Kashan Turquoise Glazed Jar

Kashan, Ancient Iran

13th Century A.D

Pottery

H: 71 cm

Of voluptuous rounded form with tapering cylindrical mouth on short stepped foot, the shoulder moulded with a band of running animals on a scrolling vine ground, a band of benedictory naskh inscription moulded around the neck, the middle of the body incised with a band of arabesques forming roundels between raised double bands, the underside of the body with incised fish-scale motifs, all covered by an opaque turquoise glaze, the interior glazed a translucent deep turquoise, repaired breaks, upper part of mouth made up.

This magnificent massive vase is one of a small number of comparable pieces, most of which are in major institutions around the world. They are typified by their large size, plain opaque turquoise decoration, and the combination of incised and moulded designs. They also relate to a slightly smaller series of plain cobalt blue and even lustre painted similar massive jars, which tend only to have moulded designs. The turquoise examples are: one in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Lane, Arthur: Early Islamic Pottery, London, 1947, pl.44), one in the Victoria and Albert Museum, one in the Islamic Art Museum, Berlin (Islamic che Kunst in Berlin, Berlin, 1964, no.466, col.pl.9), one in the Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City (Pope, Arthur Upham: A Survey of Persian Art, Oxford, 1938, pl.755), one in the Rothschild Collection (Pope, op.cit, pl.763), and one in a private American Collection. The present example is slightly smaller than most of the others which are between 31in. (78cm.) and 35in. (89cm.) high. The band of moulded animals on the present example is also seen on the Metropolitan Museum, the Rothschild and the Berlin jars, all three of which also share the fish-scale design on the underside. The central band of decoration here is also seen on the Rothschild and (doubled) on the Berlin examples. These jars clearly demonstrate the technical prowess of the 12th century potters of Iran; the capability of firing a vessel of this size without mishap is very impressive.

Exhibitions

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum, Connecticut, 1961-1963

Literature:

Riefstahl, R. Meyer: The Parrish-Watson Collection of Mohammadan Potteries, New York, 1922, pl.41

Sotheby's, London, 8 June 1964, Lot 127.

Gluck, J.: The World of Persian Pottery, Tokyo, 1980, pl.235.