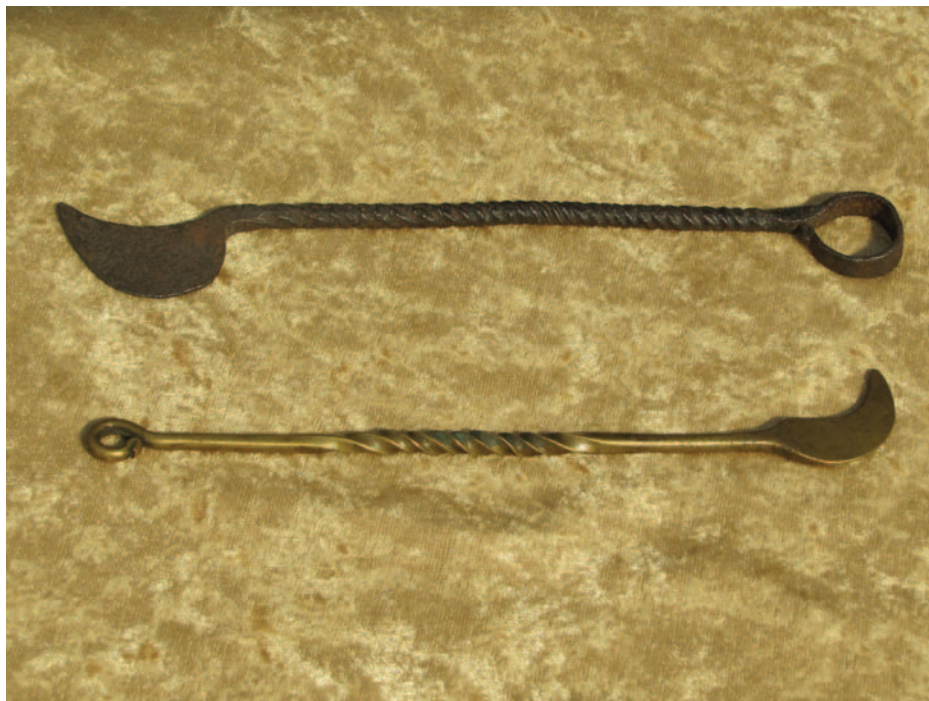


Curved Spatulas for Harvesting Opium



Often mass-produced in China and distributed to Afghanistan and other parts of Asia and Latin America, curved spatulas have been used for centuries in harvesting opium from its poppy, *Papaver somniferum*. Either the point or the thinner, sharper convex part of the spatula blade is used to lightly “score” vertical incisions on the immature pods or fruits of the opium poppy, typically in the afternoon. The milky latex which oozes out air dries, and by morning, the thicker, duller concave portion of the spatula blade is used to skim off the exudate. Although labor-intensive, this ancient technique can recover scrapings of dried opium on multiple mornings in succession. Narcotic opiates extracted from this opium include morphine, codeine, and thebaine. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

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