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CAT. 18. CERAMIC DISH WITH BLUE UNDERGLAZE DECORATION

IRAN; 2ND HALF OF 15TH CENTURY

The decoration on this Persian dish copies a contemporary Chinese pattern. The largest flowers look like peonies when seen from above, but the smaller ones resemble lotuses when seen from the side. It can, however, be difficult to tell these flowers apart, even on their Chinese models.

The history of blue and white ceramics is a classical example of cultural exchange. The Chinese were the first to develop a white ceramic material. Iraqi potters copied it using white tin glazes, which were often decorated in cobalt blue. The Persians were the first to decorate white fritware in blue under the glaze. The Chinese then copied it on porcelain, and from the 14th century, Chinese blue and white export porcelain provided the model in the Middle East and Europe.