



Iznik Dish with Kaleidoscope Design

Ottoman Turkey, 16th century

Earthenware with underglaze polychrome decoration

32.5cm diameter

Provenance: Prominent Swiss private collection

Stock no.: A5609

This 16th century Iznik dish in cobalt blue and white dates to the reign of Murad III, displaying kaleidoscopic radial patterns and abstract arches which are characteristic of this period. However, the blue-and-white colour scheme and the central medallion were inspired by Chinese prototypes. At the centre of the dish is a small, cinquefoil flower, surrounded by swirling clouds and floral scrolls. Two rows of cusped arches decorate the cavetto, with tiny quatrefoils between them.

Similar designs can be seen on dishes in the Benaki Museum, Athens, dating to c. 1570 and c. 1575 (accession nos 1416 and 11144), and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York ([1991.172](#)). The Louvre, Paris, also holds a dish with monochrome decoration and two concentric rings of arched panels but with a different design in the centre ([AD 27706](#)). Though the clouds and blossoms are suggestive of Chinese inspiration, the borders of cusped arches are reminiscent of Islamic architecture, providing a marriage of two cultures.