

A M I R M O H T A S H E M I



Safavid Pot

Safavid Iran, 17th century

Fritware, relief-moulded and glazed

15 cm high, 15 cm diameter

Stock no.: A6107

Provenance: From a French abbey, acquired in the 1930s; thence by descent.

A rare Safavid scribe's sand shaker with globular lobed body, rounded foot ring, and short neck flaring to a wide lobed rim.

This pot belongs to a small group of 17th-century stonepaste objects, typically decorated with moulded floral motifs under cobalt blue, turquoise, and yellow glazes. The most common form is the flattened gin bottle, such as examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (accession nos. [634-1889](#) and [711-1896](#)). This group is closely related to Safavid monochrome wares.

It has been suggested that the colour and use of relief decoration derives from Ming dynasty fahua porcelains.¹ See, for example, a vase (accession no. [1947.0712.238](#)) or a cup stand (accession no. [1938.0524.32](#)) both in the British Museum, London. The form, however, likely derives from Indian metalwork, such as a lota (see Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accession no. [1982.65](#)).

A very similar example of this group, dated 1600–1650, is in the British Museum (accession no. [1878.1230.627](#)). It appears to have been made as a lobed spittoon or scribe's sand shaker of the same form, with similar panels of floral repoussé decoration on alternate lobes of the body. However, metal handle, spout, and lid were added in the Qajar era to turn it into a ewer. Another spittoon of the same form but with a monochrome lavender glaze is in the Victoria & Albert museum (accession no. [1293-1876](#)), and dated to ca. 1640–1680.

[1] Hobson, R. L. *A Guide to the Islamic Pottery of the Near East*. London: British Museum, 1932, p. 71.