

A Collection of 13C tiles:



Turquoise blue Sultanabad Tile (Left)

This tile is a type of Sultanabad ware using a low relief on a fritware body and covered with an alkaline turquoise blue glaze. It is the first type in a group of three types of ware found near Sultanabad. An example of the third style is a dish in the cabinet with the lustre ware examples (shown here below the tiles). The items were not made at Sultanabad; both items were probably made in Kashan. This tile would be alternated in the design with lustre ware tiles to create a bigger pattern.

The location where pottery is found is not an accurate indicator of where it was made! Only careful excavation of kiln sites can prove where particular items of pottery were made. There are chemical tests that can be made on the waste pottery and broken saggers around the kiln site.

(Wasters are pottery items that have gone wrong during manufacture – saggers are ceramic containers in which the pottery to be fired are put allowing them to be stacked and giving some protection whilst in the kiln).

Sultanabad wares are actually a special type of underglaze-painted fritwares which were introduced in Iran during the Il-khanid period in the second half of the 13th century.



The Sultanabad bowl in the collection was probably made in Kashan.

Lustre ware Antelope Tile (Right)

The prosperous city of Kashan lies some 260 km (160 miles) south of Tehran, the capital of Iran. It was quite famous for its ceramics, silks, and carpets. Kashan's 12th and 13th Century lustred ceramics and tiles became so famous in the Middle East that 'Kashi' or 'Qashani' became the generic name of floor and wall tiling.

Star shaped tiles come in a variety of shapes and sizes, but the most common are the eight-pointed ones. The stars on display here show some of the popular images and subjects depicted on Iranian ceramics during this period. Their style is inspired by contemporary Iranian miniature paintings, a common exchange of influence between different forms of Islamic art.

Kashan tiles come in three types: those made for covering 'Mihrabs' - prayer niches in mosques; frieze tiles, usually used with dado tile-panels to cover the lower parts of internal walls; and star-and-cross tiles used to fill in dado-panels of internal walls.

To explain what the mirab is - in a mosque Muslims face the Quibla wall (means prayer direction). This wall is indicated by a niche called the Mirab – this is often richly decorated with tiles.

These tiles have figurative images so were NOT for a Mirab.

Fitting tiles together:

These examples are not from the Burrell, although similar examples are in the Collection.

