

650

650 Mirror of bronze with silver plate decorated in repoussé and chased

Diameter 18cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 13770
Egypt, Fatimid period, late 12th or early 13th century

Inner inscription

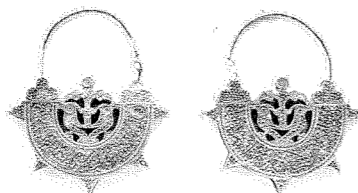
wa baraka tamma wa salāma dā'ima wa 'āfiya
'blessing entire, well-being perpetual, health.'

Outer inscription

wa salāma la wa ghibṭā [sic] wa sa 'āda baraka tamma wa salāma dā'ima [?] wa ni'ma dā'ima wa 'āfiya wa ni'ma dā'ima
'well-being, felicity, [?], happiness, blessing entire, perpetual [?] well-being, perpetual favour, health and perpetual favour.'

The history of Fatimid metalwork is extremely obscure at present and many known bronze objects from this period are still unstudied. The palmettes and stems 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, I, pl. xix)



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651 Pair of earrings of gold, sheet metal with filigree and granulation

Height 4.4cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1863
Egypt or Syria, Fatimid period, 10th–12th century

This earring shows a style of crescent which seems to have been popular during the Fatimid period. It was found at Fustat 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: Segall (1938, no. 286, pl. 56)

652 Pair of earrings of gold, sheet metal with filigree and granulation

Height 5.5cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1862
Spain, Nasrid period, 14th century

Inscription

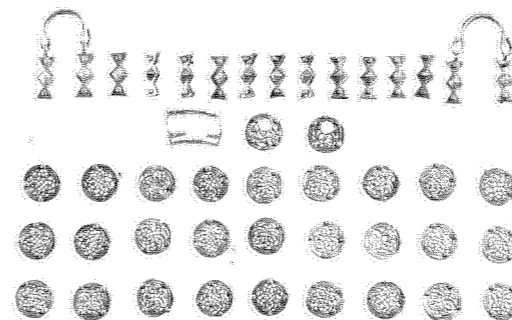
bism Allāh al-rahmān al-rahīm wa ṣalā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad
'In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful, may God bless Muḥammad.'

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

Unpublished



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653

653 Set of belt fittings of bronze, gilded with silver rivets

Diameter of discs 3cm and smaller
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1900–44
Syria, Ayyubid or early Mamluk period, 13th century

One other set of belt fittings of this form is known, that bearing the name of the nephew of Salāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin), al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'il (died 1266); 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 roundel and two side ones set with rubies, emeralds and pearls, the next had one roundel only set with stones, the lowest had but one roundel 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: Segall (1938, no. 323, pl. 53)



656

656 Jar decorated in lustre

Diameter 5.7cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1168
Persia, 12th century

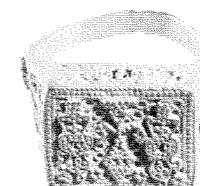
A deep red or ruby lustre was used in conjunction with a gold lustre to give the highest colour scheme used by the lustre potters. The ruby pigment is, however, rather unstable owing to its high copper content, and often spreads a red haze over the surrounding area. It was perhaps for this reason that 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

654 Ring of gold with granulation and filigree

Height 2.6cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1888
Persia, 13th century

Published: Segall (1938, no. 311, pl. 60)



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655 Ring of gold with turquoise-coloured enamel

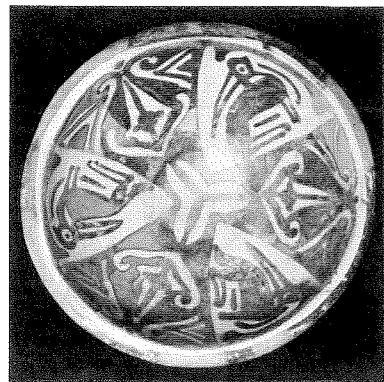
Diameter 2.1cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 1886
Syria, 10th–11th century

Inscribed *al-'abd Idris*, 'the slave Idris'.

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



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657 Bowl decorated in lustre on opaque white glaze
Diameter 22cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 11157
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 hares 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 an opaque white glaze
Diameter 38.5cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 11121
Egypt, Fatimid period, 11th–12th century

Many of the Egyptian lustre vessels depict scenes in a surprisingly naturalistic fashion. For their stylistic characteristic see Jones (1975, pp. 4–5). This fragment



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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 'courtly life'.

Unpublished



659

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

The upper-frieze reads
bakara wa-yumn wa-sa'āda
wa-ghibṭi [a] [li-ṣāhibihī]
'blessing, good fortune, happiness and felicity [to its owner].'

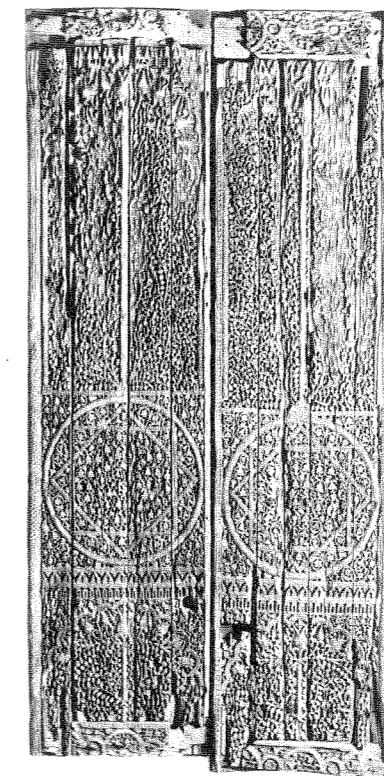
The kufic lettering is cramped as compared to that on no. 435 which bears a shorter version of the same motto. Emphasis on the rounded heads of some letters draws attention to the upper register.

Unpublished

660 Pair of carved doors
Height 225cm, width (of each) 123cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, no. 9121
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: Damascus (1969, p. 209, fig. 117)



660

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

Unpublished

662 Koran with lacquer binding
Height 35cm, width 22cm
Iman Riza Shrine Library, Mashhad, no. 228
Persia, Safavid period, 1687

This Koran consists of 339 folios in Naskhi script, 4 lines per page. The artist is given as Muḥammad Riḏā Shirāzi. The binding is painted with three flowers.

Unpublished

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

Unpublished

664 Double-page from a Muraqqa', Album
Height 22.4cm, width 16.3cm
State Library, Leningrad, Dorn 489
Central Asia (Bukhara), Shaybanid period, early 16th century

These miniatures (folios 26b, 27a) represent a scene of a madrasa in a garden. Galerkina attributes them to about 1484 and considers them to be a single composition. Akimushkin and Ivanov prefer a date in the early 16th century. However, all these authorities attribute the miniatures to the Herat school. Martin also believed that they were the product of the Herat school and ascribed them to Bihzād in about 1500. Galerkina 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 connexion here, for though the pose is not identical the unusual kaftan shape is similar. There are correspondences in pose with other figures among the paintings of Bihzād 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 Bihzād himself.

Published: Martin (1912, pl. 180); Akimushkin and Ivanov (1968, pl. 25); Galerkina (1970, pl. II)

665 Dīwān by Amīr Khusraw Dihlawī
State Library, Leningrad, PNS 104
Mesopotamia (Baghdad), Turkman period, 1465

This is an illuminated manuscript with no miniatures copied for Pīr Budāq the Qara-Qoyūnlū in 1465 by Maḥmud Pīr Budaqī.

Unpublished

666 Gū-wa-Chawgān, 'The Ball and Polostick', by 'Arfī
Height 22.4cm, width 11.8cm
State Library, Leningrad, PNS 106
Khurasan (Herat), 16th century

This manuscript was copied by Mir 'Alī al-Katīn as-Sulṭānī probably in Bukhara about 1540-5. There are three miniatures.

Published: Akimushkin and Ivanov (1968, pls. 53-4, 56)

667 Bustān by Sa'dī
Height 19cm, width 12.5cm
State Library, Leningrad, PNS 269
Central Asia (Bukhara), 1575

This manuscript was copied by Mir Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Mashhur b. Mīr Qulangi.

Published: Dyakonov (1964, pls. 21-3)

668 Mosque lamp of gilded and enamelled 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. Inscribed in blue around the neck on a ground of white scrollwork is the word *al-ālam*, 'the wise', repeated and interrupted by medallions. Each of these medallions contains a lotus 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 foliage. The main register has floral scrolls on a blue ground. On the underside of the main body and on the foot are roundels and cartouches containing floral ornament.

Published: Godman (1901, p. 72, no. 19, pl. LXXII); Lamm (1930, I, p. 467, no. 169 and II, pl. 194:5)

669 Mosque lamp of gilded and enamelled glass
Height 35.2cm
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge,
no. C.4-1949
Egypt, Mamluk period, about 1350

The lamp has six loop handles. On the neck is an inscription from the Koran, Sura XXIV, 35; on the body an inscription is dedicated to Sayf al-'Dīn Shaykhu'l-'Umari, a prominent Mamluk amir who died in 1357.

Published: Winter, C., 1958, *The Fitzwilliam Museum. An Illustrated Survey*, London, p. 103, pl. 24

The following are not exhibited

Textiles

8, 57, 68, 75, 81-2

Glass

138-141

Metalwork

197

Ceramics

427

Wood

445

Arts of the Book

509, 513, 518, 526, 568, 617, 619, 632, 638

Additional information

480 Published: Skik, K., ed., 1974, *Musée du Bardo, Département Musulman*, p. 25, no. A58, fig. 19