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HAND BASIN, PARCEL-GILT, EMBOSSED SILVER INLAID WITH BLUE, GREEN, AND CRIMSON ENAMEL

INDIA, LUCKNOW; END OF 18TH CENTURY

H: 13; DIAM: 31.3 CM

It was a widespread custom in the Islamic world to wash one's hands before entering a house, and basins like this one were used before meals as well. The lid is perforated so that the sight of dirty water did not bother the guests. An equally richly decorated ewer once made up a set with the basin.

The embossed silver basin has elegantly conceived and deeply engraved decorations featuring gazelles, flowers, and other ornamentation filled out with transparent enamel. There are less costly basins with simpler decoration of the same type made of bronze and *bidri* metal.

Published in:

Christiane Terlinden: *Mughal silver magnificence (XVI-XIXth c.) = Magnificence de l'argenterie moghole (XVIème-XIXème s.)*, Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève, Bruxelles 1987, p. 122;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Islamic art. The David Collection*, Copenhagen 1990, cat.no. 359;

Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lundbæk and Peder Mortensen (eds.): *Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal: the history and culture of the Islamic world*, The National Museum, Copenhagen 1996, cat.no. 351;

Mark Zebrowski: *Gold, silver and bronze from Mughal India*, London 1997, fig. 72;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection*, Copenhagen 2001, cat.no. 544;