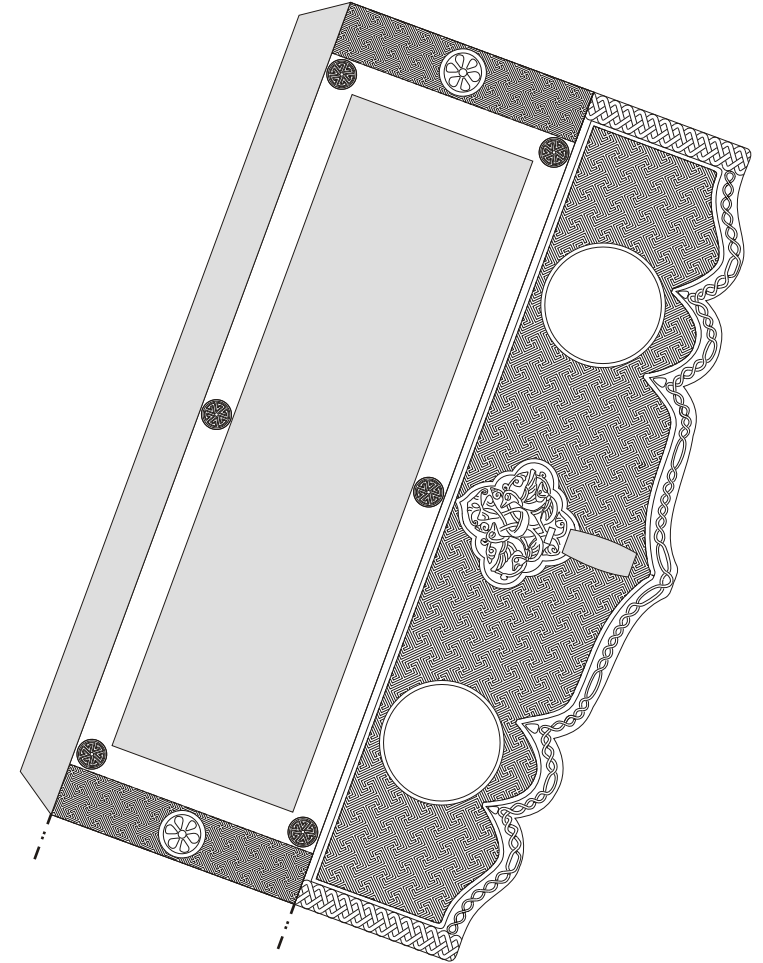
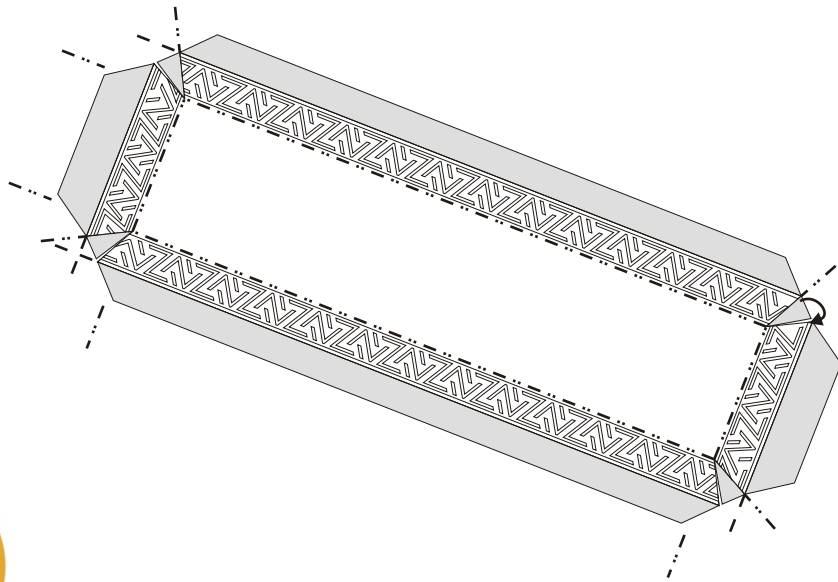


# Colour and cut out: paper model of the Courtauld Bag

Medium difficulty, suitable for age 10+



# The Courtauld Bag



The Courtauld Bag was made in Mosul (present-day Iraq) in the early 14th Century. At this time, Mosul was an important metalworking centre and was located on a major East-West trade route.

The bag is made of brass sheet with inlaid decoration in silver and gold, enhanced with black resin. The bag was probably originally lined with fabric or leather.

In 1262, Mosul was captured by a Mongol army. It is believed that the bag was made for a high-status Mongol woman, possibly the woman shown at the centre of the lid panel on the bag. An attendant shown in this scene carries a bag which looks similar to this bag. The bag may have been used to hold personal care items such as mirrors, napkins and perfume bottles.



Next to the high-status woman is a man, probably her husband, both of these figures are larger than the attendants and courtiers around them, an indicator of their status. At the left end of the panel is a man holding a bird of prey for hunting and at the right end is a musician playing a stringed instrument. Hunting scenes and musicians are also represented in the roundels on the front, back and sides of the bag showing their importance to court life. The main front roundel depicts a horseback hunter spearing a lion, the main back panel depicts a horseback hunter with a bird of prey. Musicians in the smaller roundels play the harp, flutes, tambourines and lutes. Other small roundels contain picture of people carrying bottles or cups representing feasting and drinking.



Around the lid panel is a rhyming inscription in Arabic wishing success and good fortune on the owner of the bag.

The Courtauld Bag is on display at the History of Science Museum as part of the exhibition Precious and Rare: Islamic metalwork from the Courtauld Gallery. The exhibition is a partnership between The Courtauld and the Subject Specialist Network (SSN) for Islamic Art and Material Culture (hosted by Birmingham Museums) and made possible with Art Fund support.

## Materials:

Pens/colouring pencils/paints to decorate the bag

Scissors

Glue - a stick glue is easier to use than a liquid glue for this model

Print outs of the model parts on paper or thin card. Thin card works better if you have it but the model can be made from standard printer paper.

## General techniques:

**Scoring** - to make sharp, straight folds in paper it is best to score them. Make sure that you have a surface to work on that won't be damaged by pressing into it. Place a ruler along a test fold line on a scrap of paper and use a blunt point like a thick needle, a skewer tip or a used-up ballpoint pen and run it along the fold line pressing hard. Check that the score line is indented into the paper but not cut through. If the score line is not indented, press a little harder and try again. If the score line has cut through, press slightly less hard or find a blunter point.

Once you have perfected your scoring technique on test lines, you can score the lines on the model.

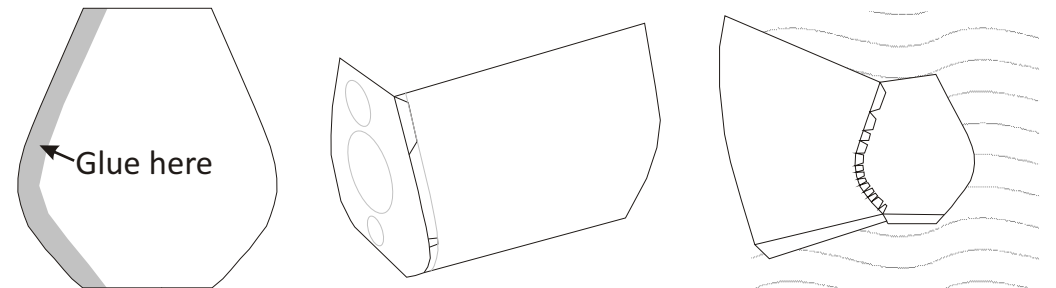
**Folds** - a fold with the crease pointing away from you is called a valley fold. Where valley folds are used on the model, they are marked with dashed lines - - - -. Folds with the crease pointing towards you are called mountain folds and are marked on the model with dash-dot-dot lines - · - · - · .

## Decorating the bag:

The roundels that contain pictures of courtly life on the bag were customised for the original owner of the bag. They have been left blank on this model so that you can customise the bag yourself, maybe with scenes from your own life. You can also add your own inscription to the lid border and your own leaf or pattern decoration to the blanks on the base of the bag.

## Assembly instructions:

1. Score the fold lines.
2. Cut out the lid and lid panel.
3. Glue the lid panel to the lid.
4. Cut out the strap mounts and strap rings.
5. Attach the strap rings to the strap mounts.
6. Cut out the bag sides.
7. Glue the strap mounts to the sides.
8. Cut out the front and back of the bag.
9. Glue the front of the bag to one side. Tip: first apply glue to the back of the side around the edge. Next, apply glue the patterned tabs, attached to the side, and fix them to the front of the bag matching the marked outlines and keeping the grey tabs tucked inside. Place the bag with the side downwards on a hard surface. Press the grey tabs firmly down onto the glued area of the bag side.



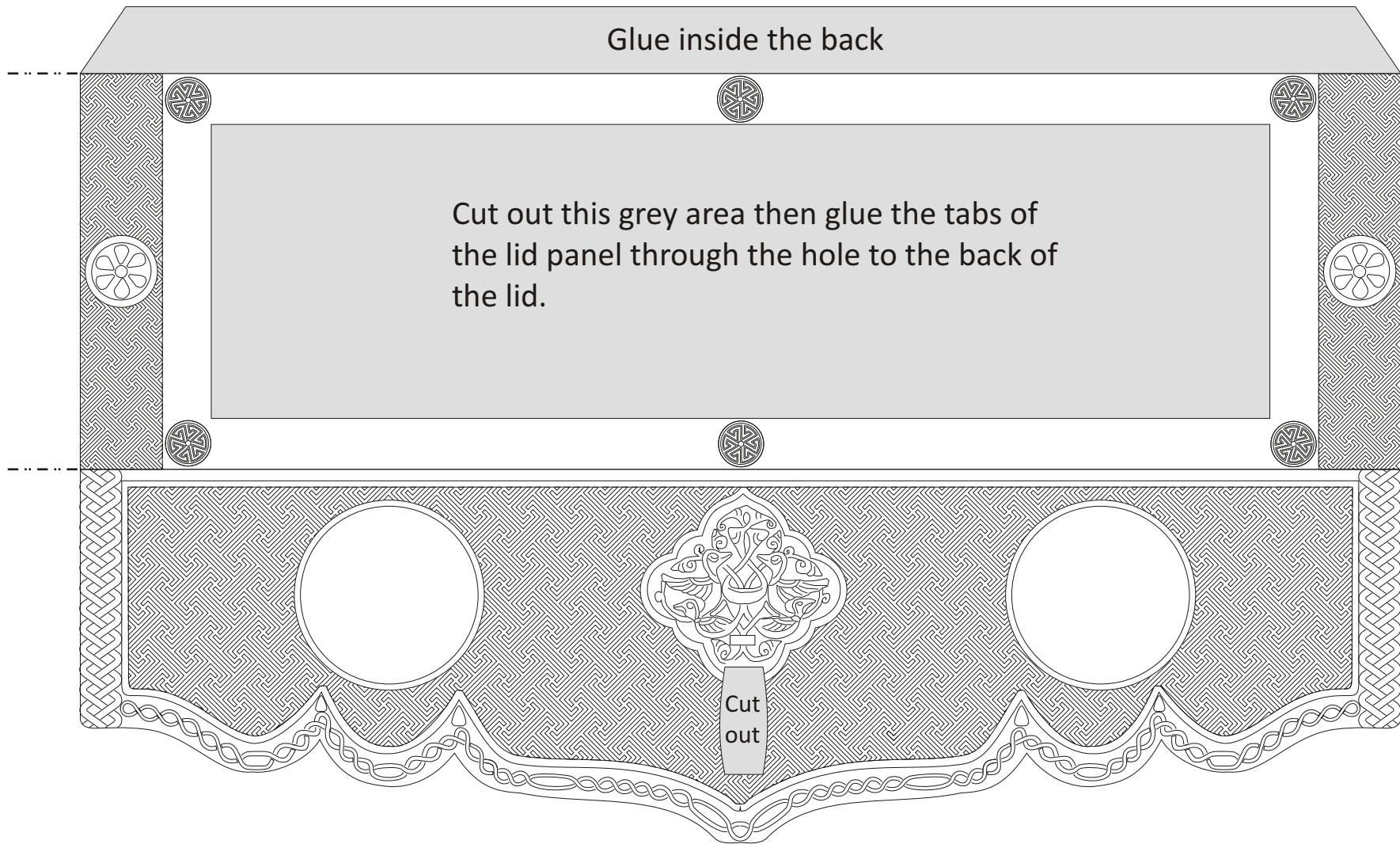
10. Glue the back of the bag to the same side as above, in the same way.
11. Glue the front and then the back to the other side of the bag.
12. Cut out the base of the bag.
13. Glue the base onto the bag. Tip: apply glue around the edge of the base, glue one end of the base to a side tab. Apply glue to the two patterned tabs and fix them over the outside of the base matching the marked outlines and keeping the grey tabs tucked inside. Lay the base flat on a hard surface and press the remaining grey tabs down onto the glued area of the base.
14. Glue the lid tab inside the back of the bag.

Lid

Glue inside the back

Cut out this grey area then glue the tabs of the lid panel through the hole to the back of the lid.

Cut out

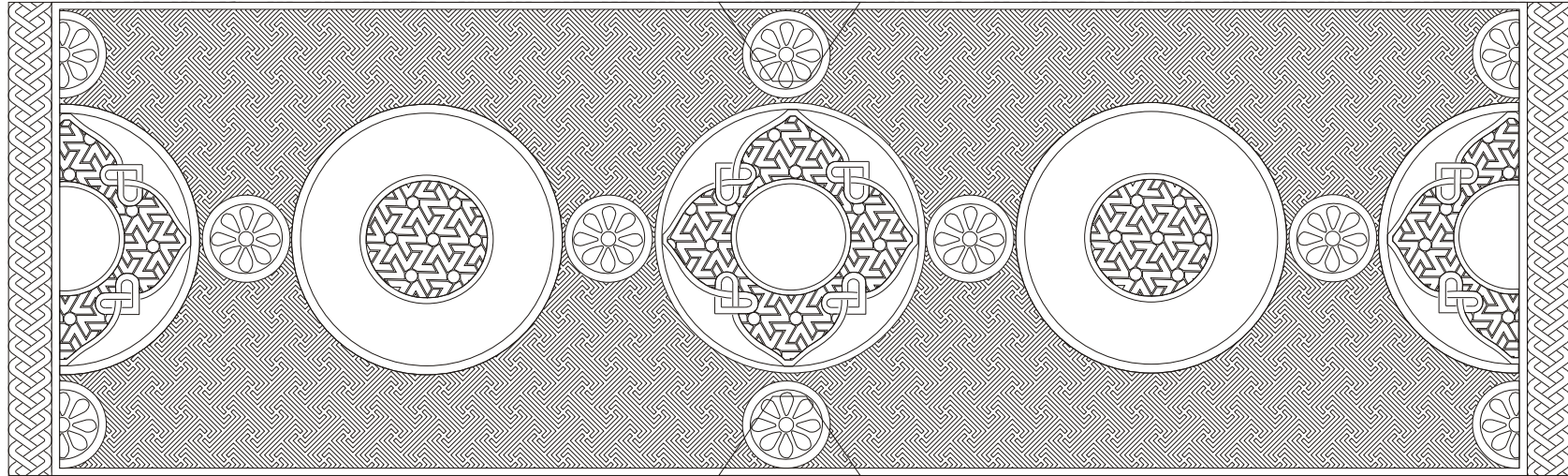


Base of bag

Glue front here

Glue left side here

Glue right side here



Glue back here

Lid panel

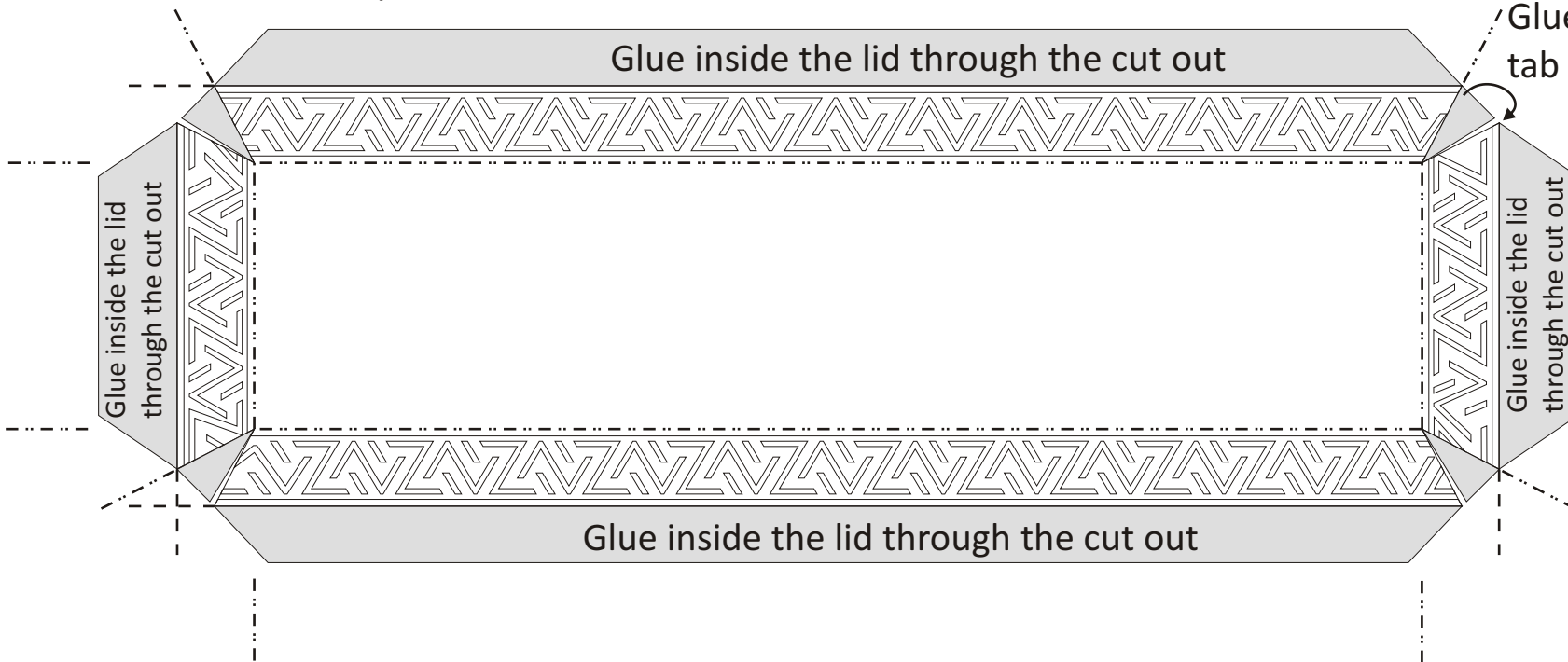
Glue inside the lid through the cut out

Glue each small triangular tab behind the side next to it

Glue inside the lid through the cut out

Glue inside the lid through the cut out

Glue inside the lid through the cut out

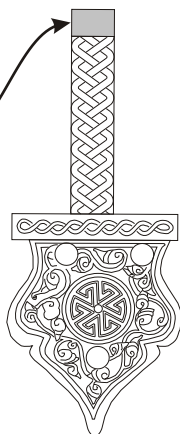


Cut out the strap ring and the strap mount.

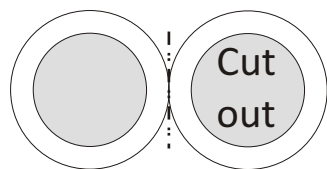
Fold and glue the two rings together back-to-back.

Put the thin strip of the mount through the ring. Glue the back of the grey tab to the back of the mount to create a loop around the ring.

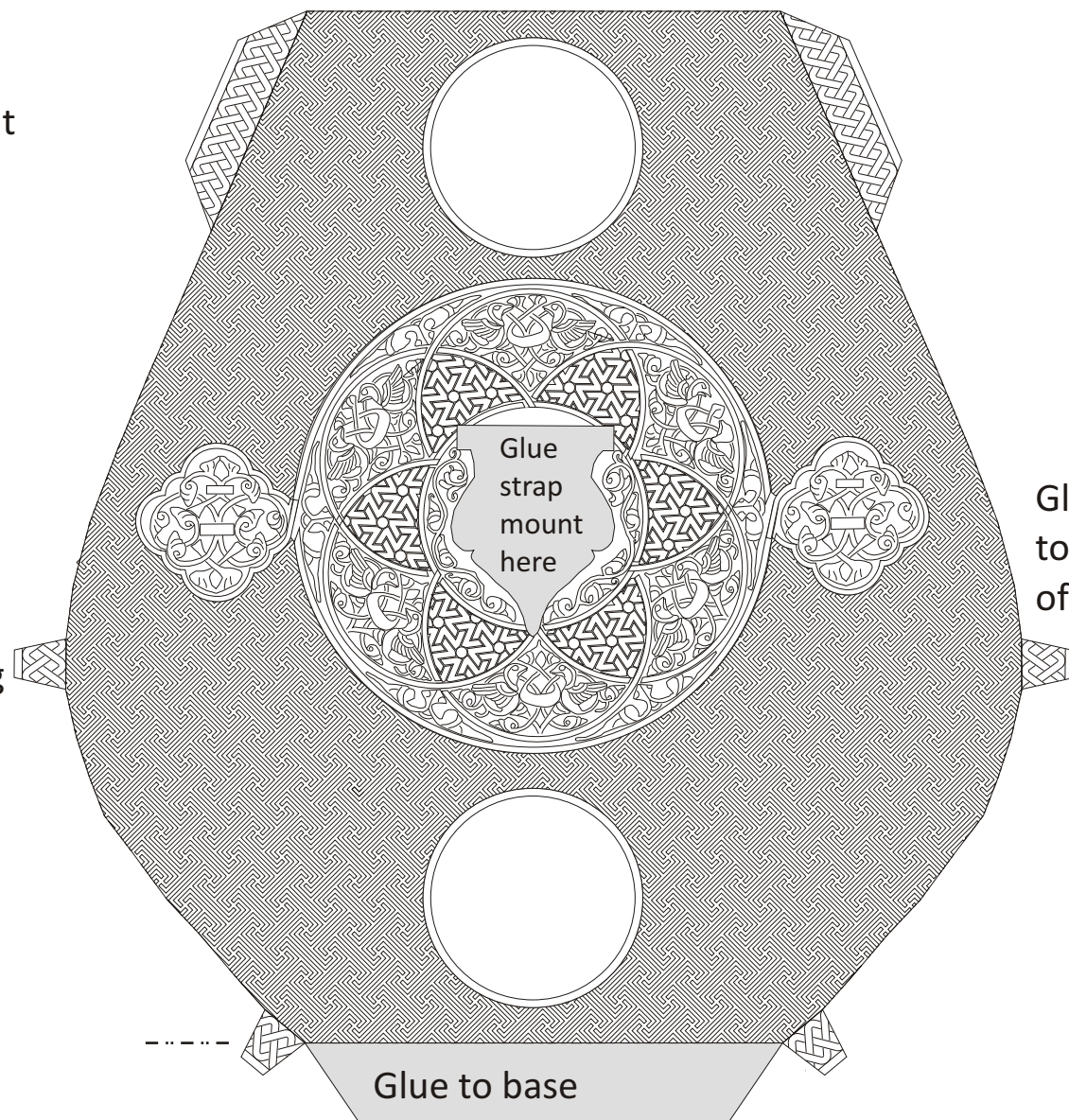
Strap mount



Strap ring



Left side of bag



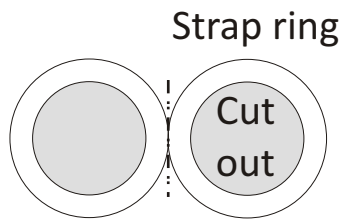
Glue to front of bag

Glue to base

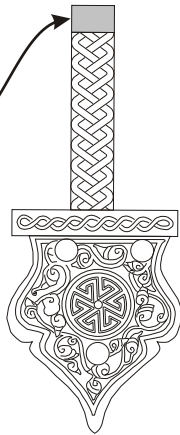
Cut out the strap ring and the strap mount.

Fold and glue the two rings together back-to-back.

Put the thin strip of the mount through the ring. Glue the back of the grey tab to the back of the mount to create a loop around the ring.



Strap mount

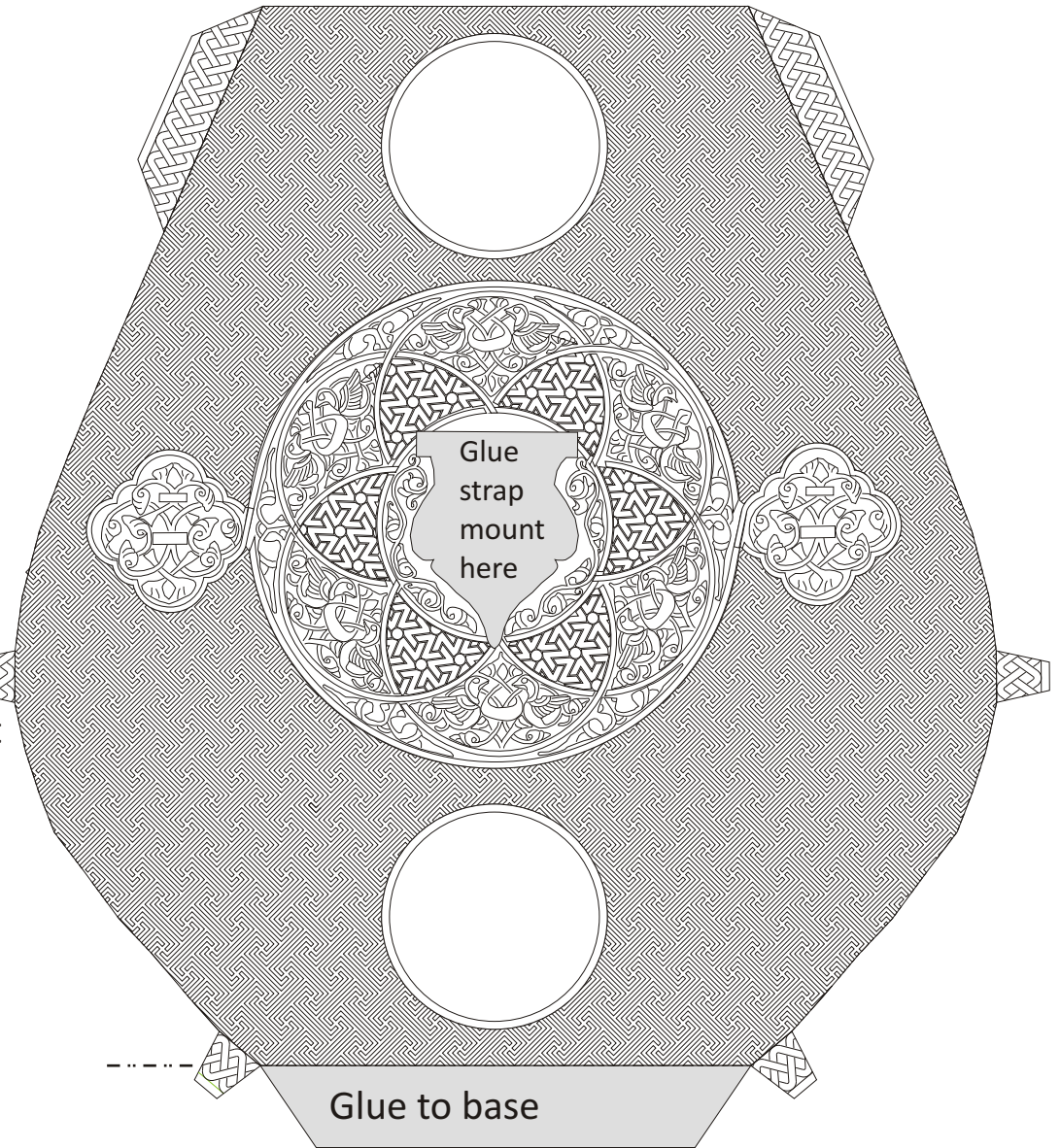


Right side of bag

Glue to front of bag

Glue strap mount here

Glue to base

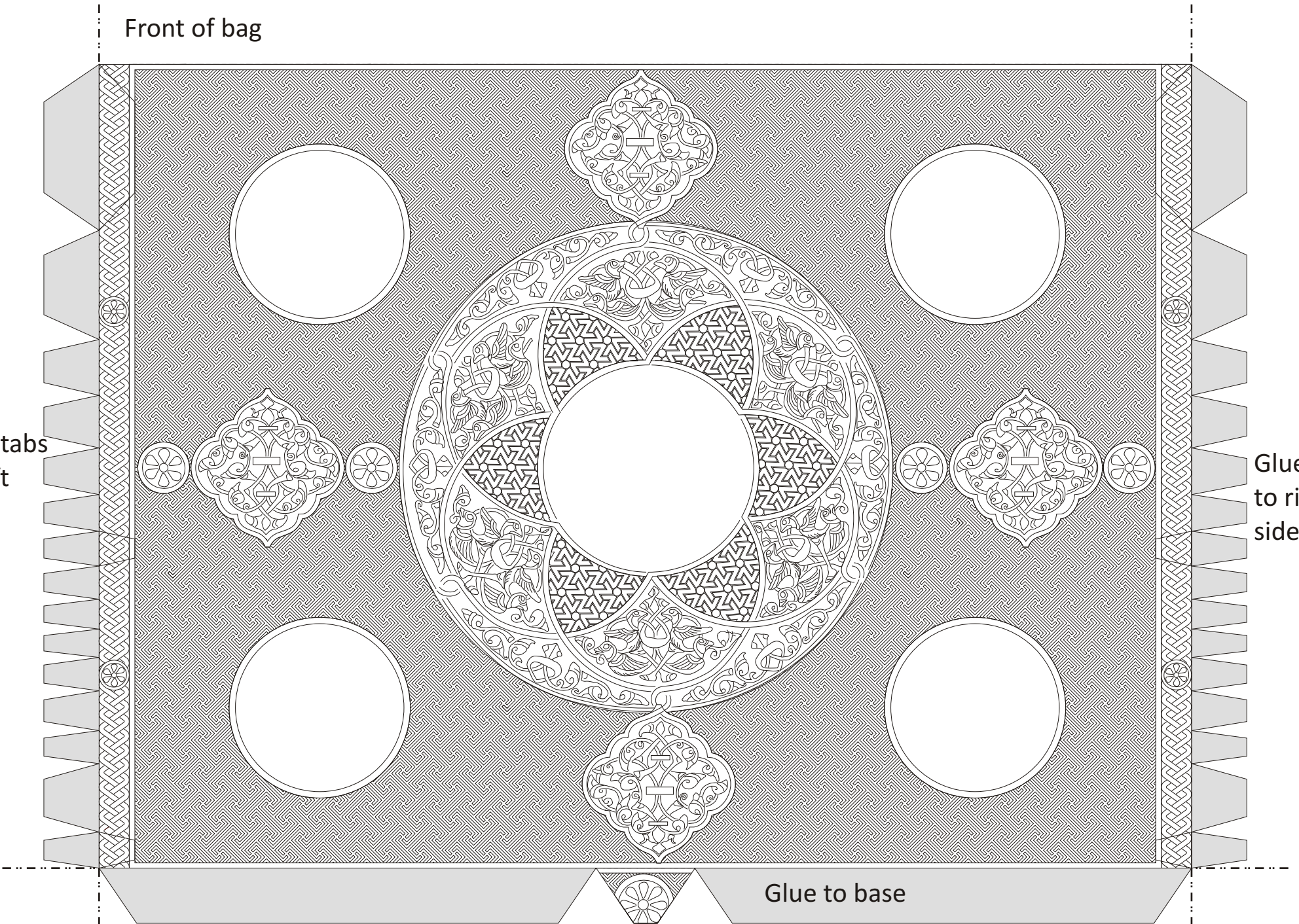


Front of bag

Glue tabs  
to left  
side

Glue tabs  
to right  
side

Glue to base





Back of bag

Glue lid here

Glue tabs  
to right  
side

Glue tabs  
to left  
side

Glue to base

