MARC MAISON

120, rue des rosiers
93400 Saint Ouen
(France)
tel: +33.(0)6.60.62.61.90
contact@marcmaison.com



Philippe-Joseph Brocard, enamelled glass mosque lamp, Paris, December 1867 (British Museum, inv. 1902,1118.1).



Philippe-Joseph Brocard, vase in the form of a mosque lamp, 1871 (Louvre Abu Dhabi, LAD 2012.011).



Blown-glass bowl with enameled and gilded decoration in a Perso-Islamic style, in the manner of Brocard (gallery, ref. 16210).



Footed bowl in blown glass, in the same style (gallery, ref. 16209).

Philippe-Joseph Brocard, born in 1831 and died in Meudon in 1896, is one of the great glass craftsmen of the Second Empire and the Third Republic. A restorer of antiquities turned glassmaker, he rediscovered the **hard polychrome enamels** of the glassmakers of Syria and Egypt (13th-14th centuries) and made them one of the emblems of the historicist and Orientalist taste of his time. Regarded as a forerunner of the École de Nancy and of Art Nouveau, he influenced **Émile Gallé**.

From restorer to glassmaker

Brocard began his career as a restorer and collector of works of art. Between 1850 and 1860 he worked notably for the Rothschild collections and for the Musée de Cluny, where he discovered the **Mamluk mosque lamps**. Fascinated by these pieces, he collected them himself. His workshop was on the Faubourg Saint-Honoré in Paris.

Reviving Islamic enamels

From the 1860s Brocard rediscovered the methods of the medieval glassmakers of the East: coloured enamels, opaque or translucent, applied with a brush and fired onto free-blown glass, heightened with gilding, arabesques and Kufic-style inscriptions. His imitations of **mosque lamps**, cups and goblets are so faithful that they are sometimes mistaken for the old models, even though, as the British Museum points out, he sometimes altered or misunderstood elements of his sources.

He exhibited at the **Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867**, then in London (1871), Vienna (1873) and again in Paris in 1878. The Louvre Abu Dhabi holds one of his blown, enamelled glass mosque lamps of 1871; the British Museum another, made in Paris in December 1867.

Towards a freer style

After meeting Émile Gallé, around 1878, Brocard's style became freer and more naturalistic. He painted clear glass in a "Persian" taste, with geometric and stylised floral ornament, then in his last years made vases in the spirit of ceramics, medieval phials and Renaissance bowls, with large flowers and foliage influenced by Chinese and Japanese art. He patented his enamelling method in 1891.

The Brocard firm

His son Émile joined the business, which took the name "Brocard et fils"; after Philippe-Joseph's death in 1896 it continued as the Verrerie Brocard until 1904 according to the British Museum. Brocard's glass is today found in major collections, among them the British Museum, the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne.

See also: Émile Gallé — Art Nouveau — Japonisme — Louis Majorelle

See our 19th-century objets d'art