

Object Summary



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Turquoise Glazed Mina'i Bottle with Sphinxes and Seated Figures

12th - 13th century

Iran

Seljuq Legacy

Stonepaste, polychrome pigments, gilding

9 3/16 x 5 in. (23.3 x 12.7 cm)

Mina'i ("enameled" in Persian) is a ceramic painting technique used during a very specific period of time (1170-1220 CE) in a very specific place (Iran, most probably in the city of Kashan). It has clear links with manuscript painting, but because no examples of illustrated works on paper or vellum survive from this early period, we cannot know for certain. There are also clear connections with the much larger-scale wall paintings found throughout pre- and early-Islamic Central Asia. On this bottle, we see the typical courtly scenes commonly painted on mina'i ware: richly-dressed courtiers speak in pairs, underneath a colorful register of prancing sphinxes.