110 Bowl
Syria, circa 1200
Ceramic; colorless glaze over blue and black design
Diameter: 26 cm

This bowl is a beautiful example of a ceramic technique developed in the 12th century—underglaze painting. The design, executed in blue and black, is covered by a transparent alkaline glaze. It consists of a light blue inscription running across the middle of the bowl within a panel of black dots; this calligraphic band spans the broadest portion of a lobed zone of white, bracketed at the corners with panels of black stippling, and bisected by a pair of linked fleur-de-lys. The flattened rim is articulated with black spots. Many objects in this style are attributed to Raqqa, an important pottery-producing center at this time. The city probably benefited from an influx of craftsmen from Egypt after the fall of the Fatimid dynasty in 1171.

111 Bowl
Syria, circa 1200
Ceramic; turquoise glaze over black design.
Diameter: 27 cm

While some of the underglaze-painted wares associated with Syria at this time exhibit a clear alkaline glaze, this bowl is remarkable for the intensity of its turquoise glaze. It contrasts with the black underglaze paint used to define the rings of the concentric design and to provide the ground for palmettes, vines and calligraphy left in reserve.

112 Lamp
Syria, 12th century
Ceramic; overpainted in luster
Height: 18 cm

This lamp was very well designed. Apparently the oil was put in the spout at the back and flowed around the hollow center to the two projecting spouts. Since the glaze has become highly iridescent, most of the design is obscured. Remnants of an inscription can be seen, however, around the flat vertical surface below the pierced domical top. Very little remains on the high cylindrical foot.
Cow and Calf

Syria, first half 13th century
Ceramic; turquoise glaze over blue and black design
Size of base: 21 cm x 11.8 cm
Height: 20.5 cm

This rare figural group shows a cow being milked by a cowherd who holds a pail at his knees. A calf stands in front of the cow and both animals are tethered to a peg. Of particular fascination is the fact that the cowherd is a distinctly Mongol type, with his hair tied in a pigtail and wearing the typical conical hat with baggy trousers. Mongol tribesmen became an increasingly familiar sight in Syria in the early 13th century and presumably this piece was made before the sack of Damascus by the Mongols in 1269.

The figures stand on a flat base, and are decorated in black and cobalt blue beneath a turquoise glaze. No other comparable group is known. It was originally found along with another single figure of a bull, which is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (inv. no. 36,1980).
114 Bowl
Iran or Central Asia, 10th century
Ceramic; colorless glaze over slip-painted design
Diameter: 33.5 cm
Inscriptions: "Wealth is to be spent not accumulated and beauty is to impress, not to frighten, so it is said."

The potters active under the Samanid dynasty in Nishapur and Samarkand discovered that by adding color to clay slip they could prevent it from running when the lead glaze was fired. This realization enabled them to render precise designs such as the calligraphy on this bowl. Its great beauty results from the economical contrast of black and white and the astonishing exactitude with which the letters were painted. Like other examples of this type, the inscription is proverbial rather than poetic. On another bowl in the Louvre, is written "Knowledge, the taste of which is bitter at first, is later sweeter than honey" (see L'Islam dans les collections nationales, Paris, 1977, no.86).

115 Bowl
Iran or Central Asia, 10th century
Ceramic; colorless glaze over slip-painted design
Diameter: 40.5 cm
The interior is painted in black under a lead glaze with a design of six, robed figures standing with their arms outstretched. They are holding one side of a palm leaf in each hand and are apparently engaged in a dance around the central figures of an ibex and a cockerel. The figures have long hair, decorated with flowers, and the skirts of their robes are alternately decorated with dots and with a diamond-pattern. Small floral ornaments are scattered on the field. The outside rim has a diamond-motif between bars.

This style of figural decoration was probably influenced by contemporary manuscript illustration, of which, unfortunately, no examples are known to have survived. Another large bowl with four seated figures of similar type is in the Cleveland Museum of Art (J. H. Wade Fund 39.249; see cover illustration, The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, vol. 47, no.3, March 1960).
**Bowl**

Iran or Central Asia, 10th century  
Ceramic; colorless glaze over slip-painted design  
Diameter: 24 cm

Slip-painted designs could be executed in more than one color and enhanced with fine, incised lines. At the center of this bowl is a floral interface; on its sloping interior sides, red leaves alternating with bands of pseudo-Kufic are framed by brown leaves. Throughout, fine white lines define the details of leaf and floral form and overlapping interface elements. The exterior rim is decorated with a brown cable pattern.

**Bowl**

Iran or Central Asia, 10th century  
Ceramic; colorless glaze over slip-painted design  
Diameter: 21.8 cm

Samanid slip-painted wares exhibit a relatively restricted range of colors and wider variety of designs. Here, the interior of the bowl is decorated with a repeated motif of two brown discs and a red 'tongue', converging on the center. The rim is festooned with brown lappets.

A slightly larger version of this bowl, with an identical design, was excavated in Nishapur, Iran (see A. Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery*, London, 1965, fig. 16B), suggesting a similar provenance for this piece.
118 Bowl

Iran, 10th-11th century
Ceramic; color over design incised in white slip
Diameter: 30.5 cm

The surface of the bowl is incised with a revolving design of curled tendrils and scale-pattern and splashed with running glazes of green, yellow, and manganese-brown. This style of decoration first made its appearance in the Islamic world in Samarra in the 9th century and is so strongly reminiscent of the Chinese T'ang Dynasty splashed ware of a century earlier that one can only suppose that some of the Chinese wares reached Iraq and Iran at this time.

119 Bowl

Iran, 12th century
Ceramic; color over design incised in white slip
Diameter: 26.3 cm

The design of a bird perched on a branch is incised and filled in with yellow, green and manganese glazes, with the lines of the drawing serving to prevent the glazes running into each other. The pottery is thick and heavy and of a type usually attributed to Arghand, a town near Tabriz. The bird is probably a falcon and can be found on another, larger bowl in the Keir Collection (see E. J. Grube, Islamic Pottery in the Keir Collection, London, 1976, no. 70).

120 Bowl

Iran, 12th century
Ceramic; blue and colorless glaze over incised design
Diameter: 22.2 cm

This bowl reflects both a Chinese inspiration and a considerable technical advance for Muslim potters. By using a fine white paste instead of coarser earthenwares, they could more closely approximate the effect of Chinese porcelain. The carved decoration may also be compared with Sung Dynasty wares. It consists of a band of palmettes around the side of the bowl. Strokes of blue glaze provide minimal color accents.

Provenance: Baron Cassel van Dorm Collection
Olsen Collection
121 Pitcher

Iran, circa 1200
Ceramic; turquoise glaze over black design
Height: 31.5 cm

The elaborate and varied decoration is painted in black beneath a turquoise glaze. Large, multi-layered palettes around the body are framed by two bands of poetry written in a flowing, cursive hand. Flying birds are reserved in a black band around the shoulder, and palettes enclosed by leaves decorate the lower body. The rim is glazed in cobalt blue with a wide band of floriated Kufic below and a cursive inscription beneath it.

This pitcher was among a number of vessels found buried in large pottery oil-jars in Gurgan in the early 1940's. They had apparently been buried in about 1220 to preserve them from the invading Mongol hordes that devastated the region. This discovery significantly changed our understanding of Iranian ceramics. Previously, only a few pieces had been found intact. The texts consist of selections of Arabic poetry.

Provenance: Jacques O. Matossian Collection
E. Binney 3rd Collection

Published: Mehdi Bahrami, Gurgan Faïences, Cairo, 1949, pl. XVIII.

Exhibited: Smithsonian Travelling Exhibition, 1966-68.

122 Tile

Iran, 13th century
Ceramic; overpainted in luster
Width: 13.5 cm

Of star form, the tile is decorated in a greenish luster with a foliate arabesque on each side of a central line which is reserved on a white ground. Such tiles were often used on the lower portions of walls in mosques and madrasas. By combining cross-shaped tiles with star tiles, large surfaces could be covered with colorful patterns.

123 Bowl

Iran, early 13th century
Ceramic; overpainted in luster
Diameter: 16.5 cm

The bowl is finely potted, with slightly curved sides. The decoration is painted in intense coppery-red luster, with a seated figure in the center, and two bands of calligraphy – the outer one in reserve – separated by a band of scroll-pattern. The outside is decorated with large, round palettes. Many bowls of this type were produced in Kashan, an important ceramic center of the 12th–14th centuries.
124 Bowl

Iran, 13th century
Ceramic; relief design, glazed and overpainted in red, blue and gold
Diameter: 24.5 cm

The distinctive character of this bowl results from the extensive gilding and the slight relief of the design. The gilded portions of the decoration are outlined in red, and two lines of blue bracket a frieze of running animals around the rim. Two small birds can be seen at the center, while the rest of the interior surface is covered with radiating palmettes and arabesques. The exterior is more restrained, with a simple diamond border and generously-spaced arabesque motifs.

Provenance: Adda Collection
E. Binney 3rd Collection

Published: B. Rackham, Islamic Pottery and Italian Maiolica, London, 1959, no.18, pl.41b.

125 Bowl

Iran, 13th century
Ceramic; underglaze painted decoration
Diameter: 21.3 cm

The bowl is beautifully made with thin rounded sides standing on a ring foot. It is decorated with a fine, looping vine, drawn in black, sprouting smaller leaves painted in blue or manganese, and larger leaves cross-hatched in black. The size of the leaves is reduced towards the center. The rim is black, and around the exterior of the bowl are black waterweeds.

The design is painted with extraordinary freedom and delicacy compared to the other examples of this group (see, for example, M. Jenkins, “Islamic Pottery,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, Spring 1983, no.23), which suggests a date in the second half of the 13th century. Such bowls are generally attributed to Kashan.

126 Bowl

Iran, 14th century
Ceramic; turquoise glaze over relief design
Diameter: 21.6 cm

The shape of the bowl, with its steep sides turning inwards at the shoulder and wide inverted rim, is typical of 14th-century bowls of the Mongol period. It has a raised inscription around the outside and is covered with a thick opaque glaze suggesting cement. Similar vessels have been excavated at Sultaniya in northwestern Iran, the area which saw the first artistic renaissance after the devastation of the Mongols.
Plate

Turkey, early 16th century
Ceramic; colorless glaze over blue design
Diameter: 35 cm

The plate has a deep cavetto and a wide rim, which has a width exactly half the diameter of the central medallion. Around the rim is an undulating flowering vine painted in blue, outlined in darker blue. The central medallion has a similar circular vine terminating in a palmette. The areas of design are bordered by double blue lines. On the outside, single blue lines are drawn around the outer edge of the rim, around the top of the cavetto and above the low ring foot.

The shape, which is more typical of Italian faience, was rarely used by Turkish potters. Several examples are known with varying styles of decoration. One is of 'Abraham of Kutahya' type, decorated in blue and white, with a slightly narrower rim proportionately than this one (Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin, no.89, 120); another is of the 'Golden Horn' type (Keir Collection); and a third has polychrome floral decoration (formerly Adda Collection, published A. Rackham, *Islamic Pottery and Italian Maiolica*, London, 1959, no.152).

Plate

Turkey, first half 16th century
Ceramic; colorless glaze over turquoise and blue design
Diameter: 45.5 cm

The decoration of this bowl is painted blue and turquoise beneath a transparent glaze. In the context of the ceramic traditions of Iznik, this represents a departure. The earliest examples were decorated in blue and white; the addition of turquoise was the first step towards the full polychrome decoration used in the second half of the 16th century.

This example has two unusual features. It is among the largest blue and turquoise Iznik plates and it incorporates two separate designs, which is not seen together on any other piece. The tree with bare waving branches can be found in a slightly more stylized form on a plate in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (see A. Lane, *Later Islamic Pottery*, London, 1957, pl.30B), which is also decorated in blue and turquoise. The grape pattern around the tree is more usually found as a central design on its own. The shape of this piece and its design are derived from Chinese porcelain of the 14th and 15th centuries.

Published: *Tulips, Arabesques and Turbans: Decorative Arts from the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Y. Petsopoulos, London, 1982 pl.73.
Plate
Turkey, circa 1570–80
Ceramic; colorless glaze over polychrome design
Diameter: 32.2 cm

The shallow plate has a narrow inverted rim and stands on a low ring foot. The inside is decorated with a design of intersecting fern leaves painted in blue, with green details and red spines with a cloud scroll where they intersect. A spray of small red flowers at the top frames a green panel of scale pattern, outlined in black and blue. A spray of red hyacinth flowers sway among the fern leaves, their foliage painted in blue and green. The narrow rim has a geometric design with triangles filled in red. On the outside, blue pairs of tulips alternate with blue rosettes, with details painted in green.

Plate
Turkey, circa 1570–80
Ceramic; colorless glaze over polychrome design
Diameter: 29.8 cm

The shallow, rimless plate stands on a low ring foot. The interior is decorated with a central cypress tree painted in pale turquoise outlined in black and flanked by large feathery leaves painted in blue, with red spines and green details. Between the leaves are sprays of roses in red and blue and two red carnations on long, looping stems with turquoise and blue leaves. A blue band with half rosettes encloses the design. On the outside are pairs of blue tulips alternating with blue rosettes with green centers.

One of the amazing features of Iznik wares is how the potters could manipulate a limited number of basic motifs to produce a seemingly endless variety of different floral designs. In other examples showing elements identical to those in this plate, the composition and total effect are quite different.

Plate
Turkey, late 16th century
Ceramic; colorless glaze over polychrome design
Diameter: 35 cm

The deep plate has an everted circular rim and stands on a low rim foot. It is decorated with a central vase, which has a red ground and reserved floral designs with touches of blue, holding a spray of red carnations and a blue flower. The vase is framed by a spray of bluebells and red zinnias. The border has a wave and rock pattern in blue and black. On the outside are paired tulips alternating with rosettes.

The vase motif is unusual on a polychrome plate. It occurs on several pieces of the first half of the 16th century, decorated in blue and turquoise (see Tulips, Arabesques and Turbans: Decorative Arts from the Ottoman Empire, ed. Y. Petsopoulos, London, 1982, pl. 64b).
132 Jug

Turkey, circa 1580
Ceramic; colorless glaze over polychrome design
Height: 25.5 cm

The pear-shaped body stands on an everted ring foot and is divided from the tall everted neck by a low raised collar. The handle has a small spur at its base. The body is decorated with a design of four blue fern leaves with red spines and green details, enclosing sprays of red carnations, rosebuds, green foliage and blue crocuses. The floral design is echoed around the neck and the handle has blue bands and stripes.

133 Incense Burner

Turkey, first half 18th century
Ceramic; colorless glaze over blue design; gilded metal fittings
Height: 21 cm

This ovoid incense burner is mounted on a high foot, set in a saucer-like base. The lid is pierced and capped with a delicate finial. The two halves of the incense burner are bound with metal rings which were originally gilded, and the chains prevent the domed cover from falling back. A potter's seal mark is painted on the base.

This is typical of the pottery produced at Küçükkaya in the 18th and 19th centuries which, while much more modest than the dazzling İznik wares, nevertheless has great charm. The more usual type is painted with bright polychrome decoration, as is seen in a similar incense burner in the Tevfik Kuyas Collection (see Anatolian Civilisations III, Istanbul, 1983, p. 125).

134 Plate

Iran, early 17th century
Ceramic; colorless glaze over red and blue design
Diameter: 41.5 cm

The plate is decorated with a dragon, painted in a pale reddish color on a blue background of scrolling lotus vines. The sides are fluted and the rim has floral scrolls. On the base are four tassel marks.

There seems to have been a large industry in southern Iran involved in making copies of Chinese porcelain. These were mixed in with the real Chinese porcelain when the caravans arrived from China to be loaded on ships bound for Europe. As Chinese porcelain commanded high prices, this was obviously a highly lucrative business. The tassel marks on the base of this plate attempt to imitate the Chinese seal marks often found on Ming Dynasty porcelain.
135 Tile
Turkey, circa 1575
Ceramic; colorless glaze over green design
Size: 24 cm x 23 cm
This unusual tile of marbleized design is similar to those in the Chamber of Sultan Murad III in the Topkapi Palace. There, tile panels of floral sprays were framed by tile columns, imitating antique marble. Another ceramic rendering of marble can be found on the lower part of the mihrab of the Mosque of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in Istanbul, built in 1571 (see Tahan Öz, Turkish Ceramics, Istanbul, n.d., pl. LII).

136 Two Border Tiles
a. Turkey, circa 1560
Ceramic; colorless glaze over polychrome design
Size: 25 cm x 15 cm
b. Turkey, circa 1570
Ceramic; colorless glaze over polychrome design
Size: 23.5 cm x 15 cm
The dimensions and the designs of these pieces indicate that they are border tiles. Tile a. consists of a well-defined floral scroll in which some blossoms are seen from above, while others, like the tulip, are shown from the side pierced by a leaf. The coloristic effect of this tile is intensified by the rich blue ground framed by turquoise stripes. Tile b. has a repeating pattern of large-lobed crest motifs alternating with smaller doubled crests. Both tiles exhibit the full palette of Iznik polychrome wares, although their respective visual effects are quite different.

137 Two Square Tiles
a. Turkey, circa 1530
Ceramic; colorless glaze over blue and turquoise design
Size: 25 cm square
b. Turkey, circa 1570
Ceramic; colorless glaze over polychrome design
Size: 24.5 cm square
These two tiles reflect both the tradition and evolution of Ottoman tile-making, of which the most famous and well-documented center of production was Iznik. In the earliest stages, the color scheme was confined to blue against a white ground. Turquoise was incorporated into the palette in the first half of the 16th century, a stage epitomized by tile a. Subsequently, green and purple were added as well as the distinctive rich red, which was applied in slight relief. Tile b. shows two shades of blue in addition to green and red.