

Object Summary



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Gilded and Cut-Glass Hookah Base

19th century

Turkey (Beykoz)

Ottoman

Glass, gilding

Overall: 11 3/8 x 4 1/4 in. (28.9 x 10.8cm)

This nargile base (one of a pair) is embellished by bands of decorative incisions, gilt floral motifs and small stars. It was created in Beykoz (a district of Istanbul) in the nineteenth century. Nargile is the Turkish word for a tobacco pipe (also called a hookah, shisha, or hubble bubble). It is used by drawing smoke through a long pipe through a base containing water. The practice of nargile smoking erupted in Istanbul during the early 1600s and became an essential element of coffee houses where men from across all social strata gathered to pass time, socialize, and engage in political discourse.