



European Ceramic Candlestick made in the Safavid Style

Samson Factory, France, 19th century

Ceramic decorated with underglaze polychrome

42cm high, 17cm diameter (base)

Stock No. : A5262

This ceramic piece is a close imitation of Safavid style cast brass torch-stands (mash'al) that were produced in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century in Western Iran. The spreading cylinder foot supports a slightly slanting 12-facet chamfered shaft framed by two strong mouldings. The cylinder neck above the shaft supports a head that is shaped in an upside-down footed bowl, above which is a lotus-shaped crown that supports a two-part cylinder candleholder. The general shape and layout of the candlestick are very similar to the original metalwork models. Contrary to the monochrome metalwork, the ceramic is painted in blue, turquoise and gold on white ground.

Turquoise is used to divide different sections, while most parts of the decorative scheme is composed of blue background with outlines and floral, foliage patterns in gold. The zigzag grooving on the shaft is left plain. The two bands of poetry in precise imitation of Persian nasta'liq script at foot and neck suggests the artisans in France must have had direct access to an authentic Safavid torch-stand model. For comparative examples in metalwork, see Musée du Louvre OA6037; AD5603. The blue symbol at the base suggests this candlestick was produced by Edmé & Cie (commonly known as Samson Ceramics). Edmé Samson (1810-1891) opened his ceramics firm in Paris with the intention of supplying reproductions of ceramics on display in museums and private collections. The firm produced close imitations in a breadth of styles including faience and maiolica types of Italian pottery, Persian, Hispano-Moresque pottery and Chinese and Japanese ceramics.