



Large 'Rimless' Grapevine Iznik Dish

Turkey, circa 1550-1565

Ceramic decorated with underglaze polychrome

35.8cm diameter

Provenance: European private collection since the 19th century

Stock no.: A4910

This large and striking dish is decorated with a central configuration of three hanging bunches of grapes amongst curly vines and leaves painted in cobalt blue and green on a white ground. The cavetto of the dish is painted with a blue and green frieze of undulating floral scrolls with green flower heads. The narrow border is decorated with cobalt blue half-rosettes on a blue ground. The reverse of the dish is decorated in the same manner but with a differing outer border with a geometric pattern painted in blue on a white ground. The base of the dish is simply painted with two thin blue concentric circles.

The grape motif first appeared on porcelain made during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Chinese blue-and-white porcelain was highly prized in the Ottoman court during the 16th century, and the potters of Iznik soon began to emulate their designs. They added green enamels to the traditional blue-and-white pattern. Just as Chinese grape dishes of the 15th century were made in the 'rimless' style, so too were Ottoman grape dishes. However, during the second half of the 16th century, the rimless style was phased out in favour of everted rims with 'breaking wave' patterns. According to Julian Raby, nearly all of the rimless grape dishes are decorated with continuous floral scrollwork in the cavetto whereas the grape dishes with everted rims have floral sprays in the same position.¹

A rimless grape dish with similar form and decoration, dated to circa 1550-1565, is in the Lady Barlow Collection, Cambridge, and published in Raby, p. 122, fig. 189. A slightly later rimless grape dish, circa 1550-1575, in the Çinili Köşk (Tiled Kiosk), Istanbul (accession no. 41/24), appears marginally more

crowded in the floral scroll decoration seen in the cavetto in comparison to our and Lady Barlow's dish. As a result, our dish appears to be more closely linked with the earlier family of 'rimless' grape dishes produced between the years 1550-1565. An Iznik dish of nearly identical decoration is in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (accession no. [F1970.25](#)). The Freer's Iznik dish measures 32.5cm in diameter and is slightly smaller in size than ours. The outer border decoration varies slightly as the Freer piece has a zig-zag border. An example in the British Museum (no. [G.64](#)), is dated to the late 16th century. It also has a zig-zag border, but the cavetto and well are decorated very similarly. Further examples dated to the 17th century are held in the Benaki Museum and the Sadberk Hanım Museum.²

¹ Atasoy, N. and Raby, J. *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*. London: Alexandria Press, 1989, p. 124

² Carswell, John, and Mina Moraitou. *Iznik Ceramics at the Benaki Museum*. Athens: Gingko/The Benaki Museum, 2023, p. 104; Bilgi, Hulya. *Dance of Fire : Iznik Tiles and Ceramics in the Sadberk Hanım Museum and Ömer M. Koç Collections*. Istanbul: Sadberk Hanım Museum, 2009, p. 333.