

# The Fatimids | The Decorative Arts

'In the Fatimid period the minor arts reached new heights in terms of both quality and quantity.'

In the Fatimid period the minor arts reached new heights in terms of both quality and quantity. Highly skilled artisans and craftsmen produced sophisticated artefacts in an array of media to meet the specifications of a diverse clientele from both the royal court and the cities. The most exquisite objects were reserved for the Fatimid court. Princes and courtiers vied to possess vessels carved from highly prized, imported rock-crystal. Glass was also popular, and Fatimid patronage enabled the industry in Fustat to apply the highest technological standards to blowing, moulding, cutting and embossing their wares.



**Name:**

Bottle

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 4th–5th century / AD 10th–11th century Fatimid

**Details:**

The British Museum

London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

Fatimid rock-crystal was highly prized in Europe where many are found in church treasuries adapted for liturgical purposes, such as reliquaries.

---



**Name:**

Spherical bottle

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 5th century / AD 11th century Fatimid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum

Berlin, Germany

**Justification:**

The cut-glass decoration on this small glass bottle imitates rock-crystal.

---



**Name:**

Fragment of a glass vessel

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 4th century / AD 10th century Fatimid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art

Cairo, Egypt

**Justification:**

The style of the highly sophisticated blue-glass decoration on this cup recalls that found on rock-crystal vessels.

---



**Name:**

Carafe

**Dynasty:**

Hegira, end of the 4th–first half of the 5th centuries / AD 10th–11th centuries  
Fatimid–Zirid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

**Justification:**

A cut-glass vessel from Mansuriyya (Kairouan). It pre-empted later Fatimid glass-production from Egypt.

---



**Name:**

Glass dish

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 4th–6th century/ AD 10th–12th century Fatimid

**Details:**

Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums  
Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

A cut-glass dish, representative of the variety of designs that could be achieved by this technique.

---