

Object Summary



Gem-Inset Enamelled Gold Pierced Coffee-Cup Holder (Zarf) with Floral Motifs

19th century

India (Benares)

Mughal

Enameled gold, mirror, gemstones

Overall: 1 3/4 x 2 1/8 in. (4.4 x 5.4cm)

This elegant vessel is a coffee cup holder. It is decorated with enameled pink flowers and green leaves in relief. A central pink-and-blue blossom rests at the bottom of the cup, and the inner rim is lined with six pink flowers. The cup is pierced with six teardrop-shaped openings and rests on a small, fluted foot adorned with pink petals. This ornate vessel speaks to the tradition of coffee drinking in India. Coffee was first recorded in the

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Mughal court during the reign of the fourth Mughal emperor Jahangir (r. 1605-1627 CE). It was a beverage imbibed by the elite, enjoyed in coffee houses called qahwakhanas.