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CAT. 20. CERAMIC BOWL WITH LUSTER DECORATION

IRAQ; 9TH-10TH CENTURY

The beveled style is three-dimensional almost by definition, as shown in cat.nos. 19, 21, and 22, but is also found in two-dimensional versions, as on this unusual bowl decorated in luster.

The design consists largely of halfpalmettes, some of which are highly stylized while others are lacinated and slightly more naturalistic. As on arabesques, they grow from or extend one another unnaturally, and it can be very hard to grasp the whole.

As is true of the stucco panels, it is difficult to differentiate between background and pattern. On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that the golden luster decoration is what forms the complex palmette motif.