320 Bowl covered in an opaque white glaze with in-glaze blue and turquoise painting decorated in lustre
Diameter 21cm
Gemmae Museum, The Hague, no. OG/1/35-1932
Persia (Kashan), 1319

The Kashan style of lustre painting developed about the year 1200 and probably replaced the Rayy styles. Kashan wares are distinguished from the Rayy types chiefly by the breaking up of the background with small spirals scratched through the lustre. The plump birds and richly patterned garnets of the figures are also diagnostic. Numerous pieces in this style, both tiles and vessels, are dated in the first two decades of the 13th century. The poems found on these vessels are the same as found on the tiles of the second half of the century, see no. 383, but no relationship between the scenes depicted and the verses has yet been noted. The design of this bowl is characteristic and depicts a group of people sitting together either side of a cypress tree. An inscription on the outside of the vessel gives the signature of the potter kutab-iabu Abi Zayd bu-Muhammad (Abu Zayd) decorated it in his own hand. Abu Zayd was one of the leading lustre potters of the early 13th century and played an important part in the formation of the Kashan style, see Bahrami (1945, pp. 35-41). The date is written on the inside inscription kutab-i abu shahur samma nu admittedly written in the months of the year six hundred and sixteen (1319 AD)."

Published: Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, pl. 79b & fig. 35)

321 Jug covered with an opaque white glaze painted with in-glaze blue and turquoise, and red and black enamel
Height 15.2cm
Persia (minai ware), late 13th century

An example of a distinctive group of minai wares, see also nos. 333-4, which are characterised by a decoration of broad arabesque and interlacing motifs and by a restricted enamel palette. The blue and turquoise are painted into the raw glaze before firing and the black and red added in a separate second firing. Copper oxide which produces the turquoise colour is a rather volatile substance and tends to become blurred in the firing, and black enamel is used to define its contours.

Published: Kühnel (1930, fig. 96)

322 Bowl covered with an opaque white glaze painted with in-glaze blue and turquoise, and red and black enamel
Diameter 22.4cm
Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, no. 921
Persia (minai ware), late 12th century

This bowl shows a complex design of arabesques and interlacing. It comes from a group of minai wares which may be attributed to the same ateliers that made lustre wares in the Rayy style for some shards are known which are decorated in both lustre and enamel painting in this style.

Published: Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, pl. 69b); Lisbon (1960, no. 127)

323 Bowl covered with an opaque white glaze painted with in-glaze blue and turquoise, and red and black enamel
Diameter 21cm
British Museum, London, no. 1912 12-273, acquired in 1912
Persia (minai ware), late 12th century

Very close in design to no. 353.

Unpublished

324 Bowl decorated with in-glaze and overglaze colours with leaf gilding
Diameter 12cm
Iron Ration Museum, Tehran, no. 9410, found at Kashan
Persia (minai ware), late 12th-early 13th century

Chevron designs often occur on other minai pieces but only very few examples known where the entire walls are covered with this pattern. The drawing of the bird is unusual for wares of this type.

Unpublished

325 Bowl painted in blue and black under a transparent turquoise glaze
Diameter 20.2cm
Stephan Grassi Collection, England
Persia (Kashan), early 13th century

This ware represents the first real underglaze painted decoration achieved in the Islamic world. The black pigment is absolutely stable, but the cobalt runs and is only used in blurred streaks. The thinness of the black pigment means that it can be painted as freely as the hand wishes and this quality is exploited to the full. The water-wed pattern of this bowl is only found in the fully developed Kashan style and dates from the first years of the 13th century.

Published: London (1960, no. 156)
357 Bowl painted in black under a turquoise glaze
Diameter 17.5cm
F. Amor Collection, France
Persia, late 12th century
Towards the end of the 12th century painting in black under a turquoise glaze became one of the popular ways of decorating pottery and was practised in all parts of the Islamic world. Although the power of the colour turquoise to ward off the evil eye and bring good luck is often cited as the reason for its popularity, the availability and cheapness of the colouring agent, copper oxide, and the ease with which it produced a pleasing colour must have added greatly to its attraction for the potter. Cobalt, which produces the rich blue, was only found in very few places and was expensive and more difficult to manage. This bowl is a fine example of its technique and decoration and relies on a simple arabesque for its appeal.

Published: Dürrstein (1973, no. 196, p. 145)

358 Ewer with moulded body painted in black under a turquoise glaze
Height 37cm
David Collection, Copenhagen, no. 1373
Persia (Kashan), early 13th century
A mock lustre inscription runs around the neck of this ewer. Modelling pot in animal and bird shapes became popular among the Persian potters in the late 12th and early 13th century. Several examples are known of cock-headed ewers in both lustre and underglaze painted wares. The handle of this ewer is moulded in the form of a bird's tail. An interesting contrast is to be noticed here between the formal moulded scroll and the free painted water-weed motif that alternate round the body of the vessel.

Published: London (1931, no. 1203); Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, p. 158a; no. 700); Dürrstein (1973, no. 118, p. 90)

359 Bowl painted in black and blue under a turquoise glaze
Diameter 22.3cm
Persia (Kashan), early 13th century
This bowl is an example of a rare type of Kashan underglaze painted ware. The main design is reserved against a black background and consists of animals and floral motifs similar to those on lustre wares of the same period. The shape of the vessel and the water-weed motif on the exterior date it in the first two decades of the 13th century.

Published: Lane (1947, pl. 93b); Feifer (1972, p. 56, no. 110, colour pl. 45)

360 Bowl painted in black under a transparent glaze
Diameter 21cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, no. 63.236, gift of John Q. Grover Foundation
Persia (Kashan), early 13th century

The earliest dated piece of underglaze painted ware is 1204 and the latest, just prior to the Mongol invasions, is 1215. Although none of the underglazed pieces is signed they may be attributed to Kashan. This footed bowl with flaring walls has a shape almost exclusive to Kashan, as is the water-weed pattern.

Published: Wilkinson (1963, pl. 36)

361 Dish decorated in lustre on an opaque white glaze
Diameter 19.5cm
Godman Collection, England, acquired from Richard Godman in 1889; said to have been found at Raggi in 1871
Persia (Kashan), second half 13th century
Lustre production in Persia was interrupted by the Mongol invasions and only a few pieces were made between 1220 and 1260. In the second half of the century the bulk of production consisted of tiles and only a few vessels. The painting on vessels becomes rather formalized and stereotyped during this period, depending heavily on tile designs. The design of this dish may be directly compared to a series of tiles dated 1267, see no. 384. The foliage with the white border and small sculls filling the centre is characteristic of lustre painting of this period. A mock inscription encircles the inside rim.

Published: Walls (1891, pl. III); Godman (1901, no. 386, pl. 1)

362 Jar decorated in lustre on an opaque white glaze
Height 68.5cm
Olga Ellis Marksman Collection, Federal Republic of Germany, found at Raggi
Persia (Kashan), second half 13th century
Jars of this size are not uncommon in monochrome glazed decoration, but lustre examples are very rare. The problem of how to decorate such a large surface has been overcome in this example by dividing the area into more than 240 hexagonal panels. The device is suited to the poster used to decorating small wall tiles and the motifs themselves are similar to those found on tiles, especially a group dated in the 1260s, see no. 384, which provides a close dating for this jar. The first two bands at top and bottom of this jar are filled with various varieties of birds, the next band is filled with dog or fox-like creatures. The middle rows have slightly larger hexagons and contain animals including an elephant, gazelles and camels as well as human figures.

Published: London (1931, no. 178); Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, p. 158a; no. 700); Dürrstein (1973, no. 118, p. 90)
365 Cap decorated in lustre on an opaque white glaze
Height 10.6cm, diameter 19.5cm
Irani Bastan Museum, Tehran, no. 21555. Joint at Taht-e Suleyman
Persia (Kashan), second half 13th century

While other pottery finds suggest that the site of Taht-e Suleyman in north-west Persia was occupied for a considerable time before Abshar Khaneh (son of Huliqu, reigning 1265–82) built his summer residence there in the 1370s, the lustre pottery all dates from this period. The vessels, of which this is a typical example, show the rather heavier potting and standardised decoration typical of the second half of the 13th century. A gazelle at the centre of the cap is surrounded by a band of other animals.

Published: London (1934, no. 2065); Poppe and Ackerman (1935–6, p. 7796)

366 Bowl decorated with a grey slip painted in black and a raised white slip under a transparent glaze
Diameter 11.8cm
Irani Bastan Museum, Tehran, no. 31505; from Bajmadar
Persia (Khurazim), first half 14th–15th century

This bowl is decorated in exactly the same technique as the Sultanabad ware, and the designs are very closely related. However, the stiff manner of drawing, with a rather sparse use of white slip relate it to a group of similar pieces reported, like this piece, to come from Khurazim in North-East Persia. A separate centre of production there, which is derived from the Sultanabad wares but is distinct, must be assumed. These wares are of simple technique and thus easy to imitate, and the possibility exists that several provincial varieties were made in various parts of the Islamic world, see Lazen (1957, p. 14, pl. 3).

Published: Lisbon (1965, no. 22)

367 Bowl covered with a grey slip painted in white slip with dark outlines under a transparent glaze
Diameter 14.5cm
Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, no. 307
Persia (Sultanabad ware), first half 14th century

The Sultanabad slip technique was particularly suited to rather large designs and many of the best examples are found on large heavy vessels with sharply articulated contours. The phoenix and animals amid foliage on this bowl are standard designs on these wares and also occur in a similar fashion on contemporary lustre wares, see nos. 364, 365.

Published: Lisbon (1957, pp. 10–12, pl. 3)

368 Drug jar (albarella) painted in black, blue and turquoise under a transparent glaze
Height 33cm
British Museum, London, no. 1912.12–15.5
Persia (Sultanabad ware), first half 14th century

Evidently related to the slip-painted Sultanabad wares, underglaze painting is used in this piece to give the same effect. Every element of the design of these wares is outlined in black and the background is hatched or stippled in black. The other colours are added and the white of the ground is left in restricted areas only, as if it were an applied colour. The use of blue and turquoise gives a softer colour scheme than that of the slip painted group. This jar has its surface divided into panels and friezes filled with floral and simple geometric motifs. It is an example of the blue and black style of potting that spread from Persia all over the Middle East during the first half of the 14th century.

Published: Lazen (1957, pp. 10–12, pl. 3)
364 Jar covered with deep blue glaze decorated in red and white enamel and gilding
Diameter 17.7 cm
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, no. 910.135.6
Persia (lavardina ware), first half 14th century
Mingai wares went out of production after the Mongol invasions of Persia and were then replaced by the lavardina wares. Here, enamel colours are restricted to red and white, and leaf gilding is introduced. These are applied in simple geometric patterns on a deep blue or turquoise glos. Lavardina (lapis lazuli) was not the name given to cobalt which produced deep blues in glass and glazes and was used to imitate lapis lazuli which itself has no colouring effect on a glos. The interior of the bowl is divided into five radiating panels, the exterior has an upper band divided by Rosette panels.
Published: Soudi-Tobbebe and Syder (1973, p. XLV).

367 Bowl covered in dark blue glaze decorated in red and white enamel and leaf gilding
Diameter 21.2 cm
Musée de Léroux, Paris, no. MAO 4001
Persia (lavardina ware), first half 14th century
Lavardina wares were already being produced by 1300 at which time Abu al-Qim(? (see no. 374) devoted a section of his text on pottery manufacture to their production. He described how a mithqal (5.5 grams) of gold is beaten between paper into 24 sheets then cut with scissors and stuck onto the vessel with glue. The enamel colours are then applied and the piece is fired in a special kiln. The thin gold of large amounts of expensive cobalt and the extra work required for the gilding, enamelling and second firing must have made this ware extremely costly. There is a contemporary report of wares, whose description can only correspond to lavardina types, being sent by the Sultan of Delhi to the Mongol vizier Rashid al-Din in 1308. These vessels had presumably been first exported to India, see Lane (1957, p. 7). This bowl is decorated with a cruciform design spreading from a star in the centre.
Unpublished.

371 Bowl covered with deep blue glaze decorated in red and white enamel and leaf gilding
Diameter 16.5 cm
Staatsliche Museen Preussischer Kunstbezirke, Museum fur Islamische Kunst, Berlin-Dahlem, no. 1.24.66
Persia (lavardina ware), 1374
Part of the Arabic-cum-Persian inscription has been damaged and restored but the date remains intact. The date marked the time of the rule of Shah Jahan and the centenary of his accession. The use of gold, large amounts of expensive cobalt and the extra work required for the gilding, enamelling and second firing must have made this ware extremely costly. There is a contemporary report of wares, whose description can only correspond to lavardina types, being sent by the Sultan of Delhi to the Mongol vizier Rashid al-Din in 1308. These vessels had presumably been first exported to India, see Lane (1957, p. 7). This bowl is decorated with a cruciform design spreading from a star in the centre.
Published: Soudi-Tobbebe and Syder (1973, p. XLV).

372 Dish covered with an opaque turquoise glaze decorated in red and black enamel and leaf gilding
Diameter 35.7 cm
Musée de Léroux, Paris, no. 6.456, acquired in 1911
Persia (lavardina ware), second half 13th century
The inscription reads al-‘izz al-dal‘im wa-l-‘iqbal al-qud‘d al-nur al-qab‘l hadda l-hadda wa l-hadda wa l-hadda.
"Perpetual glory, exceeding prosperity, predominant victory... auspicious good luck... wealth, happiness, well-being and long life to its owner." This dish differs from the usual lavardina wares in its use of turquoise glaze and a black enamel instead of the more usual white. Fish were commonly used at this period to decorate both ceramics and metalwork and are sometimes given mystical interpretation, see Ilan (1968). The shape of this dish may have been inspired by Chinese celadons which were exported to the Middle East in large numbers at this time.
Published: Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, pl. 68.48); Lane (1937, p. 49, pl. 74); Paris (1971, p. 55, no. 53).

373 Panel of two tiles covered with an opaque white glaze, with blue and green in-glaze colours and decorated in lustre
Height: 76 cm, width: 73 cm
David Collection, Copenhagen, no. 11/1968
Persia (Kashan), second half 13th century
A series of large mihrabs made from lustre tiles are dated between 1300 and 1334 and are generally associated with the Abu Tahir family of potters from Kashan who made seven out of the ten surviving complete mihrabs, see also no. 374. The various elements of the mihrab, such as the central niche, arches, columns and flanking inscriptions, were each moulded separately and assembled only after the final lustre firing. Difficulties were nearly always encountered with pieces of this size and only rarely are they free from the running of the blue and turquoise as is found here. Modelling in relief in two layers, the large blue arabesque standing in greater relief than the smaller turquoise scroll, is found only on large pieces of better quality. In this example there is a contrast between the graceful symmetrical arabesque pattern and the freely moving scroll underneath which, although symmetrical, is full of independent movement.
374-8 Two frieze tiles covered with an opaque white glaze painted in blue and green and decorated in lustre
Height 38cm, width (each tile) 43cm
British Museum, London, nos. 78.12-26, 78.13 and 78.14
Persia (Kashan), early 14th century

These two tiles come from an inscription frieze of which several tiles are preserved in Western collections. The text is of the first few verses of Surah XLVIII of the Koran. Of the two tiles, one contains a phrase from Surah XLVIII, 3 and the other contains the date:
mas bani fi dhurma shah muna sanza wa saha wa zu
"Written on the first day of Sha'ma of the year seven hundred and nine [= January 1310]."

Another tile from the same set, formerly in the Manil collection, contains the signature Yisaf ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali Tihir. Yisaf was the most important lustre potter of the early 14th century and was the brother of Abi al-Qasim, see no. 370. Five signed works of his survive. Both his father, 'Ali, and his grandfather, Muhammad, are known through surviving works dating back to the beginning of the 13th century. These tiles are of the highest quality though some trouble has been encountered with the running of the blue. While pincers on the inscription have been touched up with lustre.

Published: Bahrumi (1936, p. 241, pl. LIV); Estrin (1936, p. 53, fig. 14); Wadd (1894, pl. 11, fig. 22)

375 Tile covered in a white opaque glaze, painted in blue and turquoise and decorated in lustre
Height 72.5cm, width 43.8cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no. 15.52-1876
Persia (Kashan), early 14th century

The outer relief inscription is from the Koran, Surah CXL, the painted inscription round the inner arch is from Surah 11, 366. The inscription between the columns reads:
al-'abid al-qur'an al-mukthir li tashbih Allah 'ala kulli kasabaha 'Ali ibn Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Abi al-Muayyad fi l-baqiyah fi l-sabah ... "The work slave adoring the mercy of God (be he exalted) 'Ali ibn Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Abi al-Muayyad wrote this in his own hand in the months ... Normally the date would follow but in this example, unfortunately, there was insufficient space. 'Ali ibn Ahmad came from an important Kashan lustre potting family. He made a lustre tombstone dated 3105 together with Yusuf, the last member of the Abi Tihir family, see no. 374, and this piece must date from about the same period. 'Ali's son, Hossin, signed a tombstone now preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. There is an exact pair to this tile, also in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (the famous Salting mibrab), which suggests that these pieces may not be mibrabs, but tombstones. It was the practice in certain parts of Persia to place a tombstone at each side or at either end of the tomb.

Published: Wadd (1894, pl. XVI)

376 Frieze of four tiles covered in an opaque white glaze painted in blue and decorated in lustre
Each tile, height 57cm, width 47cm
Godman Collection, England

Persia (Kashan), second half 13th century

The inscription is in kufic with knotted letters.
... [Allah] la ilaha illa Allah la illa illa huwa al-aziz al-jauhun 'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, there is no God but He, the Magnificent, the Wise."

This phrase occurs three times in Surah III of the Koran. This frieze is one of the most impressive examples of lustre tiling, both in design and technique. It is not exactly clear in which way these four tiles were used; they may have formed a frieze on a wall or a large mibrab. Only one related tile survives, see no. 377. The technical achievement of covering such large areas with clear and even lustre is remarkable, and the standard of the drawing of the floral scroll background is higher than is generally found in other examples, see nos. 377-82. By the 13th century the kufic script was an archaism used only in decorative displays and the potter's unfamiliarity with the script is here shown in the confusion of some of the letters.

Published: Godman (1901, pl. XXIV); Pope and Ackerman (1928-9, pl. 742b)

377 Frieze tile covered with an opaque white glaze painted in blue and decorated in lustre
Height 39cm, width 66cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Islamisches Museum, no. 1.1277

Persia (Kashan), second half of the 13th century

The style of the script in this tile is very close to that on no. 376, as is the decoration of the background, and it is reasonable to assume that they were made for the same architectural setting. This tile is curved slightly at the right hand end which suggests that it was intended to fit into a niche. The other half of the tile, now in the Musée du Louvre, has a corresponding curve on the left. The text of the tile reads fi l反复 ilaha 'Ali, 'There is no god but God', continued on the Lyon tile with 'Muhammad is the prophet of God'. The border inscription consists of the first 18 verses of Surah LXI of the Koran, of which verses 4-13 appear on this tile.

Published: Erdmann (1902, pl. 49b)

378 Tiles covered with an opaque white glaze painted in blue and turquoise and decorated in lustre
Each tile, height 43cm
Godman Collection, England

Persia (Kashan), second half of the 13th century

The Konic inscriptions include Surah XLVIII, verses 24-5, and Surah XXXIII verse 82. These two tiles originally formed part of an inscription frieze, either at an opening or corner of a building, or possibly round a cistern. Two other tiles from the same set survive; a corner tile in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, and another similar tile originally in the Massey Collection. Such was the conservatism of the Kashan potters in the design of their tiles that it is often difficult to give any precise date within the span of their production, especially in the period of 1260-1340, after the Mongol invasions. Quality is no indication of an early date in this period.

Published: Wadd (1894, pl. XIII); Godman (1901, no. 120, pl. XXIII); London (1969, no. 99)
370 Panel of tiles covered with an opaque white glaze decorated in lustre
Each tile, diameter 3 cm
Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, 9 tiles, nos. 1899-64-9; 1921-1314:40; and 2; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 6 tiles no. X 295; British Museum, London, 4 tiles, no. OA 1121, p. 7, 7 a, b, c, d, e; Godman Collection, England, 22 tiles Persia (Kashan), 14th century

The Imamzadeh Yahya in Veramin, southeast of Tehran, was originally decorated with lustre tiles. A dado around the inside walls of the tomb chamber was covered with star and cross tiles, dated between October 1262 and January 1283; a large mihrab dated August 1264, and a small tombstone of July 1370. By the end of the 14th century all the tiling had been removed and is now scattered among numerous collections. Well over a hundred star and cross tiles have been recorded, of which approximately a quarter are dated. They represent the first major production of the Kashan lustre potters after the fall which followed the Mongol invasions. The inscription on these tiles is all quotations from the Koran, the most common consisting of Suras I and CXLII, while several contain the "Thirteenth" verse, Surah XLI verse 255. The designs of other tiles are based on a limited number of floral and arabesque motifs.

379 Tile decorated in lustre on an opaque white glaze
Diameter 3 cm
Godman Collection, England
Persia (Kashan), 13th century

A most unusual shape of tile designed to be set in the base of a panel of star and cross tiles. This example and its companion (no. 378) are related to the tile panels nos. 379 and 384. This tile differs from those of the former panel in subject matter, and from the latter panel in size. The date of both other panels in the 1260s yields a secure date for this tile. Together with its companions, it has streaks of lustre across the surface, probably caused by accidental splashes of water before firing. The birds and fishes are a hallmark of Kashan lustre wares. The inscription around the border is from the Koran, Surah XXIII, verses 26-7, and also the phrase naydya Allah al-‘azim wa naydya rasulahu al-‘karim
"The Mighty God spoke truth and his honourable Prophet spoke truth."

Published: Wallis (1844-5, pl. XXXVII); Wilber (1915, pl. 109-10, no. 11)

380 Frieze of tiles covered with an opaque white glaze with touches of blue and turquoise and decorated in lustre
Each tile (average), 21 cm square
Heinz Museum, Dusseldorf, 3 tiles, nos. 10-19; 16; British Museum, London, 1 tile, no. OA 1123; Godman Collection, England, 1 tile, Musée du Art Decoratifs, Paris, 1 tile, no. 6-38
Persia (Kashan), early 14th century

The inscription on these tiles does not yield a consecutive reading but is taken from the first few verses of Surah LXXXVI of the Koran. One tile from this set, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, contains the date, March 1308. There is no record that these tiles came from the shrine of ‘Abd al-Samad in Nainz which was erected in the same years and which, at one time, was decorated with lustre tiles. These were removed at the end of the last century. Lustre tiling was used primarily for the decoration of the tombs of Shi’a imams and imamsadads and they are not infrequently decorated with figures of animals and birds. Rarely, as in these examples, have the heads been chipped off, presumably to iconoclastic zeal. The frieze is probably to be attributed to Yûnûs, the last recorded master of the Abû Tahir pottery family, see nos. 373-4, whose works date from 1305 to 1334.

Published: Wallis (1844-5, pl. VII); Wilber (1915, pl. 335, no. 3); Dusseldorf (1973, no. 136, p. 199)

381 Tile decorated in lustre on an opaque white glaze
Diameter 3 cm
Godman Collection, England
Persia (Kashan), 13th century

382 Frieze of tiles covered with an opaque white glaze with touches of blue and turquoise and decorated in lustre
Each tile (average), 21 cm square
Heinz Museum, Dusseldorf, 3 tiles, nos. 10-19; 16; British Museum, London, 1 tile, no. OA 1123; Godman Collection, England, 1 tile, Musée du Art Decoratifs, Paris, 1 tile, no. 6-38
Persia (Kashan), early 14th century

An important document both for its date and for the formula which follows it.

Published: Wallis (1844-5, pl. XXXVII); Wilber (1915, pl. 109-10, no. 11)

383 Tile painted in blue on an opaque white glaze decorated in lustre
Diameter 21 cm
British Museum, London, no. OA 1123
Persia (Kashan), 14th century

An important document both for its date and for the formula which follows it.

Published: Wallis (1844-5, pl. 15); Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, pl. 7207)

Published: Eitinghausen (1836, p. 39, fig. 15); Pope and Ackerman (1938-9, pl. 7207)
Six tiles covered with an opaque white glaze with touches of blue and turquoise and decorated in lustre
Each tile, diameter 20.6 cm
Godman Collection, England
Persia (Kashan), 13th century

The inscriptions on the tiles with animal decoration are quatrains in Persian, similar in style and content. The poems on the tile with 3 hares read:

'Last night, desiring your presence, every moment
I contemplated the colour of the rose and the wise,
I drank large cups and played the rebek,
with the memory of your lips, until the white day.'

'I have taken your goodness to the centre of my soul.
I have made known the smallest parts of my soul to you,
finally I have understood the whole world;
since I bore your seal on my tongue.'

'May the World Creator protect the owner of this wherever he be.'

The tile with the arabesque decoration is inscribed with the first few lines of the Shāh-nāma. The two crosses and the star tiles with animal decoration belong to a group several of which are dated 1267. This group is thought to have once covered the walls of the Imambāzār Ja'far at Damghan. The arabesque tile belongs to a group datable somewhat later in the century. Although coming from a secular epic poem, the inscription of this latter piece is religious in tone and is quite suitable for a religious building whose walls it once, no doubt, adorned. The 'secular' nature of the poems in the other tiles has led to the assumption that they were intended for the decoration of palaces and baths, but tiles with such inscriptions have also been discovered in religious buildings, see Watson (1977, pp. 66-7).

Published: Godman (1901, pi. XIIa); Bahrani (1958, pp. 186-90, pi. LXII);

Tile covered with an opaque white glaze painted in blue and turquoise and decorated in lustre
Diameter 20.5 cm
British Museum, London, no. 78.121-30 (251), acquired in 1878
Persia (Kashan), late 13th-early 14th century

A rare tile from a series of which only a few examples are known. These tiles are distinguished by a curious type of foliage reserved in a lustre ground which is not broken up by wiggling or scrawled spirals (compare no. 384). The two seated figures on this tile show the classical pose of figures on Kashan lustre wares which remain unchanged throughout the century and a half when it was in use, compare no. 350.

Published: Wallis (1944, pl. 22)

Tile painted in blue on an opaque white glaze and decorated in lustre
Height 36.4 cm, width 33.4 cm
Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran, no. 20, found at Takht-e Suleyman
Persia (Kashan), second half 13th century

Moulds have been found at Takht-e Suleyman which indicate that certain varieties of glazed tile were made at the site, and it is thought that some of the lustre tiles were also made there. Other examples of the lustre tiles differ slightly in fabric and were probably made in Kashan and transported from there, see Naumann (1969, p. 40). Several of the tiles bear the date 671 H [1272 AD]. The cameo is a motif that occurs several times on tiles of this period.

Published: Naumann (1969)

Tile covered with a blue glaze decorated with overglaze enamel and leaf gilding
Height 32 cm
Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran, no. 21539, from the Takht-e Suleyman
Persia (Izeh), 13th-14th century

A number of frieze tiles decorated in layervarina technique were found on the Takht-e Suleyman, showing either a dragon (so on this example) or a phoenix, see Naumann (1969, pp. 41-4, pl. 36). They originally formed a frieze above panels of smaller tiles decorated in a similar fashion. Tiles showing identical dragons and pheasants are known decorated in lustre and may have been produced from the same moulds, see Lane (1960, pl. 26). Lustre examples have not however been found on the Takht.

Published: Naumann (1969)

Tile covered with a blue glaze decorated with overglaze enamel and leaf gilding
Diameter 31 cm
Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran, no. 21537, found at Takht-e Suleyman
Persia (Izeh), 13th-14th century

This tile decorated in the layervarina technique with a lion among foliage is one of a number of similar types found at the Takht-e Suleyman. Others were decorated with gazelles or pheasants.

Published: Naumann (1969, p. 41, pl. 36, fig. 3 and 5)
390 Tile carved in deep relief, covered with turquoise and white glazes
Height 12.5cm, width 59cm

391 Frieze of eight tiles with carved decoration covered with white, purple and turquoise glazes
Height 21cm, length (of each tile) 11cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no. 1283-1953

392 Tile with carved decoration and white, blue, turquoise and purple glazes
Height 9cm, width 19cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no. 1283-1953

393 Tile covered with opaque white glaze over which are laid blue and turquoise glazes decorated with red enamel and leaf gilding
Height 25.4cm, width 43.5cm

394 Tile with blue and turquoise glazes laid over a white glaze background
35.4cm square
Art Institute of Chicago, no. 1427, 11th century

The inscription is the Koranic phrase Allah ta'la Allahu 'Ala, 'Allah, there is no god but He', repeated on each side of the tile with the high risers forming an interlocking pattern in the centre. The word 'Allah' is written in turquoise above the rest of the inscription which appears in white. The technique of the tile, in which several glaze colours are laid on a white background, was adopted on a large scale in the early 17th century because, it is often said, of the impatience of Shah 'Abbas at the slow progress of the cut faience mosaic decoration of his Royal Mosque.

Published: Pope and Ackerman (1998-9, pl. 529B); Welch (1973-4, no. 36)
395 Dish painted in blue under a transparent glaze
Diameter 35.4cm
State Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, no. PG 2122; acquired in Kubači in 1919
Persia (Kubači ware), Safavid period, 17th century
Persian wares of the 16th century are very rare, and wares of the Kubači type are the only ones whose production can be traced through the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Many elements are taken from Chinese blue and white porcelain, for which the Persian wares were a cheap substitute. The two fish containing a cloud scroll between them represented on this dish are also found on a blue and white Persian plate dated 1563–4, where they represent the sign of Pisces in a series of illustrations of the signs of the Zodiac, see Lane (1957), p. 93, pl. 59b.
Published: Samarqand (1969, no. 137).

396 Dish painted in black under a turquoise glaze
Diameter 34cm
Danish Collection, Copenhagen, no. N. 3
Persia (Kubači ware), Safavid period, early 17th century
The Kubači wares are not altogether a homogeneous group; they are named after the Caucasian village where large numbers of them were found at the beginning of this century. They were certainly not made in the village and perhaps Tabriz has the best claim for their production. Painting in black under a turquoise glaze had been practiced continually in Persia since the end of the 13th century. The foliage on the outer border is characteristic of this ware, and the radiating lotus panel is taken from Chinese models. The curious face scratched in the central star is unique.
Published: Dörri-Samit (1946, p. 109, and 1975, pl. 9a).

397 Dish painted in green and black under a transparent glaze
Diameter 30.5cm
Iran Museum, Tehran, no. 4131, found at Saryk
Persia, Safavid period, 16th century
The complete lack of Chinese influence is remarkable in a piece evidently dating from the Safavid period. The cross-hatching of the panels in the well of the dish is perhaps a continuation of a style that began in Persia soon after the Mongol invasions in the 13th century, but the style of the painted bird is unique.
Unpublished.

398 Bottle painted in blue and black under a transparent glaze
Height 11.3cm
Joseph and Jean Snellin Collection, Paris
Persia, Safavid period, 17th century
The second opening on the shoulder of this bottle show it to be the base of a ghalvan or water-pipe. Neither the shape of the vessel nor its decoration, arabesques and sprays of leaves contained within panels, owe anything to Chinese influence which generally dominates Persian wares of this period. The base, however, bears a pseudo-Chinese mark. A large group of Persian blue and white wares, to which this ghalvan belongs, is tentatively attributed to Mashhad, a site which is mentioned in contemporary literature as one of the few places that produced fine pottery, see Lane (1957), pp. 97–8.
Unpublished.

399 Dish with blue slip carved through to reveal the white ground, covered with a transparent glaze
Diameter 47cm
Persia, Safavid period, 17th century
Unlike the bulk of Persian 17th-century wares which are close copies of Chinese blue and white porcelain, this type relies less heavily on Chinese inspiration. This dish, an example of a rather rare group, has its floral design cut through an overall covering of blue.
Unpublished.

400 Plate painted in blue, black, sage-green and red under a transparent glaze
Diameter 37.5cm
Persia, Safavid period, 17th century
A large number of pieces decorated in polychrome are attributed to Kerman. The colours, especially the use of a red slip, would seem to have been inspired by Etnik wares, perhaps through the mediation of Kubači wares. There is, however, no trace of Turkish influence in the designs of Kerman wares. The polychrome floral sprays of this plate are similar to those known from Safavid lustre wares.
Published: Pope and Ackerman (1988-9, p. 801).
401 Bowl, interior painted in blue under a transparent glaze, decorated in lustre, exterior and blue glazed decorated in lustre
Diameter 29.2 cm
Godman Collection, England
Persia, Safavid period, second half 17th century
Between the mid-17th and mid-18th century only a handful of lustre pieces are known, most of which are rather inferior tomboilies. They provide, however, sufficient indication that the technique of lustre manufacture was not entirely lost. The revival of this technique in the 17th century is shown by large numbers of vessels, which are very different technically to the earlier pieces, having transparent glazes and, in general, rather hard brassy lustres. The decoration is usually in its own particular idiom which bears certain resemblances to Kerman polychrome wares and to contemporary border illuminations. Where underglaze blue is also used the influence of Chinese porcelain is often apparent. In this bowl the division of the interior into a series of panels is a rough adaptation of designs found on Chinese porcelain of Wan Li date (late 16th–early 17th century).
Published: Godman (1905, no. 305, pl. VIII).

402 Bottle decorated in lustre on alternating white and blue glazed panels
Height 34.5 cm
Godman Collection, England
acquired in 1899 from the Richard Collection
Persia, Safavid period, second half 17th century
Painting in lustre on a vessel whose surface has been alternatively divided into blue and white panels is a device that is found on Persian lustre wares in the late 17th century. The shape of this bottle is typical of Safavid production, here divided into eight lobes decorated with birds and foliage.
Published: Godman (1901, no. 347, pl. XVI).

403 Dish with incised decoration under a transparent glaze, reverse bearing ribs in relief and coloured pale celadon
Diameter 23.4 cm
Godman Collection, England
Persia, Safavid period, late 17th or 18th century
This type of dish is often referred to as Gombroon ware after the port (now Bandar Abbas) from which this and other types of pottery were shipped to the West. Its place of manufacture, however, is unknown. This group is the most delicate of later Persian wares, and for the first time since the 17th century, the translucency of thin frit bodies is exploited, often forming the whole interest of a piece. The pale celadon colour of the reverse and the most delicate and subtle incised pattern are taken from contemporary Chinese porcelain.
Published: Godman (1901, no. 347, pl. XVI).

404 Bowl with transparent glaze, reverse bearing ribs in relief and coloured pale celadon
Diameter 21.5 cm
Godman Collection, England
Persia, Safavid period, later 17th or 18th century
The appeal of this bowl lies almost entirely in the contrast between the translucent white body and the raised ribs coloured with celadon. There is an identical piece in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (no. 284A-1896).
Published: Godman (1901, no. 347, pl. XVI).

405 Jar painted in blue under a transparent glaze
Height 24.5 cm
Turkey (Iznik, 'Abraham of Kataliya' type), Ottoman period, about 1460
The earliest of the Iznik wares are those of the 'Abraham of Kataliya' type, so-called after a dedication to this person inscribed on a small ewer, see Carstens (1972, pp. 78-9). They are all painted in blue on a white ground and share the same white body and brilliant glaze. They show a consistent development over 30 years or so before the introduction of other colours and the beginning of the so-called 'Damascen' style. Characteristic of many examples of the 'Abraham of Kataliya' type is the separation of the kufic elements (based on Chinese designs) painted in blue on white, from the rami elements (Turkish or Islamic designs) which are generally reserved in white on a blue ground. Of the few pieces of this type that can be attributed to the end of the 15th century, this jar is perhaps the earliest. It shares with others early pieces a blackish blue pigment, rather formal kufic designs and an angular profile derived from metal work.
Published: Kelekian (1940, no. 103); Lane (1957b, pp. 45-8, pl. 236).

406 Dish painted in blue under a transparent glaze
Diameter 44.5 cm
Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, no. OUC/1/ 6-1940
Turkey (Iznik, 'Abraham of Kataliya' type), Ottoman period, 1490-1550
A very small number of large dishes painted in a blackish blue may be attributed to the late 17th century, see no. 407, and Lane (1957b, figs. 8-9). In this example the rami element forms the major part of the design, and it is painted in reserve, while the kufic design is restricted to a floral scroll around the outside of the well. The shape and the colour scheme are taken from Chinese porcelain, through the exact manner of this transmission is unclear. Both Iznik wares and Chinese porcelains are mentioned for the first time in the Istanbul palace records in an inventory dated 1395, when the Chinese collection consisted of only six pieces, which did not include any plate or dish. The small size of the collection which, it seems, had only grown to twenty-one pieces by 1505, may account for the relatively slight Chinese influence in the designs. By the time larger numbers of Chinese wares had arrived in Turkey (sixty-two pieces were taken as booty from the Persians in 1714), the Turkish potters had developed their own idiom in painting ceramics.
Published: Lane (1957b, p. 293); Döndüsen (1973, p. 214, no. 308).
407. Dish painted in blue under a transparent glaze
Diameter 40cm
Musée du Louvre, Paris, no. 6321, Leg. Pier Latombari, 1970
Turkey (Iznik, 'Abraham of Kütahya' type), Ottoman period, 1520–1550

The inscription of this piece consists of legible but meaningless words, some of which resemble those found in pseudo inscriptions on other Iznik vessels. The base is marked with a single half-palmate leaf.

Published: Lane (1975, p. 238, fig. 8); Potts (1971, p. 56, no. 90).

408. Mosque lamp painted in blue under a transparent glaze
Height 22.7cm
British Museum, London, no. 79 12–30
500, Hendon Bequest 1978
Turkey (Iznik, 'Abraham of Kütahya' type), Ottoman period, about 1520

The inscription round the neck consists of legible but meaningless words. The lamp probably belongs to a set made for the Turbe of Bayezid I who died in 1312 and whom elegant in shape and decoration than the lamp (see no. 409), which is slightly later in date, shows an advance over the rather heavy shapes and designs of the late 15th century Iznik pieces (see nos. 405–7). The distinct three-dimensional quality in the painting of the floral scroll is characteristic of the earlier pieces in the 'Abraham of Kütahya' group.

Published: Godman (1901, pl. XLVI, no. 2); Lane (1974, pp. 49–51, pl. 70a and 1975, p. 238, fig. 19).

409. Lamp painted in blue under a transparent glaze
Height 20cm
Godman Collection, England
Turkey (Iznik, 'Abraham of Kütahya' type), Ottoman period, early 16th century

Inscription round the neck is from the Koran, Sura LXI, 13, followed by a panel with the names Allah, Muhammad and Allah. The shape of this lamp is slightly more elegant and more 'ceramic' in form than no. 408 and probably dates from a few years later. The decoration is still restricted to blue and white, and the rinceaux and kufic elements still occur separately. The design is most accomplished and the central band of palmette motifs can be read either as inverted white palmettes hanging from the neck on a blue ground, or as upright blue palmettes on a white ground. The painting has lost the heaviness which is found in the early Iznik pieces and the warm colour and delicate painting anticipate the 'Golden Horn' and 'Damasces' types. In this lamp, as in other Iznik pieces, the standard of the calligraphy does not equal that of the other decoration.

Published: Godman (1901, pl. XLIX, no. 2); Lane (1974, pp. 45–51, pl. 25a and 1975, p. 238, fig. 21).

410. Tankard painted in blue under a transparent glaze
Height 22cm, diameter 15.5cm
Musée National de Céramique, Sèvres, no. 4696, acquired in 1854
Turkey (Iznik, 'Abraham of Kütahya' type), Ottoman period, 1520–5

The shape of the tankard is derived from contemporary metalwork (compare no. 163), and somewhat resembles a finger jug. It becomes a common form in the succeeding 'Damasces' period of Iznik. This is the sole surviving example in the 'Abraham of Kütahya' class which suggests that it was made towards the end of the 'Kütahya' period. The pseudo-kufic inscription which runs round the neck is less recognisable than other inscriptions found on pieces of the same group and heralds the abscission of inscriptions in later Iznik vessels.

Published: Lane (1975, p. 261, fig. 31); Potts (1971, no. 91).

411. Pen box painted in blue under a transparent glaze
Height 30cm, width and height 6.5cm
Godman Collection, England
Turkey (Iznik, 'Abraham of Kütahya' type), Ottoman period, early 16th century

A pseudo-kufic inscription runs down both sides. A panel at the top has an inscription from the Koran, Sura LXI, 13. Like other pieces of Iznik of the 'Kütahya' type, this unique object is copied from a metal prototype, see no. 207. The pale colour of blue and the delicate floral scrolls behind the inscription suggests a late date within its class, perhaps contemporary with the mosque lamp no. 409. The lack of interest in calligraphy of the Iznik potters is well shown here; not only are the inscriptions poorly drawn, but the same texts occur in a very similar form on other pieces. The silver mounts were added later after part of the shaped opening to the pen compartment had been broken.

Published: Sourdrel-Thomine and Spuler (1973, p. 398).

412. Jug painted in blue under a transparent glaze
Height 88 cm, diameter (maximum) 16cm
Musée Civico Medievale, Bologna, no. 1305
Turkey (Iznik 'Golden Horn' type), Ottoman period, 1520–35

A small group of vessels painted in spiral floral sprays were once erroneously attributed to the Golden Horn. They are associated with the 'Damasces' period of Iznik both in date (one piece is dated 1526) and in the use of colours other than blue and white on some examples. This jug, with its smooth profile and pinched lip, shows the influence of Italian maiolica wares and may have been made for export to that country.