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TURQUOISE-GLAZED CERAMIC TILE

IRAN; 12TH-13TH CENTURY

H: 24.5; W: 23.0; D: 5.7 CM

It is uncertain how this thick tile was used. It may have been the decorative finial to a ceramic structure, for example a cenotaph or large wall decoration, and as such could be seen as an unconventional palmette. It could also have been part of a calligraphic decoration, in which the two central vertical elements could be viewed as the top of a combination of letters, for example *lam alif*. Turquoise-glazed inscriptions inlaid in unglazed brick structures are known from Persian architecture in the 12th-13th century.

No matter how we understand the tile, it makes an exceedingly distinctive impression and is a good example of how Muslim artists created new forms by stylizing plants and by combining the resulting abstractions with other motifs.

Published in:
Christie's, London, 26/4-2012, lot 98;
Kjeld von Folsach: *Flora islamica: plantemotiver i islamisk kunst*,
Davids Samling, København 2013, cat.no. 24;