

Objects from the Islamic Civilisations that  
you could include in a general tour

# The Islamic World: 1000 Years in 18 Minutes

A brilliant introduction to the history of the Islamic Empire

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpcgXTnd\\_74](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpcgXTnd_74)



33.220

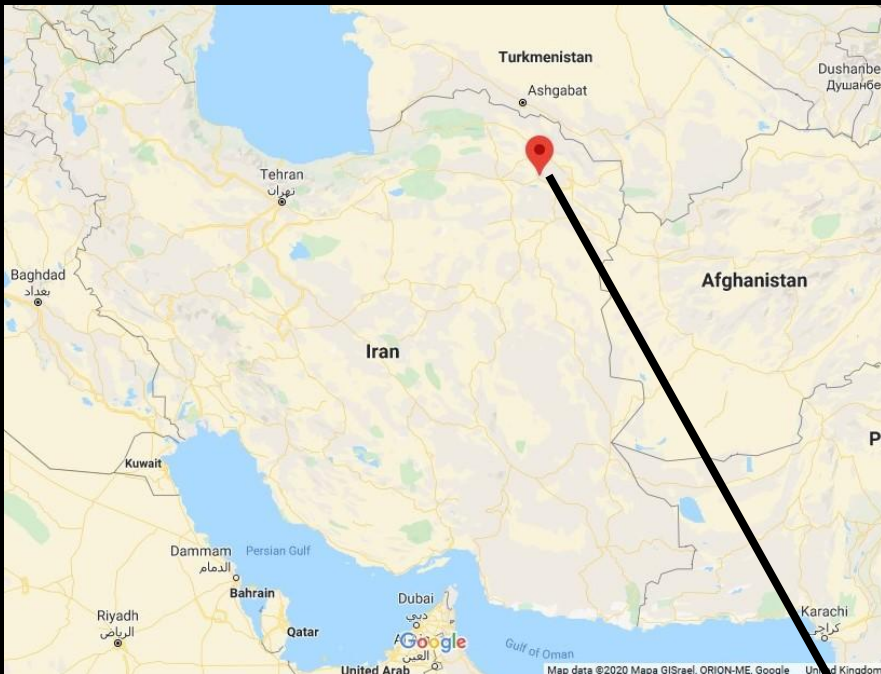
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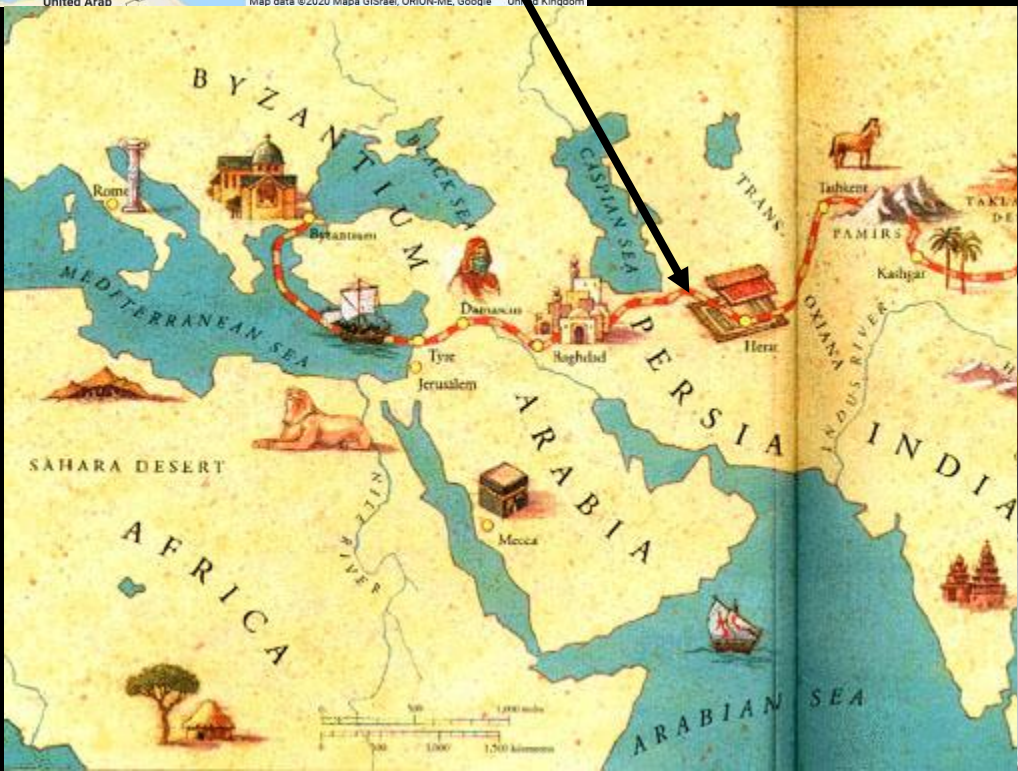
Potters and  
Kiln Workers

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- Made in NISHAPUR
- On silk road
- Early porcelains = search for white
- Influence of Tang Sancai colours
- Early Arabic letters?
- Manganese outlining to prevent bleed







- Made in EGYPT – Fatimid dynasty (still Abbasid caliphate)
- White tin oxide white slip
- Classic elements of non-religious Islamic Art:
  - Arabesques
  - Calligraphy (“Blessings”)
  - Figurative images (Hares with collars)
- Lustre decoration
  - Make and fire the pot
  - Add the lustre decoration
  - Reducing Kiln  
(remove source of oxygen to leave metal amalgam on pot)



- Silver oxide
- Copper oxide
- Flux – eg sulphur
- Grind fine and soak in vinegar, wine lees, or urine to dissolve the oxide
- Paint onto pot



Gabri ware



Bodies,  
subversive and  
irreverent

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Gabri ware



Bodies,  
subversive and  
irreverent





Buyids:  
Turkic people from around the  
Caspian Sea

Shi'as

Ruled about 945-1055

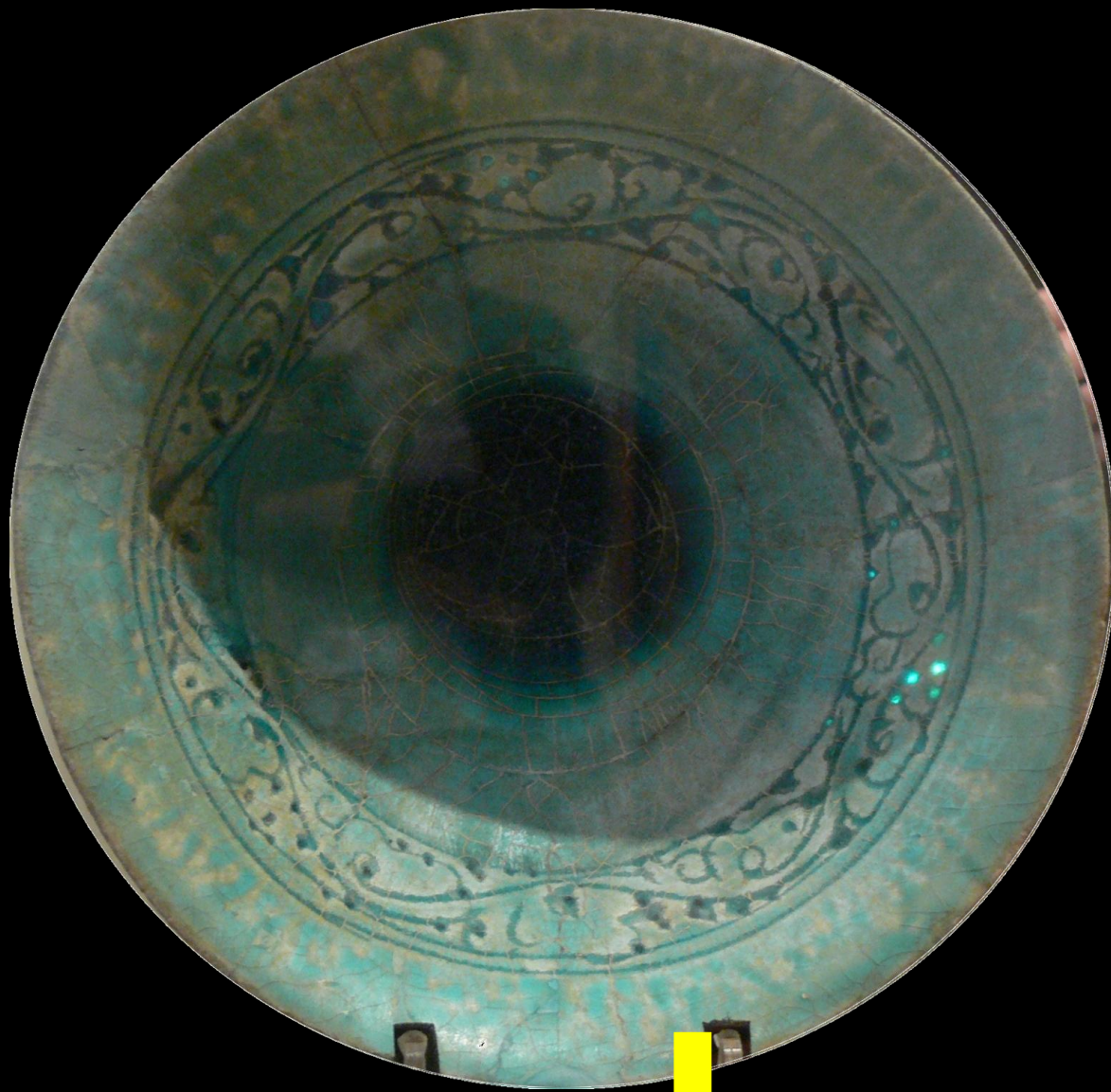
Buyid pottery = Gabrī ware - from the Garrus district which lies in the mountainous region of western Iran

Red-bodied earthenware covered with a white slip (liquified clay washed over the body before firing)

Decorated by scratching through the slip to reveal the red body beneath

Yellowish or green lead glazes were used

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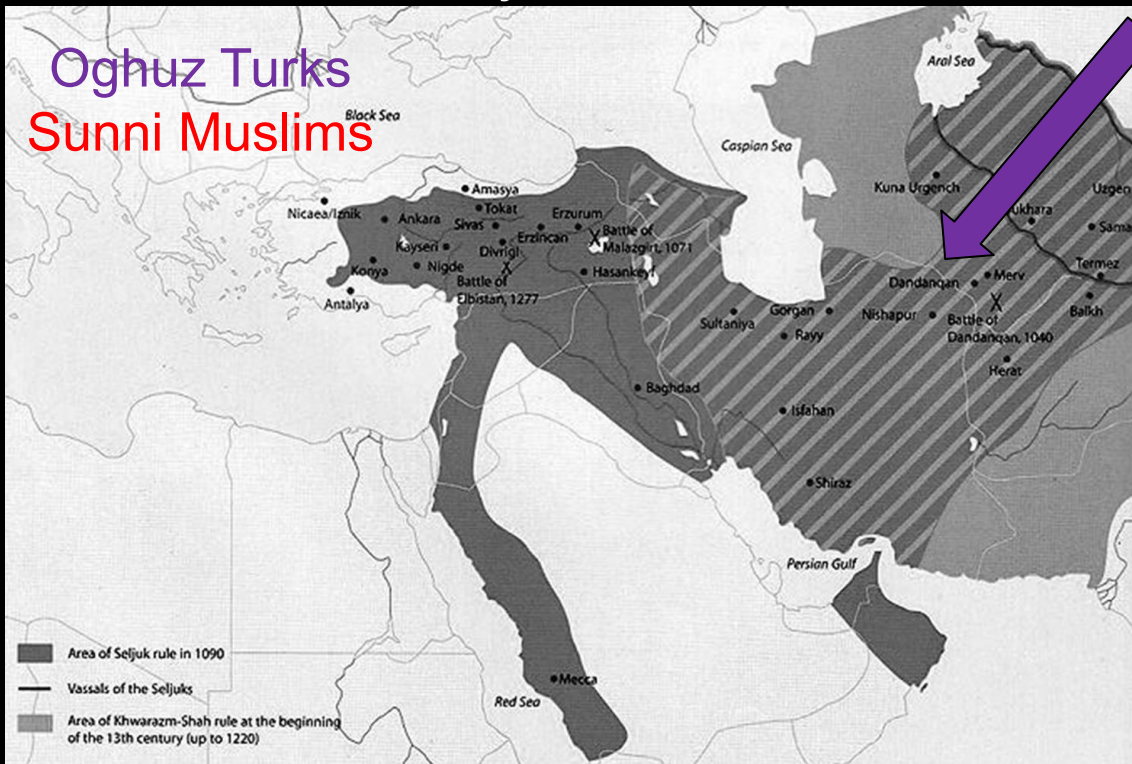
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# Extent of Seljuk Control - 1090



Oghuz Turks - Nomads of Turkish origin (present-day Mongolia)

1055 – early 13C

The most dominant colour was turquoise, a vibrant hue that the Seljuks associated with the heavens.

Introduction of siliceous paste  
– Fritware or stone-paste.

Mostly quartz with some ground glass and clay.  
Much more difficult to work because of its hardness, but also whiter and finer.

Punch holes through body, apply translucent glaze  
= some transparency.

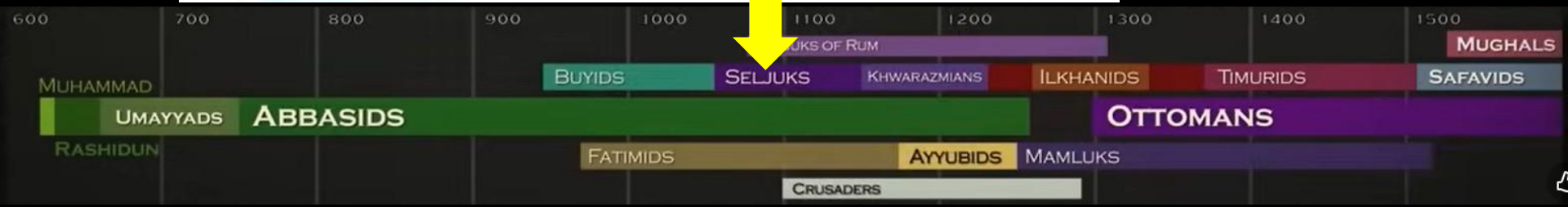
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Frieze-tile with last two letters of a word and the following word from verse 4 in chapter 48 of the Qur'an. May have formed part of the exterior decoration of a dome or the upper part of a religious building.

'God installs tranquillity and calmness in the hearts of the believers so that they grow in faith.'

### Arabic font styles

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Riqa

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Naskhi

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Nastaliq

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Thuluth

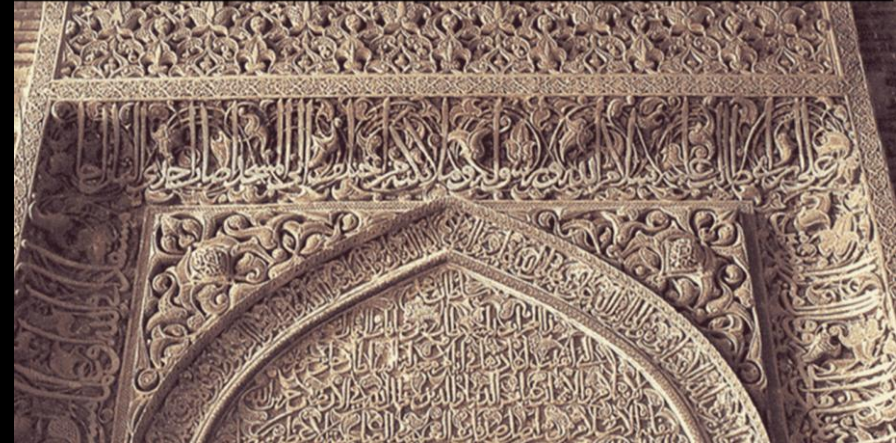
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Muhaqqaq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Square Kufic

Mihrab in the Prayer Hall of the Friday Mosque in Isfahan – 1319



Sultan Baybars Qur'an - Early 1300s



33.141

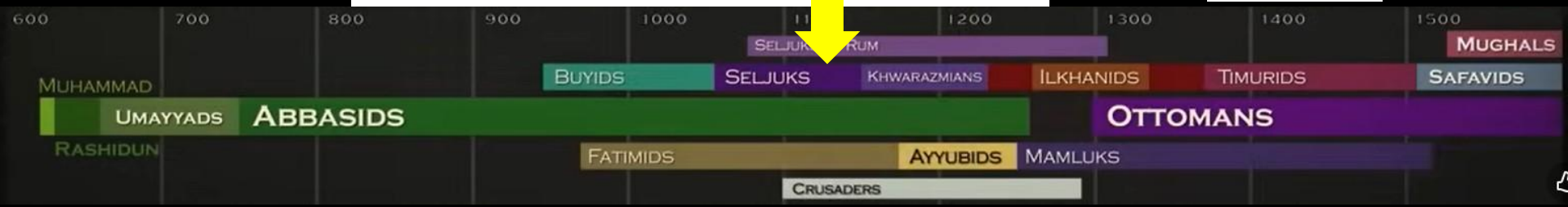
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Maiolica wares - Italy

Dried fruits,  
etc

Herbs and  
medicines



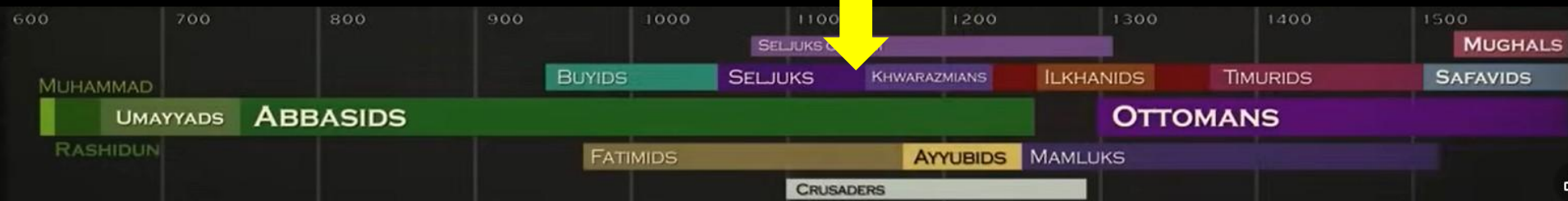
16 C Apothecary

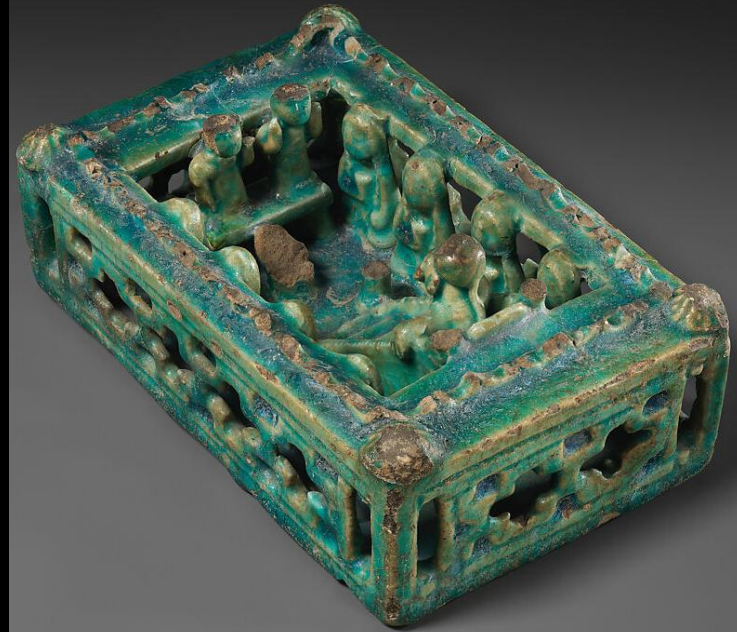
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Bodies,  
subversive and  
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## Maquette or house model

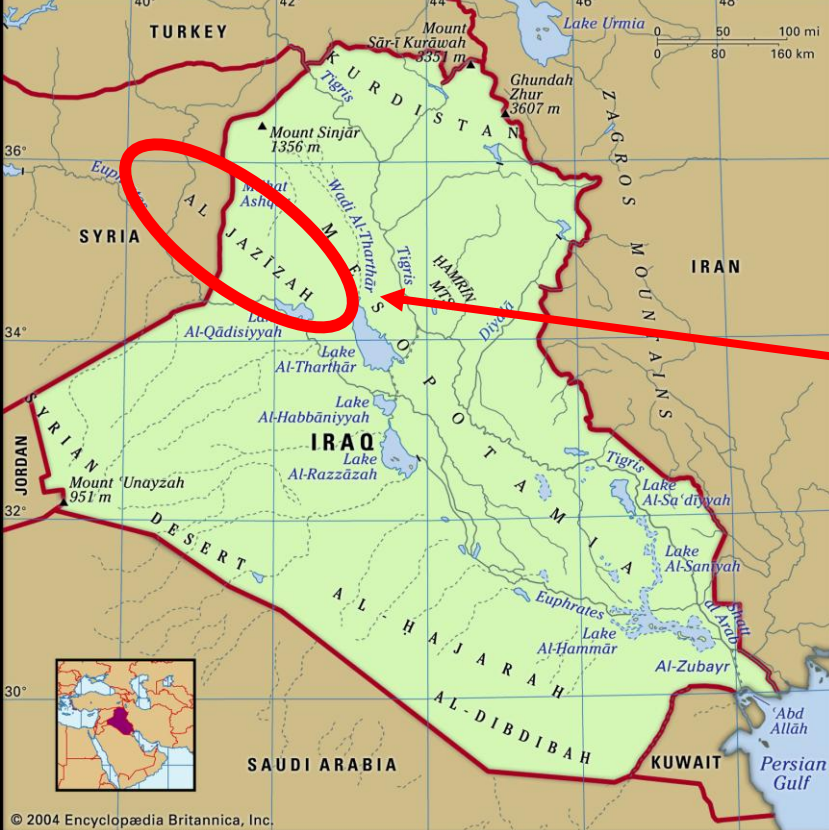
No convincing explanation for their use has been found. It has been suggested that they might have been used during Persian New Year or Nourouz festivities.



Mirror for divination,  
Seljuk period, 1100s–1200s

Cast bronze

Made in the Jazira region, north-west Iraq /  
south-east Turkey



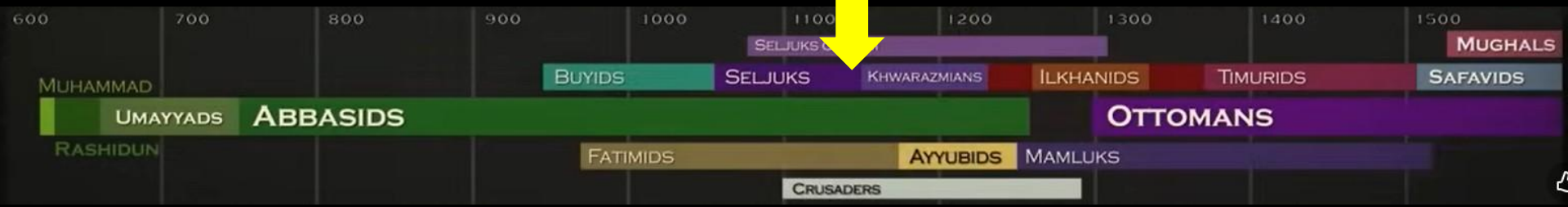
‘Glory and lasting life,  
and good fortune and beauty,  
and magnificence and praise,  
and happiness and eminence,  
and dominion and growth,  
and power and blessings upon its owner for ever.’

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Alternate moulded images:  
Head to head sphinxes – good luck  
Ring of Kingship



The god Ahura-Mazda  
grants the ring of kingship

Sasanian rock relief  
depicting the investiture of  
king Ardašir I (224 CE)



33.124

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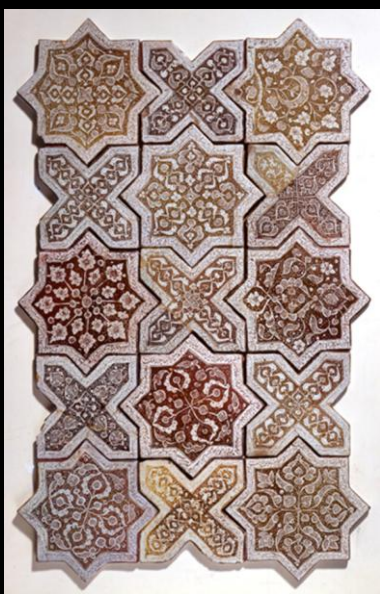
Decorated with lustre, has a long neck, a bulbous fritware body, and a flaring lobed mouth. Human faces decorate the lobes of the mouth (good luck?), and seated figures (Sufis?) fill the round medallions on the body.





Cobalt blue underglaze  
Lustre decoration  
Calligraphy

Figurative image = nonreligious



**Kashan** = prosperous city 160 miles south of Tehran

All the raw materials needed for fine quality pottery

Famous for ceramics, silks, and carpets

**'Kashi'** or **'Qashani'** = generic name of floor and wall tiling.



## Mina'i ware

- Persian for “enamel”
- Developed in Kashan pre-Mongol 1219
- Replaced by Lajvardina ware
- Has been described as "*probably the most luxurious of all types of ceramic ware produced in the eastern Islamic lands during the medieval period*".
- Fritware or stonepaste is fully decorated with detailed paintings using ground glass in several colours, usually including figures

As the ultimate champion, Rostam is determined to find a horse to match his own strength and stamina. After several days of searching, he spots a young colt “strong as an elephant ... his hoofs of steel, his skin bright and dappled as though flecked with petals of red roses on saffron.” Rostam subdues the colt by throwing a lasso around its neck. When he asks for the horse’s price, the herdsman replies, “If you are Rostam, then mount him and defend the land of Iran. The price of this horse is Iran itself, and mounted on his back you will be the world’s savior.” He calls it Rakhsh (Thunder), a name as well known in Persian literature as that of Rostam himself.

From ‘Shahnama’ – Book of Kings, by Persian poet Ferdowsi Circa 1000AD

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Lajvardina ware



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## Mongol Empire, A.D. 1294



### Ilkhanid Dynasty Subject to Kublai Khan

Lapis lazuli:

- Once more precious than gold
- Has spiritual properties – protection

Established by Hulegu, brother of Kublai Khan – sacked and destroyed Bagdad in 1256 and killed the Abbasid Caliph (rolled in carpet and rode horses over him)

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After the Ayyubid Dynasty, the Mamluks ruled Egypt, the Levant and the Hejaz from the mid-13th to early 16th centuries, with Cairo as the capital. It was ruled by a military caste of mamluks (freed slave soldiers) headed by a sultan.



Candlesticks at a Mihrab

First warriors to defeat the Mongols.

Encouraged trade, and Egypt became a centre for craftsmanship especially in bronze work.

Decorated with the titles of the Mamluk patron who commissioned it, stating:

'by the most noble authority, lofty, lordly, great; the kingly, supportive, ... provider of protection; the masterful, maintainer, prince al-Nassiri'

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OTTOMAN  
IRAN

Iznik



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Yuan dish



# Ottoman Empire

Ottomans loved Chinese ceramics, especially blue and white. Potters of Iznik to reproduce these designs with some adaptations to suit Ottoman taste.

This is an early blue-and-white Iznik 'grape dish' based on a 15th century Chinese prototype of three bunches of grapes amid vine leaves, with the rim based on a 14th century Yuan-style rim. Influenced by Chinese porcelains, especially after Sultan Salim the Grim (1512–20) conquered Tabriz in Iran, Damascus in Syria, and Cairo in Egypt, where he obtained large quantities of Chinese ceramics which were brought back to the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, between 1514 and 1517.



41.42

OTTOMAN  
IRAN



Iznik



Short Corridor

1550 to 1700





Early Iznik

## Iznik – originally Nicaea

Colours:

Originally blue

Then green and turquoise

Then red – Armenian Bol



Damascus ware

Suliman the Magnificent

- Nicaea: site of the First (The Nicene Creed) and Second Councils of Nicaea.
- Capital city of the Empire of Nicaea following the Fourth Crusade in 1204, until the recapture of Constantinople by the Byzantines in 1261.
- Nicaea was also the capital of the Ottomans from 1331 to 1335.

40.32

ISLAMIC SPAIN



Made in Valencia



Short Corridor



1430 to 1460



# Muslim potters –Christian Customers

## Hispano-Moresque



790

Early 700s – Muslim army arrive in Spain  
750 - Umayyad Dynasty established by last prince escaping Abbasids



Sacred monogram 'IHS'. the first 3 letters of the name of Jesus in Greek – IHSOVS



1150

1171 fall of the Fatimid dynasty

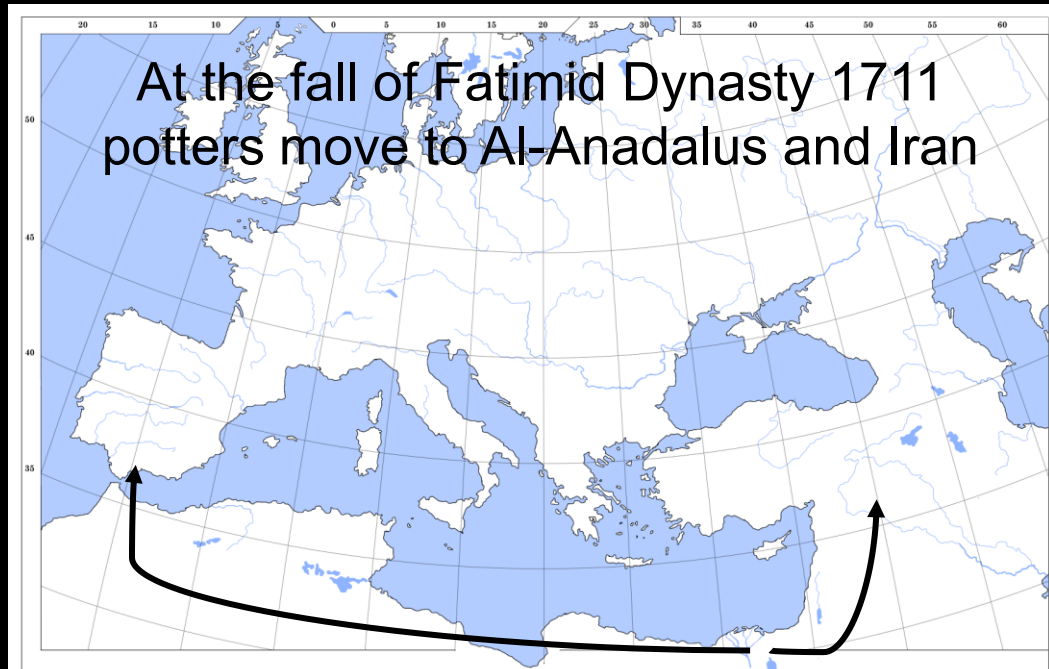


At the fall of Fatimid Dynasty 1711  
potters move to Al-Anadalus and Iran



1300

1492 - Reconquista capture Granada from the Nasrids and declare victory over the Muslims



# Albarelo

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Short Corridor

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'Belle Donne' (or beautiful women) dishes, painted with portraits of beautiful young women, perhaps exchanged between courting couples as expressions of love.

## Maiolica Ware Italian tin glazed earthenware

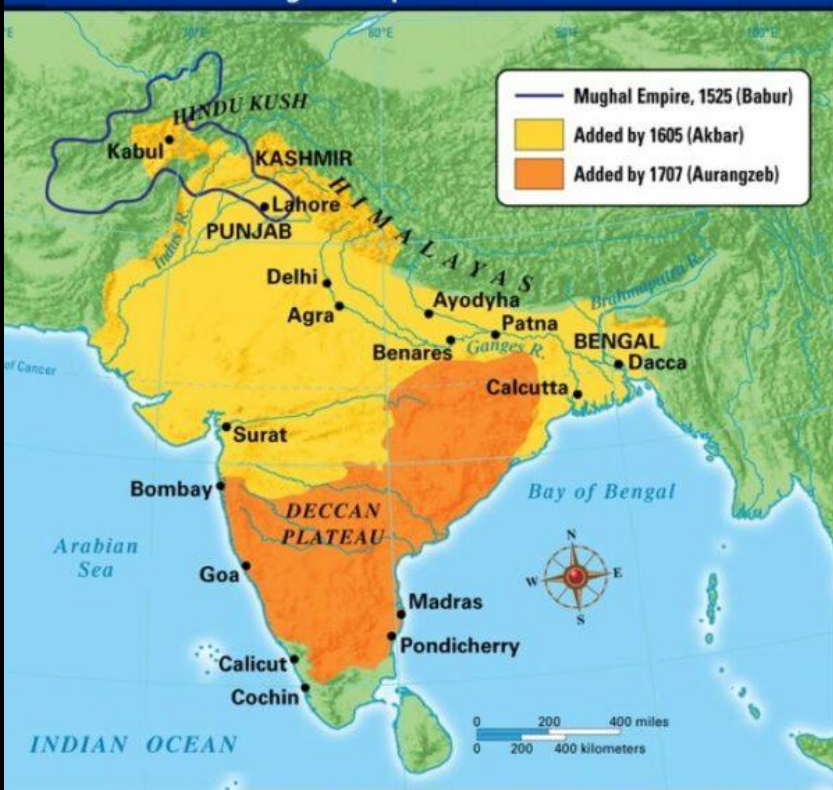
Albarello Jar:  
Easy removal from a shelf  
Lip for cloth or parchment cover  
Dried fruits, etc – fruits  
Hands – medicinal herbs, etc

At expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Christian Spain, many move to Italy = Maiolica ware





## Growth of the Mughal Empire, 1526–1707



Lahore

Capital of Mughal Empire 1586–1598)

Made in the reigns of:

Jahangir (born Salim, [55] reigned 1605–1627)

Shah Jahan (reigned 1628–1658) - the Taj Mahal

The Mughal emperors, particularly Akbar and Jahangir, were known for their extravagant and elaborate hunts, which often involved the use of cheetahs. These hunts were not just for the thrill of the chase but also for the prestige and status of the emperor.

Cheetahs were trained and used to hunt various game, including blackbuck, antelopes, and gazelles. The process of training cheetahs for hunting was relatively straightforward, typically taking three to four months. Once trained, cheetahs were kept on leashes, similar to domesticated dogs, ready to be deployed for royal hunts. The use of cheetahs in hunting was a defining feature of Mughal court life.



Cheetah with collar