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FRAGMENT OF A SAMITUM-WOVEN TEXTILE, SILK

EASTERN IRAN OR CENTRAL ASIA; 8TH-9TH CENTURY

H: 32.5; W: 38.5 CM

A textile like this one, with two confronted bulls in a beaded medallion, is clearly indebted to earlier Sasanian and Sogdian design traditions (see 4/2005). The bulls stood on a winged palmette, now almost worn away, with a stylized plant between them. The roundel over the animals' forelegs – which looks rather like a Royal Air Force emblem – is a non-naturalistic element that was to prove unusually tenacious in later Islamic animal depictions, and was at times given a more almond-like shape.

The group to which this samitum-woven textile belongs has been ascribed on the basis of an inscription on a similar textile to the Central Asian city of Zandane, near Bukhara. The city was incorporated into the Umayyad caliphate in the beginning of the 8th century.

Published in:

Kjeld von Folsach: *Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection*, Copenhagen 2001, cat.no. 631;

