amiably with) the leading collectors of the last forty years – I wish that there were time here to tell anecdotes about all these charming people whom I have so much enjoyed knowing," a sentiment that echoes with pride and reveals the immensity of his personality.[115]

Henry Walters, like his father, sought Eastern and Asian art with a great appetite beginning at Exposition Universelle in 1867.[116] Seeing prominent expositions and displays in Europe may have prompted them to bring such objects to the United States during their various buying trips abroad. But it was a domestic venture that connected Harry Walters with Kelekian; the two met in 1893 at the World's Columbian Exposition when Harry went as his father's representative to purchase art. At the Fair, Walters made some of his first acquisitions. He purchased Near Eastern cylinder seals from Kelekian, although the Walters Art Museum has not identified which ones.[117]

Following Henry Walters and Kelekian's meeting in Chicago, Kelekian became one of Walters' primary sources of Eastern objects. From the spring of 1897, Walters visited Kelekian in New York and purchased a variety of objects, ranging from ceramics to manuscripts. From there, their relationship grew closer. Kelekian offered objects in his storefront to Walters, but extended his expertise and service in two ways: he prepared

picture-book catalogues with simple captions for Walters' to shop from, and he also represented Walters at antiquities auctions.

The catalogues and photographs that Kelekian produced and presented to Walters offer insight on the dealer's role in carefully curating the private collection. In the Walters Archive, photographs with notes show some of Kelekian's offerings to Walters. Exemplary of Kelekian's objects is a wide turquoise plate found at Nishapur offered to Walters via photograph with accompanying notes, previously described. Five photo albums survive in the Walters Gallery Archives and are undated, but by referencing acquisitions to the Walters Art Museum, can be placed at 1925 or earlier. Kelekian offered some unusual objects alongside the expected Egyptian and Persian ones; for example, Walters acquired a knotted rattlesnake from Mesoamerica, carved in basalt.

At the W.H. Forman sale in London, 1899, Kelekian purchased fourteen objects for Walters, including a statuette of a seated cat from the New Kingdom of Egypt, made of bronze, gold, and glass [Image 21].[118] For the famed Christie's sale in the same year where he acquired the Marlborough Gems, Walters sent Kelekian to London in his place, citing the dealer as a "quasi-expert" in gems yet authorized purchase of "smaller ones which he considered fine and which sold at a reasonable figure."[119] Kelekian purchased 107 gems, including many important cameos and intaglios. Many of these were purchased at or below ten pounds. Kelekian's purchases were more than satisfactory at this important sale, obtaining gems of "exceptional beauty and historical significance" for Walters.[120]

Kelekian's expertise was vital to Walters' acquisitions. In an unpublished memorandum from the Walters Art Museum's Archives, Jenny Vorys Canby and Richard

H. Randall related a conversation with Kelekian's son, Charles, in which Charles and the interviewers discuss Walters' and the elder Kelekian's relationship. Dikran Kelekian's gallery in Paris, located at the fashionable Place Vendôme, was a gathering place for artists and fellow connoisseurs alike, and Walters began his Paris circuit there. This gallery served as Kelekian's import center from Cairo and export center to the United States. In Paris, Walters would purchase directly from other dealers under Kelekian's watchful eye. As Walters and the dealers bargained, Kelekian stood behind them, and guided Walters with subtle nods and shakes. As to their personal relationship, Charles Kelekian is quoted: "Dikran Kelekian liked him and admired him and therefore supplied him with the best that could be found."[121] In the same article, Charles contemplated Kelekian objects in the Walters collection, identifying a statue of Egyptian King Sesostris III in black granite "as the best they ever handled" [Image 22].[122] Kelekian and Walters maintained a strong dealer-client relationship, with Kelekian providing most of Walters' Egyptian, Islamic, and Near-Eastern objects.[123] Kelekian also sold manuscripts to Walters, including Christian and Islamic illuminated manuscripts. Items in the Walters Art Museum with a Kelekian provenance range from wool Coptic textiles, amulets from Egypt carved in a variety of semi-precious stones, Roman bone plaques, and Turkish armor in steel, silver, and gold. Considering Walters collected an encyclopedic range of objects and Kelekian's eye, expertise, and ability to supply so much, the two forged a singular relationship that benefited the two connoisseurs.

On May 20, 1915, Kelekian wrote a letter from Paris to Walters in the United States expressing his congratulations on a newly purchased luster vase. Kelekian's letter is particularly rich because of the details he expressed, which enlighten the context of the

era as well as provide information that only a dealer could know. Kelekian's letter to Walters provided a glimpse of Kelekian's archaeological sources, his experiences, and the slim numbers of wares recovered from the digs.[124] Within the cordial correspondence, Kelekian updated Walters on the goings-on in the Middle East and gave him a brief history of relevant archaeological sites. Kelekian also bemused about his own acquisitions, revealing his personal passion as a collector. The letter also provides insight to their relationship.

Kelekian's salutation began with congratulations on Walters' recent purchase "the very best luster vase that [he has] ever seen," and acknowledged that the Baltimore collector's "Persian collection now ranges amongst the few most noted in the world." The letter then took an almost argumentative tone, with Kelekian refuting Walters' claims about the availability of new finds. Kelekian rebutted, "there are no more Persian potteries to be found." Kelekian cited his insider knowledge and his accessibility to digs in Fostat, the quarter of Old Cairo. In this letter, Kelekian also mentioned Rakka, Sultanabad, and Ray.[125] Kelekian claimed his authority through experience, "30 years of personal experience and that of my brother and father before me," as well as reminded Walters that he studied those sites, went to those sites, and also sent delegates. Kelekian emphasized his obsession for Persian ceramics to Walters by claiming he spent "more than half [of his] fortune in these potteries." In this letter, Kelekian made a statement that captures his obsessive personality. He wrote, "I do not say this boastingly from a financial point of view, but simply to show you that it is for the love of these beautiful potteries that I desire to control them."[126]

Kelekian, in this letter, told that he began his career at Fostat, "the birthplace of

Persian pottery."[127] Kelekian identified archaeological sites as important sources for Persian ceramics to satisfy the blossoming demand by Westerners.[128] Kelekian's shop in Cairo, perhaps less a storefront and more a depot or export house, operated from 1910 to the 1950s, coinciding with active digs throughout the Middle East.[129] From Cairo, Kelekian shipped excavated objects to Paris and New York. Kelekian the businessman sourced these objects directly to Western buyers, identifying a niche market and satisfying the desire. Again, Kelekian stressed to Walters "not a stone left unturned in the search for these treasures."

Stephen Vernoit's "The Rise of Islamic Archeology" (1997) analyzes excavation during Kelekian's time first by reminding his readers that the goal of archaeology throughout the nineteenth century was to supply private and public collections with examples of the "antiquity of man."[130] The goal of these excavations was not pure ethnology or the systematic characterization and collection of findings, but to amass any object of interest, especially museum-quality or unbroken objects, ready for sale. Travelers identified some archaeological sites, and some of these "wayfarers" were indeed on a government-sanctioned mission.[131] Kelekian's interests aligned with these archaeological excavations, especially as pieces of fine Persian potteries were unearthed. The excavations at Fostat, Rakka, Sultanabad, and Rhages all turned up important examples of pottery that Kelekian acquired as the basis of his world famous ceramics collection and for resale to his clients. Archaeology also allowed Kelekian and his fellow scholars to further categorize and trace the development of Persian ceramics, furthering scholarship and interest in the art form.

Contemporary to the letter, the Cairo Museum supervised the digs by "hundreds of people with perfect tools."[132] Central to Kelekian's claim to Walters was the limited finds of first and second-class pieces, of which thirty were found under the Cairo Museum's charge. This letter illuminated Kelekian's participation at digs like Fostat, knowing how many pieces were found and where they ended up. He wrote in this letter that he visited the archaeological sites and met with the Cairo Museum's director each time he was in Egypt.[133] Although these objects existed, the market was tightly controlled by limited inventory available for purchase. Some archaeological sites did indeed prove fruitful, such as Rhages. For example, in 1914, Henry Walters purchased a lustered female head from Kelekian. The head, olive-gold luster on white fritware, found at Rhages, and may have been a top to a vessel [Image 23].[134] The catalogues of these archaeological objects that Kelekian prepared for Walters' review and purchase also included several examples of Rhages ceramics, some which are now found in the permanent collection.

Whereas the Walters Art Museum began as the private collection of a father and his son and slowly transitioned into a public institution for the benefit of the people of Baltimore, the Metropolitan Museum of Art was always a public museum dedicated to accruing cultural capital to the United States. The Metropolitan recently dedicated new galleries for the Department of Islamic Art in November 2011, and in the catalogue *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (2011), the editors reflected on the formation and evolution of the Museum's holdings. Although the Museum incorporated in 1870, it was only in 1932 that a department of art from the Near East was established, and then in 1963 that a department of Islamic art was

formed.[135] The early collections were contingent on "taste, enthusiasm, and generosity of the Museum's donors as well as the expertise of its curators and the skill of its archaeologists."[136] In this statement, the confluence of sources is evident – with donors having perhaps the strongest influence in the early years. Kelekian knew the value of the public collection. He stated,

> The collector becomes educated by collecting, but the museums are supposed to teach the great number of people […] The collector, whether he be a private individual or a museum curator, who as learned to distinguish the wheat from the chaff, and who has acquired the good things early, will think himself a wise and fortunate fellow. He will be.[137]

The impetus for the dedication of a department at the Metropolitan devoted to the arts of the Near East in 1932 was the amount of acquisitions of such objects to the Museum in the form of donations and bequests from private collectors. The source of these arts objects from prominent collectors in the early twentieth century evidenced the changing tides of collections as educational and legitimate artworks rather than the "bric-a-brac" of earlier American tastes. The American social class toured Europe, the East, and Asia to learn about the sources and cultures of these art objects, which was a considerable shift from the Aesthetic Movement's privileging of surface ornament and "art for art's sake." As we have seen, American tastemakers turned to dealers as sources for expertise, looking to people such as Kelekian to educate and guide them through shop fronts, galleries, and auctions, and find exemplary objects, decorative and representative at the same time.

Kelekian had a role in the early activities of the Metropolitan. He loaned "a collection of Oriental textile fabrics and other objects" to the Museum in 1895.[138] Kelekian's gift of *La Collection Kélékian: étoffes et tapis d'Orient et de Venise* to the

library in 1908 was the next recorded activity in Metropolitan publications.[139] As mentioned in the previous chapter, this book was a gigantic folio – a visual encyclopedia – for study and admiration. Without a doubt, its visibility served to advertise Kelekian's aptitude for curating a private collection. Following another textile loan in 1909, Kelekian gifted the Museum with their first ceramic objects from him, three Persian bowls.[140] Earlier accessions such as star tiles were purchased from Kelekian with the Jacob S. Rogers Fund in 1908 [Image 24].[141]

Of these early acquisitions, a thirteenth-century Persian colored and lustred bowl appeared on the cover of *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* in April 1909 with an accompanying article "Rhages Ware" by William R. Valentiner (1880-1958), the newly appointed curator of the Department of Decorative Arts. This article presented a history of medieval Persian ceramics and their production, citing the Metropolitan's examples as "very rare" and specifically, Kelekian's as "most beautiful" and in "perfect condition" [Images 25 and 26].[142] This bowl was an early gift to the Metropolitan Museum by Kelekian, undoubtedly quite valuable because of its rarity and condition, and may have served as strategic gift between the dealer and the Museum, ensuring a lasting relationship. The evidence of this professional relationship and Kelekian's attentiveness to his market was later seen in Kelekian's letter to Walters, cited above, in which the dealer discussed his knowledge of Valentiner's purchases for the museum.

Kelekian continued to loan and give objects to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, including gifts of Egyptian reliefs, Indian textiles, and Byzantine bowls, and his own books, as well as loans of Ispahan rugs and Persian ceramics. In 1910, he loaned seven

bowls from Rhages, Rakka, and Sultanabad, all archaeological sites that he was closely involved with.

Kelekian's legacy with the Metropolitan is multifaceted. Directly, he provided loans, gifts, and objects through sale to the Museum. Indirectly, Kelekian advised benefactors to the Museum. Kelekian recalled in 1939, near the end of his well-established career, "It is a satisfaction to me after half a century of dealing in them to see the works of art which I have sponsored and which have passed through my hands displayed in leading private collections and museums throughout the country."[143]

For example, Kelekian's indirect contributions to the Metropolitan Museum are evident in the bequests from the Havemeyer family. Kelekian served as an advisor to Louisine and Henry Havemeyer in the formation of their own collection. Although no record survives of how they met, it may be assumed that they became acquainted either at the 1893 Exhibition or through Mary Cassatt, a long time mutual friend of the Havemeyers and Kelekian. The Havemeyers were avid collectors of the decorative arts, which supplemented their fine paintings. Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen identified that the Havemeyer bequest, presented to and accepted by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1929, benefited almost every department in the Museum, evidencing the range of their decorative interests.[144] One important contribution to the Metropolitan with a Kelekian provenance is a large cobalt-colored jar [Image 27].[145] It is extraordinary and features running gazelles and scrolling foliage. Similar to other generous donors to the Metropolitan, their bequest demonstrated "the exquisite taste" of the Havemeyers and their role in adding to the richness of the Metropolitan's encyclopedic collection.[146]

Of these styles and media, Kelekian was most involved with helping the Havemeyers form their collection of ancient glass and ceramics from the East.[147] He, along with Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933), Samuel Colman (1832-1920), and Edward C. Moore (1827-1891), influenced the Havemeyers' collection by carefully presenting the finest objects for them to purchase. The Havemeyers collected decorative arts from a range of times and cultures, including Egyptian sculpture, Roman glass, Islamic rugs and lustred Persian pottery.[148] Correspondence between Cassatt and Mrs. Havemeyer reveals that Kelekian often set aside objects for Mr. Havemeyer.[149] Kelekian also hosted his friends abroad; the Havemeyers visited his shops in Paris and Cairo, as well as on sightseeing excursions in Egypt in 1906 [Image 28].[150] In 1911, Cassatt visited Kelekian in Cairo.[151] Cassatt and Kelekian's close friendship lasted throughout their lifetimes. She also made portraits of Kelekian's children in pastels.

Kelekian worked with other notable benefactors as well. He had an important role in the brokerage of Assyrian reliefs and colossi to John D. Rockefeller, which were donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and are prominently displayed in the Museum [Image 29]. The enormous human-headed bull and a lion sculptures and sixteen accompanying reliefs were excavated by Sir Henry Layard from the palace of King Ashurnasirpal II (r. 883 – 859 BCE) at Nimrud.[152] Kelekian was not active at the Nineveh site, but took an opportunity to purchase gigantic reliefs in 1919 from Ivor Churchill Guest, the Viscount Winbourne. The purchase of the reliefs by Kelekian offers a particular look at the way monuments were bought and sold. The reliefs were offered as a single lot for just above $100,000. This high price, coupled with the number and weight of the artifacts – two colossi, ten wall relief slabs, and six relief fragments, and eight

sculptural fragments – suggested that only a dealer or museum would have been able to acquire such a significant hoard. A dealer would then be able to unload the collection in pieces, or a museum could acquire them as a significant addition to an Ancient Near Eastern collection. Kelekian purchased all but the eight fragments.[153]

The reliefs arrived in New York as a thirty-six ton shipment and were warehoused for close to four years. During that time, Kelekian offered the reliefs to prospective museums in the form of photographs.[154] Kelekian first offered the reliefs to Edward Robinson, director of the Metropolitan, who turned them down due to lack of space and funds. Kelekian's next attempted sale was to the University of Pennsylvania Museum. He displayed the group there in an attempt to win over Dr. George Byron Gordon (1870-1927), the director of the Museum, but Dr. Gordon's untimely death preceded closing the deal. [155] Kelekian then offered the reliefs to James H. Breasted of the Haskell Oriental Museum of the University of Chicago and in his proposal letter, wrote that they were "the finest monuments ever brought to this country" and encouraged Breasted to place them into an American museum.[156] Kelekian used patriotic language to encourage buyers. As these reliefs were exemplary of Assyrian cultural heritage, an American museum would be in a unique place to own such monuments. Kelekian's asking price was $450,000, much too high for Breasted, and the deal fell through. Kelekian eventually sold the group to Rockefeller, a deal Kelekian claimed he brokered on the corner of Fifty-sixth Street and Madision Avenue. The only condition of the sale was that Rockefeller be able to donate them to a museum of his choosing, the Metropolitan.[157]

The Metropolitan also acquired gifts from Charles and his wife, Beatrice, and his granddaughter Nanette. These gifts, from Kelekian's family, greatly outnumber

Kelekian's direct contributions to the Museum's accessions, and show the importance of the continued relationship cultivated by the elder Kelekian with the Museum. Considering many of these objects given to the Museum following Kelekian's death were in his possession at one time, it is evident that his legacy for quality objects continued after his death.

**5. Conclusion: From artifact to objet d'art II**

If someone were to exemplify the American Dream, Kelekian would be an apt nomination. As an émigré from Cappadocia, Kelekian came to America with the hope to become a successful businessman. He came educated and with capital, which undoubtedly eased his success. But it was his charisma coupled with a shrewd understanding of business and a specific knowledge and love of an emerging market that allowed him to capture the attention of important clients, many of whom turned into friends. Kelekian's complete commitment to his work, which "he calls rather his love than his business, since it is art, and he is devoted to it," was another factor in his success.[158]

Kelekian is remembered for his knowledge and obsession with Eastern decorative arts and the content and character of his dynamic collections. Slowly, Kelekian encouraged a market as a fierce promoter of Eastern goods and placed his objects in important collections, private and public. His steadfast commitment to antiquities from the East ensured a lasting legacy to American culture, and elevated the status of Near Eastern and Islamic art. As a businessman, educator, and curator, Kelekian succeeded in demonstrating the rightful role of Eastern decorative arts objects in the logical evolution of art ending, contemporary to him, with the modernists.

Roger Fry (1866-1934) art historian, curator, and promoter of Post-Impressionism, reflected on Kelekian's accomplished career in the *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*. In "Modern Paintings in a Collection of Ancient Art," (1920), Fry championed Kelekian's expansion in his role as "the greatest collector and dealer in Oriental textiles and pottery," to an authority of modern art.[159] He fittingly stated how

Kelekian's decorative arts objects had changed in status during the twentieth century. He wrote:

> There was no need for [Byzantine enamels and Coptic textiles] to establish their claim as high art; they were curiosities and they were of precious quality and workmanship. But once having found their way into collections and museums, they had the opportunity to make a purely aesthetic appeal, and the longer attention was concentrated on them, the stronger this appeal became.[160]

Fry acknowledged that Kelekian's commitment to his archaeological works had successfully transformed them into objets d'art. Fry continued to praise Kelekian as a connoisseur and a tastemaker. He wrote, "His long familiarity with early Oriental art has trained his taste in the search for what is really significant in the work of art, has given him a courage which has not betrayed him in his choice of modern work."[161]

The last few decades of Kelekian's career were marked by his love for modern art, and notably artists including Cassatt, Cézanne, Courbet, Daumier, Degas, Delacroix, Gauguin, Millet, Monet, Sargent, Toulouse-Lautrec, van Gogh, Whistler … Kelekian knew many of these artists personally and hosted them in his gallery at Paris. He shared his books on Islamic pottery with Renoir, and the two discussed the use of color and line in the artist's work in parallel to Persian decoration. He also compared Picasso to Persian artists, Derain to the Copts, and Matisse's work to Persian miniatures.[162]

Kelekian also married the decorative arts of the East with modern art of the West through exhibitions including exhibitions. Kelekian continued to contribute to Museum collections and exhibitions throughout the later part of his career. Of note, Kelekian loaned art to "Paganism and Christianity in Egypt: Egyptian art form the first to the tenth century," a 1941 exhibition of Coptic art at the Brooklyn Museum.[163] A reviewer commented on the fine artistic quality of the works, and using words that echo Kelekian's

sentiments, “Some of the works startlingly approaches at times what we fondly call ‘modern.’”[164] One can imagine Kelekian’s satisfaction at this exhibition, which he recalled in a letter to J.D. Cooney (1905-1982), who curated the exhibition. In his letter, Kelekian congratulated the success of the exhibition and reminded Cooney, “the Egyptian and Coptic arts are the sources of decorative art,” a theme he trumpeted throughout his career.[165] Following this exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum, Kelekian held a special exhibition in his gallery called “Artists of the Remote Past and their Grandchildren,” in which he displayed modern art side-by-side with antiquities.[166] The unique assemblage of French and American modern art displayed alongside Egyptian, Coptic, Persian, Greek, and Chinese objects was well received. One reviewer called it “An arresting idea with some very novel comparisons and contrasts.”[167]

Just as Kelekian was the first to offer Persian objects to Americans, he was also the first to present to the American buying public with modern art. The *American Art News* credited Kelekian’s 1922 sale of Modern French Pictures as the “first great auction of modernist art.”[168] The auctioneer, Thomas E. Kirby, prefaced the auction with a statement that revealed how Kelekian was a market trendsetter. Kirby announced to the buyers: “You must make your bids […] We have no previous records to go upon in this sale.”[169] The auction was well received; purchasers included the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and various dealers and collectors. High prices were indeed fetched.

The forward to the catalogue acknowledged Kelekian’s long career and his contributions to history of art. Kelekian’s character was credited in the content of the collection: “His warm and sympathetic personality is […] so strongly impressed on and

expressed by his whole collection."[170] Seymour de Ricci wrote, "Mr. Kélékian's training as a collector and dealer has been directed towards a keen appreciation of the continuity of artistic tradition."[171] Arsène Alexandre echoed this sentiment in his essay in the catalogue. He wrote about the importance of Kelekian's collection as an example between the past and present, "[…] Not only must period and period be joined, but periods of time and place, in a study which is so marvelous in its consideration by so tremendous in its undertaking that artists, their students and ardent admirers, will never be able to purse it only step by step, feeling already dazzled by its great brilliance."[172]

Kelekian's investments during his long career paid off. He was an accomplished dealer in terms of reputation and financial success. He contributed significantly to the collections of American museums and promoted the love and learning of arts from the East. In 1944, a special exhibition "Kelekian: As the Artist Sees Him" opened at the Durand-Ruel Galleries to celebrate his long career, as an "accolade, to a gifted, wise and greatly revered man."[173] In the exhibition catalogue, Kelekian's knowledge and appreciation of decorative arts and modern art was praised, and his taste called "advanced and clairvoyant."[174] Frank Cowninshield (1872-1947), journalist and art critic, attempted to capture Kelekian's enormous personality in the introduction: "He is a creature so curiously compounded that under his grim and sometimes awesome visage he combines, in one person, the qualities of a Persian satrap and a properly accredited archangel; of Genghis Khan and the Chevalier Bayard; of Thor the God of Thunder and Saint Francis of Assisi."[175] Nineteen celebrated artists contributed portraits of Kelekian in various media including painting, sculpture, and mosaic. Artists included Milton Avery (1885-

1965), Jo Davidson (1883-1952), Walt Kuhn (1877-1949), Hans Moller (1905-2000), and Elsa Schmid (1897-1917), among other fine modern artists.

These portraits give insight to Kelekian's reception by these artists. Many feature Kelekian standing stern with a background of textiles, paintings, and sculptures. Walt Kuhn's pen and watercolor shows Kelekian bundled up against a New York winter and peering out behind round eyeglasses. Elsa Schmid's mosaic represents Kelekian's adroit personality. Made of many pieces, the image comes together to show Kelekian's face in his older age. A sketch in Schmid's papers reveals a moment between subject and artist. Underneath Schmid's drawing of Kelekian's portrait is a quote, presumably from Kelekian as he sat for her. It reads, "I big man – you must draw big man – little artist draw little man – you big artist."[176]

Kelekian died in on January 39, 1951 after falling out of a window. Kelekian was eulogized in newspapers following his death as a "legendary – almost a fantastic – figure for more than a half century.[177] Paul Bird, editor of *The Art Digest* remembered Kelekian as "a wonderful person who loved art, people and New York."[178] Bird credited Kelekian's connoisseurship as "awe-inspiring," and that he had a palpable influence in helping elevate the taste of the New York art world.[179]

Kelekian's legacy will continue as the premier connoisseur dedicated to promoting Eastern decorative arts objects. His career spanned sixty-five years, more than enough time for a young dealer to mature into a celebrated authority on Ancient Near Eastern, Islamic, Coptic, Egyptian, and Persian arts. Kelekian's careful study and knowledge in these areas were influential in elevating taste, and he promoted these arts fiercely through various channels like the World's Fairs and esteemed publications. His

provided authentic objects to discriminating clients for their private collections. Importantly, he also ensured these objects were available to the public by placing them in private collections. He long career was punctuated by a love for modern art, which he celebrated as an evolution from his antiquities. Kelekian's chief accomplishment, acknowledged in the last years of his career, was the elevation of ancient Eastern decorative arts to the status of high art. He accomplished his life's work and the objects that passed through his hands are studied and admired in the finest museums all over the world.

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[1] "Reflections of a King dreaming of the immensity of the heavens and the fragility of earthly glories. May the end be noble, may you be happy." Untitled photograph, The Kelekian Vertical File, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland.

[2] *Plate*, Iran, dated 885 AH/CE 1470-1481 (Timurid Period). Underglaze painted fritware, 8 x 37 cm. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (48.1031).

[3] Oliver Watson, *Ceramics from Islamic Lands* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004) 449.

[4] Before and during Kelekian's time, objects from the Near and Middle East were called "Oriental," referring to the East and encompassing Japanese and Chinese arts as well. Sometimes place-names were used, such as Moorish, Turkish, or Arab, which focused regionally on styles. Other classifying nomenclature included "Mahometan," or a variation of the name. The use of "Islamic" was not used until recently, and "Ancient Near East" refers to the time and place before Mohammed's birth and Islam's subsequent influence in the region.

Previously, the study of Eastern arts was in relationship to the arts of Europe. In Roger Fry's article, written in Kelekian's time, "The Munich Exhibition of Mohammedan Art I" in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 17 no. 89 (August 1910), Fry sought to contextualize Islamic arts in terms of "signs of influence passing from West to East," keeping European art at the focus on of study and Islamic at the periphery (284). This sentiment is echoed in a contemporary critique by Sibel Bozdoğan, "Journey to the East: Ways of Looking at the Orient and the Question of Representation" *Journal of Architectural Education* 41 no 4 (1988). She writes, "The scope of the term Orient is vast, covering lands from Asia Minor to Japan and generally viewed from a Europe-centered perspective as a subdivided into a near-, a middle-, and a far-East. The systematic discovery, exploration and recording of the Orient has to be understood as part

of a radical, historical transformation in Western vision and consciousness, bringing it into contact with hitherto inaccessible natural and cultural worlds"(38).

Today, the definition for Islamic arts, as dictated by the *Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (London: Macmillan, 1996), vol. 16, is as follows: "the art made by artists or artisans whose religion was Islam, for the patrons who lived in predominately Muslim lands, or for the purposes that are restricted or peculiar to a Muslim population or Muslim setting"(94-5). Still, this remains problematic. See Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field" *The Art Bulletin* 85 no. 1 (2003) for a historiography of Islamic art.

[5] Kelekian Archive Finding Aid, first edition, Metropolitan Museum of Art's Onassis Library for Hellenic and Roman Art, New York City. Biography prepared by Nanette Kelekian and Mark Santangelo, 2.; Raymond Kevorkian, librarian of Armenian General Benevolent Union's Bibliotheque Nubar in Paris, identified Kelekian's hometown as Talas (in the Kayseri Province, east of Cappadocia) in an interview July 12, 2011.

[6] Richard Beer, "As They Are: Namesake of Tigranes," *Art News* (1934): 11 and 13. The medals are now at the Bibliothèque National de France.

[7] Raymond Kevorkian was kind enough to speak with me about the social and political climate of the Ottoman Empire at the middle of the nineteenth century from which Kelekian came. Other successful Armenians in America were Hagop Kevorkian, connoisseur and dealer, who was also born in Kayseri and educated at Roberts College, and Calouste Gulbenkian, one of the wealthiest men of the twentieth century.

[8] Literal translation: oriental curiosities, diverse antiquities. The Kelekian Archive, File U1 Folder A, General and Related Interest: Kelekian Business Letterhead. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[9] The growing tension between Armenians and the Ottomans following a series of ethnic and religious reforms and oppressive measures preceding the Young Turk Revolution and Armenian Genocide may have influenced their choice to leave the country as well.

[10] Oleg Grabar, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art" *Muqarnas* 1 (1983): 2.

[11] The meaning of *Orientalism* in this paper is largely based on Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). Since the focus here is on Eastern objects in the West, Said's definition of *Orientalism* as "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience" works well (1). Kelekian worked within this hegemonic understanding of the East when dealing with his Western customers in New York and in Paris. Kelekian understood the theories, practices, and bodies of knowledge created by scholars in the West and especially in the early part of his career, played into an inauthentic representation of the imagined Orient.

The term *Orientalism* is also used by cultural studies scholars, including art historians, to describe the appropriation of themes from the Near and Middle East and beyond. The style of art of the same name was popularized in the nineteenth century by artists such as Jean-Léon Gerôme, who was one of Kelekian's clients.

To bring this full circle, the cover of Said's twenty-fifth anniversary copy of *Orientalism* is "The Snake Charmer" by Gerôme. In the painting, there is a soldier wearing a Turkish helmet. Kelekian purchased a helmet just like it from Gerôme (perhaps it was indeed the same one) and resold it to Harry Walters.

[12] Kelekian also made paper reproductions of his blue ribbons to give out at his store. The Kelekian Archive, File D3 Folder A, Publicity and Publications: The 1893 Chicago World's Exhibition. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[13] Kelekian, "The Old and the New," *Art News* 37 (1939), 68.

[14] Ibid.

[15] The name is grammatically incorrect in French; it should be *Le Musée du Bosphore.* French was not Kelekian's native language.

[16] "The Kelekian Collection," *The Collector* 6 no. 1 (1894): 13.

[17] The scope of Kelekian's interests was vast. He collected illuminated miniatures from India as well as Chinese porcelains. The focus of this paper, however, remains on objects from the Near and Middle East with an emphasis in ceramics.

[18] *The Art Collector* 9 no. 3 (1898). Kelekian's advertisements in *The Art Collector* ran next to ads for other premier dealers such as Duveen and Knoedler and Co., placing him in a class of fine New York dealers.

[19] "An Echo from the Dana Sale," *The Art Collector* 9 no 2 (1898): 23. The "teapot" could be an Iznik Ewer at the Victoria & Albert Museum (C.2008-1910) made circa 1520 and restored in the nineteenth century with silver mounts. It was later sold to George Salting (1835-1909) and then bequeathed to the Victoria and Albert.

[20] "Sale of Persian Art Works: Kelekian's Choice Collection to go to Auction," *The New York Sun*, February 8, 1903.

[21] "An Echo from the Dana Sale."

[22] Dikran Khan Kelekian, *The Potteries of Persia: Being a Brief History of the Art of Ceramics in the Near East* (Paris: Herbert Clarke, 1909), 7.

[23] Kelekian, *Potteries of Persia*, 12.

[24] Roger Riordan, "Introduction," *The Arts of Persia and the Levant* (New York: Dikran G. Kelekian, 1899), 7.

[25] Advertisement, *The Art Collector* 5 no. 10 (1894).

[26] The seal is unattributed to any certain person.

[27] Kelekian, "The Old and the New," 153.

[28] Ibid., 67.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Dikran Khan Kelekian, *Persian and Analogous Potteries* (Paris: Herbert Clarke, 1910), no page.

[31] Mariana Shreve Simpson, "A Gallant Era: Henry Walters, Islamic Art, and the Kelekian Connection" *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000).

[32] Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, "Collecting the 'Orient,' at the Met: Early Tastemakers in America" *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000).

[33] Alison Field Ventura, "The Khan of American Collecting: How Dikran Kelekian Created a Market for Islamic Arts" (Masters thesis, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution; and Parsons The New School for Design, 2011).

[34] "The Kelekian Collection," 13. The spelling of "Lotos" may refer to Alfred, Lord Tennyon's poem, "The Lotos Eaters" (1832).

[35] "A Connoisseur's Advice," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 3, 1893, 3.

[36] George Davis, "World's Columbian Exposition," *The North American Review* 154 no. 424 (1892): 313.

[37] Zeynep Celik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 85-87.

[38] *World's Columbian Exposition Portfolio of Midway Types* (Chicago: American Engraving Company, 1893).

[39] John J. Flinn, *World's Fair Grounds, Buildings and Attractions Illustrated* (Chicago: Stanford Guide Co., 1893), 67.

[40] Moses P. Handy, ed. *The Official Directory of the World's Columbian Exposition*

(Chicago: W.B. Conkey Company, 1893).

[41] "A Connoisseur's Advice."

[42] Dikran Kelekian, *Works of Art and Antiquities: Faiences, Carpets, Statuettes, Greek and Roman Old Coins, and Precious Stones* (1893). Kelekian printed this pamphlet – a single sheet, folded – as a give-away at his booths. The pamphlet, which was not illustrated, plainly stated the exhibitor's name and booth information on the front and an itemized list of objects inside.

[43] Kelekian, *Works of Art and Antiquities*.

[44] Committee on Awards of the World's Columbian Commission, *Special Reports Upon Special Subjects or Groups* vol 1, 57th Congress, first session (1901), 336.

[45] Oppert was a French-German Assyriologist who studied ancient languages and was connected to archaeological sites in Mesopotamia.

[46] Wellesley Reid Davis, *Notes of Le Musée de Bosphore* (New York City: Dikran G. Kelekian,1898).

[47] Ibid., 3.

[48] Ibid., 4.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Interview with Nanette Kelekian, New York City, February 6, 2012.

[51] "Sale of Persian Art Works: Kelekian's Choice Collection to go to Auction."

[52] "Kelekian's Orientalia: Marvels of Old Persia's Looms, Bronzes, Church Textiles, and Antique Keramics Coming to the Hammer," *The New York Times*, April 12, 1903, 7.

[53] "Art Exhibitions," *The New York Daily Tribune*, April 11, 1903, 7.

[54] Ibid.

[55] "Kelekian's Orientalia."

[56] "The Collector," *The Art Amateur* 43 no. 5 (1900), 121.

[57] Ibid.

[58] I am grateful to John Ghazvinian for providing me a context of US-Persian relations at

the beginning of the twentieth century. His book on Iranian-American relations is forthcoming.

[59] "My Notebook," *The Art Amateur* 47 no. 5 (1902), 118.

[60] "Persian Textiles," *The Art Amateur* 44 no. 3 (1901), 68.

[61] "Persian Dignitary Here," *The New York Sun,* April 24, 1904.

[62] "The Collector," *The Art Amateur* 43 no. 1 (1900), 4.

[63] Advertisement, *The Art Collector* 5 no 10 (1984).

[64] T. W. Park, "The Opening Ceremonies of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition," *World's Fair Bulletin* 5 no. 8 (June 1904) 8.

[65] Invoice, Dikran Kelekian to Henry Walters, October 13, 1906. The Kelekian Vertical File, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland.

[66] "Sale of Persian Art Works." Kelekian continued to advertise his relationship with the Persian government until 1922, when his brother Hovannes was arraigned on a charge of impersonating an official. Dikran was named in the complaint as well. They were no longer authorized to use the official Persian seal, which they then removed from their 709 Fifth Avenue shop. See "Row over Persian Consul," *New York World*, July 29, 1922.

[67] Firman of the Persian Government, The Kelekian Archive, File D4 Folder A: Publicity and Publications. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[68] "Persia's Participation," *World's Fair Bulletin* 5 no. 4 (February 1904), 41.

[69] Park, "The Opening Ceremonies," 8.

[70] Invitation from the Missouri Commission's Reception and Grand Ball, The Kelekian Archive, File D4 Folder A: Publicity and Publications. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[71] "Persia's Participation," 41.

[72] Dikran Kelekian, "Catalogue of Ceramics, Textiles, Rare Rugs, Jewelry and Manuscripts from the Private Collection of Dikran Khan Kelekian," (St. Louis: Buxton and Skinner, Printers, 1904).

[73] "Persia's Participation," 41.

[74] Not much is known about Kelekian's business in Paris. He closed his store at the

outbreak of the Second World War and did not reopen it following armistice. No records survive from Paris, save from some ledgers at the Kelekian Archive.

[75] "Persia's Participation," 41.

[76] Kelekian, "The Old and the New," 153.

[77] "He Likes the Americans: Dikran Khan Kelekian is Visiting Detroit," *Detroit Free Press*, June 19, 1904, 16.

[78] Fifth Avenue Art Galleries, "Catalogue of Ceramics, Textiles, Rare Rugs, and Manuscripts" (New York: The Alexander Press, 1905); this sum converts to USD $346,267.81, as of January 2012.

[79] "Persian Art from St. Louis. Sale of Objects in the Persian Pavilion at the World's Fair," *New York Times*, January 24, 1905, 9.

[80] Jules Guiffrey and Gaston Migeon, *La Collection Kélékian: Ettofes & Tapis d'Orient et de Venise* (Paris: Librarie Centrale des Beaux Arts, 1908).

[81] Kelekian gifted many of these, including a copy to Mr. Charles L. Freer of Washington, which can be accessed at the Freer Sackler Library in Washington, DC.

[82] Guiffrey and Migeon, *La Collection Kélékian*, 5.

[83] Ibid., 6.

[84] Kelekian cited his contemporaries in the field in *Analogous Potteries.* He mentioned: Henry Wallis, Sir Cecil Smith and Charles Wylde of the Victoria and Albert, Dr. Pit of the Amsterdam Museum, Prof. Sayce of Cambridge, Dr. Sarré and Dr. Von Falke of the Berlin Museum, Dr. Denman Ross of the Boston Museum, Yacoub Artine Pacha of the Cairo Museum, and Dr. Fouquet of Cairo. Kelekian also cited his dear friend, Miss Mary Cassatt, "the eminent American artist".

[85] Kelekian, *Persian and Analogous Potteries*.

[86] The copy available at the Library of Congress, numbered 97, belonged to Mrs. Louisine Havemeyer, as the handwritten inscription reads, signed by Kelekian.

[87] Kelekian, *Persian and Analogous Potteries*

[88] Kelekian, *The Potteries of Persia*, 19.

[89] Ibid., 8.

[90] Ibid., 7.

[91] Ibid.,

[92] Kelekian, *Potteries of Persia*, 15.

[93] Ibid., 8-11.

[94] Ibid., 16.

[95] Ibid., 11.

[96] Ibid., 7.

[97] Ibid., 7-8.

[98] Ibid., 12.

[99] Ibid., 20. *Bowl*, Iran, 12th – 13th cenutry. Ceramic with luster painted decoration. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (09.103)

[100] Ibid., 17. *Dish depicting a Wedding Procession*, Kashan, Iran, first quarter of 13th century. Stonepaste; molded, luster painted on opaque white glaze, 4.7 x 41 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art (1983.247)

[101] Ibid., 20.

[102] Rita Reif, "Antiques View: A case study in brilliant restoration," *New York Times*, February 12, 1984, A35.

[103] Kelekian, *Persian and Analogous Potteries.*

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] *Bowl*, Kashan, Iran, 1180 -1220 century. Fritware, overglazed with enamel, 17.8 cm diameter. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (c.52-1952).

[107] Kelekian converted AH 515 to 1137 AD in this description. I have found other inconsistencies between the Hegira dates and his conversions to the Common Era. The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, which complicates conversion to the Gregorian calendar, which is arithmetical.

[108] Kelekian, *Persian and Analogous Potteries.*

[109] "Ceramics at Auction. The Charles A. Dana Collection on Sale. Rare Pieces Under the Hammer," *New York Herald-Tribune,* February 25, 1898, 9.

[110] Some of his books at the Library of Congress are attributed *Gift of Dikran Kelekian* on the frontispiece in pencil.

[111] Royall Tyler, "The Kelekian Collection at South Kensington," *The Saturday Review*, February 25, 1911, 237. In an conversation with Mark Santangelo, he spoke that Kelekian had a habit of "parking" his collections in various museums as a way of saving on storage and ensuring his objects were available for public viewing. Undoubtedly, Kelekian's objects benefited from having such visibility and prestige in America and Europe's premiere museums. Other "parking" included cylinders at the British Museum, which were eventually given to the Metropolitan Museum.

[112] From conversations with Santangelo and Nanette Kelekian, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Feb 6, 2012. A good number of ceramics from *Analogous Pottery* are illustrated in Watson's *Ceramics from Islamic Lands.* A good number of the pieces are unlocated by the author at time of publication.

[113] The post-Civil War prosperity led to the creation of major public collections in American cities. Cities like Washington, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Baltimore became important centers of commence and culture due to the influence of America's great businessmen. William Wilson Corcoran chartered his gallery in Washington, DC in 1870. Also in 1870, the Metropolitan Museum of Art formed its first board of trustees. Again, it was the financial generosity and social impetus to further the arts in America by philanthropists that many of these museums were incorporated. Similarly, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (1870), the Brooklyn Museum (1895), and the Walters Art Museum (1909) had their start in the last half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

[114] Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, "Collecting the 'Orient,'"72.

[115] Kelekian, "The Old and the New," 154.

[116] The elder Walters, William Walters, collected art starting around 1847, when he used the "first five dollars he earned" to buy *Retreat from Moscow* by E.A. Odier. His aggressive collection of Old Masters, bronzes, engravings, and decorative arts, acquired during his years abroad during the Civil War and at visits to international exhibitions, eventually became part of private museum. During the 1870s, William Walters transitioned his private collection into a formal yet private museum, and installed galleries, salons, and large vitrines in his townhouse. The museum, on Mount Vernon Street, opened in 1874 during select hours to the public. A second palazzo-style addition was built 1909. Continuing with the legacy of charitable activities so prominent by Americans following the Civil War, the fifty-cent rate charged for admission went to the Poor Association. In a similar fashion, certain rooms of the Museum were made available

for students and artists. The Museum became a formal public institution in 1934. See William R. Johnston, *William and Henry Walters, The Reticent Collectors* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

[117] William R. Johnston raised a point in *William and Henry Walters, The Reticent Collectors* (1999) that the younger Walters was not concerned with record-keeping and often erased prices to keep future researchers from speculating about the monetary value rather than the artistic value of his purchases. See note 54 on page 269-270 in *The Reticent Collectors*.

[118] *Statue of a Seated Cat*, Egypt, circa 664 – 350 BCE (Late Period). Bronze, gold, glass, 18.3 x 8.5 x 14.4 cm. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (54.403).

[119] Diana Scarisbrick, "Henry Walters and the Marlborough Gems" *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 39 (1981): 49.

[120] Johnston, *The Reticent Collectors*, 147.

[121] JVC [Jenny Vorys Canby] and RHR [Richard H. Randall], untitled memorandum, 1970. The Kelekian Vertical File, The Walters Art Museum Archive, Baltimore, Maryland.

[122] *Sesostris III*, Egypt, circa 1850 BCE (Middle Period). Black granite, 61 x 19 x 36.5 cm. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (22.115).

[123] Johnston, *The Reticent Collectors*, 212.

[124] Dikran G. Kelekian to William Walters, 20 May 1915. Kelekian Vertical File, The Walters Art Museum Archive, Baltimore, Maryland.

[125] Kelekian varied the spelling of some cities, choosing Rakka with in his English correspondence and Raqqa in French. The city is now called Ar-Raqqah, in Syria. He also used both spellings for Rayy, Iran (the other: Ray) but more often Kelekian used the old name for the city, Rhages.

[126] Kelekian to Walters, 1915.

[127] Dr. Fouquet of Paris was the primary excavator of Fostat. He and Kelekian had some sort of relationship, but the degree is unknown. The first mentions of the excavations of "the first Muslim capital of Egypt, El-Fustát" in *The American Journal of Archaeology and of the History of the Fine Arts* occurred in 1889, but European interests in the site were active at least since the late 1870s. See A. L. Frothingham, Jr. "Archaeological News" *The American Journal of Archaeology and of the History of the Fine Arts 5* no. 4 (1889): 478-52.

[128] He mentioned Rakka, which was excavated by the Turkish government officially beginning in 1896; Sultanabad in 1905; and Rhages circa 1850, but not methodically until 1910 by the Swiss amateur archaeologist Charles Vignier (1863-1934).

[129] Kelekian Archive Finding Aid, 4.

[130] Stephen Vernoit, "The Rise of Islamic Archaeology" *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 2.

[131] At this time when the colonial interests of Western nations were vested in cataloguing culture, it was useful to have a diplomat or similarly positioned person overseeing the expedition; perhaps Kelekian's alignment with the Persian government was useful here.

[132] Kelekian to Walters, 1915.

[133] This director may have been Yakub Artin Pasha (1842-1919) Minister of Public Instruction in Egypt. Kelekian knew him from the Armenian General Benevolent Union, a philanthropic group dedicated to the promotion of Armenian welfare and culture. Kelekian did have strong ties to this group; he served as a vice-president and on their board of directors, as well made large financial contributions. For more information about the AGBU, see *The Armenian General Benevloent Union: One Hundred Years of History* ed. Raymond H. Kévorkian and Vahé Tachjian (Chicago, Paris, New York: AGBU Central Board, 2006).

[134] *Female Head with Floral Head Covering*, Iran, 12th century. Fritware with luster decoration, 15 x 11.9 x 9 cm. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (48.1192).

[135] Priscilla P. Soucek, "Building a Collection of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Musem, 1870-2011" in *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Maryam D. Ekhtiar, Priscilla P. Soucek, Sheila R. Canby, and Navina Najat Haidar (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 2.

[136] Soucek, "Building a Collection," 2.

[137] Kelekian, "The Old and the New" 154.

[138] H. G. Marquand and L. P. Di Cesnola, "Report of the Trustees for the Year 1895," *Annual Report of the Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, No. 26 (1895): 647.

[139] "Notes," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 3, No. 9 (1908): 176.

[140] "Gifts," *Annual Report of the Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 40 (1909): 73.

[141] *Tile, star*, Iran, first half of the 14th century. Stonepaste, molded and underglazed,

19.7 cm wide. Metropolitan Museum of Art, (08.110.14). There are fourteen ceramic objects purchased from Kelekian in the 08.110 group of accessions.

[142] William Valentiner, "Rhages Ware" *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 4 no. 4 (1909): 66. *Bowl*, Iran, early 14th century. Stonepaste, luster painted on opaque white glaze and polychrome decoration under transparent glaze, 22.9 cm wide. Metropolitan Museum of Art, (09.22.1).

[143] Kelekian, "The Old and the New," 154.

[144] Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "The Forgotten Legacy: The Havemeyers' Collection of Decorative Arts" in *Splendid Legacy: The Havemeyer Collection*, ed. Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, Gary Tinterow, Susan Alyson Stein, Gretchen Wold, and Julia Meech (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 99.

[145] *Large Jar*, Iran, 681 AH/CE 1282-3. Stonepaste, monochrome glazed, modeled, 54.6 cm high, 44.5 cm diameter. Metropolitan Museum of Art, (56.185.3).

[146] "The Bequest of Mrs. H.O. Havemeyer" *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 24, No. 2 (1929): 38.

[147] Frelinghuysen, "Forgotten Legacy," 105.

[148] Frelinghuysen, "Forgotten Legacy," 99 and 108.

[149] See note 26 in "Forgotten Legacy," 113. Mary Cassatt to Louisine Havemeyer, July 2, 1906, Havemeyer Correspondence at the Metropolitan Museum of art.

[150] Jenkins-Madina, "Collecting the 'Orient'," 85.

[151] Nancy Mowll Mathews, *Mary Cassatt: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 288.

[152] *Human headed winged lion*, Assyrian, 883-859 BCE. Gypsum alabaster, 313.7 cm high. Metropolitan Museum of Art, (32.143.1).

[153] John Malcolm Russell, *From Nineveh to New York: The Strange Story of the Assyrian Reliefs in the Metropolitan Museum & the Hidden Masterpiece at Canford School* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 129. See this volume for a complete history of the reliefs. Kelekian had only a small part in the long history of the Assyrian reliefs. For Kelekian's role, see chapter seven, "The Sculptures Come to America."

[154] Russell, *From Nineveh to New York*, 130.

[155] Kelekian, *The Old and the New*, 153.

[156] As quoted in Russell, *From Nineveh to New York*, 131.

[157] Kelekian, *The Old and the New*, 153.

[158] "Sale of Persian Art Works."

[159] Roger Fry, "Modern Paintings in a Collection of Ancient Art," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 37 no. 213 (1920): 303.

[160] Ibid., 304.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Kelekian, "The Old and the New," 67-68.

[163] Howard Devree, "Brooklyn Shows Large Art Display," *New York Times*, January 23, 1941, 24.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Dikran Kelekian to J.D. Cooney, 4 March 1941. Kelekian Dealer File, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, New York.

[166] Howard Devree, "A Reviewer's Notebook," *New York Times*, January 11, 1942, 9.

[167] Ibid.

[168] "America to Have its First Great Auction of Modernist Art in Dispersal of Superb Collection Formed by D.K. Kelekian," *American Art News* 20, no. 15 (1922): 7.

[169] "French Modernists' Art Readily Sold," *New York Times*, January 31, 1922.

[170] Seymour de Ricci, "The Kélékian Collection: A Forward," in *The Notable Private Collection of Modern French Pictures and a group of the works of the noted American artists Arthur B. Davies belonging to the widely known Antiquarian Dikran Khan Kélékian of Paris and New York*, (New York: American Art Association, 1922).

[171] Seymour de Ricci, "The Kélékian Collection: A Forward."

[172] Arsène Alexandre, "The Kélékian Collection," in *The Notable Private Collection of Modern French Pictures and a group of the works of the noted American artists Arthur B. Davies belonging to the widely known Antiquarian Dikran Khan Kélékian of Paris and New York*, (New York: American Art Association, 1922).

[173] Frank Crowninshield, "Kelekian: As the Artists Sees Him," (New York: Durand-Ruel Galleries, 1944).

[174] Ibid.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Untitled sketch, Elsa Schmid Papers, Archives of American Art. Microfilm reel 953, frame 903.

[177] Meyer Berger, "Kelekian Plunges 21 Floors to Death," *New York Times*, January 31, 1951, 23.

[178] Paul Bird, "The Editor's View: Dikran Kelekian," *The Art Digest* 25 (February 15, 1951): 5.

[179] Ibid.

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