

CORNING MUSEUM OF GLASS

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Glass Medallion with Falconer

This translucent purple disk was decorated on its front by means of a stamp, which imparted the low-relief design in the glass. Depicted in the scene is a horse running to the left, astride which is a rider who turns at the waist to look out at the viewer. He wears an elaborate headdress, a belted caftan, and knee-length boots. A falcon perches on his left fist. Below the horse and rider, a hound pursues a hare to the right. The canine's jaws are open, and the animal appears to be about to seize its frightened prey. A second bird above the horse's head completes the scene. Perhaps this bird is the falcon's prey.



Medallion with Falconer, Islamic, Central Asia, 12th century. Stamped. Diam. 9.1 cm, Th. 0.4 cm. (2011.1.1)

Falconry was the sport of kings and noblemen, and it is likely that the man depicted here comes from the upper echelons of his society. At least six Islamic disks with falconers are known, and all may have been made with the same stamp. Similar disks show eagles, lions attacking gazelles, and birds of prey catching hares. The Museum is fortunate to have in its collection another stamped medallion decorated with a musician playing a lute (2010.1.10). All of these images were popular in the Islamic world in the Middle Ages, and several are inscribed with the names of 12th-century rulers. These inscribed examples, along with other data, help to assign a 12th-century date for the Museum's disk.

In the 1930s, archaeologists discovered similar disks set in a plaster window grille in a medieval palace at Tirmidh, Uzbekistan. This discovery helps to explain the function of the Museum's disk as a miniature windowpane.

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