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FRITWARE BOWL, PAINTED IN LUSTRE OVER A WHITE GLAZE

IRAN, KASHAN; JUMADA AL-AKHIRA 600 H = FEBRUARY-MARCH 1204

H: 9.8; DIAM: 19.8 CM

This beautifully composed and well-preserved bowl is one of some 15 pieces of lustre and *minai* ware that were signed by the potter Abu Zayd from Kashan between 1180 and 1219. He was considered one of the period's most innovative ceramists and was one of the artists behind the Kashan style, in which the figures were masked off against a lustre background, but in which both the figures and the background were dissolved in a dense, painstakingly ornamented surface.

It is the couple's round-cheeked, Turkish-Mongol faces that catch our attention at first glance. Then we see their hands and the quite abstract bodies, with the garments' sumptuous spiral vines against the background's plants, birds, and dense scrollwork.

Published in:

Sara Kuehn: *Central Asian and Islamic textiles and works of art*; 2, London 2001, cat.no. 13;

Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom (eds.): *Cosmophilia. Islamic Art from the David Collection, Copenhagen*, McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Boston 2006, cat.no. 118;

Sheila S. Blair: "A brief biography of Abu Zayd" in *Muqarnas*, 25, 2008, pp. 157-158, fig. 1;

Oya Pancaroglu: "Potter's trail: an Abu Zayd ewer in the Saint Louis Art Museum" in Venetia Porter and Mariam Rosser-Owens (eds.): *Metalwork and material culture in the Islamic world : art, craft and text : essays presented to James W. Allan*, London 2012, p. 397, note 1 (no photo);

Kjeld von Folsach: *Flora islamica: plantemotiver i islamisk kunst*, Davids Samling, København 2013, cat.no. 29;

Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer: *The Human Figure in Islamic Art – Holy Men, Princes, and Commoners*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2017, cat.no. 10;

Oya Pancaroglu: "Conditions of love and conventions of representation in the illustrated manuscript of Varqa and Gulshah" in Christiane Gruber (ed.): *The image debate: figural representation in Islam and across the world*, London 2019, fig. 4, p. 76;

Axel Langer (ed.): *In the name of the image : Figurative representation in Islamic and Christian cultures*, Museum Rietberg, Zürich, Berlin 2022, cat. 109, pp. 197 and 199-200;