Ceramic 5

Small blue-and-white dish.
Izmir, ca. 1550-60. Diameter: 11.285 cm. Height: 2 3/4 , 6 cm.

By the middle of the 16th century, the artists of Izmir were experimenting with a wide variety of designs and techniques, the results of which showed most clearly in the ceramic wares made for the free market, rather than in the wall tiles executed for the most part on commissions from the Court in Istanbul. The thick-stemmed central flower in this composition, surrounded by six five-lobed leaves, is probably a stylized representation of an artichoke, a plant which is grown by the millions in the Bithynian hinterland around Izmir and Bursa.

Around the clear and star-like form of the central flower, filling the background of the bottom, amets, and border of the dish, are many small forms executed in dark cobalt-blue line, that appear to be groups of three tiny spirals stuck together. This form, which is quite ubiquitous in Turkish art, is known as angilm, and its symbolism and origins have been much debated. It seems that the form was originally Chinese, and depicted three pearls which were borne on the crest of a wave; the form was used in Islamic art for a variety of purposes, from depicting the spot of a leopard-skin associated with the costume of the great Persian hero Rustam, to its inclusion on coins of the Timurid dynasty as a sort of royal escutcheon. By the 16th century, the forms were referred to in Turkish documents as bokh (literally: spotted) or polong (literally: leopard-like), but their original Chinese connotation as a symbol of felicitous good luck seems to have adhered the longest, and their presence on a work of art seems to have served as protection against the "evil eye" of envious malicious spirits.

The plate shown here belongs to an exceptionally rare group of mid-century Izmir wares, other examples of which can be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum, London; the Godman Collection, Horsham; and the Musée de Sèvres.
Ceramic 6

Dish with floral decoration including carnations, a tulip, and a cypress.


EXHIBITIONS: Los Angeles-Honolulu, 1974-75, Cat. No. 54.
REPRODUCTIONS FOR COMPARISON: Ansevan, fig. 419; Dimand, 1958, p. 222, fig. 147; Lane, 1971, No. 42b; Pal, 1973, p. 69 (color); Ayl, 1973, No. 85.

From 1560 onward, the production of polychrome ceramics decorated with floral designs increased in volume in Iznik, and great numbers of the famous floral wares reached collections in the West. This small plate, typical of the high-quality Iznik production of the latter part of the century, is a charming mixture of asymmetrical details in an harmonious composition, ranged around a central cypress tree. The Turkish love of flowers which led to the use of these floral designs extended to a symbolic plane as well, and the flowers themselves carried meanings of poetical intensity expressed in the lyrical Ottoman love poetry, in which the cypress tree symbolized the tresses of the beloved, the tulip stood for unrequited passion, and the carnation represented the aloofness of the beloved.

The central composition of this dish, at once a little picture and perhaps a lovers' ode as well, is surrounded with a simplified and heavily stylized derivative of the Chinese wave-and-foam border seen on earlier pieces. The entire composition was executed on the "blanks" or slip-covered plates by a master artist who sketched the outlines in chrome-black; the colors were then added by the master's apprentice. The result is at once spontaneous and predictable, as ordinary as a small nosegay, and as extraordinary to us as would be a Turkish love poem sung in a traditional Ottoman musical setting.

Ceramic 7

Panel of three tiles, mounted in a wooden frame.

Iznik, ca. 1575. Size (each tile): 4 1/2 in. square.

REPRODUCTIONS FOR COMPARISON: Ansevan, pl. V; Goodwin, 1971, fig. 102.

The most popular of the sons of Sultan II Mustafa, a brave, intelligent and capable prince who had a strong following in the Turkish army. As the result of palace intrigues, in which the young man was portrayed to his father as a dangerous rebel, the sultan ordered the execution of his favorite son, and in the
year 1583, on a visit to his father’s camp during an army campaign, the young prince was murdered. Partially as an act of contrition, and partially to appease the enraged supporters of Mustafa in the army, a tomb was erected in the old imperial capital of Bursa where the prince was laid to rest. Curiously, however, it appears that it was not until the death of Mustafa’s brother and successful rival, Sultan Selim II, that the tomb was decorated with Iznik tiles, whose designs, painted in the brilliant polychrome palette of the time, incorporated stylized lotus flowers and the naturalistic Turkish tulips, hyacinths, carnations, and honeysuckles which had first appeared on Iznik wares about a decade earlier. Perhaps the supreme technical achievement of the Iznik artists was the development of a polychrome palette incorporating vivid greens, turquoise, blue, and a thick and arresting red, used with a black outlining under a clear and shiny glaze. This technique was employed in the tile revetments which decorate so many of the famous Ottoman royal buildings of the later 16th and early 17th centuries, as well as in the polychrome Iznik wares which were produced in vast numbers for export to the West, and sold in the bazaars of the Ottoman Empire. Tiles from the group made for the tomb of Sultan Mustafa were so popular that the design was copied in later Iznik tiles made in the early 17th century, and a few examples of the original revetment tiles have found their way into European collections.

Ceramic 8

Panel of two tiles, mounted in a wooden frame.

Iznik, ca. 1575-85. Size (each tile): 9 1/2 x 4 1/2 in. square.


The great polychrome wall revetments of Iznik, which were produced in great numbers and an astonishing variety of beautiful designs between 1560 and 1620, reflected two currents in Ottoman Turkish art. One was the court painting style, with its sophisticated designs of dragons and foliage (Cat. No. 10). The other was the Ottoman floral style, relying upon bright colors and the Ottoman repertoire of naturalistic flowers. These two tiles, of a type well-known in Western collections, came from a building of the later part of the 16th century which has now
disappeared; they present a design of blue-ground floral cartouches surrounded by sprays of flowers, and executed in the brilliant colors of Iznik at the height of its creativity and technical quality. The design was so popular that it was extensively copied in the ceramic center Kütahya in the 18th century, and variants on the design were produced in Iznik at the very end of the 16th century.

Other examples of tiles from this group are found in the Kunstgewerbe Museum, Cologne; the Islamic Museum, East Berlin; the Louvre and the Musée des arts décoratifs, Paris; the Metropolitan Museum, New York; and the tomb of Eyyub outside the city walls of Istanbul.

Ceramic 9
Panel of four tiles, mounted in a wooden frame.
Izmir, ca. 1580-90. Size: 28½ x 14½ in.; 33.5 x 37 cm. (cut at top and bottom).


The extensive reconstruction of the tomb of Eyyub, an important Islamic shrine on the Golden Horn outside the walls of Istanbul, was undertaken to repair earthquake damage suffered at the beginning of the 19th century. At this time, the mosque and tomb of the shrine were extensively rebuilt, the former in a European style, and it appears that many tile revetments of the 16th century found their way to the European art market in subsequent years. These four tiles, with their designs of red-ground cartouches containing tulips and carnations, embraced by gigantic saw-edged turquoise leaves again decorated with tulips, belong to the revetments of the Eyyub shrine executed under Sultan Murad III toward the end of the 16th century. No pattern made at Iznik is better represented in museum collections, and this one is found in museums in Paris, Lisbon, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, London, Leningrad, and Hamburg. In addition, tiles remain in substantial numbers on the walls of the Eyyub shrine.

The use of the expensive and technically difficult-to-handle red color as a ground is rarely found before the mid- and later seventies of the 16th century, and in these tiles it achieves a milky brilliance and intensity reminiscent of ripe tomatoes. The standard Iznik palette of red, turquoise, blue in two values, and green, with a black line, is augmented here by the rare appearance of a dark manganese-purple used for the stems of the five-petaled flowers which wend their way through and behind the major elements of the composition.
Ceramic 18

Dish with central green-ground hatayi design.

Izmir, first half of the 17th century. Diameter: 13½, 33.5 cm. Height: 2½, 6 cm.

EX COLL.: The Elms, Newport, R.I.

REPRODUCTIONS FOR COMPARISON: Rackham, 1959, fig. 85a.

Standards of workmanship declined rapidly in the 17th century in the Izmir workshops, due to a multitude of causes, including a number of disastrous fires and a system of artificially low prices which appear to have forced many makers into bankruptcy. Nevertheless, a number of the later Izmir wares show the tremendous influence which the classical style of the preceding century continued to exert on Ottoman Turkish art up to our own time. This dish preserves the basic tenets of the hatayi or "Cathayan" style of the 16th century, itself ultimately inspired by Chinese art. The tendrils bearing palmettes and decorated leaves spring from a single point in reserve white on an uneven green ground, but the "collar" extending into the cavetto has degenerated into a series of shapeless blobs, the whole contained in the now-familiar wave and foam border. The charm of these later Izmir works lies in part in the enduring vivacity of their design, and in part because of their illustrous historical lineage reaching back to greater times in the history of Turkish art.
Ceramic 11

Two tiles with a design of stenciled palmettes and flowers.

Syria, 17th century. Size: (each tile) 10⅝ x 10⅝, 26.5 x 26.5 cm.


These two tiles, with their essentially circular composition of a large stencilled palmette surrounded by tulips and carnations, are executed in the full Syrian palette of purple, dull-green, dark and light blue, within a black line. The central composition of each tile represents the end of a long chain of progressive stylization, beginning with Ming blue-and-white porcelain designs of the early 15th century, which were in turn adapted in progressively more stylized form by Italian wares, and finally used in these tiles in a simplified and flattened form. The spandrels or corners of each tile bear a quarter-rose and the three circles and two wavy lines called činastami, originally a depiction of three pearls and the waves of the sea in Chinese art, but long bereft of their original meaning and associated instead with the pelts of leopards and tigers, and possessed of powerful magic against the evil eye.

Tiles of this design have come to Western museum collections in large numbers, and other examples may be seen in the Kunstgewerbe Museum in Cologne and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Ceramic 12

Panel of three tiles with inscription in reserve white, in a wooden frame.

Syria, 17th century, dated 1047/1637-8 A.D. Size: 7½ x 21¾, 19 x 53.5 cm.

Ex Coll.: Abram
Exh: Los Angeles—Honolulu, 1974-75, Cat. No. 56.
Ref: An unpublished study by C. Kiefer of the Laboratory of the Sèvres manufactory, No. 5438.

The tile bears the following inscription: "this building renovated by Ibrahim al-Qashani." The name or sobriquet al-Qashani does not necessarily imply that the artist of this panel (or the patron of the building for which it was made) was from that central Iranian city, but may call into mind the established traditions of ceramic-making of that city, and seems to have been used by qāšu, or tile-makers, in various parts of the Islamic world, as a sort of evocation of the noble lineage of...
continued

their profession. Utilizing the typical Syrian variant on the Iznik technique, somewhat arbitrarily ranged over the two-and-a-half tile panel, the cartouche bearing the inscription is flanked on either side by stylized tulips and complex lotus palmettes. The blue ground, applied with a soft brush, lends a Persian-Turkish pottery to give an irregular manner in which the shadows of the brush strokes may still be seen, imparting a soft quality to the design under the clear glaze.

Ceramic 13

Octagonal tile with design of rumi arabesque, in a frame.


EXHIBITIONS: Los Angeles—Horniman, 1974-75, Cat. No. 55.


The long traditions of pottery-making in Syria adapted quickly in the later part of the 16th century to the production of tiles and wares heavily influenced by Iznik ware, substituting, however, an often rather thin manganese-purple for the famous Iznik red pigment. While the Syrian tiles, now believed to have been produced in the vicinity of Damascus, were never of the quality and technical level of the Iznik production, and never benefitted from the close relationship with the sanjakbey which provided a continual flow of designs to the Iznik workshops, the Damascus workshops' output reached a high level in the early 17th century, as a system of fixed prices and oppressive governmental controls brought about the decline of the Iznik workshops.

Unlike the rectangular and hexagonal tiles which fitted together to form wall revetments, the bulk of octagonal Ottoman tiles appear to have been produced as tops for the small octagonal tables or hamam which formed a part of interior furnishings of the house. The split-leaf or rumi design used here was a standard part of the Ottoman decorative repertoire from the early 15th century onward, and the central inscription, invoking the protection of God, is both a conventional pious wish, and a nazamlik or protection against the envy of evil spirits.
Ceramic 14

Small polychrome bottle.

Kütahya, 18th century. Size: 3½", 26 cm.

The charming polychrome pottery produced in the town of Kütahya in the 18th and 19th centuries fell heir to the techniques of İznik, but the small-scale Kütahya wares reflect in their designs the needs of a provincial middle class whose tableware should be decorative without demonstrating any debt to the court art of Istanbul. This small bottle succeeds admirably on both counts; the drawing in black line is perfunctory and a trifle unsure, the forms are sketchy and for the most part difficult to decipher, the painting is light but not particularly skillful, but the colors are joyful and inlouse. The Kütahya potters perfected an underglaze yellow which they added to the repertoire of purple, red, turquoise, and blue developed during preceding centuries, and these largely Armenian artists bequeathed to future generations a light-hearted and attractive art form which to a great extent seems to have existed independently of any venerated artistic tradition of style and subject matter.

Ceramic 15

Small polychrome pilgrim-flask.


Reproductions for comparison: Lane, Leiden, 1971, figs. 50-51.

A particular group of Kütahya ceramic wares distinguished by the use of small dots of red pigment must be counted among the most appealing products of the Armenian ceramic center in the 18th century. The pilgrim-bottle, a shape which was evidently taken over into ceramic production from its origins in metalwork, is frequently encountered in Kütahya production; the two halves were turned separately on the potter’s wheel and then joined, covered with white slip, and painted, while the small wheel-turned neck was similarly joined to the body of the bottle. While because of their fragility such bottles were not ideally suited to being carried about in the same fashion as their metal progenitors, they combined the functions of the bottle with the artistic advantage of two round and relatively flat surfaces for decoration. This example is typical of the genre in its simple and naively bright decoration of colored dots arranged into flower-like clusters.
METAL

Metal 1
Large alem (battle standard).
Bronze. Turkish or Persian. Probably 16th century.
Height: 36 inches, 91.4 cm; greatest width: 11 inches, 28.3 cm.
Like the smaller, later alem (Metal 4), this finial was mounted on a pole and served as rallying point for the military unit in battle. On maneuvers or on parade, it would have been carried at the head of the column.
A large group of similar standards is exhibited in the Topkapı Saray Museum.

Metal 2
Spout for a sebsebil (playing fountain).
Gilded metal. Second half of the 16th century.
Height: 12 inches, 32.7 cm.
EXHIBITIONS: Los Angeles-Honolulu, 1974-75, Cat. No. 57.
REPRODUCTIONS FOR COMPARISON: Cat. No. 17, fol. 217r, p. 36, which shows a fountain with a series of these spouts.
The abundant use of fountains is one of the legacies of Islam, no doubt adapted from earlier, pre-Roman prototypes. The heat of the Near East necessitated a style of life with enforced rest periods, particularly at midday. Peaceful courtyards with playing fountains provided soothing oases. Pools surrounded with a series of spouts such as this appear to be a Turkish adaptation of the usual single jet of water. The dragon shape probably comes from a Far Eastern source.
Metal 3
Frontal (armor to cover the front of a horse's head).

Copper gilt. 16th century. Length: 22 1/4, 57.1 cm.

EX COLL.: The Armory of the Topkapi Palace (the seal is near the right eyehole).
EXHIBITIONS: Los Angeles-Honolulu, 1974-75, Cat. No. 58.
REPRODUCTIONS FOR COMPARISON: Art Treasures of Turkey, 1966, No. 252; a similar frontal decorated with a simple stalk of pairs of flowers. It includes the two pieces that protect the sides of the horse's head and complete the rear half of the eyeholes. Also, Arseven, fig. 357.

The use of copper gilt for this piece rather than the more military steel suggests that it is from a set of parade armor. The elaborate studding around the edge, which may have supported some kind of perishable decoration, and the slot in the middle of the forehead for a plume or plumes, strengthen this possibility.

A companion piece is in a private collection in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Metal 4
Finial ornament (alem) for the top of a banner (sanjak).

Metal, with fluid script in the open fan shape, 17th century (?). Size: 15 1/4, 38.7 cm.

EXHIBITIONS: Los Angeles-Honolulu, 1974-75, Cat. No. 59.

When a courtier was newly appointed to the government of a province (sanjak) in Anatolia, his position was confirmed by the bestowal of a flag or standard (also sanjak). He thus became sanjak bey. The legitimizing banner remained with him during his governorship. The present finial, probably from a smaller, less formal flag, no doubt graced the top of a battle standard. Its religious inscription acted as a kind of talisman for the military or civil detachment that followed it.
Metal 5

Yataghan (sword) with grip of walrus-tusk ivory.


Exhibitions: Los Angeles-Honolulu, 1974-75, Cat. No. 60.

Reproductions for Comparison: Atsures, fig. 340 (left).

Islamic metalsmiths were models for later emulators in Europe. Toledo in Spain and Damascus in Syria were major metalwork centers. (The process known as “damascene” received its name from the second of these cities.) Turkish armories provided excellent offensive weapons and body protection for the soldiers of the huge armies, and sumptuous parade pieces for show for the less warlike. The curious use of walrus-tusk ivory (see also Cat. No. 108f) was not uncommon.
Metal 6
Miquelet musket.
Inlaid metal. Turkish or Persian. 18th century. Size: 56½, 143.8 cm.
REPRODUCTIONS FOR COMPARISON: Anziden, fig. 341.
Turkish guns, both individual pieces for foot soldiers and those in the artillery
train, were justly feared in the 16th century campaigns of Ottoman expansion in
Europe and the Near East. Their depiction in the battle scenes of the historical
manuscripts begins early as an aspect of Turkish realism as opposed to Persian
fancy. We have seen their appearance in Cat. Nos. 19 and 41, where their presence
has helped to prove Turkish attribution to works that at first glance seem Iranian.

Metal 7 & 8
Ibrik and tazsibak (earr and basin) for the washing of hands.
Size: (ibrık) 13¼, 33.6 cm., (tazsibak) 14¼, 37.1 cm. (diameter).
Metal with floral decoration incised and gilded. Inscribed: its owner is Mehmet Mahmud.
Dated: 1219 (or 1229/1804-05 or 1813-14) A.D.
REPRODUCTIONS FOR COMPARISON: Anziden, fig. 352.
The intricate designs on these utilitarian vessels do not appear to come from royal
workshops. They seem rather to be the conscious attempt of some provincial digni-
try or wealthy art-lover to "ape his betters." A Bosnian provenance has been
tentatively suggested.