









# **EXTREMELY RARE LARGE BEAUTIFUL AMBER ENAMELLED MOSQUE LAMP GLASS**

each of waisted globular form of amber tint with wide flared neck, the sides applied with six suspension loops, enamelled in opaque red, blue, and white with additional gilt, with thuluth inscriptions on the body and neck, blazons in roundels depicting a bands of scroll, floral rosettes and foliate decoration, the foot with a gilt band.

ORIGIN\_FRANCE  
CIRCA\_19TH CENTURY  
HEIGHT\_54.6 CM  
CULTURE: ISLAMIC WORLD

In the Islamic religion, the donation of a lamp was considered an act of reverence towards God. This act is connected to a text in the Koran that says in verse 35 of the sura "The Light": "God is the light of the heavens and the earth! His light is like a niche in which one finds a lamp. The lamp is made of glass; the glass is like a brilliant star."

The analogy between the light and God inspired the donation of Mosque lamps such as this one as well as many others since figural representations of God are strictly forbidden by Islamic religion. The beginning of this verse was later reproduced by Mamluk glass lamps.

These Mosque Lamp belongs to a group of enamelled and gilded mosque lamps of the late European 'revivalist' tradition of enamelled glass, distinguishable by their highly decorative and finely-applied designs. The thuluth inscriptions and blazons emulate the style of luxury items from the Mamluk age.

## **Bibliography**

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For an introduction to the production of enameled glass, see:

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S.M. GOLDSTEIN, Glass from Sassanian Antecedents to European Imitations: the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, vol. XV, London, 2005.

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On the technique of enameled glass, see:

WATSON O., Pottery and Glass: Luster and Enamel in Gilded and Enamelled Glass from the Middle East, London, 1998, pp. 15-19.

For examples of piece of this type, see:

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WARD R. (ed.), Gilded and Enamelled Glass from the Middle East, London, 1998, fig. 23.5, 23.6, 25.4, 25.5, 25.6.

In the Islamic religion, the donation of a lamp was considered an act of reverence towards God. This act is connected to a text in the Koran that says in verse 35 of the sura "The Light": "God is the light of the heavens and the earth! His light is like a niche in which one finds a lamp. The lamp is made of glass; the glass is like a brilliant star."

The analogy between the light and God inspired the donation of lamps such as Mamluk and Brocard and many others since figural representations of God are strictly forbidden by Islamic religion. The beginning of this verse was later reproduced by Mamluk glass lamps.

From a practical point of view, the donation of Mosque lamps during mamluk period was necessarily important for lighting the interiors of mosques during the morning and evening prayers.

The origin of the production of such enameled glass lamps is tentatively attributed to the 13th century to Syrian and Egyptian artisans who excelled in the creation of colored and enameled glass. The first Islamic enameled glass appeared in Syria between the 12th and the early 13th century. This technique, which was quickly adopted by Egyptian artisans, flourished into a large and thriving industry. It remains very difficult to distinguish between Syrian and Egyptian production.

Enameled glass is a colored glass technique. When the glass has been formed and cooled, the artisan applies a mix of oil and pigment to the surface with the aid of tweezers or a brush. The object is then placed at the opening of the kiln until it reaches a low temperature that slowly reheats it. The pigments fuse together with the surface of the glass, creating a fine layer of color that is solidified by the cooling.

It was very important for kings to have their own mosque lamps commissioned as it showed nobility, power, and also the blessings on the lamps gave spiritual power to the kingdom.