

The Metropolitan
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ISLAMIC POTTERY

A BRIEF HISTORY



Marilyn Jenkins

THE METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM OF ART

Pottery-making ranks as one of the greatest artistic achievements of Islamic civilization. Some of the finest wares ever made were produced during a period of more than a thousand years in the vast area of the Islamic world extending from Spain to the borders of China. Muslim potters, displaying an innovative sense of design and color, created both a delightful variety of shapes and a luxuriant but subtle palette of "natural" hues — deep blues and turquoises, copper greens, aubergines and earth reds. They covered their wares with decoration of extraordinary richness, employing skillful variations of stylized plants, geometric patterns, and calligraphic motifs, often worked into networks of engaging complexity. In the quintessentially Islamic arabesque, leafy undulating vinelike stems grow from one another in a seemingly infinite progression that leads the eye throughout the composition and often ingeniously fills the space completely. Figural imagery, less frequently seen on Islamic objects, often provides important information about the styles and customs of the period.

In their technical accomplishments Islamic craftsmen have rarely been surpassed. Mastering new techniques and adapting old ones to new uses, Muslim

potters gained control over their medium, to the extent that they often enveloped their pieces in more than one glaze by using a multiple firing process. Perhaps the apogee was reached in the creation of luster ware, whose dazzling iridescent effects imitate the sheen of precious metals. Luster-decorated objects, much admired and imitated in Europe as early as the fifteenth century, had an impact that can be seen in ceramics made in the United States today.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has an outstanding collection of Islamic decorative arts. Of the various media — pottery, wood, metal, glass, textile, stone, stucco, enamel, and ivory — the pottery, a collection of 1,600 objects representing a wide geographical range and every major period and style, is perhaps the most comprehensive. Indeed, the ceramics collection is among the best in the world. Few institutions could offer such varied resources for illustrating a history of Islamic pottery. That the Metropolitan stands among them is amply demonstrated in the following pages, which draw solely from objects in the Museum's collection.

Among the examples chosen by the author of this *Bulletin*, Marilyn Jenkins, Associate Curator, Department of Islamic Art, are pieces that would be essential

to any survey of Islamic pottery, such as the opulent albarello on the cover or the mihrab (figure 36). In addition, in this particular history, new paradigms have been substituted for better-known examples of certain types of wares (see figures 4, 5). Also included are recently discovered objects that for the first time are properly placed in this study (figures 33, 34).

The Museum's excavations at Nishapur conducted by Walter Hauser, J. M. Upton, and Charles Wilkinson (in the 1930s and in 1947), have added an important dimension to this collection. Among the discoveries from this site are some of the finest examples of slip-painted wares of the tenth century, including the large bowl whose only decoration is an elegant Arabic inscription (figure 9). Many of the works discussed here are the gifts of generous contributors to the Islamic collections: Benjamin Altman, W. B. Osgood Field, Isaac D. Fletcher, Horace Havemeyer, and Edward C. Moore, the latter having bequeathed the first major group of Islamic objects to the Metropolitan in 1891.

PHILIPPE DE MONTEBELLO
Director

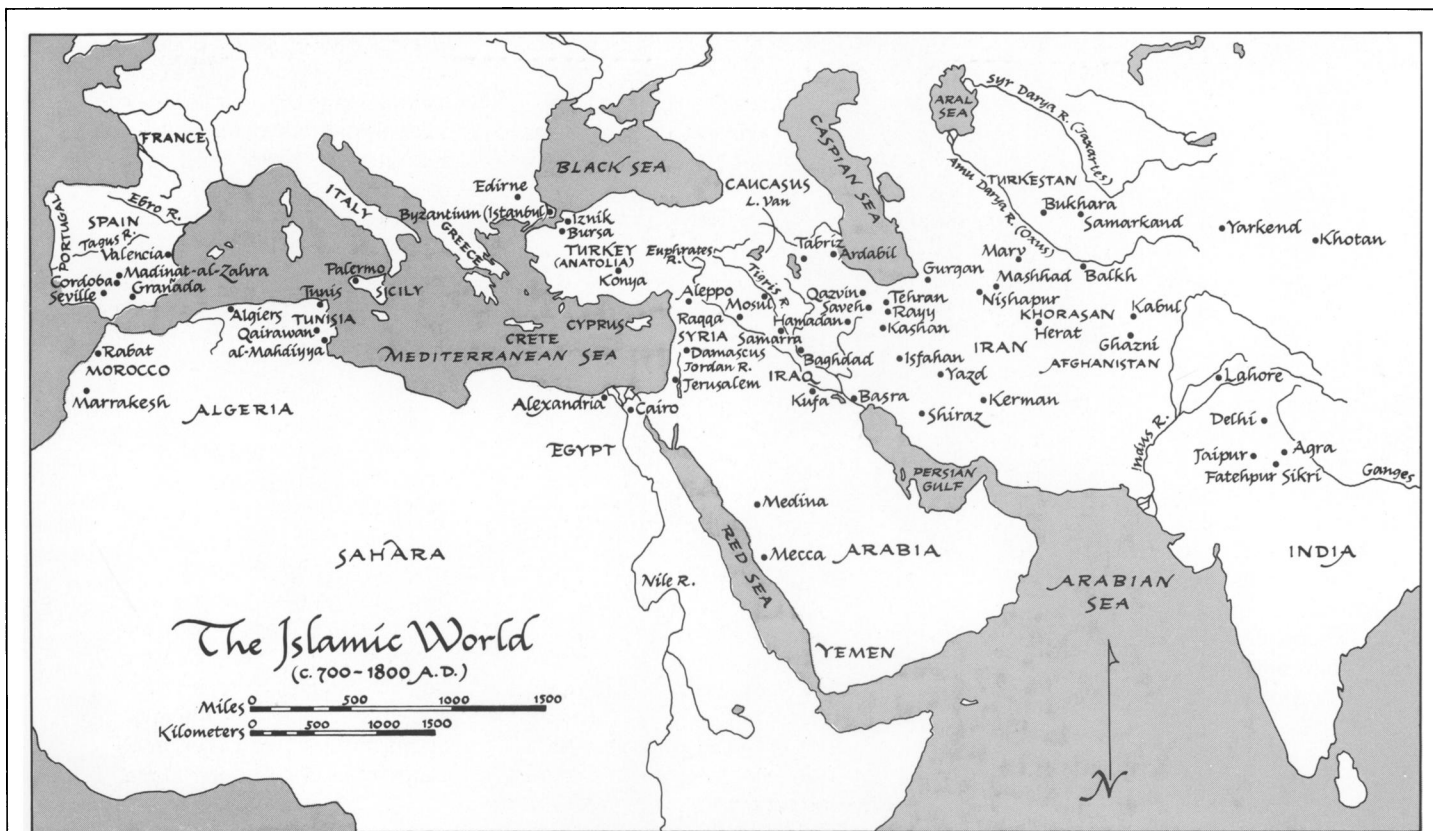
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Front cover: Lidded albarello from Iran (figure 28). **Inside front cover:** Detail of Egyptian tile panel (figure 51).

Spring 1983



Introduction

Little is known about the art of the economically sophisticated mercantile aristocracies of the three major Arabian cities of Mecca, Medina, and Ta'if when the Arabs began their conquests in the name of Islam during the second quarter of the seventh century A.D. Whatever form this art took, it apparently had little influence on the Muslim cultures that evolved later outside the Arabian peninsula. Rather, in the early centuries of Islam, most of the building styles, architectural decoration, types and shapes of objects, decorative techniques, and iconography were adopted from cultures found in the areas conquered by the Muslims. It was only gradually that this adoptive process became first adaptive and finally creative.

The history of the art of the potter in

the Islamic world is no exception to this pattern. This history can be divided into four broad periods—beginning with the seventh century and concluding with the seventeenth. Within each period, in centers that were wealthy and stable enough politically to be able to support numerous ateliers of creative artists, new techniques and styles evolved after a time of adoption and adaptation or experimentation. Because of the prestige of such centers, the wares produced in them created vogues and subsequently spawned imitations or variations in less important centers. New techniques and styles were often carried to other areas by migrating craftsmen who were seeking work or were summoned by more prosperous patrons. Each of the periods also

witnessed either a continuation of techniques found in the preceding period or a revival of one or more of them.

Despite the diversity implied in its geographical spread and thousand-year duration, the history of Islamic pottery has an inherent unity. In addition to the cyclical repetition of the processes of adoption, adaptation, and creation, the widespread use of four basic decorative elements also contributed to this phenomenon. The Islamic potter employed abstract vegetal forms (one of the most popular was the arabesque), calligraphy, figural iconography, and geometric patterns in the decoration of his medium within each of the four chronological periods discussed in this brief history.





Early Pottery

SEVENTH TO TENTH CENTURY

Two basic types of decorated ceramic wares were in use in the Islamic world before the ninth century. One grew out of the Roman *terra sigillata* ("molded earthenware") and bears molded decoration derived from late Greco-Roman models or more stylized motifs of Sasanian origin—those derived from the art of pre-Islamic Mesopotamia and Persia. The other has Eastern prototypes and bears stamped, incised, or applied decoration. Both types are found in either glazed or unglazed versions.

The period of adoption and adaptation during the early centuries of Islam was followed, beginning in the ninth century, by one of innovation. Excavations in Samarra, founded in 836 in what is now Iraq as the temporary capital of the Abbasid dynasty, have provided ample proof of the experimentation with new pottery techniques undertaken by Iraqi ceramists. In an attempt to imitate Chinese porcelain, they rediscovered a combination used much earlier by the Egyptians: tin oxide and clear lead glaze, a mixture that provided a fine opaque surface for decoration. They and other Islamic ceramists continued to use such a surface for various types of decoration and they eventually introduced it into Europe.

The products incorporating new techniques such as inglaze and luster painting (see figures 4, 5) that were made in

Samarra as well as in the permanent Abbasid capital of Baghdad were admired throughout the empire. Thus it is not surprising to find variations or imitations of them in many of the provincial cities. By the end of the tenth century the purely adoptive and adaptive phases of Islamic pottery production were over and the creative phase was almost two hundred years old and giving rise to innovation, regional diversification, and copies in far-flung areas of the Islamic world.

1. Unglazed vessels were popular for centuries because liquids stored in them were kept cool by the evaporation that occurred through their porous walls. This example bears motifs drawn from or inspired by pre-Islamic Eastern motifs: a long-horned quadruped and a large-tailed bird on either side of a "tree of life." The charm of this primitive yet sophisticated design more than compensates for the lack of perfection of the ewer's proportions.

The decoration used here is known as barbotine, a technique in which rolled strips and circles of clay were applied to the surface, flattened, and then incised with parallel lines. Sasanian vessels bear barbotine decoration as well, but the many possibilities inherent in this technique were only fully developed on glazed and unglazed pottery of the early Islamic period.

This type of decoration plus the additional incised designs and the vestiges of metal prototypes visible on the handle and neck, as well as the ribs at the base of the neck, indicate that the ewer was made during the first century of the Islamic period.

2. This fragmentary ewer illustrates a ceramic type that was very popular under Roman rule and later enjoyed a renaissance during the early Islamic period. This ware, made in a carved ceramic mold, was available in glazed and unglazed varieties during this period. The shape of this glazed vessel has Eastern prototypes; in its original state the ewer must have closely resembled an unglazed one in the collection of the L. A. Mayer Memorial Institute for Islamic Art in Jerusalem that bears an Arabic inscription in Kufic script stating that it was made in Gurgan in what is now Iran.

Unlike the unglazed piece, the ewer presumably had a panel in its center with an openwork design that would have been attached to one half of the body before the two halves were joined. After the foot, handle, spout, and neck were applied, further decoration was added to mask the join of the neck and that of the handle to the body. The piece was then glazed and fired. The green glaze color was common also to other pieces of the type.



3

3. Pieces exhibiting similar decoration and this flat-bottomed rimless shape based on a metal prototype have been found in Samarra, a location indicating a date for this dish in the ninth century, later than the ewer executed in the same technique.

The dish shows an Islamic adaptation of an interlace design drawn from Greco-Roman tradition. Here the various elements of the pattern bear abstract motifs—parallel slashes, circles, and dots—additions that are illustrative of the Islamic penchant for all-over decoration.

The dish also represents the very important rediscovery by Muslim potters in the ninth century of the Egyptian device of adding tin oxide to clear lead glaze. An

early example of the use of this opaque surface for colored designs can be seen in the green stain painted in the glaze on the four innermost knots of the decoration as well as on four of the squares created by the interlace.

4. A further development of stain or in-glaze painting is seen on this jar with four lug handles: after the opaque glaze was applied, certain areas were stained green—as on the molded dish—and then vegetal designs and swags were painted in blue on the raw glaze as well. The effect of the in-glaze painting is much like ink on a blotter.

This technique appears to have been very popular in ninth-century Iraq and to

have been copied in the provinces, especially Khorasan, where manganese, which produces an aubergine color, was used in place of cobalt. These imitations, lacking the finesse of the Iraqi wares, were also produced in other regions, such as those of present-day Spain, Tunisia, and Algeria, that looked to Baghdad as the cultural capital of the period. As in Khorasan, the palette was green and aubergine.

This shape was decorated in other techniques during the ninth century, but examples of it are rare compared to bowls, whose shape imitated the apparently prestigious Chinese wares imported into Iraq at this time.







6



7

5. One of the most important contributions to the ceramic industry in the early Islamic period was the application of the luster-painting technique to pottery. Previously used to decorate glass, luster painting as employed by ninth-century ceramists in Baghdad left a permanent imprint on the ceramic industry in general, and its influence is still evident in the luster-painted ware made in America today.

For this extremely difficult process, silver and copper oxides, each mixed with a medium, were used to paint designs on a vessel already covered with an opaque glaze and fired. During a second firing in a reducing kiln, oxygen was drawn out of the metallic oxides, leaving the metal suspended on the surface to refract light and create a lustrous appearance. Shades of green were obtained from silver and those of brown from copper.

The field of this Iraqi dish is filled with a highly stylized flowering bush, and the flat rim bears a repeated design of the Arabic word for "sovereignty," written in Kufic script, which may be an abbreviation of a common calligraphic decoration stating "Sovereignty belongs to God." This poly-

chrome luster technique is more often found on bowls imitating a Chinese shape, rather than on those of the metallic shape that this unusually large dish imitates with its wide flat rim and broad footless base.

6. The polychrome luster-painting technique was extremely short-lived; more certain of success was the monochrome variety, since only one color was involved in the execution of a design. It was monochrome luster painting that spread from Iraq to Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Iran, Spain, England, and eventually to America.

This bowl exhibits many of the design characteristics of the monochrome luster-painted wares of tenth-century Iraq: the caricaturelike quality of the seated man holding a beaker in one hand and a flowering branch in the other; the plain border surrounding him and the two birds holding fish in their beaks; the speckled background; the scalloped rim design; and the exterior decoration of a series of three concentric circles evenly spaced around the wall on a field of dashes and dots. The foot bears the Arabic word for "blessing"

in Kufic script.

7. In the second half of the ninth century Ahmad ibn Tulun, an Abbasid governor and later virtually independent ruler of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, summoned Iraqi craftsmen to Egypt to create works of art similar to those he had known in Samarra. Another influx of Iraqi craftsmen probably came to Egypt in the tenth century, in search of new patronage, when Abbasid political fortunes began to wane. Thus did migrating craftsmen presumably introduce luster painting into Egypt from Iraq.

This tenth-century bowl with its palmette-tree motif surrounded by a pseudo-Kufic border is a fine large example of early Egyptian monochrome luster. On the exterior it is decorated with a series of five petal-shaped areas, formed by half-palmettes, each bearing a line of pseudo-Kufic. The flat foot gives the name of the artist (see figure 11).

Iraqi prototypes are known and must have served as inspiration for this bowl as well as for imitations of luster-painted ware made in the eastern Iranian province of Khorasan.



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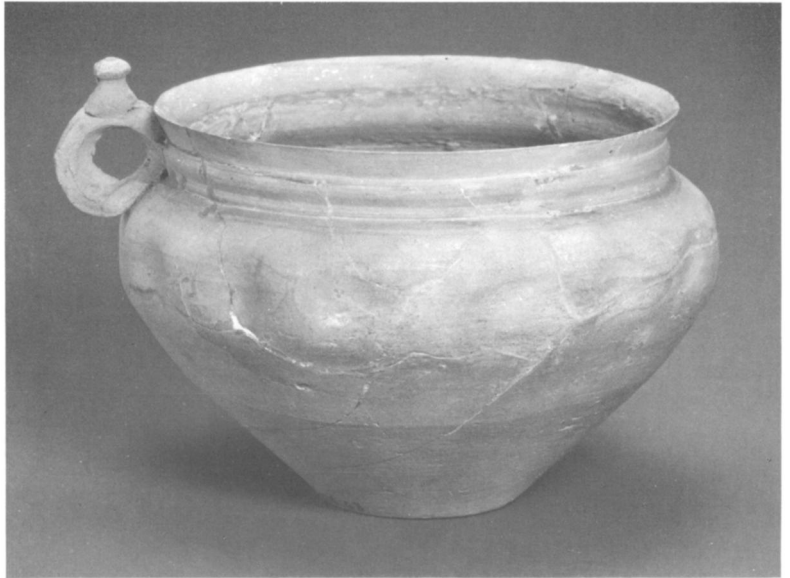


8. By the ninth century, designs created with molds and through the use of stamped, incised, and applied decoration gradually gave way to more original—and difficult—techniques of inglaze and overglaze painting. During that century and the next, potters in Khorasan and in the region northeast of the Oxus River in Central Asia, as well as in Iraq, eastern Arabia, Syria, and Egypt, employed a new technique to decorate ceramic surfaces.

Like Iraqi inglaze-painted and overglaze luster-painted pottery, this ware had a plain opaque surface for decoration. The body was covered by a white or colored engobe, a thin wash of the body material. The design was then painted, and the piece was glazed and fired.

One variety, known as “splashed sgraffito ware,” bears designs incised through the engobe to the red-clay body and then highlighted with different colors. When the designs were covered with a colorless transparent lead glaze, the colored dots and lines were likely to run during the firing. This bowl—one of the most successful examples of “splashed sgraffito ware”—has a purely Islamic design of a palmette-filled arcade with spandrels of vegetal rinceaux.

10



The Tang “three-color” ware that inspired this very popular group of pottery, and shared its color scheme of green, aubergine, and brown on a white ground, may have appeared in the Middle East as early as the eighth century.

9. The important ceramic centers of Nishapur and Samarkand in the provinces of Khorasan and Transoxiana, respectively, produced a number of different types of underglaze-painted ware in their attempts to attain total mastery over their medium. Perhaps one of the most spectacular proofs of their achievement can be seen in the clarity of the design painted on this unusually large and deep bowl.

The ultimate solution to the problems of underglaze painting in these two centers evolved through the discovery that almost complete control could be exercised over the design if the coloring agents were mixed with a clay slip, a more liquid version of the body itself. When the lead glaze was applied over the slip-painted design and the object fired, the design remained stable.

The decoration on the interior of this bowl consists of an Arabic inscription in

Kufic: “Planning before work protects you from regret. Prosperity and Peace.” The elegance of the letters has been enhanced by fine incisions. The perfection of the design and potting in combination with the size of the bowl (it is eighteen inches in diameter) makes this a true tour de force of the potter’s art. Some examples of this slip-painted ware have red in the palette; others reverse the color scheme so that the designs are silhouetted on a dark ground.

10. While the emerging middle classes and the patricians were buying locally produced glazed pottery as well as the coveted imported ceramic objects also available in the markets of the Middle East, unglazed wares were still fulfilling vital needs of all the citizenry. Humble though they may have seemed at the time, these vessels with their simple elegance superbly illustrate the control of the potter over his medium. With no glaze or applied or painted decoration to hide its flaws, this eggshell-thin cup, highlighted only by tooled punches on its shoulder, is a worthy testament to the level of the industry in the tenth century.

9





Early Medieval Pottery

ELEVENTH TO MID-THIRTEENTH CENTURY

The technique of luster painting, which moved from Iraq with migrating ceramists and, to the best of our knowledge, was never to return, continued in Spain as well as in Egypt during this period. It is from the latter country—with the disintegration of the Fatimid dynasty and the rise of artistic patronage under the Kurdish Ayyubids and various Turkic groups, including the Great Seljuks—that the technique most probably moved again with migrating artists to Syria and Iran. In addition to luster-painted ware, molded slip- and in-glaze-painted ware continued to be made, along with objects exhibiting incised decoration.

However, the most important innovation in the field during this period was the re-discovery of faience, made in an attempt to imitate the appearance of Sung porcelain. First employed by the Pharaonic Egyptians, this is a man-made mixture of potash, quartz, and white clay. Once re-discovered, the white composite body was soon being used by Islamic ceramists as a ground for painted designs that exhibited greater linear and tonal variety than could have been achieved before.

The decorative possibilities open to the Muslim potter were now limitless.

These composite-bodied objects seem to have been almost exclusively covered with alkaline glazes, to the exclusion of lead glazes, in twelfth- to fourteenth-century Syria and late fourteenth- to early eighteenth-century Iran. However, and contrary to widely accepted opinion, these alkaline glazes were used only sporadically between the eleventh and the middle of the fourteenth century in Iran, where lead glazes were still the preferred covering for composite-bodied ware.

It is during this period that, under Muslim influence, the first lead glaze opacified with tin was used in Europe—in Pavia, Italy, at the end of the eleventh century. Thus the ceramic industry of the Islamic world laid the ground for Italian majolica and the many other European wares that were decorated with designs painted on an opaque white surface.

11. Stylistic and iconographic changes took place in the decoration of luster-painted pottery after this technique was brought by artists from Iraq to Egypt. As in most Fatimid art, there was an increase in

the use of human and animal motifs that appear more alive than their predecessors. The heraldic eagle on this outstanding object lacks the caricaturelike quality of the seated man on the tenth-century Iraqi bowl (figure 6). Its Hellenistic heritage is obvious: in composition—profile head and outstretched wings and legs—it descends from the insignia of the Roman legions.

Beneath the bird's right talon and again on the foot of the bowl is the artist's signature, "Muslim." Active around the year 1000, he is the only Egyptian potter of this period who has been placed in a firm historical context.

The ceramist in Egypt at this time must have been held in rather high esteem, for not only did many artists such as Muslim sign their names on the back or the front of their objects, but some also countersigned those signed by others, thus indicating important ateliers whose master craftsmen's signatures were coveted. In the early Islamic period, pieces bearing the potter's signature were not entirely unknown but the practice was not widespread.



12

12. In the middle of the twelfth century—and apparently coinciding with the fall of the Fatimid dynasty—the luster-painting technique seems to have disappeared from the Egyptian potters' repertoire and appeared in Syria for the first time.

Typical of early Syrian luster-painted ware are some of the features of this basin: copper-colored luster, applied to a transparent, rather than opaque, glaze that has a crackled quality; and large undecorated areas within the design. Significant also are the scalloped decoration on the rim and the wide plain band forming the upper border of the principal design. Examples of this ware with motifs incised through the luster also exist.

Rather unimaginative with regard to shapes, this Syrian copper-colored luster-painted ware occurred mainly in the basin form shown here (an unusually large example) or in bowls with very sharply flaring walls. Bowls of the latter type were set into the campaniles or facades of Romanesque churches in Italy as decoration during construction. Because the buildings are very often dated, these *bacini*, as they are called, can be dated as well.

13. The technique of incising ceramic surfaces, as seen on this footed Iranian bowl, is a carry-over from the early Islamic period; and the purely Islamic arabesque design on its straight walls is a continuation of a motif that was very popular in ninth-century Samarra. However, the period of its manufacture was not only one of continuation; at a point as yet not clearly defined, Chinese porcelain inspired a new chapter in Islamic pottery making. Not content with imitating only the whiteness of the porcelain, Iranian potters went a step further and made deep incisions in the walls of the vessels, sometimes piercing them. When these deep incisions were covered with transparent glaze, the walls appeared as translucent as those of the much-coveted Chinese ware.

14. This panel, one of a group of six Syrian tiles bearing a bold molded calligraphic design, exhibits a decorative technique practiced in early Islamic times. It is representative of a type of ware with molded designs very common in the central Islamic lands during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. These ob-

jects—including dishes, vases, lanterns, and low tables for food and drink—were most often covered with a clear colorless, turquoise, or aubergine glaze.

Ceramic architectural decoration had a long pre-Islamic history in the Middle East. The earliest Islamic examples are from ninth-century Iraq, whence the tradition passed to other countries in the Muslim world. Ceramic architectural elements from Syria, in any technique, dating from the time of this panel are rare.

15. There is very little evidence of the use of glazed ceramic architectural decoration in the extreme eastern reaches of the Muslim world during this period except for a few tile fragments from Nishapur and a large group of tiles from Ghazni, in what is now Afghanistan, found in a palace destroyed by the Mongols in 1221. Among the Ghazni group was this square red wall tile with molded decoration. Its motif of affronted large-tailed birds has early Islamic parallels, as do the motifs on many other Ghazni tiles. The colors used on the group, notably green and yellow, as well as the rare red seen here, are also more characteristic of earlier pottery.



14



13



15



16. One variety of slip painting under a transparent lead glaze employed in early Islamic Iran is found during the early medieval period on the so-called silhouette ware, here represented by a cup with a band of gazelles striding across its belly. Modifications to the earlier technique were necessary because of the new body type: in this ware the design was executed with a thinner version of the composite-body material (known as "frit") instead of being painted with a clay slip.

The vessel was then covered with a transparent clear or turquoise glaze. In some examples of this type, the whole object was covered with a thick layer of frit; when dry, the frit was incised through to the body, creating a design, or it was carved away, leaving the design in relief.

The most common shapes among silhouette ware are drinking vessels, although bowls are known as well. The stripes on the lower section of this cup and on its short neck are a popular device

on these objects.

17. The decoration on this bowl was created in the same manner as that on the cup (figure 16), the only difference being that the body is earthenware and the design is carved in a coat of white engobe, not frit. This ware, known as "Garrus," the name of the district where the type was first found, is very probably a provincial imitation of the silhouette ware made in the frit-painted technique.



17

18. The ability to paint a design that would not run in, on, with, or under a glaze required a mastery of the medium that was attained only through much trial and error. At the dawn of the twelfth century, the problem had not been completely solved, but ceramists continued to investigate new methods, including the novel technique used on this small dish. It is an example of *laqabi* ("painted") ware, which, because of its short-lived appearance in the Islamic world, must have been an experiment in pottery painting.

Here, the entire background is carved away, leaving the design in relief. This design, in turn, is incised, creating what can only be called dikes or cloisons to prevent the different colored glazes from running together. This technique, because of its

cloisons, has a built-in stylizing effect that is very successful in depicting this colorful perky bird, which forms the principal design.

The shape of the dish—with its low slightly flaring walls and wide flat rim (bearing a pseudo-Kufic design)—places it more in the Syrian than in the Persian sphere, although this type of ware was also made in Iran.

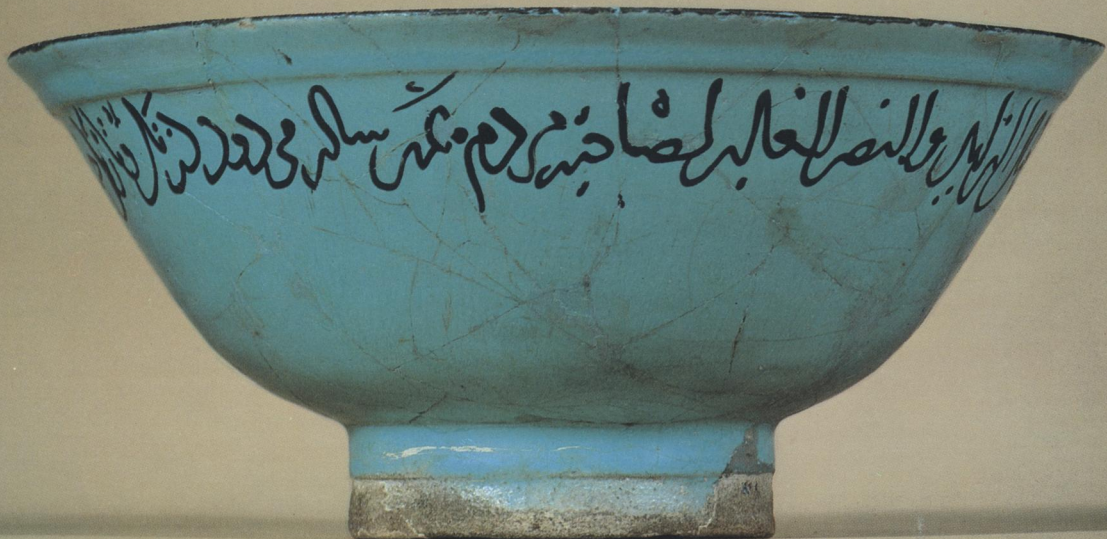
19. In an attempt to increase the number of colors in their palettes, twelfth-century Iranian potters developed a technique now known as *mina'i* ("enameled"), in which stable colors were stain-painted in a lead glaze opacified with tin and, after a first firing, less stable colors were applied and the object was refired at a lower tem-

perature. This technique enabled the artist to paint in a greater variety of colors with complete control, lending a miniaturelike quality to the designs not found on other pottery types. Whether for practical or aesthetic reasons, this method was relatively short-lived.

Figural designs as opposed to stylized vegetal ones seem to have been preferred by *mina'i* painters: some of the vessels with figures bear scenes from the Iranian national epic, the *Shah-nameh* (*The Book of Kings*), written by the poet Ferdowsi between 975 and 1010. The style of these figures echoes that of those in the few Persian paintings on paper extant from this period, and thus *mina'i* ware serves to increase our knowledge of painting of the early medieval period.

18





20. Until the second half of the twelfth century, ceramists in different areas of the Islamic world had not completely mastered the technique of decorating glazed objects with what were often quite elaborate designs of a calligraphic, vegetal, geometric, or figural nature. Twelfth-century potters, however, began to stain-paint directly onto the composite body. As is well illustrated by the lower section of this Syrian jar, this method of underglaze

painting provided a very clear image.

21. In addition to underglaze-painted ware decorated in black under a clear or turquoise glaze (figure 20), Syria produced underglaze polychrome painted ware during the second half of the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth century. These pieces are closely related to those made in contemporary Egypt and Turkey, all of which are customarily decorated

with figures, animals, or birds.

The abstract decoration on this jar is unusual for the type, as it reflects the influence of contemporary metalwork in the layout of its design and in the motifs (specifically the horizontal bands interrupted by large roundels). As we have seen earlier, costlier metal objects often served as the inspiration for objects in less expensive media.



20

21



22. During most of the twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth century, the central part of Anatolia was ruled by a branch of the Turkic Seljuks from their capital at Konya. Structures that stand to this day as well as those revealed during excavations attest to the Seljuk fondness for covering the walls of their buildings with tiles arranged in geometric patterns.

When the Mongols began their sweep across Asia during the first quarter of the thirteenth century, craftsmen from the countries in their path migrated to safer, more financially stable areas to work. That the building tiles were produced with the help of imported or migrant craftsmen is evidenced by this hexagonal grouping, which probably came from the palace of 'Ala' al-Din Kay-Qubadh (ruled 1219–37) at Konya. It exhibits the technical and iconographical influence of Syrian objects in the star-shaped underglaze-painted tile with the sphinx and the technical influence of Persian *mina'i* ware on both types of the four-sided tiles.

23. The technique of underglaze-painting

was also highly developed in Iran. This bowl, produced during the early thirteenth century, exhibits great linear and tonal variety. Superimposed design networks are a common feature on Islamic objects in many media produced at many different times; characteristically Islamic motifs include the split palmettes with which the blue six-part design terminates.

The exterior decoration and shape of this vessel, with its high foot and flaring walls that break quite sharply in their lower section, are typical of ceramics associated with Kashan.

24. This ewer with a reticulated outer wall that virtually masks the innermost plain one is also associated with the Iranian ceramic center of Kashan and belongs to a very rare group of double-walled objects whose prototype seems to have been Iraqi.

Characteristic of Kashan production are the willow pattern above the foot and that inside the neck. The principal decoration is a veritable jungle scene incorporat-

ing sphinxes (some of which strongly resemble the one on the tile grouping from Konya [figure 22]), harpies, and quadripeds of several varieties, all set against a dense vegetal background. The decoration also includes the date: A.H. 612 (A.D. 1215–16).

25. In Iran and Turkey the tradition of glazed ceramic architectural decoration—a tradition that began during the early medieval period and extended into the next two periods—was developed to one of its highest levels within the history of pottery. This Turkish *bosse* appears to have been created in much the same manner as the decoration on the outer wall of the ewer (figure 24). The hollow hemisphere consists of a cut-out geometric design that contains vegetal motifs in some of its sections.

Although bosses used for architectural decoration were more commonly executed in stone, ceramic pieces similar to this one are still in situ on buildings in Konya, accenting the spandrels of arches.



22



23



24







26

26. In the late twelfth and first half of the thirteenth century in Syria, the luster-painting technique was combined with underglaze painting, as it was also in contemporary and later ceramic production in Iran and Spain. This handled drinking vessel with a tapering neck was a popular shape for Syrian luster-painted ware, of which some of the characteristic features are a chocolate-brown luster combined with underglaze-painted blue, and a background of tightly coiled spirals reminiscent of engraved or chased scrolls on contemporary metalwork. The arrangement of the various calligraphic, geometric, and vegetal designs into a series of concentric bands interrupted by medal-

lions also has abundant metal prototypes.

27. At about the time of the collapse of the Fatimid dynasty in 1171, luster-painted ware was being produced in Iran as well as Syria. While it seems quite certain that migrating Egyptian potters were responsible for bringing the technique to Syria, their role in the appearance of luster-painted ware in Iran is less clear. Certain features common to both wares support a connection between Egyptian and Iranian luster, particularly that associated with the Persian city of Rayy. Of those features, this Iranian footed bowl exhibits two: a design reserved on the luster ground (in this case, an "Islamized" Pegasus) and a gadrooned rim.

27









Late Medieval Pottery

MID-THIRTEENTH TO FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The pottery industry exhibited a number of discernible trends during this period. It witnessed a continuation of some of the ceramic types seen in the early medieval period, most especially the luster- and underglaze-painted wares, and a simplification of certain techniques employed in the earlier period.

Glazed ceramic architectural decoration, first used in the Islamic world in ninth-century Iraq, now was refined, reached its zenith, and began its decline.

During the late medieval period, as earlier, vogues or styles current in various areas of the Islamic world manifested themselves in architectural decoration as well as on vessels. Some of these interna-

tional styles are explained by contemporary texts and inscriptions indicating that artists from Iran, namely from Tabriz, were working in Egypt, Syria, and Turkey at various times during the period.

Late medieval ceramics were strongly influenced by Far Eastern, mainly Chinese, iconography and color schemes. Effected principally through the Mongol invasions and through trade, this influence breathed new life into the production of underglaze-painted ware at this time and during the late Islamic period.

28. This lidded albarello, or storage jar, belongs to a group of wares known as

lajvardina, from the Persian word for lapis lazuli, *lajvard*. Because of the survival of a treatise written in 1301 by Abu'l Qasim al-Kashani, a member of a well-known family of Kashan potters, much is known about the technique used to decorate this group. It is related to the technique used on *mina'i* ware but employed only overglaze colors, which were fixed by a second firing. The most common method of applying gold to such wares was used on this vessel: after red gold was hammered into a very fine sheet and cut into shapes with scissors, the individual pieces were backed with glue and applied to the jar with a pen or rod and then smoothed with cotton.



29. During the early and late medieval periods, the city of Kashan was renowned throughout Persia for its luster-painted tiles, and commissions were received from all over the country. This example probably served as a mihrab, or niche indicating the direction of Mecca—the focal point of Muslim houses of worship.

Except for the artist's signature, which is conspicuously placed in the spandrels, the molded epigraphic decoration is all Koranic. The last part of Chapter 2, Verse 136, "And God will suffice you against them and He is the Listener, the Omniscient," has been used imaginatively to form and fill the arch resting on slender columns. The arch itself is the compound word *fasayakfikhahum* ("And He will suffice you against them"); from it hangs a mosque lamp. A very similar mihrab from Kashan, in the collection of the Gulbenkian Foundation, in Lisbon, bears the same epigraphic device and is dated A.H. 710 (A.D. 1310–11).

30. The appearance of Far Eastern iconography on Islamic works of art seems to coincide with the spread of Mongol taste about 1300. This bowl is a typical example of a type of ware made in the first half of the fourteenth century with decorative motifs that betray Chinese influence—here, a proud goose and lotus blossoms hidden among dense foliage.

The technique used to decorate the bowl was also employed with slight variation on objects made in contemporary Egypt and Syria. The composite white body was covered with a gray engobe before the design was painted on it with a thick white frit. Black was then used for outlines and cobalt blue for highlights. The sharply breaking wall and T-form of the rim are aspects of a shape typical for the period.

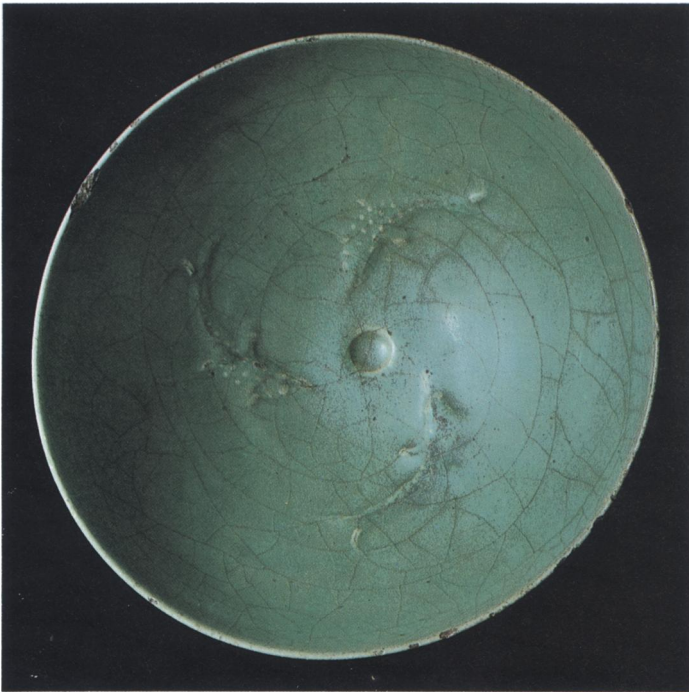
31. Chinese influence during this period was not confined to iconography. Chinese celadon-glazed wares were highly valued and imitated in Iran and in Egypt, although their color was only rarely duplicated successfully.

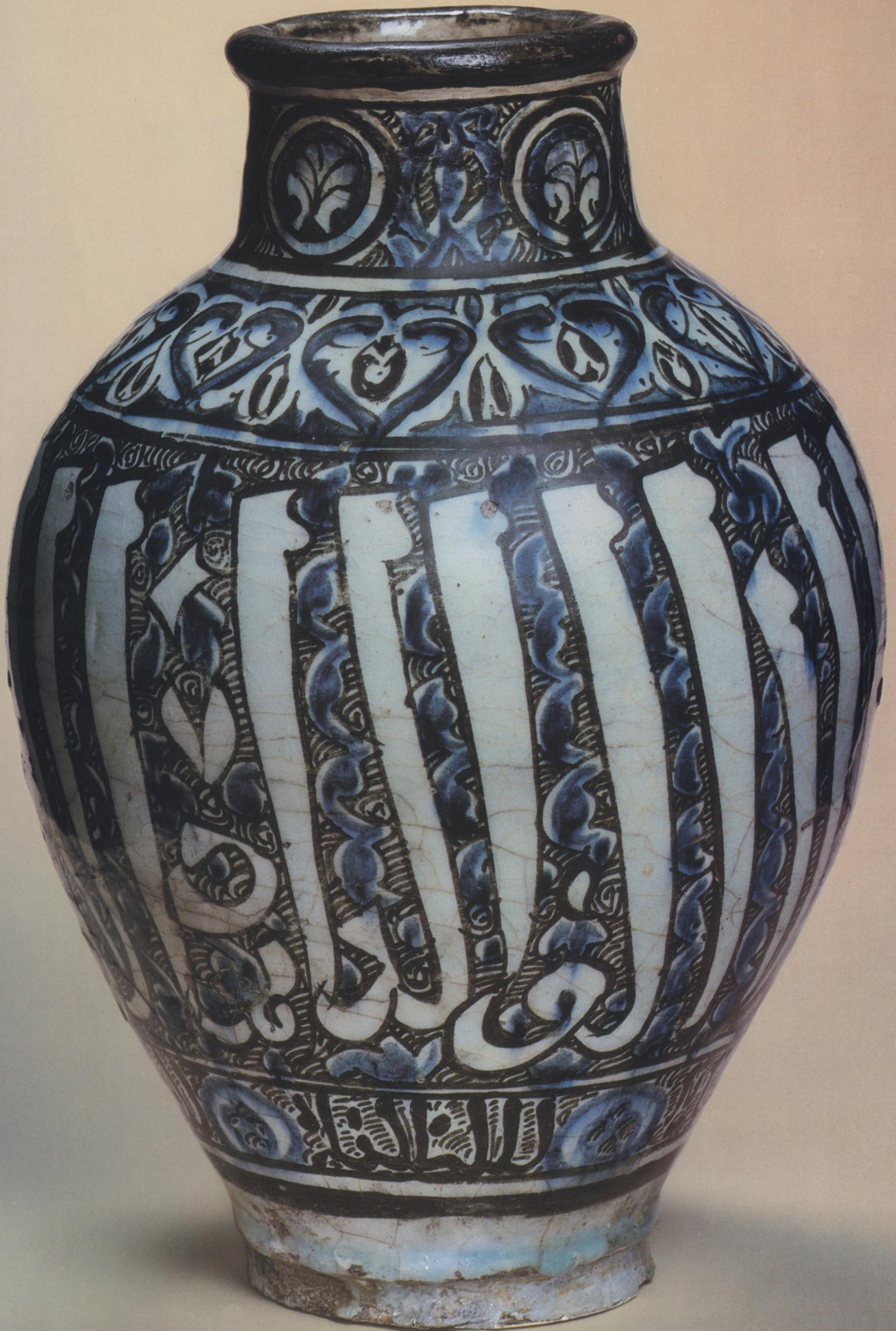
The decoration on the interior of this bowl—three fish encircling its base—closely parallels that on the Chinese prototypes. The hemispherical shape of the bowl, its low narrow foot, and the radiating petal patterns in relief on the outside reflect the shape and exterior decoration of the celadon-glazed petal-backed bowls from the Lung-ch'uan kilns. The shape was found among bowls of various decorative techniques during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, especially in Iran.

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32. The vogue for imitating contemporary metalwork designs, current in Syria during the early medieval period, continued during the fourteenth century on some Syrian underglaze-painted wares. The principal decoration on this large jar consists of a wide band in which a ground of tightly curled spirals bears an Arabic inscription in thuluth script: "Lasting glory, increasing prosperity, and fortuitous destiny." Unlike the angular Kufic so popular in decorative arts of the earlier periods, thuluth is a cursive script characterized by tall elegant verticals. Similar wide bands bearing bold thuluth inscriptions inlaid with silver on a ground of engraved or chased spirals—all positioned between decorative borders—were very common on contemporary metalwork from Syria and Egypt.

33. Syrian underglaze-painted wares appear to have had an impact on ceramic production as far north as Serai Berke, on the Volga River, which served as the capital of the Golden Horde. Because of their alliance against the Mongols with the Mamluks (who ruled in Syria and Egypt until 1517) and also the bond between the Golden Horde and the Mamluks of a very active trade in slaves, it is not surprising that artists in South Russia were influenced by pottery, such as this example, made in Mamluk centers. The dish has a characteristically Mamluk shape, with rounded and slightly flaring walls and a wide flat rim. The layout of the border and the motifs within it—crosshatching interrupted by rectangles bearing spots of color—are found on pieces from Serai Berke.

34. Far from finely crafted, this underglaze-painted dish is nonetheless important in the history of Islamic pottery because a date is incorporated in its charming and quite typically humble Persian inscription: "As long as the soup is good, if the bowl is not so well made, let it be. The year A.H. 779 [A.D. 1377–78]." The date permits us to have precise information about one type of underglaze-painted ware produced in Iran during the last quarter of the fourteenth century—a period during which very little is known about Iran's pottery production.



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35. This eight-pointed star tile bears two superimposed design networks, a popular Islamic decorative convention (see also figure 23). The lower, finer network is left unglazed, while the upper, bolder design is glazed turquoise blue. The combination of glazed and unglazed areas on a single object, be it a tile or a vessel, is relatively rare. However, tiles with glazed and unglazed areas are known in Iran from as early as the middle of the eleventh century.

On vessels, the unglazed areas permitted evaporation, while the glazed areas

satisfied the Persian penchant for colorful decoration. On architectural tiles decorated in this manner, the glazed design would be emphasized and thus seen from a greater distance.

36. Architectural decoration comprised of individual glazed pieces was first used in Islamic Iran in the first half of the twelfth century, when small monochrome glazed tiles were set into the walls of buildings in a very sparse, tentative manner. This practice gained momentum quite rapidly,

and by the time this mihrab was made, entire walls were being covered with mosaic totally executed in small pieces of brilliantly glazed ceramic. The complexity of such patterns required awesomely accurate cutting: since every angle influences the whole, the pattern could not be realized unless each piece was precisely cut. This highly exacting phase soon gave way, for the most part, to one in which designs were painted on larger tiles—a much quicker and easier way to cover large surfaces with patterned glazed ceramics.

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا
الذي كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله

Decorative border containing Arabic calligraphy in white on a dark blue background, including:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا
الذي كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله

Arched panel with intricate geometric and floral patterns in blue, white, and gold, featuring a central square medallion with the text:

مسجد بيت مكة

37. The decoration on this border tile, carved in high relief and glazed in vivid colors, is no less striking than the decoration on the mihrab, yet it was considerably easier to execute. This tile and the group to which it belongs are characterized by deeply carved vegetal, calligraphic, or geometric designs glazed in one or more colors. It is typical of the glazed ceramic architectural decoration in Bukhara and Samarkand during the second half of the fourteenth century.

38. Less time-consuming still was the technique used to execute the design on this twelve-pointed star tile from the *madrasa* ("theological school") at Khargird in Persia (A.H. 848 [A.D. 1444–45]). Before the various motifs were painted with colored glazes, each area to be painted was circumscribed by a thin line of a greasy substance mixed with manganese, which prevented the different colors from running together. When fired, the grease burned away and left a dark matte line outlining the motifs. This technique, known as *cuerda seca* ("burnt cord"), was used earlier in Spain. It also enjoyed a great but brief success in Turkey during the first half of the fifteenth century, and it was to become quite popular in Iran during the final period to be discussed here.

39. These two tiles are rare examples in Western collections of the *cuerda seca* technique as executed in Turkey. Five other identical tiles are known, four in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and one in the Madina Collection in New York. All are slightly bowed, and they form a repeat pattern of an arch-and-spandrel design—indicating that, set side by side, they once graced a cylindrical object of large diameter. Perhaps they are from a decorative band on the minaret of a mosque.

This technique was introduced into Turkey from Iran early in the fifteenth century. The first monumental tile cycle in Ottoman Turkey was executed in this technique for the Green Mosque in Bursa, which was completed in 1428. The mihrab in this mosque bears an inscription identifying the artists of the revetment as "masters from Tabriz."

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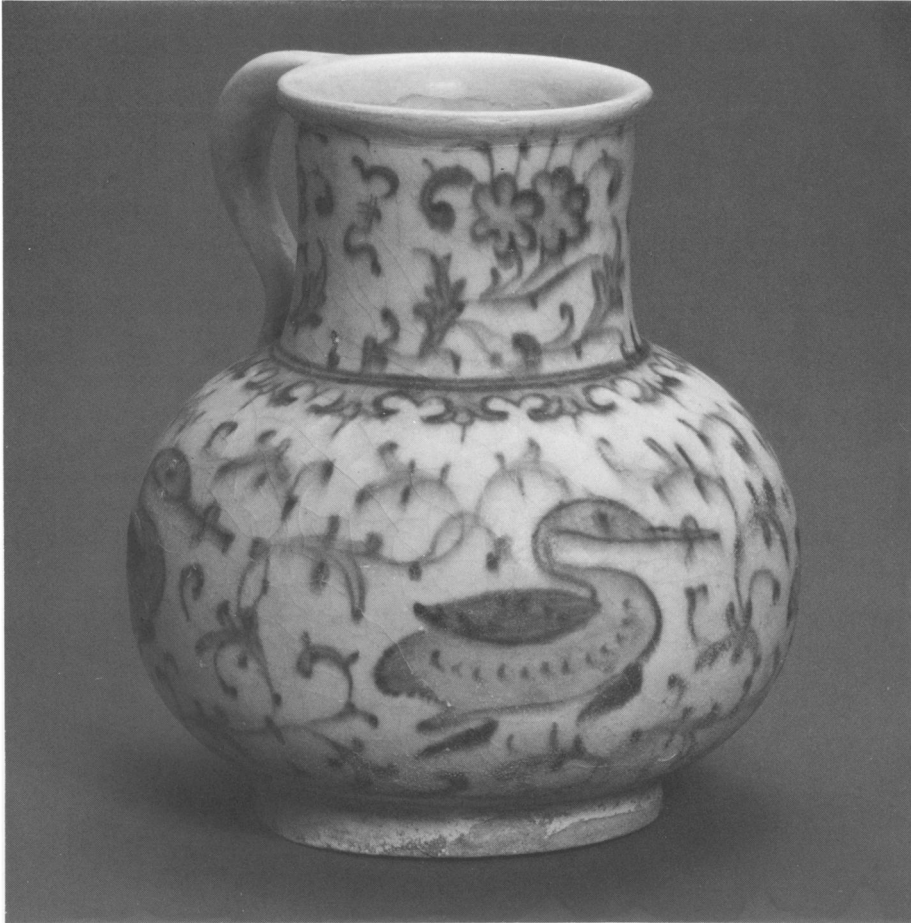
40. Fifteenth-century Syrian and Egyptian underglaze-painted ware is handsomely represented by these two hexagonal tiles. The Syrian example (below) bears a background design of tightly coiled spirals and a motif of a lidded ewer on a stand, of which a number of Mamluk metal examples exist as well as a few ceramic ones. The decoration is very Islamic, unlike that of the Egyptian tile (above), which betrays its dependence on Chinese models.

Although no Iranian prototypes for these tiles survive, they must have existed; a religious complex in Damascus decorated with more than thirteen hundred hexagonal underglaze-painted tiles also bears a rectangular one with the signature of an artist from the Iranian city of Tabriz. It seems quite certain that this particular artist subsequently moved to Cairo, since several bowls bearing his signature are known to have been made there. Similar hexagonal tiles also exist in Turkey; since ceramists from Tabriz are known to have been working there at the time, it is safe to suggest that the Turkish tiles were also made by Tabrizi artists.

Thus it appears that in the early years of the fifteenth century, Iranian ceramists moved westward and established their imprint on the ceramic production of at least three countries, an imprint that was to be felt for many years to come.

41. This hemispherical bowl belongs to a series of wares made from the second half of the fifteenth through the seventeenth century and now known as Kubatchi, from the name of the town in the Caucasus where many of these pieces were found in the nineteenth century. This bowl is one of a rare early group in the series characterized by a design of ogee panels encircling a central roundel—all of which bear vegetal motifs—reserved on a black ground distinguished by incised, predominantly spiral designs. A brilliant turquoise glaze covers the entire bowl. The four known dated pieces of this group range from 1469 to 1495. They constitute the only three-dimensional ceramic objects that can be securely placed in fifteenth-century Iran.





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42. Our knowledge concerning the Muslim world's production of three-dimensional pottery pieces during the fifteenth century remains tentative, except for those that belong to a dated group (such as figure 41) and those signed by an artist whose dates are ascertainable.

The shape of this ewer is identical to that of a group of metal ewers scattered in various collections throughout the world; a number of these ewers are dated. Since ceramic objects tend to imitate metal ones, it can be concluded that this ewer was produced later than the metal examples, not earlier than the second half of the fifteenth century. The determination of its place of manufacture is more difficult. The shape is reminiscent of Iranian metalwork; the ewer's vegetal decoration and the quality of its glaze are closely paralleled in a bowl (in the collection of the Louvre) whose foot bears the information "made in Damascus"; and the crenelated design around the base of its neck is very similar to designs found on early Turkish wares from Isnik.



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43. The luster-painted ware of Nasrid Spain ultimately owes its existence to the objects produced in that technique in ninth-century Baghdad. Moving westward from Baghdad, first to what is now Tunisia and then to Algeria, the technique appeared subsequently in late eleventh-century Spain, where it gave rise to an important center in Malaga. Production in this city led directly to the so-called Hispano-Moresque luster-painted wares. Among the products of this later and long-recognized group is this rare eight-pointed star tile, whose overall grapevine pattern with naturalistic leaves and bunches of fruit still betrays the classical heritage of Islamic art.

44. This deep dish, or *brasero*, which was made slightly later than the eight-pointed star tile, bears witness to the long Islamic tradition behind its production. Its major motifs—the cobalt-blue palmette tree, the pseudo-Kufic designs in the cartouches surrounding the central roundel, and the tightly coiled spirals on the wide flat rim—are all drawn from the Islamic repertoire.





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Late Pottery

SIXTEENTH TO SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Some of the finest pottery ever produced in the Islamic world was made between about 1490 and 1700 in the Ottoman Turkish city of Iznik (ancient Nicaea). The influence of this important production center on ceramic objects made in seventeenth-century Iran appears to have been strong.

Egypt and Syria, now provinces of the Ottoman Empire, were also active ceramic-producing areas, but they seem to have manufactured mainly copies of objects made in Turkey or to have continued the ceramic tradition current in those countries during the preceding period. The other major Islamic power at this time, the Mughals, made no new contributions to the ceramic industry.

Most of the many different pottery types made during this period exhibit a continuation of the decorative techniques already perfected during earlier periods or a revival of them, although in certain cases these techniques are combined in new ways. This period of continuity and renaissance

also saw the acceleration of the decline of the industry. By the end of this period, Islamic ceramic production had totally lost its vitality.

45. Earthenware ceramics were made in Iznik as early as the second half of the fourteenth century, but it was not until about one hundred years later that this center began to manufacture pottery with a composite body. The earliest composite-bodied ware made in Iznik was distinguished by an underglaze-painted blue decoration on a white ground.

Among the principal characteristics of this ware, known as "Abraham of Kutahya" (after the artist whose signature appeared on only one piece), are ornately contoured panels with small, highly detailed vegetal patterns, like those on the interior of this bowl. The decoration within the panels, in white silhouetted on a blue ground, contrasts with the same design, in blue on a white ground, executed on a larger scale and in a broader style on

the exterior of the bowl.

The jewel-like quality of the colors may be attributed partially to the thin wash of white body material applied over the raw body to serve as a surface for the decoration. This technical feature was common to all wares made in Iznik.

46. A variant of the "Abraham of Kutahya" type, represented by this small mosque lamp, is characterized by a ground completely covered with delicate spiraling stems bearing small flowers. This motif serves as the backdrop for two beautifully executed Arabic inscriptions: "Power belongs to God, the One" (repeated three times on the body of the object) and (on the flaring upper section) "there is no hero except 'Alī; no sword except dhū-l-faqār ['Alī's sword]."

During this period in Turkey, pottery continued to imitate metalwork in shape as well as in design. This lamp, however, is one of a number made at this time that have a glass prototype.





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47. "Abraham of Kutahya" ware soon gave way to that with more varied designs and more colors. This "Damascus" type, so called because originally it was thought to have been made in that city, incorporated in its decoration cobalt blue, light blue, turquoise, manganese purple, sage green, and a greenish black for outlines. Among the products of this polychrome group are the finest ceramic wares ever produced in the kilns of Isnik.

Like many pieces of "Damascus" ware, this dish has a symmetrical composition springing from a single source. The stylized tulips seen radiating from the central rosette and in clusters in the border, where they alternate with a favorite Turkish motif of closed crescents, were to become very popular during the last phase of Isnik production.

48. Like the polychrome luster-painted ware of seven hundred years earlier, the "Damascus" underglaze-painted polychrome group, although exceedingly beautiful, did not survive very long. It was at least partly a matter of economics that caused the Isnik kilns to begin turning out tiles and vessels with another polychrome color scheme. Of the three types of ceramics produced in Isnik, the "Rhodian" type, named for the Island of Rhodes, where it was thought to have been manufactured, was developed last and existed the longest (from about 1555 until about 1700). The predominant new color added to the palette was a "sealing-wax" red, which was applied so thickly that it stood in relief. The most popular designs on "Rhodian" ware were flowering plants, particularly the bluebell, hyacinth, carnation, rose, and tulip, many of which are quite realistically depicted on this panel.

During this third and final phase of Isnik pottery manufacture, the interiors of both religious and secular buildings were covered with tiles such as these, giving them a very airy but sumptuous appearance.

49. By far the most outstanding Isnik "Rhodian" wares were the tiles. The vessels were of lesser importance and their designs merely abbreviated versions of the magnificently composed tile decorations. One small and rare subgroup of "Rhodian" ceramics appears not to have had any counterpart in the tile industry. This dish, whose principal design is a single blossom with radiating petals, is typical of this ware, in which chocolate-brown, salmon-pink, or a warm blue opaque glaze was used as the ground for a slip-painted design. The last-named color may have later echoes in some Iranian products, such as the kalian illustrated in figure 59.





50. This panel of six tiles is a handsomely painted example of the Syrian version of “Rhodian” ware. The decoration of parallel undulating vines with hybrid blossoms and bunches of grapes that more closely resemble flowers than fruit is an adaptation of similar designs found in Turkish tile panels and textiles. Cobalt blue, turquoise, purple, and green, all with black outlines, were the preferred colors.

51. This Egyptian panel from a mosque illustrates the continuation of the ceramic tradition following the Ottoman conquest of that country and is proof of how little the political change affected artistic production. Its bold cursive inscription reads: “The weak servant Kayun ibn Abdallah, the sinful, the one in need of God’s mercy, founded this blessed mosque. It was built in the year 1000 [A.D. 1591–92].” If the date of manufacture were not incorpo-

rated in its decoration and if the arabesque design in the spandrels did not exhibit strong Ottoman influence, it would be tempting to place this panel within the Mamluk period since a number of similar tiles once graced and still decorate buildings of this period in Cairo today.

52. Like a number of ceramic objects produced in Isnik during the sixteenth century, this Iranian dish combines Far Eastern and Islamic motifs in its underglaze-painted decoration. The border design is a corruption of the wave pattern found on fifteenth-century blue-and-white Ming porcelain, and the design in the cavetto is an encircled and beribboned variation of a fairly common element on sixteenth-century Chinese blue-and-white and polychrome wares. The central design of a benign lion in a landscape is, however, purely Islamic.

The dish is a very rare example of a dated sixteenth-century Persian ceramic object: A.H. 975 (A.D. 1567–68) appears on its exterior wall.

53. The strong influence that Chinese blue-and-white porcelain began to exert on Islamic ceramics in the late fourteenth century persisted for at least the next two hundred and fifty years. The artist of this large Persian dish selected and adapted elements of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain of various dates for his decoration—such as the design on the cavetto, the dragons, and the concentric wave pattern. The “tassel mark” on the foot of the dish, in imitation of a Chinese reign mark, or *nien-hao*, suggests a seventeenth-century date because it is very similar to marks found on other Iranian bowls attributed to this time.



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54. This dish belongs to the final, polychrome type of “Kubatchi” wares (see figure 41). Its underglaze stain- and slip-painting, and palette of blue, turquoise, green, yellow, and red, with black outlines, may indicate that “Rhodian” ware exerted an influence on the characteristic technique and color scheme of these polychrome “Kubatchi” pieces. Most of the figures incorporated in the designs of both dishes and tiles in this group appear to be very similar to those found in miniature and monumental paintings executed in Isfahan during the reign of Shah ‘Abbās I (1589–1628).

55. Some of the buildings constructed in Isfahan during the reign of Shah ‘Abbās I were decorated with tiles such as these, which were executed in the *cuerda seca* technique (see figures 38, 39).

Europeans, who were present in relatively large numbers at his court, are often represented in fashions of the day. On this panel of thirty-two tiles, the gentleman in European dress appears to be a merchant attempting to sell fabric to the woman reclining on pillows. An Iranian gentleman kneels by the tree at her left, and three servants attend the group, bringing liquid refreshment and dishes of fruit.



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56. Another type of ware made in seventeenth-century Iran that appears to have been influenced by ceramics from the Isnik kilns is a group whose principal decoration, as seen on this dish, consists of small, delicate designs, some of which are framed by ornately contoured panels, alternating with larger, broader designs—not unlike the combination on “Abraham of Kutahya” ware. The use of underglaze stain- and slip-painting together is found on both “Rhodian” and polychrome “Kubatchi” ware, and the delicate arabesque design in the cavetto is incised through the black slip in the same manner as the secondary designs on the early “Kubatchi” bowl (figure 41).

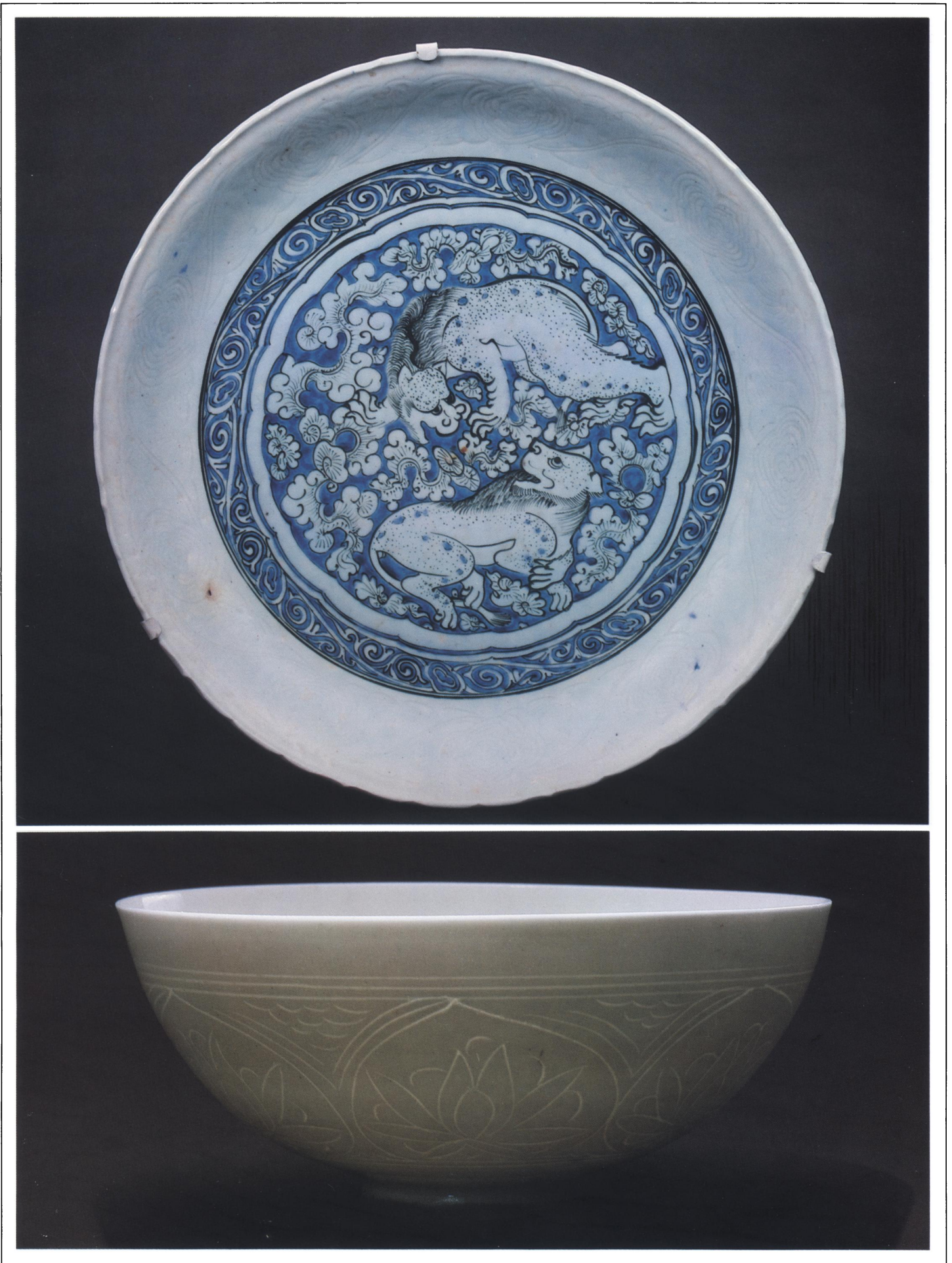
It is likely that the Iranian center that produced the “Kubatchi” pieces transmitted Turkish influence to the later Persian pottery industry.

57. It has been suggested that the inspiration to decorate pottery with painted designs came to China from the Middle East as did the cobalt ore for the earliest blue-and-white porcelain. Thus, in Islamic ceramics such as this dish, which betrays the influence of Chinese blue-and-white ware, the circle has been completed.

The designs found on the type of ware represented by this large dish are more faithful to their Chinese originals than those of the type discussed in figure 56.

They are outlined with an intense black; the blue has a decidedly violet hue and is applied in varying thicknesses. The rim of this vessel bears an incised design, a decorative feature found on plates made for export during the late Ming period.

58. This bowl illustrates the revival of the incised ware common in twelfth-century Iran (see figure 13). It may have developed from the type just discussed, as that large dish bears a similarly executed design on its rim. The decoration on this bowl of tangent petal shapes circumscribing lotus blossoms is so deeply incised that it permits light to shine through the vessel’s walls.



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59. Another technique popular in twelfth-century Iran and revived at this time was frit carving (see figure 16). The rarest as well as the most beautiful objects exhibiting this technique were made by applying to the entire vessel a thick layer of frit that, when dry, was carved with a design through to the white composite body and subsequently covered with a transparent glaze. The blue of the frit on this kalian, or water pipe, is reminiscent of the color on a rare type made in the kilns of Isnik (figure 49). (The metal attachments to this kalian are later additions.)



60. Luster painting was also revived during the late Islamic period. This carafe was covered with a clear glaze and its alternate lobes stained blue. After an initial firing, the copper luster-painted landscape design was executed. The graceful elegance of the bottle's shape is enhanced by the lobular form and the subtle blue shading of the lobes, which both emphasize the verticality of the object. Such shapes were popular in this period; a similar bottle can be seen in the foreground of the tile panel in figure 55.



Credits

1. EWER. Earthenware, applied and incised decoration. Iraq, 1st half 8th century. H. 13¾ in. (35 cm.). Gift of V. Everitt Macy, 1930 (30.112.48)
2. EWER. Earthenware, molded and applied decoration, glazed. Iran, 1st half 8th century. H. 14½ in. (36.8 cm.). Gift of Richard Ettinghausen, 1978 (1978.549.2)
3. DISH. Earthenware, molded in relief and glazed. Iraq, 9th century. Diam. 6⅞ in. (17.5 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1953 (53.110)
4. JAR. Earthenware, glazed and stain-painted. Iraq, 9th century. H. 8½ in. (21.6 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1932 (32.149)
5. DISH. Earthenware, glazed and luster-painted. Iraq, 9th century. Diam. 15 in. (38.1 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1976 (1976.309)
6. BOWL. Earthenware, glazed and luster-painted. Iraq, 10th century. Diam. 9⅝ in. (23.7 cm.). Gift of Edwin Binney, 3rd, and Purchase, Richard S. Perkins Gift, 1977 (1977.126)
7. BOWL. Earthenware, glazed and luster-painted. Egypt, 2nd half 10th century. Diam. 7 in. (17.8 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1963 (63.16.3)
8. BOWL. Earthenware, white engobe, incised, colored and colorless glazes. Iran, Nishapur, 9th-early 10th century. Diam. 10¼ in. (26 cm.). Excavations of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Rogers Fund, 1938 (38.40.137)
9. BOWL. Earthenware, white engobe, slip-painted, incised and glazed. Iran or Transoxiana, Nishapur or Samarkand, 10th century. Diam. 18 in. (45.7 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1965 (65.106.2)
10. CUP. Earthenware. Iran, Nishapur, 10th century. H. 3⅞ in. (8 cm.). Excavations of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Rogers Fund, 1940 (40.170.43)
11. BOWL. Earthenware, glazed and luster-painted. Egypt, c. 1000. Signed by Muslim. Diam. 10 in. (25.4 cm.). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles K. Wilkinson, 1963 (63.178.1)
12. BASIN. Composite body, glazed and luster-painted. Syria, mid-12th century. Diam. 11⅞ in. (30.1 cm.). Gift of Habib Anavian, 1975 (1975.40)
13. FOOTED BOWL. Composite body, incised and glazed. Iran, 12th century. H. 3⅝ in. (9.2 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1963 (63.159.2)
14. SIX TILES. Composite body, carved and glazed. Syria, 12th-13th century. 67 x 7 in. (170.2 x 17.8 cm.). Gift of Otto H. Kahn, 1910 (10.56.1)
15. TILE. Earthenware, molded and glazed. Afghanistan, Ghazni, 12th-13th century. H. 5⅞ in. (13 cm.). Gift of Marjorie Schwarz, in memory of Herbert F. and Dorothy C. Schwarz, 1975 (1975.193.1)
16. CUP. Composite body, underglaze frit-painted. Iran, 2nd half 12th century. Max. diam. 5⅝ in. (14.3 cm.). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1967 (67.104)
17. BOWL. Earthenware, incised in champlévé technique, white engobe, painted and glazed. Iran, 2nd half 12th-13th century. Diam. 10 in. (25.4 cm.). Gift of Edward C. Moore, Jr., 1927 (27.13.3)
18. DISH. Composite body, carved, colored and colorless glazes. Syria, 2nd half 12th century. Diam. 7⅞ in. (20 cm.). Purchase, Gifts in memory of Richard Ettinghausen, 1979 (1979.210)
19. BOWL. Composite body, stain- and overglaze painted and gilded. Iran, late 12th-early 13th century. Diam. 7¾ in. (19.7 cm.). Henry G. Leberthon Collection Gift of Mr. and Mrs. A. Wallace Chauncey, 1957 (57.61.16)
20. JAR. Composite body, underglaze-painted. Syria, late 12th-early 13th century. H. 9½ in. (21.4 cm.). Bequest of Horace Havemeyer, 1956, H. O. Havemeyer Collection (56.185.16)
21. JAR. Composite body, underglaze slip(?) and stain-painted. Syria, late 12th-1st half 13th century. H. 9¾ in. (24.8 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1923 (23.162.1)
22. TILE ASSEMBLAGE. Composite body, overglaze painted and leaf gilded. Turkey, 1st half 13th century. Diam. 8⅞ in. (22.7 cm.). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Jack A. Josephson, 1976 (1976.245)
23. BOWL. Composite body, underglaze slip(?) and stain-painted. Iran, Kashan, early 13th century. Diam. 8¾ in. (22.2 cm.). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1964 (64.256)
24. EWER. Composite body, underglaze painted and incised (glaze partially stained cobalt), with pierced outer shell. Iran, Kashan, dated A.H. 612/A.D. 1215-16. H. 8 in. (20.3 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1932 (32.52.1)
25. BOSSE. Composite body, molded, carved and glazed. Turkey, 13th century. Diam. 5¾ in. (14.6 cm.). Anonymous gift, 1974 (1974.370.12)
26. EWER. Composite body, underglaze- and luster-painted. Syria, late 12th-1st half 13th century. H. 7⅞ in. (18.7 cm.). Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1948 (48.113.15)
27. BOWL. Composite body, glazed and luster-painted. Iran, late 12th-early 13th century. Diam. 8 in. (20.3 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1916 (16.87)
28. JAR WITH COVER. Composite body, overglaze painted and leaf-gilded. Iran, 2nd half 13th-14th century. H. with cover 14¾ in. (37.5 cm.). Henry G. Leberthon Collection, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. A. Wallace Chauncey, 1957 (57.61.12)
29. TILE NICHE. Composite body, glazed, stain- and luster-painted. Iran, Kashan, early 14th century. Signed by Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Anmad Babuyeh, the builder. Rogers Fund, 1909 (09.87)
30. JAR. Composite body, underglaze painted. Syria, 14th century. H. 11¼ in. (28.6 cm.). Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1941 (41.165.45)
31. BOWL. Composite body, applied(?) decoration and glazed. Iran, 1st half 14th century. Diam. 11¼ in. (28.6 cm.). Gift of Mrs. Horace Havemeyer in memory of her husband, 1959 (59.60)
32. JAR. Composite body, underglaze-painted. Syria, 14th century. H. 13¼ in. (33.6 cm.). Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891 (91.1.130)
33. DISH. Composite body, underglaze-painted. Syria, 14th century. Diam. 9¼ in. (23.3 cm.). The Friends of the Islamic Department Fund, 1971 (1971.21)
34. DISH. Composite body, underglaze-painted. Iran, last quarter 14th century. Diam. 11⅜ in. (30 cm.). Purchase, Anonymous Gift, 1970 (1970.28)
35. TILE. Earthenware, carved and partially glazed. Iran, 13th century. Diam. 11¼ in. Gift of Charles B. Hoyt, 1932 (32.41.1)
36. MIHRAB. Composite body, glazed, sawed to shape and assembled as mosaic. Iran, c. 1354. H. 11 ft. 3 in. (342.9 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1939 (39.20)
37. TILE. Composite body, carved and glazed. Greater Iran, 2nd half 14th century. W. 13 in. (33.5 cm.). Purchase, Walter D. Binger Gift, 1972 (1972.88)
38. TILE. Composite body, glaze-painted. Iran, 2nd quarter 15th century. Diam. 15¼ in. (38.7 cm.). Gift of Philip M. Lydig, 1917 (17.143.1)
39. TWO TILES. Earthenware, glaze-painted. Turkey, 2nd quarter 15th century. H. 18 in. (45.7 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1908 (08.185)
40. TWO TILES. Composite body, underglaze painted. Egypt, 2nd half 15th century and Syria, 1st half 15th century. W. 7½ in. (19.1 cm.) and 6⅝ in. (16.8 cm.) Rogers Fund (67.69.4); Source unknown (X228.1)
41. BOWL. Composite body, underglaze painted and incised. Iran, 2nd half 15th century. Diam. 12⅜ in. (31.4 cm.). Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection, Bequest of Isaac D. Fletcher, 1917 (17.120.70)
42. EWER. Composite body, underglaze-painted. Provenance unknown, 15th century. H. 5½ in. (14 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1969 (69.13)
43. TILE. Earthenware, glaze and luster-painted. Spain, late 14th-early 15th century. W. 9¼ in. (24.8 cm.). Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1941 (41.165.41)
44. DEEP DISH (BRASERO). Earthenware, glazed, stain- and luster-painted. Spain, c. 1430. Diam. 17 ¾ in. (45.1 cm.). The Cloisters Collection, 1956 (56.171.162)
45. BOWL. Composite body, opaque white glaze, underglaze-painted. Turkey, Isnik, 1st quarter 16th century. Diam. 10 in. (25.4 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1932 (32.34)
46. MOSQUE LAMP. Composite body, opaque with glaze, underglaze-painted. Turkey, Isnik, 1st quarter 16th century. H. 6⅝ in. (16.8 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1959 (59.69.3)
47. DISH. Composite body, opaque white glaze, underglaze painted. Turkey, Isnik, mid-16th century. Diam. 11¾ in. (29.8 cm.). Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913 (14.40.732)
48. TILE PANEL. Composite body, opaque white glaze, underglaze slip- and stain-painted. Turkey, Isnik, 2nd half 16th century. 47¾ x 47½ in. (121.3 x 120.6 cm.). Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.2083)
49. DISH. Composite body, opaque blue glaze, underglaze slip-painted. Turkey, Isnik, last quarter 16th century. Diam. 12⅞ in. (30.6 cm.). The Friends of the Islamic Department Fund, 1970 (1970.30)
50. TILE PANEL. Composite body, underglaze painted. Syria, 2nd half 16th century. 33 x 22 in. (83.8 x 55.9 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1922 (22.185.13a-f)
51. TILE PANEL. Composite body, underglaze painted. Egypt, last decade 16th century. L. 6¾ in. (160.6 cm.). Bequest of Agnes Miles Carpenter, 1958 (58.90.1a-g)
52. DISH. Composite body, underglaze-painted. Iran, dated A.H. 975/A.D. 1567-68. Diam. 12⅞ in. (32.7 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1968 (68.42)
53. DISH. Composite body, underglaze-painted. Iran, 17th century. Diam. 17¼ in. (43.8 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1965 (65.109.2)
54. DISH. Composite body, underglaze-painted. Northwest Iran, early 17th century. Diam. 13⅞ in. (35.2 cm.). Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection, Bequest of Isaac D. Fletcher, 1917 (17.120.56)
55. TILE PANEL. Composite body, glaze-painted. Iran, 1st quarter 17th century. L. 78 in. (198.1 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1903 (03.9c)
56. DISH. Composite body, underglaze slip(?) and stain-painted, incised. Iran, 17th century. Diam. 14¼ in. (36.2 cm.). Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891 (91.1.92)
57. DISH. Composite body, incised and underglaze painted. Iran, 1st half 17th century. Diam. 17½ in. (44.5 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1924 (24.47.4)
58. BOWL. Composite body, incised and glazed. Iran, 2nd half 17th century or later. Diam. 7⅞ in. (20 cm.). Gift of William R. Valentiner, 1911 (11.137.1)
59. KALIAN. Composite body, frit-painted, carved and glazed. Iran, 17th century. H. 8¾ in. (22.2 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1975 (1975.61.3)
60. BOTTLE. Composite body, glazed (partially stained blue) and luster painted. Iran, 2nd half 17th century. H. 11¾ in. (29.8 cm.). Theodore M. Davis Collection, Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915 (30.95.157)

CHRONOLOGY

622	Flight (Hegira) of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca, marking the beginning of Islamic history
632-661	The Four Orthodox or Rightly Guided Caliphs
661-750	The Umayyad Caliphs
749-1258	The Abbasid Caliphs
756-1031	The Spanish Umayyads
909-1171	The Fatimids
819-1005	The Samanids
977-1186	The Ghaznavids
1038-1194	The Seljuqs
1077-1307	The Rum Seljuqs
1256-1353	The Il-Khans (Mongols)
1226-1502	The Golden Horde (Mongols)
1230-1492	The Nasrids
1250-1517	The Mamluks
1342-1924	The Ottomans
1370-1506	The Timurids
1501-1732	The Safavids
1526-1858	The Mughals
1779-1924	The Qajars

Inside back cover: Detail of Egyptian tile panel (figure 51).

