



Inv. no. 45/2001

CAT. 10. FRITWARE BOWL PAINTED IN LUSTER OVER AN OPAQUE, WHILE GLAZE. SIGNED ABU ZAYD

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

H: 9.8; DIAM: 19.8 CM

A man and a woman are placed in an elegant but quite abstract manner in an indefinable landscape filled with vines and little birds.

The figures were masked off in the luster ground and the details that define them were painted in luster. She is seated on the left in a tunic on which a couple of bold spiraling tendrils cursorily denote the location of her knees. Only her hands, thick neck, face, and long hair crowned with a kind of diadem or hat are clearly delineated. He is wearing a caftan with a Mongol closure on the left side. His arms are more clearly defined, as are the position of his hands and the protruding boot on his left leg.

We are far from the naturalism found on the Egyptian bowl (cat. 8, inv.no. 4/1992)). Both have round faces with plump chins, and

elegantly delineated eyebrows, noses, and little mouths. Their eyes are narrow and slightly slanted. Both are an expression of the new Turkish-Mongol ideal of beauty that came to dominate in large parts of the Middle East from the 11th century, an ideal that largely continued right to the 17th century, although large parts of the population belonged to a more Indo-European type.