





Table I. Acquisition and provenance histories of the four (truly five) luster tiles from the Emamzadeh Yahya at Varamin analyzed in study. All tiles are presumed to have been made in Kashan, dated or dateable between 660/1262 and 661/1263, and measure about 30 centimeters.

Tile	Accession number & museum	Summary of Acquisition & Provenance	Sources & Quotes
<p>Cross tile, undated</p> 	<p>EAX.289.b, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford</p>	<p>Part of a set of six tiles. This cross was previously mounted in a frame surrounded by four star tiles (see fig. 8).</p> <p>1932 is the earliest date on record in the Ashmolean. The tiles were probably a transfer from the museum's Western Art department.</p> <p>The fifth star tile (EAX.289.a, dated Moharram 661/November–December 1262) is currently on view.</p>	<p>"From the Imāmzādeh Yahya, at Varamin, Persia" (Object card; see fig. 8)</p>
<p>Cross tile, undated</p> 	<p>1838B-1876, Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London</p>	<p>Purchased in 1875 by Robert Murdoch Smith, buying agent for the South Kensington Museum (later V&A), from Tehran-based dealer Jules Richard.</p> <p>This cross was part of a set of seven large crosses, hence the letter B in the first part of the accession number.</p> <p>The price for the set was 7 pounds, 10 shillings.</p> <p>As a group, these tiles were the 1,838th 'object' in an enormous acquisition from Jules Richard for the museum.</p>	<p>"Priced List of ancient tiles purchased from M. Richard referred to in Report no. 25," no. 20, V&A Archive, MA/1/S2325</p> <p>"Nos. 18–19 [sic, 19–20], large stars and crosses, fitting into each other, come from Verameen whither they were probably taken like no. 14 & 15 from the ruins of Rhages." (Murdoch Smith, report no. 25, V&A Archive, MA/1/S2325; see also Murdoch Smith, <i>Persian Art</i>, 35)</p> <p>"From the ruins of Verameen" (V&A Ceramics registers)</p> <p>For further discussion, see Fuchsia Hart in Hart and Overton, <i>Between the Object, Archive, and Gallery</i>. See also Overton and Nakhaei, "From Varamin to Honolulu," section 1875–76: Tehran.</p>

<p>Star tile, a composite of two half tiles, undated</p> 	<p>1837H/L-1876, Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London</p>	<p>Purchased in 1875 by Robert Murdoch Smith, buying agent for the South Kensington Museum (later V&A), from Tehran-based dealer Jules Richard.</p> <p>This star was part of a set of ten large stars, four in halves, including this H and L. At some point likely during its life in the museum, the two half tiles were fused together as one.</p> <p>The price for the set was 35 pounds.</p> <p>As a group, these tiles were the 1,837th ‘object’ in the Jules Richard acquisition.</p> <p>*It is likely that this composite was originally made as a single tile with various verses from sura <i>al-Insan</i> (76:1–2, 25–28). It was then cut in half to meet mounting needs within the tomb (that is, areas requiring half tiles). It can therefore be described as a probable single tile in the Kashan workshop, two half tiles in the tomb of Emamzadeh Yahya, and a re-composite in the South Kensington Museum.</p>	<p>“Priced List of ancient tiles purchased from M. Richard referred to in Report no. 25,” no. 19, V&A Archive, London, MA/1/S2325</p> <p>“Nos. 18–19 [sic, 19–20], large stars and crosses, fitting into each other, come from Verameen whither they were probably taken like no. 14 & 15 from the ruins of Rhages” (Murdoch Smith, report no. 25, V&A Archive, MA/1/S2325; see also Murdoch Smith, <i>Persian Art</i>, 35)</p> <p>“From the ruins of Verameen” (V&A Ceramics registers)</p> <p>For further discussion, see Fuchsia Hart in Hart and Overton, <i>Between the Object, Archive, and Gallery</i> (around 2:43 for views of the front and back). See also Overton and Nakhaei, “From Varamin to Honolulu,” section 1875–76: Tehran.</p>
<p>Cross tile, dated 661/1262–63</p> 	<p>1077A-1892, Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London</p>	<p>Acquired in 1892 from the widow of collector-dealer William Edkins (d. 1891).</p> <p>This tile was part of a large purchase, mainly of tiles, for 125 pounds (920 to 1435-1892). It is possible that the tile was bought on the London market.</p>	

Citation: Trinitat Pradell, Judit Molera, Moujan Matin, and Keelan Overton. “Microanalytical and Microstructural Analysis of Thirteenth-Century Luster Tiles Attributed to the Emamzadeh Yahya in Varamin, including a Comparison to a Nineteenth-Century Imitation ‘Luster’ Tile by ‘Ali Mohammad Esfahani.” Essay in *The Emamzadeh Yahya at Varamin: An Online Exhibition of an Iranian Shrine*. 33 Arches Productions, June 7, 2026. Host: Khamseen: Islamic Art History Online.

Direct links to [this essay](#), the [Luster gallery](#), and the Emamzadeh Yahya [website](#).