

Antiques Trade gazette

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Above: cigar case by William Neale of Birmingham, 1897, to mark the King of Siam's European tour, £16,000 at Elstob.

The £200 eBay cigar case that sparked a £16,000 bid

Pick of the week

When an Irish antiques sleuth paid under £200 on eBay for what appeared to be a cigar case, information about its origin was sketchy at best.

On one side was a portrait of a gentleman with a collection of facsimile signatures in a script unfamiliar to the buyer. On the other, an enamelled depiction of a steam yacht. Some

online research later revealed that the script was Thai, that the portrait depicted was of Siam's head of state from 1868-1910, King Chulalongkorn (1853-1910), and the steam yacht was the *Maha Chakri* – the king's royal yacht.

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Mosque lamp shines at sale to make glass object record

by Alex Capon

A 14th-century mosque lamp from Egypt or Syria achieved the highest price for a glass object at auction when it sold at four-times estimate at Bonhams in London.

The Mamluk enamelled glass mosque lamp made for Chief of Corps Saif ad-din Sarghitmish (d.1358) hammered at £4.2m.

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Silver



Charger puts early motoring in the picture

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Asian art: Stellar highlights from the recent specialist auction series – page 6 & 24-25

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Left: a temporary export bar has been placed on a 19th century schoolgirl's needlework of Menai Bridge sold at Sotheby's.

Menai Bridge sampler given temporary export bar

A temporary export bar has been placed on a needlework sampler created by an 11-year-old 19th century schoolgirl.

Valued at £14,564, the work depicts the Menai Bridge in Anglesey.

The export bar has been placed on the needlework to allow time for a UK institution to acquire it.

Designed by Thomas Telford, the bridge connects Anglesey to mainland Wales. Schoolgirl Mary Anne Hughes completed the work in time for the opening in 1826, when it became the first and longest suspension bridge in the world.

The work was previously owned by the Marquess of Anglesey and had sold at Sotheby's on April 11.

The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (RCEWA), which advises the government on the export of cultural property, found the needlework met criteria for its outstanding connection with Welsh history, its significance to the study of local social history and the importance of needlework within the education of young girls.

The decision on the export licence application will be deferred for a period ending on January 7, 2025. At the end of the first deferral period the owner will have a consideration period of 15 business days to consider any offers to purchase the sampler at the recommended price of £14,564.

Dom Walbanke

Dealership delighted as Giant Bible goes home

Les Enluminures has sold a thousand-year-old Giant Bible of St Maximin to the National Library of Luxembourg for €4.5m (£3.735m), writes Stewart Cumiskey.

Previously in private hands, this is the last manuscript from the School of Echternach available on the market.

Echternach Abbey, located in the south-eastern corner of modern-day Luxembourg, was one of the most important scriptoria of Carolingian and Ottonian times, in close relationship with St Maximin in Trier, which produced the Bible.

Weighing 55lbs and made from the skins of over 200 cattle, this huge manuscript is illuminated with title pages and numerous beautiful initials. It will be on view at the National Library's holdings of the School of Echternach from December 2024 to March 2025.

Founder and CEO Sandra Hindman says: "Les Enluminures is honoured to continue to play a role in the repatriation of objects of cultural value to their origins, as in its sale of the thousand-year-old Liesborn Gospels through the German government to the city of Liesborn in 2017 and now this sale to the National Library of Luxembourg. We are never happier than when our manuscripts go 'home'. When the owner approached me with a desire to sell, I immediately thought of Luxembourg."

Right: Giant Bible of St Maximin sold to the National Library of Luxembourg by Les Enluminures.



Mamluk mosque lamp shatters glass record

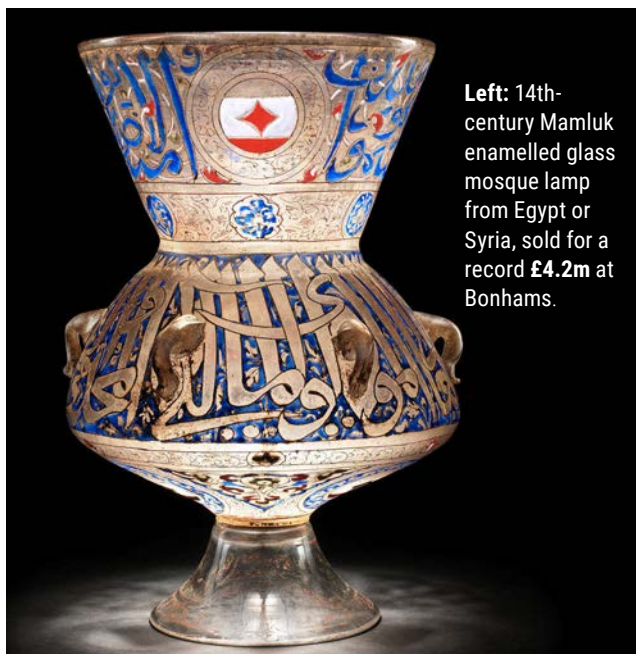
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Estimated at £600,000-1m at the auction in New Bond Street on November 12, it drew a strong competition before it was sold for a price that, with buyer's fees added, was £5.13m. Bonhams said it could not disclose any information about the buyer.

In terms of the top prices at auction for glassworks, the sum surpassed both the £3.4m for another mosque lamp sold at Christie's in 2000 and also the £2.65m for the Constable-Maxwell Cage-Cup, a piece of colourless Roman glass that sold at Bonhams in 2004.

Shining example

The current lamp at Bonhams was an example produced via the technique of simultaneously gilding and enamelling glass that was almost unique to the



Left: 14th-century Mamluk enamelled glass mosque lamp from Egypt or Syria, sold for a record **£4.2m** at Bonhams.

Mamluk court. Such lamps were produced in the 13th and 14th centuries for decoration and the provision of light in

mosques, and they are considered some of the most accomplished examples of medieval glassware anywhere

in the world. This particular lamp was commissioned by the Mamluk Emir Sarghitmish, a powerful chief during the reign of al Nasir-Hasan (c. 1334-61). The lamp carries both his name and the Sultan's name, as well as the blazon of Sarghitmish. It was most likely hung in the Madrasa of Sarghitmish, a prominent mosque that still stands today in Cairo's medieval quarter.

It was also inscribed with a verse from surah al-Nur (light) from the Qur'an (it was standard practice in medieval enamelled lamps that their upper inscription was Qur'anic).

In 1907, the scholar Yacoub Artin Pasha celebrated the lamp's beauty by observing: "In its entirety, this lamp is on a par with the most beautiful enamelled glass lamps I have seen and studied."

The lamp came for sale from a descendant of Egypt's first prime minister, Nubar Pasha (1825-99). Having been in the family for more than a century, it had previously been regarded as a decorative revivalist piece – and used by the family as a vase for dried flowers.

Bonhams' head of Islamic and Indian art Oliver White said: "From the mid-1800s, the lamp belonged to the prominent French collector Charles Schefer, and in 1906 it became part of the collection of Armenian aristocrat Boghos Nubar Pasha, the son of Egypt's first prime minister. It has been passed down in his family ever since.

"The rarity of the object, together with this impressive provenance, make it one of the most important pieces of Islamic glassware ever to come to the market."