

GALERIE GOLCONDA

ARCHÉOLOGIE MUSÉALE
FOSSILES – BIJOUX RARES ET ANCIENS
CABINET DE CURIOSITÉS DES GRANDES CIVILISATIONS

CERTIFICATE

SHI'ITE PRAYER STONE

ISLAMIC ART - IRAN (13th – 15th century)

EX JEAN DAVID-WEILL COLLECTION

MATERIAL AND TECHNIQUE: Circular Shi'ite prayer “stone” in terra cotta with, in its center, an inscription in Persian and an embossed or molded decoration. Some parts are raised and irregular. The uneven glaze is due to age. It was generally the custom that the clay be taken from a holy place, such as Kerbala or Mashhad. The special characteristics of the earth from Karbala in Iraq were already known in the time of the prophet.

Fine condition. Some scratches and missing parts to the glaze.

ORIGIN: Names of a divine nature, such as those of the Prophet or the Shi'ite imams, are engraved on circular clay plaques. The Shi'ites ascribe protective or therapeutic powers to pious phrases and verses from the Koran. Certain letters in Arab writing can also take on an esoteric and magical dimension. During prayer, the Shi'ites place a clay slab beneath their forehead in order to follow the Prophet's *sunnah*. The letters thus mark their foreheads as a testimony to their devoutness.

PROVENANCE: Former collection of Jean David-Weill who was an eminent epigraphist specializing in Islam. He was an independent attaché then member of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale in Cairo from 1927 to 1936, before holding a chair in Muslim art at the School of the Louvre and becoming curator of the department of Middle Eastern Antiquities at the Museum of the Louvre in 1945.

DIMENSIONS: Diameter: 8 cm

MUSEOGRAPHY: Similar pieces can be found at the Museum of the Louvre (MAO S. 1925, 1926 and 1927).

Police book registration N°: 1646