101 A Khurasan bronze bottle
North Eastern Persia, 10th/11th century
the hexagonal body resting on a tall splayed foot, the domed shoulder
supporting a narrow cylindrical neck widening into a rounded form at the
mouth, each face of the body cast with a tear-shaped chased boss within an
hexagonal panel, the neck decorated
with a band of six protruding nodules
20.2 cm.
This is a beautifully executed example
of the tendency toward geometricism
appearing in Persian metalwork in the
tenth century. The severely geometric
form of the body is softened by the
curves of the raised bosses which are
thought to derive their shape from
lotus buds (Melikian-Chirvani 1982,
p.29). The highly stylised form of
these buds illustrates another trait that
Persian metalwork had developed by
this period, namely a tendency toward
abstraction. A similar example, though
with a square-section body, is in the
Ker Collection (Ward 1995, p.27,
fig.15).
£5,000-7,000
€7,800-11,000

102 A fine Khurasan bronze handled cup
North Eastern Persia, circa 11th century
the body of rounded form with a deep
lobed rim and supported on a narrow
foot, with a loop handle beneath a
flattened thumbpiece in the form of a
pair of birds heads emanating from a
calligraphic cartouche, the rim exterior
with a narrow band of incised leafy
carrying beneficent inscriptions, the body
with a small panel of interlacing
palmette motifs
16.4 cm.
This is a refined example of a
charming form of the early Khurasan
metalwork school. It appears
elsewhere, though not frequently, and
rarely with such elegance. A
comparable piece is in the Herat
Museum (Melikian-Chirvani 1982,
p.29, fig.3) and the form appears in
pottery by the twelfth century (Grube
£8,000-12,000
€12,600-18,800

103 An extremely rare elephant-form
brass hammer head
Khurasan, North East Persia, circa
1200 A.D.
the square-section head with a square
face and tapering to a terminal in the
form of an elephant's head, with ridge
dividing each side and a central
rectangular aperture for attaching the
haft, decorated with chased work
and inlays of copper, silver, turquoise
and glass beads in form stylised floral
and foliate motifs, geometric designs
and calligraphic cartouches conveying
beneficent inscriptions (2)
8.5 cm.; stand
This is a highly unusual and
deliberately decorated metalwork
form. The object manages to
transcend its function through the
sophisticated rendering of an almost
whimsical theme. It is the highly
developed sculptural qualities of this
piece which should be noted. Other
hammer heads incorporating animal
heads are known but the zoomorphic
clement is usually so abstracted as to
be barely recognisable. For instance, a
hammer-head in the Ker Collection
also has an elephant-head terminal
but its features have been reduced to
little more than a nonchalant
acknowledgment of the source of the
design (Feinberg 1976, plate 35,
no.105).
£15,000-20,000
€23,500-31,000
104 A Khurasan silver and copper-inlaid bronze ewer
North East Persia, circa 1200 A.D.
the tapering cylindrical body formed
with alternate angular and curving
flutings, the narrow foot with a
spayed base, the cylindrical neck
ridged above the shoulder and
flashed by raised elements in the
form of lions, the angled spout with
a raised boss in the form of a
turbaned head on the upper side,
the loop handle of square section,
decorated in incised work
heightened with silver and copper
with cartouches and bands of
stylised floral and foliate motifs, the
shoulder with a radiating band of
cursive calligraphy carrying
benedictory inscriptions
40cm.

This is a characteristic form of early
medieval Khurasan metalwork. The
decoration is finely worked and
typical of the repertoire employed
on these vessels. Similar decoration
can be found on a closely related
example in the Kain Collection
(Pehirkli 1976, plate 16, no.53).
The angular and rounded fluting
seems to echo a decorative motif
from Khurasan architecture of the
period. The alternating flanges
and engaged columns of the tomb
towers in Kakhmar create a similar
pattern and suggest that architecture
continued to lead forms to
metalworkers in the twelfth and
thirteenth centuries (Dubre 1938,
Vol IV, plate 347B).
£20,000-30,000
€31,400-47,100

105 A Khurasan silver-inlaid bronze
weights dish
North East Persia, circa 1200 A.D.
of shallow convex form with small
apertures at the rim for suspension,
decorated on the exterior with an
inlaid and incised design of a central
roundel within six further roundels
each encircled and linked by a fine
intertwining band, the seven roundels
each enclosing a depiction of a
planetary or astrological figure
5.9cm. diameter

The beautifully decorated dish must
have once formed a part of a
splendid set of scale dishes. The form
is rare in itself but this piece is made
more than noteworthy by the dense
application of inlaid decoration.
The introduction of this planetary
imagery in the Eastern Islamic world
would seem to date from the first
half of the twelfth century (Carboni
1997, p.7). The style of the inlaid
designs is reminiscent of the
astrological figures on the Vaso
Vescovardi, which is of a similar date
(Ward 1993, p.79). The figures on
this covered bowl have similar stick
like arms, sometimes four of them
indicating the Indian origin of much
of this imagery.

In the case of this dish, it would
seem likely that the seven roundels
depict the seven planetary figures.
However, the identification of the
figures is not clear throughout. With
certainty one can identify the images
of the Sun (with light radiating
around the head), the Moon
(holding a disc), Mercury (also
known as al-Shait and hence
depicted with scrolls) and Venus
(playing a lute). The figure holding
two severed heads may be the planet
Libra who sometimes is depicted
with human-headed pans. This
variation was employed on an
infowill and a footed bowl, both
contemporary to this dish and both
now in the Metropolitan Museum
(Carboni no.12, p.30, and no.19,
p.64, respectively). The central
figure, apparently holding a variety
of attributes and possibly with four
arms, could be Saturn, though it
may instead be a depiction of an
astrological figure with its planetary
Lord.
£8,000-12,000
€12,600-18,800
Though not exactly the same, these two candlesticks have for long been treated as a pair. They form part of a small, enigmatic group of candlesticks all of which have closely related dragons head double candleholders (Grube 1989 illustrates most of them, pp.187-191, figs. 1,2,7,8,13,14 & 18). However, the practicalities of making such pieces necessitates that they are formed in two parts. The enigma of the group arises from the fact that these very similar candleholders appear on bases of different forms and dates.

On the assumption that an example in the David Collection appears to have contemporary parts, and that the base is double to no later than circa 1660 on stylistic grounds, Erne Grube has asserted that the candleholders must all have been made in the first half of the fifteenth century and some remounted later (ibid., pp.175-178). Elsewhere, Anatoly Ivanov raises the possibility that a candlestick of this group in the Hermitage may also be made of parts contemporary to one another (Kuwait 1990, p.127, no.108). However, since the base can be confidently dated to the early seventeenth century, Ivanov's suggestion provides the interesting corollary that the candleholder must also be mid-Safavid. Since both commentators consider the group of candleholders so similar to one another as to be contemporaries, Ivanov therefore places the whole group some two hundred years later than Grube.

More recently, Ivanov has proposed that another candlestick of this type in the Hermitage might also be considered as wholly early seventeenth century (Amsterdam 1999, pp.177-178, no.133). This candlestick, apart from some applied elements on the base, compares very closely to our two pieces and, thus, on the basis of this, one might also date our examples toward 1600 A.D.

However, Ivanov acknowledges the convincing nature of Grube's consensus on the David Collection candlestick and hence the unresolved question of the groups date in general. At present, therefore, a broad and cautious date for our pieces of circa sixteenth century seems prudent while awaiting further investigation of the group.
108 A Raqqa turquoise-glazed tile
Syria, 12th/13th century
of elongated rectangular form, decorated with a deeply moulded frieze of formal palmettes 60cm.
£3,000-5,000
€4,700-7,800

109 A Raqqa lustre-decorated pottery table top
Syria, 13th century
of hexagonal form, moulded decoration of raised honeycomb shaped medallions and floral motifs, petals painted in cobalt-blue, lustre decoration of split-palmettes on scrolling grounds 24cm.
This table top decorated with undulate and overglaze designs is a very sophisticated example of its type. Although complete low tables are known their decoration mainly consists of moulded designs and monochrome glazes as the examples in the Nasir D. Khalili Collection, London and the David Collection, Copenhagen (see Grube 1994, pp.284-285; No.327 and von Foltzach 1990, p.188, No.140 respectively).
£3,000-5,000
€4,700-7,800

110 A Kashan turquoise-glazed pottery jug
Persia, late 12th/early 13th century
the bulbous body resting on a low foot, with a narrow neck widening into a disc below the mouth, decorated in black and cobalt-blue with alternating waterweed stems and stripes, the upper body and neck with a band of interlocking fish motifs 18cm.
Examples of this unusual pottery form are known with various types of decoration from Seljuk Persia. Those include simpler designs such as the Keir Collection example decorated with vertical blue stripes on a white ground (see Grube 1976, p.189, no.127) and a cobalt-blue glazed example with one single horizontal stripe running across the body as illustrated in Oriental Splendour 1993, pp.84-85, no.47. Others are lustre and even lustre and minor tinsel decorated such as the piece in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington (Arl 1973, p.105, No.46).
£7,000-9,000
€11,000-14,100

111 A Kashan lustre-decorated cruciform pottery tile
Central Persia, 13th century
with pointed terminals, decorated with a radiating design of fleshy palmettes reserved on a dense ground of small circular motifs and scrolls, the reverse ghosted with the image of the lustre decoration of the tile fired beneath 21cm.
£2,000-3,000
€3,150-4,700
A mina'i pottery bowl
Persia, late 12th/early 13th century

Provenance:
Formerly in the collection of M. Emile Paravicini

Exhibited:
International Exhibition of Persian Art, London 1931, no.CR21

Published:
Pepe 1938, vol.V, in colour plate 693

Inscriptions:
Around the rim interior:
"alala al-ras... [(una) tala'a al-shams laka al-ras wa... [(una) tala'a al-shams wa al-qamar"

'May Victory and...last for you as long as the Sun rises. May there be victory
and...as long as the Sun and the Moon rise.'

This is a beautiful mina'i bowl painted with a delicacy that befits the romantic
theme of its decoration. It is the painterly aspect of this bowl which makes it
particularly appealing and highlights the close link between mina'i decoration and
painting traditions of the period.

Pepe, discussing this bowl in Survey of Persian Art, believed that it belonged to a
small group of mina'i pieces either signed, attributable to, or by a follower of Abu
Zayd. This name appears on some very high quality mina'i pieces, all painted in
this style and some with dates in the late twelfth century (Pepe 1938, plates 686
and 692l. There is little information about Abu Zayd except that which is contained
on pieces of pottery and the significance of this name was not always clear.

However, the name also appears on Kashan lustre-decorated pieces sharing
decoration of similar themes and style to the signed mina'i works. Some of the
lustre-signed pieces also bear dates from a similar period to the mina'i examples.

This evidence, taken with comparative analysis of the epigraphy, has recently led
to the more confident identification of Abu Zayd mentioned on the two types of
pottery as the same man (Winters 1994, pp.170-173). This provides some
information regarding the practice of potters in medieval Persia and gives clear
evidence that there was production of mina'i pottery at Kashan in central Persia.

The similarity in style and theme between the signed works of Abu Zayd and our
bowl encourages us to support Pepe's hypothesis that it too was a product of the
atelier of this great medieval master potter.
113 A fragmentary Timurid mosaic tile panel
Persia, 15th century
the irregularly shaped fragment decorated with a mosaic-work design of stylised cloud scrolls in yellow on a black ground
19.5cm x mounted
£2,000-3,000
€3,150-4,700

114 A Nasrid green-glazed pottery mortar
Spain, 14th/15th century
the tapering cylindrical form with a flat base and broad splayed rim, with two narrow ridges around the upper body and a pair of loop handles, the interior with a brownish-ochre glaze
20.5cm, across the handles
£6,000-8,000
€9,600-12,600

115 A rare pair of Lajvardina moulded calligraphic pottery tiles
Persia, circa 1300 A.D.
each of rectangular form, decorated with a cobalt-blue glaze and overglaze red, white and gilt, the cursive calligraphy set against a ground of scrolling foliage, the upper band with floral motifs (2) each approximately 34 by 31.5cm.
£8,000-12,000
€12,600-18,800

Inscriptions
Qur'an, III, part of verse 192:
"...forgive us therefore our faults, and cover our evil deeds...." (Maulvi Muhammad Ali 1920, p.194)

This is an extraordinary rare pair of large calligraphic tiles which together form part of a verse from the Qur'an. Originally, they are likely to have decorated a mihrab panel and therefore would have been set in a manner similar to the large calligraphic border tiles adorning the panel now in the Berlin State Museum (see Pope 1958, Volume V, plate 704). Single tiles of similar decoration and possibly from the same mihrab are in the British Museum (Islamic Pottery 800-1400 AD 1969, p.44, no.142), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Carboni and Masuya 1993, p.34, no.29) and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Pal 1973, p.50-59, no. 105).
A magnificent Mamluk blue and white pottery tile
Egypt or Syria, first half 15th century
of square form, decorated in a rich cobalt blue with a fantastic design of a domed architectural edifice flanked by elaborate floral and foliate motifs
20.5cm. square approximately
£20,000-30,000
€31,400-47,100

Of exceptional rarity and beauty, this tile is perhaps the finest example of a Mamluk tile to come to auction. Large square tiles of this kind seem to have been made only in small numbers. The decoration of this tile, and the other recorded examples of this type, is generally of a far higher order than that found on the more standard hexagonal tiles. In this case, the composition combines an elaborate floral design, popularly featured on Mamluk tiles in general, with an architectural vision combining reality and fantasy. The arches of the two side buildings appear to be decorated with alternating bands of light and dark stone, a characteristic feature of Mamluk architecture. However, whilst it is tempting to deconstruct the individual elements into recognisable forms, the overall design of the building does not seem to be derived from an authentic architectural tradition or specific building.