

Object Summary



Mina'i Bowl with Enthroned Ruler Surrounded by Attendants and Sphinxes

12th - 13th century

Iran (Kashan)

Seljuq Legacy

Object Summary

Stonepaste, polychrome pigments, gilding

Diameter: 6 15/16 in. (17.6 cm)

This mina'i (Persian: "enameled") bowl depicts a central, enthroned ruler orbited by four birds of prey, four standing courtiers, and four seated attendants. Two confronted sphinxes - female-headed lions with the wings of eagles - perch above his head, offering protection. Note the richly-patterned costume of each courtly personage, elaborately painted to echo the sumptuous silks of the Seljuq élite. Mina'i ceramics - created during a narrow window of time, most probably in the city of Kashan - often show the luxurious pleasures of royal life, a topic of fascination for the mostly middle-class clientele who purchased the bowls.