



Zhangzhou Dish Made for the Islamic Market

Zhangzhou Prefecture, Fujian Province, China, Early-Mid 17th century

42cm diameter

Stock no.: A4674

This circular porcelain dish is painted in underglaze cobalt blue on a white ground. The well of the dish is decorated with a landscape scene containing several pagoda-like buildings, figure on land and on a boat, large rocks together with a fish, a lobster, and various plants. The deep cavetto of the dish is decorated with cartouches containing alternately Arabic inscriptions and flowers also enclosed in cartouches. Between each of these cartouches is a ribbon panel, typical of Kraak dishes. The everted outer rim of the dish is further decorated with smaller panels of flowers and foliage.

Zhangzhou dishes with Arabic inscriptions were made predominantly for the Southeast-Asian Islamic market. The biggest market for these wares was Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan. These dishes were initially referred to as 'Swatow' wares as they were presumed to be named after the 'Shantou' port in Guangdong Province, China, from where they were later shipped. Similar Zhangzhou dishes with Arabic inscriptions can be found in the The Princessehof Museum of Ceramics, Leeuwarden (accession no. GRV 1929-290), which is the same size as the present example, and The Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore (accession Number 2007-00870), which measures 42.3cm diameter - just a few millimeters larger than the present dish.

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