Currently on view at: Getty Villa, Gallery 111, The Hellenistic World

Alternate Views

Inside, slight tilt

Object Details

Title:
Net Pattern Bowl
Gilded and inlaid with gems, this small silver bowl demonstrates how artistic styles intermingled in the ancient Near East in the first century B.C. Flowers with garnets in their centers cover the interior. Each flower is placed in a pentagonal area, which forms the net pattern of the bowl. Most of the bowl's interior surface is gilded, but the bands separating the pentagons and four leaves of the central calyx retain their natural silver color for contrast. Stylistic features of the bowl suggest that it was made in Parthia. Today split among modern Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, Parthia was once part of the Persian Empire until Alexander the Great conquered it. After Alexander's death in 323 B.C., first the Hellenistic Greek Seleucid dynasty and then the Graeco-Bactrian Empire ruled the region. This Greek domination of the area ended in the late 100s B.C. under a wave of invaders from the central Asian steppes.

This complicated political history left its legacy in the art. Parthia was a prosperous and wealthy area, and its silversmiths incorporated Greek elements with Near Eastern ones in their work. On this bowl, the central calyx is Near Eastern, but the net pattern is Greek.
The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center features works of art dating from the eighth through the twenty-first century, showcased against a backdrop of dramatic architecture, tranquil gardens, and breathtaking views of Los Angeles. The collection includes European paintings, drawings, sculpture, illuminated manuscripts, decorative arts, and European, Asian, and American photographs. The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa in Malibu features Greek, Roman, and Etruscan antiquities presented in a setting modeled after a first-century Roman country house, the Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum.