The Metropolitan Museum of Art possesses one of the few truly comprehensive collections of Islamic pottery, but, as in any collection that aims at full representation of a particular art form, there are inevitable gaps. It has fortunately been possible, in the last two years or so, to fill at least some of these gaps, and also to add a number of exceptional pieces in areas already represented. These recent acquisitions cover so wide a range that a survey of them constitutes a brief history of the most important schools of Islamic pottery, from its origins through the main span of its development.

Pottery attained the status of an art in the Muslim world only after contact with the stoneware and porcelain of China, at the end of the eighth century, when these seem to have been imported in quantity for the first time to the Abbasid court at Baghdad. This city, founded by the second Abbasid caliph, al-Mansur, in 762, and Samarra, the soldiers’ city built by al-Mutasim in 836 about fifty miles to the north, became the centers of Islamic culture in the ninth century, and here the first schools of ceramic making were established. The earliest products of the Baghdad kilns are obvious attempts to imitate Chinese T’ang porcelains, but soon the Muslim potters developed a taste of their own, and, although always inspired by Chinese examples, began to produce molded and multicolored wares of great beauty and originality.

One of the main problems of the Iraqi potters was that they did not have the necessary ingredients for making true porcelain—as they did not have the clay called kaolin. This is a deficiency that all Near Eastern countries share. A large part of the history of Islamic pottery making is therefore taken up by the struggle against this deficiency, and by efforts to develop a ceramic body that would at least come close to the admired products of the Chinese kilns.

The Baghdad and Samarra potters used ordinary potter’s clay, which they covered with a lead-fluxed glaze, a material so liquid in firing as to make underglaze painting impossible, for the colors blur or run together. True alkaline glazes, made from powdered sand and quartz crystal, and fluxed with potash or soda would not run in the firing and so made underglaze painting possible; they would not, however, stick to ordinary potters’ clay, which made the production of a new artificial body necessary, made of quartz and glassy matter very similar to that of the actual glaze. Although known in Egypt at all times, these “secrets” of the potters’ art did not reach the rest of the Muslim world before the twelfth century. With such technical limitations the early Iraqi potters had
the formidable task of providing ceramics that would look like and would be to a degree as durable as Chinese porcelains. To please the caliph and his court, they invented a variety of shapes, colored glazes, and decorative schemes. Realizing, for example, that it was impossible to match the special surface quality of white T'ang porcelain merely by using a lead glaze over a white slip, they devised a modified form of lead glaze, mixed with tin oxide, the suspended particles of which rendered it white and opaque in firing. This new glaze, applied in a heavy coating to a highly purified yellow clay body, eventually came very close to the effect of T'ang wares, and many pieces of plain white tin-glazed bowls and small plates have been found in Samarra and elsewhere in Iraq. But it seems that the Muslim potters were not satisfied for long with such unadorned pottery, and a second color was soon added, a magnificent deep cobalt blue. In sparingly applied, small-scale patterns, the surface of usually small, shallow bowls was decorated with a few quick brushstrokes, contrasting in a particularly appealing way with the dull, grayish white of the glaze. These pieces are very rare. Among the recent acquisitions of the Museum are two specimens of a type decorated, not with the customary floral or abstract linear patterns, but with writing. The beauty of the written word attracted Muslim artists of all periods, and in no other culture was writing as a form of art developed to such a degree. One of the two pieces (Figure 1) is decorated with only a single line of three words, running horizontally from the right of the center to the left rim, giving the artist’s name—Sahil. The asymmetry of this inscription is not really Islamic but rather Far Eastern in spirit, and may well have been inspired by a Chinese model. The second bowl (Figure 2) is more in the usual taste of Islamic art, its...
balanced design consisting of two words in the center, one set exactly beneath the other, plus a series of quickly painted half circles running around the edge. This is one of the finest pieces of its kind, both because of its perfect condition and the superior quality of its design.

Most important of all the innovations of the Iraqi potters was the invention of an entirely new technique that revolutionized pottery decoration in the Near East: luster painting. Even though its origins are not entirely clear, and although Egypt is sometimes credited with having produced the earliest examples, in painting on glass, there is no doubt that luster was first employed on a large scale for ceramic decoration in Baghdad and Samarra.

The pigment for luster painting is made by compounding sulfur in various forms with silver or copper oxide. This compound is mixed with red or yellow ocher, with a mild acid such as vinegar or wine lees used as a medium, and is applied to a ceramic surface that has already been glazed and fired. In a second, light firing, with little air and much smoke, the pigment is fixed to the glaze. The ocher then rubs off, and the oxides adhere, producing upon the surface of the glaze a brilliant metallic stain, ranging in color from greenish yellow to reddish brown. Both the hue and the degree of brilliance vary according to the ingredients of the pigment and the thickness of application. Different oxide combinations produce different tones, and the thinner and more transparent the luster film, the greater the range of color effects and reflections that can be achieved. This rich and subtle technique was for many centuries one of the most important features of Islamic pottery decoration.

The makers of the earliest luster pieces used more complex patterns than those on the cobalt-painted wares, and they explored fully the potential for multicolor effects that the new technique offered. A little later, probably toward the end of the tenth century, the potters abandoned the more difficult, if more expressive, polychrome effects for a simpler, overall tone of greenish yellow or golden brown, but at the same time, in compensation, introducing a great variety of figural patterns. All early luster pieces are rare, espe-
cially those that are well preserved, for luster fades easily when the glaze comes into contact with soil acids and begins to corrode. We are therefore very fortunate to have a tenth century bowl (Figure 3) that is not only unusual in size and quality of design, but is also in perfect condition. The symmetrical pattern consists of two large peacocks facing each other, very much in the fashion of a heraldic emblem. The outside is painted with a simple pattern of circles and lines (Figure 4) typical of all Iraqi luster ware.

The technique of luster painting seems to have been a jealously guarded secret that for many years was the exclusive possession of the potters of Iraq. In the eastern Persian province of Khurasan, for example, where, in the ninth and tenth centuries, the city of Nishapur became an important cultural center and produced a wide variety of interesting pottery types, luster painting seems to have been unknown. Pottery imported from Iraq, however, seems to have incited the admiration and envy of Nishapur potters to such a degree that serious attempts were made to imitate it. The results are technically of a quite different nature, and fall far behind the originals in effect, but their bold, decorative designs have a distinctive quality of their own that makes them most attractive. A large bowl (Figure 5) – the largest of its kind yet found – is a perfectly preserved and especially beautiful example of the type. The highly stylized floral and animal motifs, combined in an overall geometrical pattern, are executed with a reddish brown pigment upon a yellow slip. The whole is covered with a shining, translucent glaze, with the evident intent of reproducing both the color and brilliance of true luster. The result is highly effective and original, even though dependent upon Iraqi models – a dependence that can be most clearly seen on the outside of the bowl (Figure 6), where the typical Iraqi design of large circles filled with parallel lines painted in quick brushstrokes is used (compare Figure 4).

As this bowl from Nishapur demonstrates, the Khurasan potters had found a secret of their own; namely, how to paint beneath a fluid lead glaze without the danger of having

**OPPOSITE:**

5, 6. Slip-painted bowl (imitation luster), Persian (Nishapur), x-xi century. Diameter 13 1/2 inches. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 63.159.1

7. Slip-painted bowl, Persian (Khurasan), x century. Diameter 7 1/8 inches. Rogers Fund, 62.170.1
the design destroyed in firing. This technique of underglaze painting appears to have been first developed in the great center of Central Asian culture, Samarkand, which at the time was under the rule of the same local princes, the Samanids, that ruled in Nishapur; it was probably introduced into Nishapur in the tenth century. Special pigments were developed, combining metal oxides, for the colors, with an earth medium that had a similar composition to the clay slip and so formed a bond strong enough not to be dissolved by the liquid glaze. This “slip painting,” as it has been aptly called, carried pottery decoration to new heights in the Muslim East about two centuries before the introduction of alkaline glazes and an artificial ceramic body. Another small bowl from Khurasan (Figure 7) demonstrates in a particularly successful way the possibilities for polychrome painting on pottery in this technique. The essentially abstract design is executed in aubergine, ocher, and brownish red upon a yellow background, and yellow dots are applied here and there to enrich the simple pattern. The yellow, red, and ocher, obviously well mixed with a clay-slip paste, have stayed in place under the glaze, but the aubergine, which perhaps could not be mixed with so much earthen matter without diluting the color, has blurred or run in many areas.

With the decline of Abbasid power during the tenth century, a great many artists, and among them many potters, seem to have left Iraq in search of more profitable and secure employment. The newly established and resplendent court of the independent Fatimid dynasty in Cairo apparently attracted most of them, and it was here that the tradition of luster painting was continued. A small bowl (Figure 8) decorated with a beautifully designed palmette tree, surrounded by a band of inscription, shows the earliest stage of luster painting in Cairo. The way the leaves are drawn, one growing from another in a fashion anticipating one of the most characteristic forms of later Islamic ornament, the arabesque, recalls the designs of Samarra wood carvings of the late ninth century (Figure 9), and their continuation in wood and plaster carvings of
the Tulunid and early Fatimid periods. Since a number of these carvings can be dated rather precisely, the attribution of this bowl to the beginning of the tenth century is relatively secure.

Even though the actual potting is less accomplished, the shapes simpler and less well designed, Fatimid luster wares have one great advantage over those made in Iraq: they were often decorated by truly great painters. Some of these artists may well have been Iraqis, trained in the Samarra tradition, but most of them were undoubtedly Egyptians, trained in the late classical style that survived in Egypt for many a century after the Arab conquest. That many of their works are signed is testimony to the appreciation and social standing the painters seem to have enjoyed. Among the many artists known, two stand out: Muslim and S'ad. Until recently neither was represented in our collection, but we now have received a beautiful bowl by Muslim (Figure 11). It is decorated with the powerfully drawn figure of an eagle, almost heraldic in its simplicity. The signature of the artist appears beneath the eagle's right claw, and also on the center of the back of the bowl (Figure 10). Muslim seems to have remained close to Mesopotamian traditions, and the familiar circle and dash pattern on the outside of this bowl make the origin of the style and technique quite clear.

The twelfth century marks the turning point of pottery making in Persia. With the fall of the Fatimid dynasty in 1171, and probably even before that date, a new migration of potters took place, but this time from west to east. With these artists from Cairo the secrets of alkaline glazing, the manufacture of an artificial ceramic body, and luster painting were introduced into Persia. Pottery was then produced all over Persia in great quantities and of higher quality than any previously known in the Islamic world. Rayy, near Tehran, the capital of the Seljuk Turks who since the tenth century had dominated the politics and culture of Persia, and Kashan, another city ruled by the Seljuks, in central Iran about 150 miles to the south of Tehran, were the principal centers.
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 63.159.2

Gift of W. R. Valentiner, 11.137.1
Because of the similarity of the new ceramic body to alkaline glazes, a fusion between body and glaze could be achieved that was without precedent in the Muslim East. This fusion made the use of a clay slip over the body before painting or glazing unnecessary, but allowed painting on the surface of the body itself. The new alkaline glazes achieved a brilliance and purity that seemed to match those of the still envied Chinese porcelains. The earliest products of the Seljuk workshops are once again greatly influenced by white-glazed T'ang and Sung wares. A bowl with steep sides (Figure 12) resting on a fairly high foot, covered with a brilliant white glaze over a finely potted, pure-white ceramic body, does in fact reach a technical perfection that seems to match that of Chinese porcelain. But, of course, there was no way of making the ceramic body translucent. To overcome this shortcoming, the potter incised his delicate design so deeply into the walls of the bowl that light would penetrate them, creating the illusion that the whole vessel was translucent. This device was used for centuries in Persian pottery, and reappeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Figure 13).

The Seljuk potters were immensely productive. They created an almost infinite variety of shapes, patterns, and sizes, sometimes dependent upon Chinese models, but more often completely and imaginatively original. Among

14 (above), 15 (below, left). Bowl in bird shape, Persian, XII century. Height $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 63.159.3


17. Stucco head, Persian, XII-XIII century. Height 10 inches. Rogers Fund, 33.111
the many types made in the twelfth century, that with molded relief decoration seems to have been especially popular. This type was subject in turn to many variations, of which the Museum possesses a large and representative selection, but one recently discovered example is so unusual that it may well be the unique survivor of its kind. This small white-glazed bowl (Figure 14) is in the shape of a bird with a human face. Its body is decorated with delicate reliefs: a frieze of animals running along the rim, and a medallion on each side containing a human figure. The slightly fluted foot follows the outline of the vessel as a whole—rounded in front and coming to a sharp point behind. The face (Figure 15) with its almond-shaped eyes, straight nose, high cheekbones, and minute mouth, is clearly of the Seljuk type, as encountered in the stucco sculpture (Figure 17) and painted pottery of the period. Its application to what appears to be the body of a bird recalls the mythological figure of the harpy, which can frequently be found in Islamic art and probably goes back to Central Asian sources. The same face, with a very similar crown and necklace, appears on a small fragmentary bowl (Figure 16) in Tehran; there it constitutes the sole element of decoration, repeated eight times, so that the bowl has a multilobed shape. There can be little doubt that both pieces belong to the same school, the location of which we do not know, but it may well have been Rayy.

Muslim potters of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were not content, however, with molding the surfaces of vessels into animal shapes, but occasionally tried to make something closer to the real thing. The result of these efforts is an exceedingly scarce group of human and animal figurines in clay, most of them small in scale, and generally decorated in monochrome glaze. Many still at least pretend to be objects of utility—aquamaniles or vases; that is, they are usually hollow and have an opening at the top into which water can be poured. A few of these pieces, however, are solid: real pieces of small sculpture, a great rarity in Islamic art. Such a work is the handsome camel (Figure 18), only eight inches high, bearing on its hump an enclosed baldachin saddle of the type used by Muslim women. The piece, probably made in the second half of the twelfth century, is covered with a glaze that was originally turquoise blue but has turned an even more appealing silvery tone. Attribution of such objects to a particular workshop is very difficult, but they may have been made at Rayy, for the special delight of the nobles of the court.

It was probably in the same city (though substantial proof is lacking) that the art of luster painting was at this time introduced, and developed to new heights of perfection.
Three luster-painted pieces in the style associated with Rayy significantly enlarge our still much too small collection of this particularly beautiful and important type of Islamic pottery. The style in its most typical form is represented in two of these, a large ewer (Figure 19) and a small, fairly deep bowl (Figure 20). Figures and floral motifs are reserved in a deep brown luster ground, creating a contrast between the solid, unbroken background and the white designs. Individual details are defined with only a few strokes of drawing. More unusual is a large, shallow plate (Figure 21), glazed in cobalt blue on the outside, as are many Rayy luster pieces, but decorated on the inside with a figure of a young man, an inscription, and a scalloped border painted in brown on a white ground—the very reverse of the usual Rayy style. Only a few pieces of this type are known.

The most interesting aspect of these luster-painted wares is their reflection of an otherwise almost entirely lost art: painting from the Seljuk period has come down to us only in a single illuminated manuscript and a few fragments of wall painting, but it must have been extensive, and there can be little doubt that many of the painters who decorated ceramics such as these were equally, if not primarily, employed in decorating the palaces of the Seljuk rulers and princes, and in illustrating their manuscripts. The seated figure of the small bowl especially suggests such painting, for he has obviously been taken out of context. His hand is raised in a gesture of speech, directed toward a companion who is not represented. The drawing of the figure is extremely accomplished; executed in an almost impressionistic manner with a few swift brushstrokes, it is in sharp contrast to the rather ponderous contour of the more decorative figure on the large plate.

Rayy was totally destroyed and its inhabitants slaughtered by the conquering Mongols, who invaded Persia in the early thirteenth century, reaching the capital in 1220. By 1258 they captured Baghdad, and murdered the last Abbasid caliph, who was still at least nominally Leader of the Faithful. With this blow the Abbasid era came to an end. It took almost
20. (above). Luster-painted bowl, Persian (Rayy), xii-xiii century. Diameter 7\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches. Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 63.158.1

21. (below). Luster-painted bowl, Persian (Rayy), xii-xiii century. Diameter 14\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches. Fletcher Fund, 64.60.3

22 (right). Luster-painted tile, Persian (Kashan), xiii century. 12\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches square. Fletcher Fund, 64.60.4

23. Head of a bodhisattva, supposedly from Cave I, Bazakil, Chinese Turkestan, viii century. 14\(\frac{1}{2}\) x 12 inches. Fletcher Fund, 47.18.132

25. Bird designs from Kashan lusterware. From *Ars Islamica*, III, 1936

**OPPOSITE:**


27. (below). Luster-painted plate, Persian (Kashan), dated A.D. 1211. The University Museum, Philadelphia

28. Luster-painted bowl, Persian (Kashan), dated A.D. 1210. Diameter 8\(\frac{5}{16}\) inches. Rogers Fund, 61.40
half a century before the devastated cities of Persia recovered and new cultural life sprang up. Rayy never did recover, and cotton fields stretch out today where once the great Seljuks ruled.

One exception seems to have been the other great pottery center of Persia, Kashan, which prospered under the Seljuks and seems to have survived the Mongol conquest remarkably well. Kashan was active in pottery making from the beginning of the twelfth century. Its best known and probably finest wares are those painted with luster, and the Museum recently added a number of important luster-painted Kashan pieces to its already large collection.

Most unusual of these is a tile in the shape of a cross (Figure 22), decorated with rows of seated figures. Kashan became so famous for its ceramic tiles, with which it supplied the rest of Persia, that all tiles came to be called *kashis* or *kashanis*. Such cross-shaped tiles as this were combined with star-shaped tiles to cover large interior surfaces (Figure 24). Cross-shaped tiles, however, are usually small and decorated only with abstract floral motifs. Those with human figures are rare, and only a small fragment of one was previously in the collection.

The figures on this tile are not painted in reserve like the figures on the Rayy pieces, but rather form an integrated part of the overall decoration. Except for the faces and the haloes, no part of the design is left unembellished. Garments are covered with what looks like a fine scroll ornament but is in fact a series of interlocked half circles, ending in dots. The same pattern appears in the background, where it has been scratched into the luster ground with a sharp point—a typical Kashan technique. The effect created by this dense ornamentation is of a unified design, with hardly any of the strong contrasts between light and dark areas so characteristic of the Rayy style.

The facial types are, however, very similar to those on Rayy luster pottery, and both wares were made at more or less the same time for the same Seljuk rulers. A resemblance can also be found between the persons represented on this and other Kashan luster pieces and
figures in Central Asian wall paintings (Figure 23) dating back as early as the eighth century. Once again is demonstrated the extraordinary importance of Asian, and especially Central Asian traditions in the development of Eastern Islamic art.

A particularly fine example of Kashan lusterware (Figure 28) is also one of the earliest known dated pieces. The shape is typical, with a low, straight, unglazed foot and steep, straight sides, and so is the decoration of the outside, consisting of a continuous row of large circular leaves, painted in luster on the white background of the glaze. The interior contains inscriptions from Persian poetry, either written in luster or scratched into a luster ground. One of these also contains an Islamic date that corresponds to A.D. 1210. Although dated Kashan pieces are not rare (there are more than three hundred presently known), this is one of the earliest recorded. It belongs to a group of luster-painted bowls, all made about the same time in the same workshop, and all employing similar band ornaments and inscriptions. The most unusual details of the decoration are the encircling snakelike dragons, a motif well known in other forms of Seljuk art but rather rare in pottery painting. All the pieces of the group, however, display the motif, probably indicating that they were decorated by a single artist.

Another characteristic Kashan pattern is represented by a large luster-painted plate (Figure 26), of a type not previously in the collection. The decoration consists of scrollwork, with half-palmette leaves and small
birds reserved in the luster ground. Similar birds, incidentally, appear in the background of the cross tile. Such birds are drawn in two distinct poses, flying and standing (Figure 25), and are a virtual trademark of the Kashan workshops. Although the plate is not itself dated, it can be accurately placed. Another large plate (Figure 27), dated 1211, has an almost identical pattern, plus a central medallion with two seated figures similar to those on the cross tile. The same motifs appear on the cover of a small luster-painted box in the collection of A. U. Pope, dated 1219, and on another bowl in the State Museum in Berlin-Dahlem, dated 1217. It is quite likely that our plate, and possibly our cross tile as well, were made about the same time: that is, the second decade of the thirteenth century.
Such comparisons can also help identify pieces that are not decorated in luster. Although Kashan is particularly known for its luster ware, it produced a number of other types of pottery as well. The design on a small bowl painted in black under a green glaze (Figure 29) is of particular interest, as it provides further evidence that a large group of similar vessels came from the Kashan workshops. Reserved in the black background are four birds, which on close inspection reveal themselves as the same type that appear on Kashan luster ware. The very fact that they are represented in reserve, rather than painted on a light ground, is a further similarity with luster technique. When, finally, the shape and fine white ceramic body of the bowl are taken into consideration, there can be little doubt that it was made in Kashan, probably in the early part of the thirteenth century.

Kashan can with certainty be identified as the location of the workshop that produced two polychrome overglaze painted bowls of the so-called Minai type (Figures 30, 31). Minai ware, besides being one of the most beautiful forms of pottery made in the Islamic world, is extremely interesting for its reflection of wall painting and text illustration, of which, as stated before, little has survived from before the thirteenth century. Popular all through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries but probably out of fashion after 1300, it poses many problems of dating and attribution. The two bowls recently acquired have the distinction of being signed by an artist who added to his name the nisbah (indication of place of origin) al-Kashani. One of the bowls, which is dated 1186, bears the full signature of a painter called Abu Zayd. In the inscription of the second bowl, dated 1187, the name has been destroyed, but the nisbah al-Kashani remains intact, and it is likely, to judge from the style of decoration and the close date, that the piece is also the work of Abu Zayd. With this information these bowls are of supreme importance as documents for the identification of Minai ware from Kashan.

Toward the end of the thirteenth century pottery making in Persia declined, although the Kashan workshops continued their activ-
ity into the fourteenth. Later in the fourteenth century there was apparently a revival, for a new type of ware, not previously known and difficult to place and date exactly, came into existence. Since many pieces of this new type have been found in the vicinity of the modern town of Sultanabad, the pottery is usually referred to as Sultanabad ware, or, more correctly, Sultanabad-district ware. It is distinguished by its heavy potting and by the use of a thick, translucent glaze over designs that in some areas are slightly raised. This relief effect is due to the heavy application of white and gray pigments, especially in floral patterns; although some bowls are decorated with abstract linear patterns, the designs usually consist of foliage—blue and green as well as white or light gray—irregularly distributed over the entire surface. Against this background, or within medallions, animals or, more rarely, human figures appear. Although probably made in great quantities, well-decorated and well-preserved examples are rare. One such small bowl (Figure 33) is typical in shape and in its background design of small, orderly shrubs, but the figure in the center is highly unusual. It is a bird with a human head, wearing what looks like a feather cap resembling those worn by the Mongols (Figure 32). It is likely that this is a representation of a harpy, like that of the Seljuk bowl (Figure 14), but for this period and medium the subject is rather puzzling. Because of its fine state of preservation, high quality of design, and iconographic peculiarity, this piece makes an especially valuable addition to our small group of Sultanabad-district wares.

Our two final examples come from the Safavid period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Persia was united and pacified under a native dynasty and enjoyed a period of great artistic activity in all fields. Paradoxically, Safavid pottery is rare even by comparison with some of the scarcer types of early pottery.

Our collection of Safavid pieces is in general small, and any addition is therefore of great importance. The first of these acquisitions is a bottle (Figure 36) with a slightly molded white ground, its design a lively pattern of hunters amid elaborate foliage, painted in black and blue. The other is a large bowl (Figures 34, 35) with a magnificent floral design, also painted in black and cobalt blue on a white ground and covered with a brilliant translucent glaze. Both probably belong to the earlier part of the seventeenth century, when the cities of Kerman in the southeast and Meshhed in the northeast were the leading ceramic centers of Persia, and both follow the long tradition of blue and white pottery, which had a revival at this time.

Through his ingenuity and inventiveness, his originality and unmatched ability to create constantly new shapes, new techniques, new forms of decoration, the Muslim potter counts among the greatest craftsmen of this most earthy of arts. Just as he was frequently inspired by the pottery of other countries, notably China, he influenced with his work the forms of ceramic making elsewhere. The style of cobalt-blue decoration, for instance, was first developed in Persia and carried from there to the Far East. In fact, it appears that polychrome painted decoration, which was practiced in China only from the thirteenth century on, was initiated by Islamic potters. The impact of Muslim ceramics on the potteries of Europe, Italy and Spain in particular, is well known. Byzantine ceramics are directly derived from Syrian and Persian pottery of the earliest periods, and the potteries of Faenza, Padua, and Gubbio owe an undisputed debt to the art of the Muslim potter. Islamic pottery therefore occupies a central position in the history of ceramic making of modern times.

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