



Chinese blue and white Kraak dish, Wanli (1573-1619)

POA

Chinese blue and white kraak dish, Wanli (1573-1619), decorated to the centre with an eight-pointed star cartouche in reserve containing three precious beribboned objects: a scroll, an artemisia leaf and a calabash bottle; all against a cellular ground with small reserve scrolls; the cavetto and wide rim with eight shaped alternating cartouches containing either fruiting peach branches or further artemisia leaves and tasselled cords; interspersed by narrow inset panels with a design of dots and cellular ground; the reverse rim divided into eight sections with each large cartouche containing a small babao within a circle, interspersed by narrow panels containing simplified ruyi-head sceptre motif.

Dimensions:

Diameter: 31.3cm. (12 5/16in.)

Condition:

Fritting to rim

Notes:

The plants and precious objects inside the cartouches on this plate are symbols connected with Daoist tradition. Peaches are a symbol of longevity, a preoccupation of Daoist believers, and are frequently depicted in reference to the Daoist Immortals. According to legend, this group of semi-mythical figures attended the Feast of Peaches (???) held by the Jade Emperor, ruler of all of the Heavens and his wife, the Queen Mother of the West. This mythical banquet features prominently in Ming novels including *Journey to the West* (attributed to Wu Cheng'en c.1500-c.1580). It is supposedly held at the Jade Pool of the Emperor's Golden-Gate Cloud Palace to celebrate the ripening of the peaches from the Queen Mother's Garden. These peaches of immortality (pantao??) only ripen every few thousand years, and are shared amongst the immortals to sustain them until the next banquet. Meanwhile, calabash bottles are commonly associated with traditional Chinese medicine and artemisia leaves feature in a Daoist medical handbook by Ge Hong (283-363) which identified elixirs and herbs which prolonged life.

Material and Technique

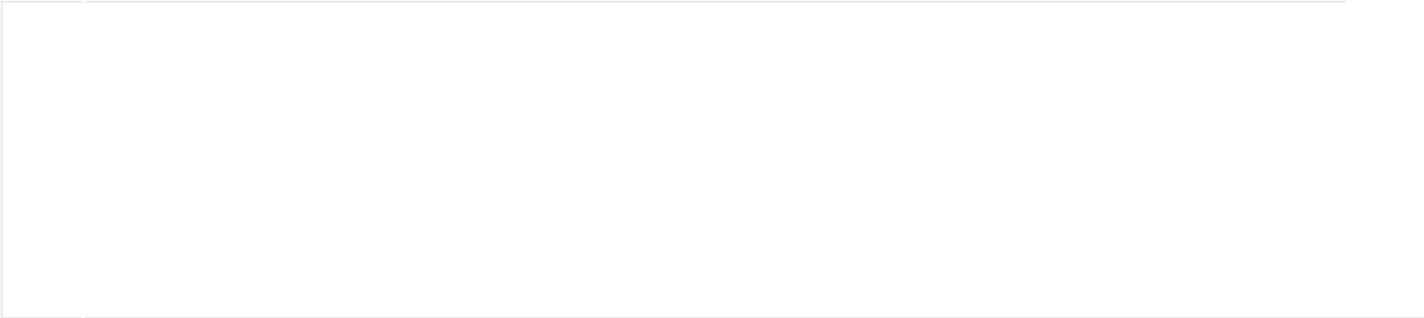
Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue decoration

Origin

Chinese

Period

17th Century



Condition

Very good

Diameter

31.3cm. (12 5/16in.)

Antique ref: F847