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BASIN, COLORLESS GLASS, DECORATED WITH ENAMEL AND GILDING

EGYPT OR SYRIA; 14TH CENTURY

H: 9.5; DIAM: 21.7 CM

The basin has the same shape as contemporary brass bowls. Its decoration also includes elements that were found on the period's inlaid metalwork, such as lotus flowers and the inscription in cursive *Naskh* calligraphy that repeats the word *al-alim* ("the wise"). On the inside of the basin, fish and sailboats were combined in an original way around a six-pointed star – perhaps a metaphor of the sun over the oceans.

The technique of decorating glass with polychrome enamel was developed under the Ayyubids, but reached a zenith in the Mamluk period, when glass of the type was also exported to Europe's Christian realms and to the Far East. We know that the basin was in China in around 1900.

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