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Turkey (Iznik)

**Peacock dish**, about 1550

Fritware body with underglaze painting over a slip coating

Musée du Louvre, Department of Islamic Arts, K 3449

The sultans of the Ottoman Empire prized Chinese blue-and-white porcelains and amassed great collections. During the late 15th century, Ottoman potters in the city of Iznik began to approximate imported Chinese examples by covering their wares

with a brilliant white slip over which they painted floral scrolls in cobalt blue. These three dishes suggest the popularity of the floral bouquet as a decorative motif on Iznik pottery. And yet, the one with the whimsical pale blue peacock has the most visual appeal. Luxuriant stems with varied flowers and long, serrated leaves create a bold, rhythmical

pattern that flows seamlessly onto the outer rim. By contrast, the decoration on the other two dishes is more controlled, with evenly spaced, stiffly drawn flowers and a clearly defined rim. Its dynamic composition, imaginative designs, and brilliant colors clearly place the peacock dish in a separate class.

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