

***Tile***, mid-17th century

Iznik, Turkey, Ottoman Empire (1299–1922)

Underglaze-painted fritware

This tile, with its shades of blue underglaze painted on a white slip, is a typical Iznik production of the late 17th century. The design incorporates common elements, including stylized plants like tulips, carnations, honey-suckle, and cypress trees. The positioning of one half of a tree on either side indicates that identical tiles were produced to cover the surface of a building with a continuous pattern. The frame suggests that the tile was removed from its original setting and sold as an individual artwork. There is a robust ceramic trade in Turkey even today. It is quite common for visitors to purchase either factory- or handmade tiles as souvenirs.

Huntington Museum of Art

Gift of Drs. Joseph B. and Omayma Touma, 1997.19

***Jug***, about 1590–1600

Iznik, Turkey, Ottoman Empire (1299–1922)

Underglaze-painted fritware

This jug is a delightful example of ceramics from Iznik (called Nicaea in antiquity). The city was already a center for ceramic production prior to the establishment of trademark Iznik-style objects popularized by the Ottoman court. One reason for its success as a hub for pottery was its proximity to the necessary materials: white clay, fine white sand, wood, and fresh water. Iznik was also a center of trade, which facilitated the distribution of its pottery throughout the Ottoman Empire.

This jug is painted with swirling saz leaves alternating with carnations and tulips in diagonal bands that emphasize the rounded shape of the body. The use of floral motifs was meant to evoke the sumptuous gardens of the Ottoman court in which many of these varieties grew.

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Gift of Drs. Joseph B. and Omayma Touma, 2000.10.25



Women participating in the traditional art of Azerbaijani carpet weaving, 2005.  
Photo: Roya Taghiyeva for Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan and UNESCO.

***Pistols***, late 18th to early 19th centuries

Turkey, Ottoman Empire (1299–1922)

Steel, silver, wood, and coral

Gunpowder was created in China in the 9th century. The first guns were produced in Europe during the 14th century. The Ottomans quickly realized the advantages of firearms and began manufacturing their own guns and artillery in the 15th century. These pistols feature elaborate decoration that often adorns firearms from this region. In some cases, the function of the weapon was secondary to its appearance. Every element on these pistols is decorated, from the serpentine silver designs along the barrels to the inlaid coral and elaborately cast silver mounts on the stock.

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Gift of Drs. Joseph B. and Omayma Tuma, 2000.10.85-86

***Long-barreled Pistol***, early 19th century  
Maghreb (Northwest Africa), possibly Algeria  
Wood, silver, coral

Pistols, small firearms designed to be held in one hand, were in use throughout Southwest Asia and North Africa from the 17th century onward, but most of the surviving examples were manufactured during the 18th and 19th centuries. Many of these firearms were imported, with locks that were produced in Europe. They were acquired in trade, as spoils of battle, or were copies of European prototypes. This pistol has a flintlock and a barrel, likely French, incorporated within a North African wooden mount. The stock is inlaid with coral and silver wire. The combination of materials used to create this single object illuminates the increasing circulation of materials, objects, and people globally that occurred during the 19th century.

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Gift of Drs. Joseph B. and Omayma Touma, 2000.10.75

***Begging Bowl (Kashkul)***, 18th century

Shiraz, Southern Iran

Tinned copper

Kashkul, or beggar's bowl, is perhaps the most recognizable element associated with Sufis and dervishes, who are known to have given up their worldly possessions and traveled in search of religious illumination. Usually, these distinctive shaped objects were made of various materials ranging from coco-de-mer, wood, metal, and ceramics. Some have related the kashkul's shape to boats, referencing the travels of its owner.

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Gift of Drs. Joseph B. and Omayma Tuma, 2000.10.56

**Lamp**, 12th-13th century  
Iran, Seljuk period (1050–1300)  
Cast bronze

This lamp likely illuminated a secular, rather than sacred, space and either rested on a stand or hung from a chain. The shape of this bronze oil lamp was influenced by earlier examples in other materials—in this case, ceramic. The bird-shaped finial and unusual inclusion of a hinged ram's head for the cover imbue it with a sense of whimsy. Both the body and the foot are decorated with incised animals and symbols. The inscriptions on the cover are no longer readable, but likely conveyed good wishes. The absence of a dedication indicates that the lamp was created for the market rather than a private commission.

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Gift of Drs. Joseph B. and Omayma Tuma, 2004.3.27



*Conversation Between the Narrator (Sanjaya) and the Blind King (Dhritarashtra); from the Bhagavad Gita, 19th century, illustrated Sanskrit manuscript. The British Library. 13758, Folio 12r.*