650 Mirror of bronze with silver plate decorated in repoussé and chased
Diameter 8.5cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1770
Egypt, Fatimid period, late 12th or early 13th century

Inner inscription
\textit{usā bāχa hu tīmma usā saλāma d'a'ma usā 'aβaβa 'blessing entire, well-being perpetual, health.'}

Outer inscription
\textit{usā saλāma lā tīma bīha [sic] usā wa 'ɔlaha bāχa hu tīmma usā saλāma d'a'ma [?] usā mǎμa d'a'ma usā 'aβaβa usā mǎμa d'a'ma 'well-being, felicity, [?] happiness, blessing entire, perpetual [?] well-being, perpetual favours, health and perpetual favour.'}

The history of Fatimid metalwork is extremely obscure at present and many known bronze objects from this period are still unidentified. The palettes and stools on this mirror have a somewhat eastern Islamic flavour, but the style of the kufic inscription, with its closest parallel in an inscription dated to 972 in the mosque of al-Azhar, Cairo, and the ‘comma’ border, a decorative feature known in other Fatimid bronze pieces, indicate its Egyptian provenance. Technically the mirror is unparalleled; other Islamic mirrors are probably composed of bronze layers of different qualities to produce a good reflecting surface, but no other known example has a silver back.

Published: Grohmann (1967), 3, pl. xiv.

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651 Pair of earrings of gold, sheet metal with filigree and granulation
Height 4.4cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1856
Egypt or Syria, Fatimid period, 11th-12th century

This earring shows a style of crescent which seems to have been popular during the Fatimid period. It was found at Pustat and other pieces are known. Here the crescent is wide but flat, and its two points curve towards each other to the extent that they sometimes almost meet. These examples are extremely fine, and the alternation of filigree and granulation was probably designed to display the skill of the jeweller.

Published: Segal (1938, no. 286, pl. 56).

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652 Pair of earrings of gold, sheet metal with filigree and granulation
Height 5.5cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1852
Spain, Nasrid period, 14th century

Inscription
\textit{bism Allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥim wa xuld Allāh 'alī Muhammad}
In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful, may God bless Muhammad.

Published: Segal (1938, no. 285, pl. 57).

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653 Set of belt fittings of bronze, gilded with silver rivets
Diameter of disc 9cm and smaller
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1900-44
Syria, Ayyubid or early Mamluk period, 12th century

One other set of belt fittings of this form is known, that bearing the name of the nephew of Salih al-Din (Saladin), al-Malik al-Salih Isma'il (died 1265), see Mayer (1952, pl. IX). The origin of the style is uncertain but it is quite different from the belt form common in Persia from the 6th century and widespread over nomadic Central Asia and eastern Europe. The Ayyubid style is known to have continued to be popular under the Mamluks. The Mamluk historian al-Maqrizi gives a description of the robes of honour given by sultans to amirs and mentions such objects; the most distinguished belts had between the uprights a central rounded and two sides each set with rubies, emeralds and pearls, the most had one rounded only set with stones, the lowest had but one rounded without any stones. Mayer (1952, p. 58). In this example the twin suspension loops are to hold the normal twin-mounted sword. The buckle has lost its tongue and the purpose of the two roundels with off-centre open discs is not clear.

Published: Segal (1938, no. 323, pl. 53).

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654 Ring of gold with granulation and filigree
Height 2.6cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1888
Persia, 13th century

Published: Segal (1938, no. 311, pl. 50).

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655 Ring of gold with turquoise-coloured enamel
Diameter 2.0cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1886
Syria, 10th-11th century

Inscribed \textit{al-ubah Idrisi, the slave Idrisi.}

Published: Segal (1938, no. 309, pl. 59).

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656 Jar decorated in lustre
Diameter 5.5cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1168
Persia, 12th century

A deep red or ruby lustre was used in conjunction with a gold lustre to give the rightest colour scheme used by the lustre potters. The ruby pigment is, however, rather unstable owing to its high copper content, and often spreads a red haze over the surrounding area. It was perhaps for this reason that its use was never extensive and was abandoned altogether during the second half of the 9th century. The shape of this little jar is most unusual for lustre ware of this period.

Unpublished.
657 Bowl decorated in lustre on opaque white glaze
Diameter 23 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1127
Egypt, Fatimid period, late 9th-early 10th century

At some time in the 10th century lustre wares ceased to be produced in Mesopotamia. It has been argued that Egypt produced wares in the Mesopotamian style from the beginning of that century, but such pieces are difficult to distinguish from imports. This bowl illustrates the distinctive Egyptian lustre ware that developed at the end of the century though the interlocking motifs and hair still retain a Mesopotamian character. For the significance of rabbits and hares in Fatimid art, see Dodd (1974).

Published: Jenkins (1968)

658 Bowl decorated in lustre on opaque white glaze
Diameter 38.4 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1125
Egypt, Fatimid period, 11th–12th century

Many of the Egyptian lustre vessels depict scenes in a surprisingly naturalistic fashion. For their stylistic characteristics see Jones (1975, pp. 4-5). This fragment depicts a musician, probably female, with a lute. To be noticed are the various shapes of metal ewers that surround the figure, one with a round body holding a large flower seems to rest on a metal stand. Other lustre vessels painted in a similar style show various aspects of the 'courty life'.

Unpublished

659 Carved panel originally attached to beam
Length 73 cm, height 24 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 9142
Egypt, Fatimid period, 10th–11th century

The upper frieze reads
bawara 'ana yammu na'a 'ala
wa-qhi dhu [al] b'il-jahidhi
"blessing, good fortune, happiness and felicity (to its owner)."
The kufic lettering is cramped as compared to that on no. 435 which bears a shorter version of the same motto. Emphasis on the rounded heads of some letters draws attention to the upper register.

Unpublished

660 Pair of carved doors
Height 220 cm, width (of each) 123 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 9127
Mesopotamia (Takrit), Abbasid period, 8th–9th century

These doors may well pre-date the foundation of the city of Samarra though they display all the characteristics of the first Samarran style.

Published: Dimandia (1969, p. 200, fig. 117)

661 Carved wooden panel
Archaeological Museum, Province of Toledo
Spain, Almohad period, 12th century

Unpublished

662 Koran with lacquer binding
Imam Riza Shrine Library, Mashhad, no. 238
Persia, Safavid period, 16th century

This Koran consists of 339 folios in Naschi script, 4 lines per page. The artist is given as Muhammad Ri'f Shirkhi. The binding is painted with three flowers.

Unpublished

663 Collection of gold jewellery
National Museum, Barut
Syria, Ayoubid, Mamluk and Ottoman periods, 12th–19th centuries

Unpublished
664. Double-page from a Muraqqa', Album
Height 22.4cm, width 16.3cm
State Library, Leeningrad, Dorn 469
Central Asia (Bukhara), Shayanband period, early 16th century
These miniatures (folios 26b, 27a) represent a scene of a madrasa in a garden. Galperkina attributes them to about 1514 and considers them to be a single composition. Akhmatshin and Ivanov prefer a date in the early 16th century. However, all these authors attribute the miniatures to the Herat school. Martin also believed that they were the product of the Herat school and ascribed them to Bihzad in about 1510. Galperkina endorses this attribution and connects the miniature of a seated youth writing (folio 27a) with the famous 'Portrait of a Painter' now in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington. There does, indeed, seem to be some connection here, for though the pose is not identical the unusual khuffa's shape is similar. There are correspondences in pose with other figures among the paintings of Bihzad but not close enough to be a compelling indication of a unique relationship. In any case, such relationships are also to be seen in the manuscripts from Bukhara through the first half of the 16th century. It is of great interest to place this album beside the best attested work of the master Bihzad himself.
Published: Martin (1912, pl. 140); Akhmatshin and Ivanov (1968, pl. 255); Galperkina (1970, pl. II).

665. Divan by Amir Khusraw Dihlawi
State Library, Leeningrad, PNS 104
Mesopotamia (Baghdad), Turkman period, 1465
This is an illuminated manuscript with no miniatures copied for Pir Budaiq the Qara-Qoyunlu in 1465 by Mahmud Pir Bursqi.
Unpublished

666. Gūwa-Chawqān, 'The Ball and Polostick', by 'Arfi
Height 22.4cm, width 11.8cm
State Library, Leeningrad, PNS 106
Khorasan (Herat), 16th century
This manuscript was copied by Mir 'Ali al-Karimi as-Sultāni probably in Bukhara about 1540–5. There are three miniatures.
Published: Akhmatshin and Ivanov (1968, pls. 53–4, 58).

667. Bustān by Sa'di
Height 19cm, width 12.5cm
State Library, Leeningrad, PNS 269
Central Asia (Bukhara), 1575
This manuscript was copied by Mir Husayn al-Husayni al-Mashhur b. Mīr Qulānī.
Published: Dyakonov (1964, pls. 21–2).

668. Mosque lamp of gilded and enameled glass
Height 35.6cm
Godman Collection, England
Syria, Mamluk period, first half 14th century
The lamp has six handles and is raised on a high foot. Incribed in blue around the neck is a ground of white scrollwork; the word al-aṣlām, 'the wise', repeated and intercalated by medallions. Each of these medallions contains a lion on a blue ground encircled by a band of scrolls with four escutcheons. Below this band another frieze is painted on the inside of the glass. The shoulder has a frieze of roundels each containing foliation. The main register has floral scrolls on a blue ground. On the underside of the main body and on the foot are roundels and carvings containing floral ornament.
Published: Godman (1910, p. 72, n. 19, pl. LXVII); Lamont (1930, I, p. 487, no. 199 and II, pl. 191 f.).

669. Mosque lamp of gilded and enameled glass
Height 35.6cm
 Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge,
no. C.4–1749
Egypt, Mamluk period, about 1530
The lamp has six loop handles. On the neck is an inscription from the Koran, Surah XXIV, 53, on the body an inscription is dedicated to Sayf al-Dīn Shawkī al-'Umari, a prominent Mamluk amīr who died in 1357.

Additional Information
Published: Shih, K., ed., 1974, Musée du Bardo, Département Islamique, p. 25, no. A58, fig. 19.