

Orientalist Glass Art

Masterpieces From The Museum
Of J. & L. LOBMEYR, Vienna



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Museum of J.&L. LOBMEYR, Vienna

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LOBMEYR



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Greetings

When we think of interactions between nations and peoples, economic aspects are often in the foreground. Yet, exchange also takes place in sciences, humanities, cultures and the fine arts, where it often has a very profound effect on fostering the understanding of other civilizations and their way of life.

The exhibition "Orientalist Glass Art – Masterpieces from the Museum of J.&L. LOBMEYR in Vienna" at the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization highlights the influence of traditional Arabic art on Austrian and European design and architecture. Showing this exhibition in Sharjah is a great opportunity to not only present Austrian arts and crafts in the Arab world but also to demonstrate the interaction between our cultures.

Since its foundation, the family-run company of J.&L. LOBMEYR has substantially influenced the development of glass art and representational chandeliers in Europe.

Already in the late 19th century, the company contributed decisively to the Arab-style interior design of the 1870s, which was publicly displayed in the Egyptian Pavilion at the 1873 Vienna and 1878 Paris world exhibitions. In the late 20th century, the chandelier designs which Lobmeyr contributed to the extensions of the Holy Mosques in Makkah and Madinah as well as to other mosques and palaces in Saudi Arabia, Brunei and many other Islamic countries illustrate the continuing influence of Arab-Islamic styles on Austrian glass and chandelier design.

Once acknowledged as purveyor to the Austrian Imperial Court, J.&L. LOBMEYR still works for many Austrian federal institutions, as it stands for traditional, high-quality Austrian craftsmanship and design for which it is known worldwide.

I, therefore, hope that many visitors will come and see this exhibition which is sure to contribute to the mutual understanding between our cultures.

H.E. Dr. Heinz Fischer

Federal President of the Republic of Austria

The Dialogue of Cultures can take many forms. Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization and J.&L. LOBMEYR give impressive historic testimony of a successful dialogue between Austrian artistic industries and oriental forms and patterns. The results are artefacts which reflect a bounty of beauty and light. The Austrian crystal and chandeliers manufacturer J.&L. LOBMEYR, founded in 1823, is internationally known both for its quality of craftsmanship and as a leading innovator.

By 1835, its outstanding reputation led to the first orders from the Imperial Court in Vienna. Since the early days of the company the Lobmeyr family has had a deep admiration for Arabian culture and heritage: By the 1840's Lobmeyr was already supplying chandeliers for the huge palace of the Egyptian Khedive Abbas Hilmi I in Cairo. Nowadays, its products can be admired in the most renowned Museums for Applied Art in the world – in New York, London, Paris and Vienna, as well as in the Metropolitan Opera in New York and in the Holy Mosques of Makkah and Madinah, where chandeliers designed and created by Lobmeyr illuminate the space.

This private collection of the Lobmeyr family contains unique and historic pieces of glass art that have never been publicly exhibited before.

When dialogue succeeds, it transforms, and the result may attain a new substantive quality. Glass, light and form are the elements of this East-West dialogue, which references the shared metaphor of light as source of hope, wisdom and peace.

H.E. Sebastian Kurz

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Integration, the Republic of Austria

Foreword

Sharjah Museums Department is delighted to host 'Orientalist Glass Art – Masterpieces from the Museum of J.&L. LOBMEYR, Vienna', the first ever exhibition devoted exclusively to this as yet rarely explored aspect of 19th-century European art and design. Curated hand in hand with the museum and archive of the Lobmeyr family - at the forefront of Austrian glass art since 1823 - the show presents more than 80 examples of orientalist glassware, designs, work drawings and documents. Together, they offer a rare glimpse into a fascinating dimension of European glass design, reflecting both the artists' dedicated creative engagement with the Arab-Islamic world and their deep respect for its technical and aesthetic accomplishments.

It is befitting that 'Orientalist Glass Art' should be inaugurated in the Emirate of Sharjah, given its longstanding promotion of orientalist art through the efforts of His Highness Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, himself an avid collector and patron of the first substantial international exhibition on orientalist painting, 'The Lure of the East', in Sharjah in 2008.

At the same time, the significance of 'Orientalist Glass Art' goes beyond its immediate historical context. The enthusiasm with which 19th-century artisans studied Islamic art and the creativity with which they translated its ornamental principles into innovative, cutting-edge artworks for their own time have much to inspire contemporary designers who are looking at ways of incorporating their Arab-Islamic heritage into modern practice today.

'Orientalist Glass Art' is Sharjah Museums Department's latest contribution to Sharjah's internationally recognized efforts in promoting peaceful intercultural dialogue and friendship between East and West through art and culture. We thank the Lobmeyr family for their trust and dedication in delivering an exhibition that supports those goals most beautifully.

Manal Ataya

Director General, Sharjah Museums Department





Introduction

Andreas, Leonid and Johannes Rath

Managing Partners of J.&L. LOBMEYR

Henry Bertel

Managing Director of CIMI Futurebility Consulting & Sales Agency GmbH

Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis

Senior Strategic Advisor, Sharjah Museums Department

Lobmeyr is greatly honoured by the opportunity to show their orientalist glass treasures in the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization. The catalogue in your hands provides an excellent memento for visitors and a source of information for those unable to attend the exhibition. Lobmeyr is especially thankful to Dr Ulrike Al-Khamis and all the other colleagues at Sharjah Museums Department involved in the project for their tremendous dedication in curating the exhibition from our vast archives and for setting them in scene so eloquently to create this enlightening and beautiful exhibition.

We would like to express our thanks to Henry Bertel and Austrian ambassador Peter Elsner-Mackay for first establishing links with the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization – it truly is the very best place to present this exquisite collection. It is our expressed aim to highlight the mutual artistic fascination between West and East and to contribute to an ongoing and thriving creative exchange of thoughts and ideas between the two.

May the exquisite beauty of finely crafted crystal glass and lighting remain an inspiration to our everyday lives.

Andreas, Leonid and Johannes Rath

Managing Partners of J.&L. LOBMEYR

CIMI Consulting Agency GmbH has been representing Lobmeyr in the GCC region for four years. While visiting its family museum, I was stunned by the exquisite pieces charting this distinguished firm's history in glass. In personal conversations with the management about the distinctive history of the company, its 170 years of experience with oriental glass art and the crafting of chandeliers for the Holy Mosques of Makkah and Madinah soon emerged as a particular focus of discussion. 2 ½ years ago, the idea arose to reconnect the Islamic world – whose rich artistic heritage had inspired the pieces – with some of those Lobmeyr masterpieces which so beautifully echo its legacy to this day.

Subsequently, on behalf of Lobmeyr, I ventured to the Gulf region to evaluate local interest in our idea. The reaction was overwhelmingly positive throughout, but we soon realised that Sharjah was the ideal location for the exhibition we had in mind to start with,

given its outstanding and internationally acknowledged standing as one of the most significant cultural hubs in the Arab world. The exhibition which has resulted out of our inspiring and impressive collaboration with Sharjah Museums Department (SMD) reflects what we had set out to achieve most beautifully. We are deeply grateful to our Sharjah colleagues for the opportunity to introduce – for the very first time - a little known yet spectacular aspect of 19th-century orientalist art to the Gulf through the exposure of historical Lobmeyr crystal glass.

Henry Bertel

Managing Director of CIMI Futurebility Consulting & Sales Agency GmbH

When J.&L. LOBMEYR first dispatched Henry Bertel to visit the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization in late 2013 to propose an exhibition of its orientalist glass, the idea was received enthusiastically from the outset. Not only were the artefacts he showed the team breathtakingly beautiful, but it was recognised that both the items themselves and the theme of orientalist glass from Austria had never been the exclusive focus of an international exhibition since the late 19th century - the time both were in fashion as Europe was gripped by an all pervading fascination with 'the Orient'. Indeed, while orientalist painting is a well-known topic in art history, the decorative arts of the time on the whole remain largely unappreciated – a regrettable fact given the wealth of objects and archival material that survive in museums and private collections like the Lobmeyr Family Museum to this day.

In recognising the significance of the project, the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization readily agreed to take the lead in both curating and presenting the Orientalist Glass Art of J.&L. LOBMEYR at its premises. We thank the Lobmeyr family and Henry Bertel for their enthusiasm, intellectual rigour and above all their trust. Our creative intercultural collaboration has been a happy and mutually beneficial one. Together with the artefacts in the exhibition, it eloquently symbolises the fruitful ongoing dialogue between artists in Europe and those of the Islamic world over centuries.

Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis

Senior Strategic Advisor, Sharjah Museums Department



*A Brief History of the House of
Lobmeyr in Vienna, Austria*

Leonid Rath

A Brief History of the House of Lobmeyr in Vienna, Austria

Leonid Rath

The history of the company starts with the birth of its founder, Josef Lobmeyr, in the small town of Grieskirchen in Upper Austria in 1792 (Fig. 1). As a young man, Lobmeyr's father - a textile dyer by trade - decided to apprentice Josef to his grand uncle, an inn keeper and glazier. In 1818, young Lobmeyr ventured to Vienna as a journeyman, initially working as an employee with two local glaziers. After saving 300 Gulden and borrowing the same amount again from an aunt, he finally opened his own little store in the city's Weihburggasse 3 on February 1823.

After only one year, in 1824, the success of his fashionable and high-quality wares allowed Lobmeyr to move to larger premises in Vienna's Kärntner Strasse. Here, he was able to broaden his range of drinking sets and other specialised glass items such as heavily cut vases and

bowls, soon offering also mirrors, chandeliers and crystal light fixtures for candles. Soon, Lobmeyr's professional success was underpinned by personal happiness, too. In 1827 Lobmeyr married Aloisia Dobravsky, who was to take a leading role in supporting her husband in driving

the small company - which by now had over thirty employees - towards ever greater success. As time went by, most of the couple's surviving children also assumed an active role in the family business: sons Josef Jr (1828-1864) and Ludwig (1829-1917) passed their master's exam as glaziers, joined the firm and later - after the death of their father - led it; daughter Louise married Wilhelm Kralik, the owner of a glass factory with which Lobmeyr collaborated closely, and daughter Mathilde's son with August Rath, a renown Viennese businessman, took over the leadership of the firm in the early 20th century.

By 1835, the outstanding reputation of the Lobmeyr firm



Fig. 1: Josef Lobmeyr Senior, the founder of the firm (1792-1855)



Fig. 2: Lobmeyr glass objects formed part of the official and private tableware used by the Emperor and Empress of Austria at the Hofburg in Vienna

led to the first orders from the Imperial court in Vienna, with a drinking set delivered the same year. Soon afterwards, Lobmeyr was officially appointed as purveyor of crystal glass items to the Habsburg court (Fig. 2).

Meanwhile, the company's success did not remain confined to Vienna. Indeed, by the 1840s, Lobmeyr had secured many European commissions as well as its first Middle Eastern order, supplying chandeliers for the huge palace of the Egyptian Khedive Abbas Hilmi I in Cairo. For this project, Josef Lobmeyr Jr went out personally to survey the building in 1848 and returned a year later to oversee the installation of the lighting implements.

In 1855, Josef Lobmeyr died unexpectedly, leaving his sons Josef Jr and Ludwig with the formidable task of running the firm. Josef was to concentrate on business aspects and administration while Ludwig saw to the artistic evolution of their glassware. From 1860 onwards, the company is officially registered as J.&L. LOBMEYR, the name it retains to this day. In the same year, Lobmeyr also introduced and registered its distinctive 'lattice monogram', the firm's logo, which has been added to the most precious glass pieces produced by the company ever since.

Under the direction of the two brothers, Lobmeyr's old-fashioned designs were now discarded in favour of new, fashionable styles inspired by a wide range of historical

European and Oriental art forms. The most sophisticated and technically demanding pieces were made for show at the international World Fairs held in Europe and the US, starting with the London World Fair in 1862.

In 1864, tragedy struck again when Josef Jr passed away after a long illness. At first, Ludwig seriously considered liquidating the firm, especially as his health, too, was not at its best. Eventually, however, he was persuaded to continue, and under his leadership, the company was to achieve unprecedented heights of success during the last three decades of the 19th century (Fig. 3).

Major inspiration for the continuing artistic development of Lobmeyr glassware now came from the recently opened Austrian Museum for Art and Industry in Vienna, aimed at improving the aesthetic taste of contemporary Austrian artisans and craftsmen. Inspired by the South Kensington Museum in London, the Museum displayed examples of the best decorative and industrial arts from around the world, including the Ottoman Empire, Persia and the Arab world. At the same time, it also regularly



Fig. 3: Ludwig Lobmeyr (1829-1917), a leading Austrian glass industrialist and a key figure in the 19th-century Viennese art scene

showcased the best and most visionary of contemporary crafts. From its inception, Ludwig Lobmeyr established close ties with the Museum and its staff, becoming not only one of the first Viennese industrialists who supported the activities of the Museum in all aspects, but who also displayed his latest designs there, with the aim to 'elevate the aesthetics of Austrian Glass' (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: The Vienna Museum of Applied Arts in the late 19th century (Photo © MAK)

At the time, Ludwig already drew many designs for Lobmeyr vessels himself, experimenting both with various artistic styles – Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism, Oriental – and a range of technical methods in order to exploit the aesthetic possibilities of the glass medium to the full. He also made contact with the most outstanding Viennese architects, designers and artists in view of inviting them to work with him on the design and ornamentation of innovative glass series.

For the 1867 World Fair in Paris, he collaborated in particular with the Danish architect Theophil von Hansen, famous for his part in the urban development of late 19th-century Vienna and soon a close Lobmeyr associate. Other artistic contributors included Professor Friedrich Schmidt, the architect of the new town hall of Vienna, and Josef Storck, later director of the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts. Their glass designs were extremely well received in Paris, and the Lobmeyr display was awarded a Silver Medal by the Fair's jury.

Spurred on by this success, Ludwig intensified the development of new forms and series with special focus on groundbreaking cutting, engraving and painting techniques. In that, he worked closely with the Bohemian glass manufactures of his brother-in-law Wilhelm Kralik in Adolf, which supplied the raw glass items, and his own refinery in Steinschoenau, responsible for applying the various decorative schemes. Copper-wheel engraving in particular reached an unprecedented degree of sophistication at the time and has remained a major asset of the company to this day.

In 1873, the Vienna World Fair, which coincided with the company's fiftieth anniversary, was to see Lobmeyr's most spectacular exhibition yet (Fig. 5). Majestic chandeliers, candelabra, mirrors, drinking sets – including the now famous 'Emperor Set' – and examples of individual glass art such as stem cups and centrepieces for dining tables competed for the public's attention and admiration. Even the Austrian Emperor himself congratulated Ludwig Lobmeyr on his achievement and awarded him with one of the country's highest honours. Yet again, the House of Lobmeyr had reaffirmed its leading position in the glass industry of its time. Ludwig Lobmeyr himself was now recognised as 'the regenerator of Bohemian glass'.

Inspired by the success of the Vienna Fair, Ludwig Lobmeyr decided to publish the first comprehensive volume



Fig. 5: Part of the J.&L. LOBMEYR crystal glass display at the 1873 International Exhibition in Vienna

dedicated to the medium of glass. 'Die Glassindustrie, ihre Geschichte, gegenwaertige Entwicklung und Statistik' (the glass industry, its history, contemporary development and statistics), with contributions by Dr Albert Ilgs from the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry and Viennese Art Historian Wendelin Boeheim, was published in 1874 and remains an important reference work today.

In 1877, Wilhelm Kralik died, and yet again, Ludwig Lobmeyr briefly contemplated giving up the business, before refocusing his efforts on presenting yet another outstanding collection of innovative glasswares at the 1878 Paris World Fair. This time the focus lay on delicate coloured glass items, decorated with engraved, painted and gilt decoration, as well as iridescent glass.

Of course, international success did not prevent Lobmeyr from continuing its close links with Vienna and its artistic establishment. Since 1873, the firm had regularly contributed to the Christmas exhibition of the city's Museum of Art and Industry, and in 1879, it presented a large comprehensive exhibition of its most outstanding achievements in glass. Again, the designs of the items displayed resulted from the ongoing collaboration between Lobmeyr and major contemporary artists.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s Lobmeyr continued to exhibit at World Fairs across Europe and the US. At the same time, the company saw to an ever increasing number of commissions from a local and international clientele, drawn particularly from amongst the bourgeois elite and aristocracy, including senior members of the Imperial household.

In 1894, Ludwig Lobmeyr – 65 years at the time and having remained unmarried – brought the son of his sister Mathilde, Stefan Rath, into the business. Hand in hand, they oversaw the move of the Lobmeyr firm to its new and final premises in Vienna's Kaertner Strasse, its distinctive, prominent shop front attracting customers as never before. Gradually, Stefan Rath took over more and more responsibilities from his ailing uncle, and by the time of his death in 1917, he was firmly established and ready to take the firm into the 20th century.

Initially Stefan Rath had intended to simply continue production with the exquisite designs and styles developed by his uncle. However, several established artists from his uncle's circle soon pointed out to him that 'the strength of Lobmeyr never resulted merely from the preservation of traditions, but from the ability to march ahead and lead on cutting-edge and groundbreaking developments'.

Since the turn of the century, major shifts in artistic taste had set in. As early as 1900, when Lobmeyr exhibited at the Paris World Fair, Stefan Rath had realised that – by adhering exclusively to traditional styles – the firm was in danger of losing its position at the helm of the Austrian glass industry. An aesthetic reorientation now proved an urgent requirement. Fortunately, Lobmeyr's close association with both the Museum and College of Arts and Crafts made it easy to establish contact with some of the most revolutionary and innovative young artists in Vienna, in particular Josef Hoffmann, the founder of the 'Wiener Werkstaette' (Viennese Arts and Crafts Workshop) and a close associate of the now world-famous painter Gustav Klimt.

By 1914, Lobmeyr was again leading on the development of visionary, contemporary styles, including designs that translated early manifestations of the gradually emerging 'Art Deco' style into glass. The greatest breakthrough for the new ideas, however, came at the Paris 'Art Deco' exhibition in 1925, where glass designs by Josef Hoffmann, Oswald Haerdtl, Stefan's daughter Marianne Rath and Oskar Strnad among others won a Gold Medal for Lobmeyr (Fig. 6).

Another famous artist who helped to drive the development of Lobmeyr products forward at the time was the architect Adolf Loos. Despite being based both in Prague and the South of France, he had designed one of Lobmeyr's most important tumbler series, discussing his ideas with Stefan Rath by letter. Their surviving, extensive correspondence still serves as an important record of design history in the making today.

Meanwhile, the increasingly difficult economic and political climate of the late 1920s and 1930s also took

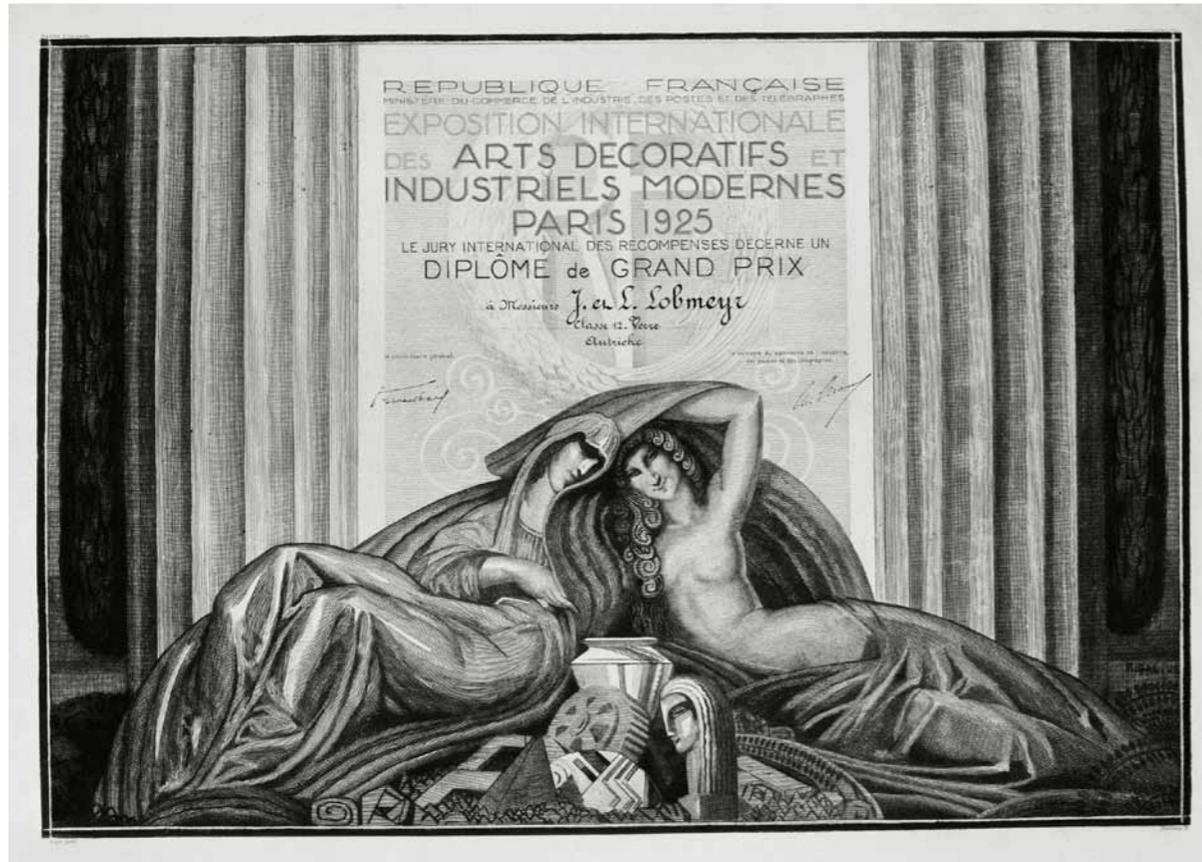


Fig. 6: The 'Grand Prix' certificate awarded to the firm of J.&L. LOBMEYR at the 1925 International Exhibition in Paris

their toll on Lobmeyr. In 1938, to avoid the increasing intrusions of Hitler's regime, Stefan Rath withdrew to his second home in Steinschönau/Bohemia, transferring the ownership of the company entirely to his son Hans Harald Rath. Lobmeyr in Vienna now concentrated mainly on the production of luxurious chandeliers.

Stefan Rath at the same time focused his attention on the Lobmeyr refinery in Steinschönau, expanding it into an independent business. In 1948, the Communist Czech authorities nationalised Rath's small company, and he himself became a state employee. Nevertheless, Steinschoenau became the focus of an ever expanding clientele – not least the Prague authorities themselves, who regularly ordered monumental and luxurious, stately gifts for foreign rulers and dignitaries. Despite the political and economic restrictions of the time, Rath managed to stay in touch with former contacts

in Europe and the US, too, securing an invitation to present a Lobmeyr exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1949. The show, which featured glass designs by Adolf Loos, Josef Hoffmann, Oswald Haerdtl, Vera Liskova and Vally Wiesenthier, also travelled to several other American cities, considerably raising Lobmeyr's profile on the continent. In 1950, a second Lobmeyr show took place at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, its exhibits celebrated as examples of cutting-edge industrial design. Following the New York exhibitions, in recognition of Lobmeyr's achievements in glass art, both the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of art acquired key pieces for their permanent collections.

In 1951, Stefan Rath – after staging a final farewell exhibition of Lobmeyr glass in Prague - returned to Vienna for good. For the last nine years of his life

he re-joined his son Hans Harald in leading the firm, overseeing in particular its hollow glassware and engraving workshops.

After the death of his father in 1960, Hans Harald Rath not only took over the management of the Lobmeyr firm but – like his predecessors – actively contributed to the artistic progression of its products. A formidable driving force in keeping the interest in glass art alive at home and abroad, Hans Harald had a particular passion for designing chandeliers. Indeed, ever since joining the firm as an apprentice in 1924, he had sketched and executed chandelier designs - for hotels like the famous Hotel Sacher in Vienna, cafes, theatres, government buildings and even castles. During the war years and late 40s, he collaborated with the Austrian firm Swarovski in keeping high-quality production going as Bohemian glassworks – now part of Communist Czechoslovakia – were no longer accessible to supply the crystal glass elements so essential in chandelier designs.

At the same time, he began to build links with newly-established Austrian glassworks – the start of a creative and sustainable partnership.

From the early 1950s onwards, Lobmeyr glasswares and chandeliers were again much in demand at home and prominently represented at international fairs.



Fig. 7: Hans Harald Rath explaining his groundbreaking chandelier design for the Metropolitan Opera in New York to the American Ambassador in Vienna

High-level commissions once more abounded, including a major order for chandeliers and glass sets from the Royal Houses of Kuwait, Afghanistan and Ethiopia respectively. In the US, meanwhile, Lobmeyr's reputation led to invitations to design the lighting systems for the Austria House in New York and – most significantly – the city's new Metropolitan Opera House in 1966 (Fig. 7). The designs for the Met's revolutionary 'star burst' chandeliers marked the culmination of Hans Harald Rath's professional life – cut short tragically only two years later by his death in a railway accident.

It now became the task of Rath's three sons Harald, Peter and Stefan to continue the family legacy in its fifth generation and ensure the company's continuing prosperity. Inducted into all practical aspects of the firm's activities since their teenage years, the brothers ably picked up where the father had left off so unexpectedly. In 1969, Peter Rath succeeded his father as director of the World Craft Council, while also continuing projects that had been initiated under his leadership. Most notably in this respect was Rath's work on the lighting for the Kennedy Center in Washington. Tasked with designing the 'largest chandelier in the world', he created a unique arrangement that measured twenty meters in diameter and incorporated 90 individual lighting units conceived to 'dazzle like a glittering jewel'. Meanwhile, towards the end of 1969, Lobmeyr was also commissioned to create a monumental chandelier for the Supreme Soviet Assembly Hall in the Kremlin in Moscow.

The 1970s saw an intensification of modern glass and chandelier designs, the latter successfully executed in collaboration with the time-honoured Viennese chandelier maker Josef Zahn and Co, which Lobmeyr had acquired in 1972. The Lobmeyr brothers intensified their active involvement in Austria's arts and crafts scene, opening a gallery space – 'Treffpunkt L' – on the second floor of the premises to showcase contemporary studio glass as well as the latest Lobmeyr designs and establishing an art glass studio in Baden outside Vienna with the help of artist Jack Ink. The company's history meanwhile was honoured with a special family museum set up in 1978. Scholars and academics, too, began to research and showcase Lobmeyr's central position

in the history of European glass art. Thus, in 1981, Viennese art historian Waltraud Neuwirth published the first volume of her comprehensive study on Lobmeyr's orientalist glass.

Throughout the 1980s Lobmeyr featured in over one hundred national and international exhibitions, from Vienna to Rome, from Philadelphia to Tokyo. An exhibition particularly close to the heart of the family was 'Thomas Edison – 100 years of Electric Light at Lobmeyr's', which featured the company's first electric crystal chandeliers, including a prototype made in 1882 as a gift from Ludwig Lobmeyr to his sister Mathilde as well as bespoke pieces for the Imperial court and the world-famous Hotel Sacher in Vienna. Major commissions at that time include chandeliers for the royal houses of Saudi Arabia and Brunei as well as monumental lighting systems for the new American embassy in Cairo, the Indonesian embassy in Vienna and the restored Charlottenburg palace in Berlin. At the same time, Lobmeyr's expertise was also increasingly appreciated in the context of historical restoration projects, including that dedicated to the early electric chandeliers in the Vienna city hall, first installed in 1887.

The 1990s brought continuing success and new challenges. In spring 1990, the famous German

conductor Herbert von Karajan suggested Lobmeyr's involvement in the development of innovative crystal chandeliers for the Athens concert hall. The two majestic pieces for the stairwell measured 14 meters, four further lighting elements for the foyer five meters each. Major orders also came in from Japan.

Since the early 2000s, the house of Lobmeyr has been run by Andreas, Leonid and Johannes Rath, the children of the elder Rath brothers (Fig. 8). While strategically expanding the firm's international retail networks around the world, like their forefathers the brothers continue their passion for exquisite craftsmanship, cutting-edge design and creative involvement in the national and international decorative arts scene, both in terms of restoration and in terms of contemporary explorations with exciting young designers, including POLKA, Sebastian Menschhorn, Marco Dessi, Michael Anastassiades, Ted Muehling as well as Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin from the Formafantasma Studio in Amsterdam. Several of these experimental glass collaborations have made their way into exhibitions at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris and major design festivals like the London, Vienna and Milan Design Weeks.



Fig. 8: Andreas, Leonid and Johannes Rath, the current directors of the Lobmeyr firm, in front of the current Lobmeyr store, which dates back to 1895

*Ludwig Lobmeyr and
Orientalism in Vienna*

Rainald Franz



Ludwig Lobmeyr and Orientalism in Vienna

Rainald Franz

The fashion of travelling across the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt, new methods of publication and international exhibitions of industrial and decorative arts all revived the interest in oriental art and decorative arts in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century. In European arts, characterized by their eclecticism at the time, interest in the Orient resulted in the emergence of a new artistic style now known as orientalism, expressing itself in a wide range of art forms from literature to music, the decorative arts to architecture.¹

Within the context of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg empire, interest in the Orient long preceded 19th-century orientalism. Indeed, its lands looked back on a long history of trade and warfare with the Ottoman Empire in particular, while Islamic art objects were familiar luxury goods that had been imported since medieval times and had long been seen as an exotic source of inspiration for its decorative arts across the centuries. Especially glass objects from Syria had been traded to and across Europe since the 11th century, making their way into the treasuries of cathedrals and monasteries as well as the imperial cabinet of curiosities (Kunstammer) from the 16th century onwards.²



Fig. 1: Design for Lobmeyr's chandelier and mirror displays at the 1862 London International Exhibition

In addition to the oriental artefacts that had reached Europe over time, in the 19th century displays at the innovative world exhibitions - initiated with the 'Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations' held 1851 in London - offered further inspirational encounters with Islamic and oriental art. Intended to foster international trade in the best of industrially produced commodities and products, including those designed by the decorative arts and art industries, these world exhibitions became a regular feature in Europe and even the United States, and international artisans went to all length to present the best they could produce.

One of the few Austrian glass manufacturers present at the 1862 World Exhibition in London was the Viennese firm J.&L. LOBMEYR (Fig. 1). Famous for the production of exquisite glass and crystal wares, chandeliers and mirrors, it won a Medal of Honour for the outstanding quality of the items it displayed.

While in London, Ludwig Lobmeyr, the head of the firm, met the Viennese art historian, critic and journalist Rudolf Eitelberger (1817-1885), tasked by the Austrian royal family with setting up a new Royal Imperial Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna according to the

model of the South Kensington Museum, established for the industrial arts after the Great Exhibition of 1851. Eitelberger's mission was to collect exemplary historical and historicizing pieces that could help to refine the aesthetic taste and production skills of contemporary Austrian artisans - essential to make their work competitive with French and English products. The Royal Imperial Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna (Fig. 2) was opened in 1864 as the first Museum of Decorative Arts on the European continent, second only to its predecessor in London, now known as the Victoria & Albert Museum. Ludwig Lobmeyr was one of the first Austrian industrialists to extensively support the Museum and develop his products according to Eitelberger's ideas. He now set out to develop new glass forms, including whole drinking sets, on the basis of historical pieces, prints and drawings in the Museum collections. Meanwhile, he also came to serve as a curator for the Museum and helped to develop exhibitions, which often included the latest and best Lobmeyr glass designs - orientalist pieces among them. The Museum's emphasis on developing the industrial arts of Austria came at a time when the field, including the manufacture of glass, was very much dominated by France. Here, orientalist glass designs had first been introduced in the 1860s by glass artists like Emile Gallé in Nancy and the Paris-based glass artist Philippe-Joseph Brocard, who had first developed a deep interest in Islamic glass after becoming involved in the conservation of medieval Syrian examples. His orientalist glass pieces with coloured enamels, based on 13th-14th century originals such as mosque lamps, bowls and beakers, attracted considerable attention and praise at the 1867 Paris and 1873 Vienna World Exhibitions. Austrian artisans like Lobmeyr set out to study the works of their French competitors and in turn create luxury items in 'the Oriental style'. Further inspiration in this respect also came from specialised trade magazines like *Gewerbehalle* or *L'Art pour tous* as well as pattern books illustrated with newly developed chromolithographs. Among the best known of those were James Cavanah Murphy's *The Arabian*

Antiquities in Spain (1813) and in particular the works of the British artist Owen Jones : *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra* (1836-1845), produced with the help of fellow artist Jules Goury, and *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856), published after the 1851 Great Exhibition in London. In France meanwhile, the archeologist Achille-Constant-Théodore-Émile Prisse d'Avennes published *L'Art arabe d'après les monuments du Kaire* (1869-1877), and Auguste Racinet edited *L'Ornement polychrome. 100 planches en couleurs or et argent contenant environ 2000 motifs de tous les styles art ancien at asiatique, moyen age, renaissance, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècle* (1869-1873).

In addition to benefiting from the Museum's extensive collections of artefacts and library resources, Lobmeyr's close personal ties with the Museum and its director Rudolf Eitelberger also led to contacts with the most important Viennese designers of their time. Indeed, much orientalist glass designed for his firm owes its existence to the collaboration with artists who came via the Royal Imperial Museum of Art and Industry - Franz Schmoranz and Johann Machytka most notable among them.³

Franz Schmoranz (1845-1892) was one of the leading Viennese personalities to document, publish and apply oriental forms, ornaments and glassware. The son of a famous architect of the same name, Schmoranz had studied at the Vienna Academy and worked in Chrudim/Bohemia before studying in Prague at the Technical University and working as an assistant of the Berlin architect Karl von Diebitsch (1819-1869), well known for his deep interest in Moorish architecture. In the 1860s, Schmoranz joined Diebitsch in Egypt, where he had been appointed as architect to the Egyptian Khedive

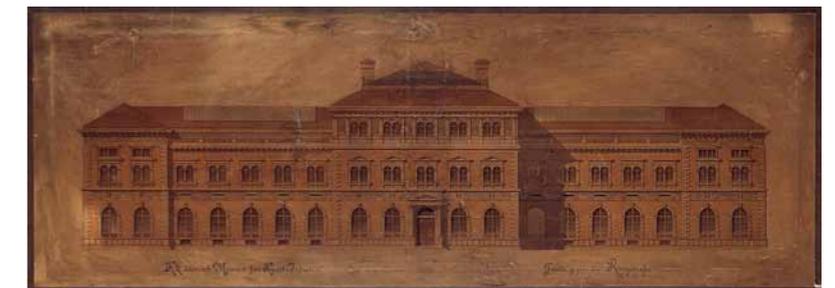


Fig. 2: The facade of the Royal Imperial Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna, facing the famous Ringstrasse (Photo © MAK/Georg Mayer)

(viceroys) Ismail Pasha and was building his palace in Ismailia, a city founded in 1863 as a prospective administrative center on the Suez canal. When Diebitsch died in 1869, Schmoranz took over his position. He oversaw the completion of the Khedive's palace and continued working for him, planning and executing the Egyptian pavilions for the 1873 Vienna and 1878 Paris World Exhibitions respectively.

The 1873 Vienna World Exhibition saw a continuation of the trend to incorporate orientalist pavilions first established at the 1867 Paris exhibition, and Franz Schmoranz, too, designed accordingly, including an exact copy of the burial-Madrasa of Sultan Kait Bey in Cairo (1472-1474) in his rendering of the Egyptian Khedive's palais. The group of Islamic buildings furthermore comprised a town house, a farm house, a Turkish coffee house, a mosque and a copy of the rock tomb of Ben Hassan. In addition to manifold orientalist structures like these, the exotic objects shown in the international pavilions and the main hall (Industriepalast) of the exhibition further provided ample inspiration to Austrian artisans. Oriental styles in particular were praised by art critics and curators.

In addition to his architectural activities abroad and at home, Franz Schmoranz also continued to maintain close connections with the art scene in Vienna, and in particular the Royal Imperial Museum of Art and Industry. In 1876, he organized an exhibition of Islamic and oriental architecture at the Museum, based on drawings, photographs and plaster casts of architectural and ornamental details he had collected during his travels in Constantinople, Sicily and the Near East between 1868 and 1874. At the same time, he published a companion catalogue with architectural sketches and plans drawn during visits to Jerusalem, Damascus, Bursa, and Palermo. A special focus concerned the architecture of Cairo, where Schmoranz had worked with his assistant Johann Machytka. Upon Franz Schmoranz' early death in 1892, his brother Gustav, professor at the Prague Kunstgewerbeschule (school of applied arts) since 1897, continued his brother's work and proceeded to publish an important book on historical oriental glass in European collections in 1898. The publication contains many drawings apparently still from Franz Schmoranz's

hand as well as a detailed chemical analysis of traditional 'Arabian' glass and glass colours.⁴

The contemporary focus on the oriental arts among Viennese architects, artists and artisans of course reflected and catered to a far-reaching public fascination with the orient, triggered in particular by increased travels to the region. Oriental interiors became the rage after crown prince Rudolf had a 'Turkish Salon' established at the Vienna Hofburg, with a lavish publication about it released in 1886 (Fig. 3).⁵ The imperial interior inspired



Fig. 3: The Austrian crown prince and his wife in the Turkish Salon at the Hofburg in Vienna (Photo © MAK)

many an aristocratic and bourgeois copy, all requiring appropriate orientalist furnishings and accessories, including decorative ceramics and glass items. Among those eager to cater for this new market was also the foremost Viennese purveyor of glass and crystal, Ludwig Lobmeyr. In fact, by that time, the Lobmeyr family had already been familiar with the orient for some time, having supplied and installed chandeliers and wall lightings for the palace of the Egyptian Khedive in 1848/9 after winning a competition (Fig. 4).⁶ The first orientalist Lobmeyr glass was a vase decorated in the 'Arabian style' ("arabisch decorirt"), based on patterns from 'Arabian' tiles Schmoranz had sold to the Viennese Royal Imperial Museum of Art and Industry after the 1876 exhibition, entitled *Historische Ausstellung des islamitischen Orients, Darstellungen von Cultus- und Profanbauten umfassend (historical exhibition of the Islamic Orient, comprising representations of religious and secular buildings)*, which he had organized there.⁷ By 1878 Schmoranz and Machytka

designed a wide range of orientalist vessels, bowls and lamps for Ludwig Lobmeyr. Meanwhile, several other Viennese designers such as the architects Otto Girard and Georg Rehlender, the draughtsman Moritz Knab, several professors at the Vienna Kunstgewerbeschule (school of applied arts) such as Josef von Storck and Valentin Teirich, and Josef Salb, a teacher at the k.k. Staatsgewerbeschule (state school of crafts) in Salzburg, also collaborated with Lobmeyr in creating a range of orientalist glass series. In general, the glass shapes were designed by the firm, many by Ludwig Lobmeyr himself, and the raw glass form produced by the Bohemian glass manufacture of Meyr's Neffe in Adolfov/Adolf, now in the Czech Republic. The ornamentation was then contributed by the respective artists.

While Schmoranz and Machytka provided the ornamentation for the glass series in the 'Arabian style', characterized by coloured enamels and gilding applied on transparent glass, Otto Girard and Georg Rehlender specialized in translucent and opaque glass items with coloured enamels and prominent gilding. Valentin Teirich meanwhile designed Indian and 'Arabian' ornaments for opaque vases and vessels, while Josef von Storck, also director of the Vienna Kunstgewerbeschule, developed the series "dark green with gold"

from patterns adapted from Auguste Racinet's Indian style chromolithographs in *L'Ornement polychrome*. Josef Salb, finally, designed ornaments for the series 'vases etc. with oriental enamel decoration', 'rose crystal' and 'celadon c'.

The coloured work drawings for most of these designs still survive today in the archives of the Lobmeyr firm. Meanwhile, patterns and drawing books with detailed drawings to document and record the glass sets, including two folio-sized volumes dealing exclusively with 'Oriental' and 'Arabian' vessels, were donated to the Royal Imperial Museum of Art and Industry in 1883 and 1892 by Ludwig Lobmeyr on the condition that they should remain in its library.

In conclusion, the far-reaching fascination with the Orient in 19th-century Vienna found its expression in glass art primarily due to the efforts of the firm of J.&L. LOBMEYR and in particular its proprietor Ludwig Lobmeyr, who was not only a prominent industrialist but also, and perhaps even more so, a keen artist, designer and intellect, whose outstanding aesthetic sensibility and inquisitive mind made him one of the foremost drivers of Austrian arts and crafts at the time.



Fig. 4: Josef Lobmeyr junior (1828-1849) visited Egypt in 1849 to install an order of the firm's chandeliers at the palace of the Khedive in Ismailiya

¹ Alexander L. Macfie: *Orientalism. A Reader*, New York 2000; John M. MacKenzie: *Orientalism. History, Theory and the Arts*, Manchester [u.a.] 1996; Sallama Al-Madhi: *Einfluss der islamischen Architektur auf die Wiener Bauten im 19. Jahrhundert*, Diss. phil., Wien 1973; Stefan Koppelkamm: *Der imaginäre Orient. Exotische Bauten des achtzehnten und neunzehnten Jahrhunderts in Europa*, Berlin 1987; Edward Said: *Orientalism*, London 2003.

² Hermann Pollig (Ed.): *Exotische Welten Europäische Phantasien*, Stuttgart 1987.

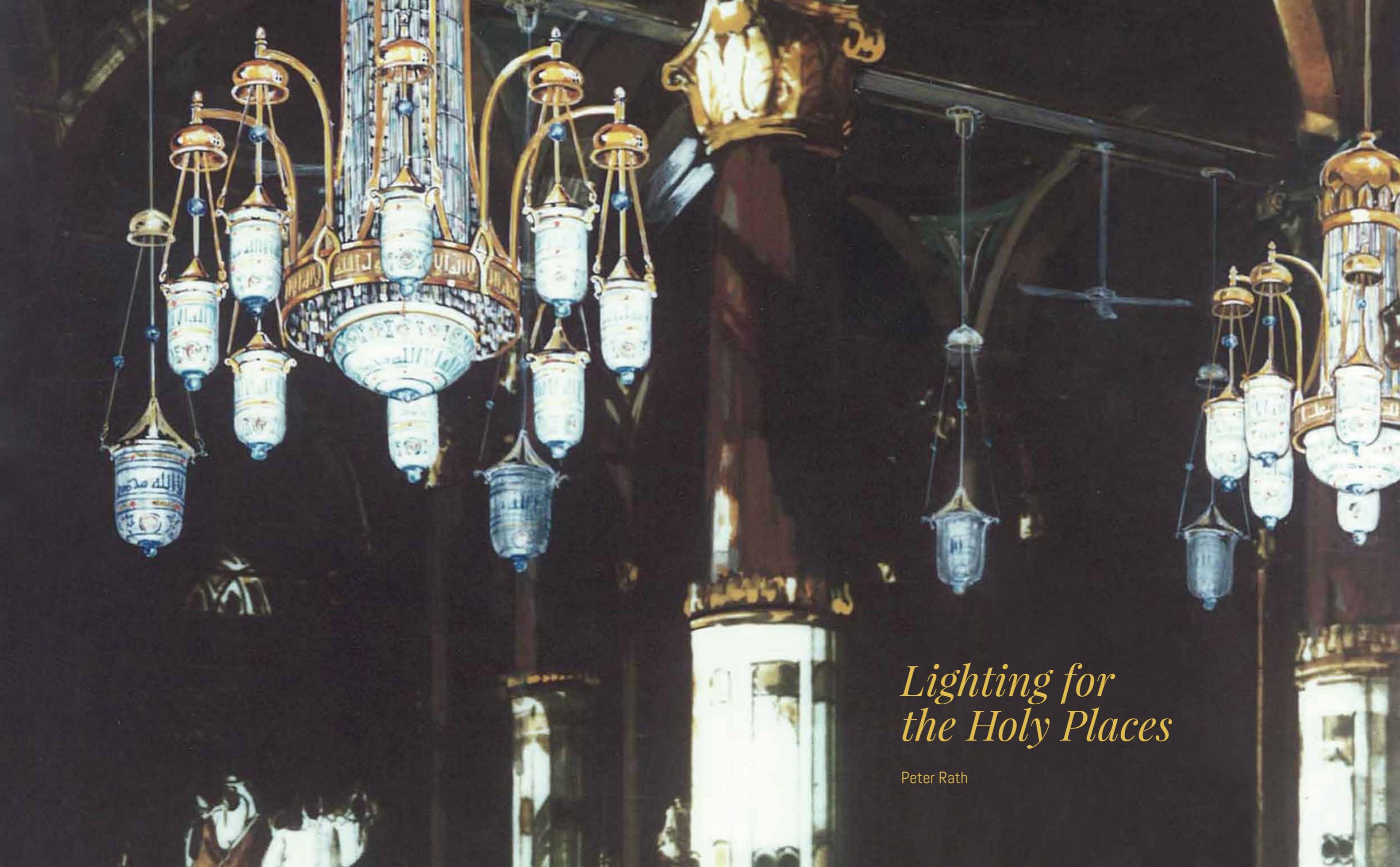
³ Mary Patricia Sekler: Le Corbusier und das Museum als eine Stätte des Lernens. in: Peter Noever (Ed.) *Kunst und Industrie. Die Anfänge des Museums für angewandte Kunst in Wien*, Vienna 2000, p.260-265.

⁴ *Altorientalische Glas-Gefäße nach den Original-Aufnahmen des Gustav Schmoranz*. Vienna 1898, also published in English: *Old Oriental gilt and enamelled glass vessels extant in public museums and private collections*, G. Norman and Son, Vienna, London 1899.

⁵ Eva B. Ottlinger, Lieselotte Hanzl-Wachter: *Kaiserliche Interieurs: die Wohnkultur des Wiener Hofes im 19. Jahrhundert*, Wien 2002, S. 132

⁶ Waltraud Neuwirth: *Schöner als Bergkristall/Surpassing the Beauty of Rock Crystall. Ludwig Lobmeyr – Glass Legend*, Vienna 1999, p. 168-169.

⁷ Ulrike Scholda: „Man suchte die Kunstgewerbetreibenden heranzuziehen, ich sank von selber hin...“ Ludwig Lobmeyr und das k.k. Österreichische Museum für Kunst und Industrie, in: Peter Noever (Ed.) *Kunst und Industrie. Die Anfänge des Museums für angewandte Kunst in Wien*, Vienna 2000, p. 201.



*Lighting for
the Holy Places*

Peter Rath

Lighting for the Holy Places

Peter Rath

To bring light to one of the most important Holy Sites of Islam was a vocation and was seen by the owners of Lobbmeyr exactly as such.

We remember the Holy Qur'an, chapter 24 "The Light" ("An-Nur): "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth and Allah guides to His light whom he wishes".

It was in 1973 that HH King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz first gave orders to restore and enlarge the Holy Mosques of Makkah (Haram al-Sharif) and Madinah (Riadh ul Jannah)

In 1976 Lobbmeyr was approached by the Saudi authorities to help with working on the plans for new chandeliers for the Makkah mosque, an enormous and highly complex endeavour. It was Stefan Rath from the Lobbmeyr firm who insisted on an Arab-Islamic style of design for the more than one thousand differently sized chandeliers. A preliminary scale model provided by the firm soon convinced the contractors to accept this proposal.

In the early 80s, shortly before King Fahd took on the title of 'Custodian of the two Holy Mosques', work begun on the 'Madinah Project', with Lobbmeyr providing numerous detailed designs for scaled lighting prototypes, intended for both the old Mosque and the extensions.

In early 1985 Peter Rath travelled to Jeddah personally on behalf of Lobbmeyr to present the final designs to the contractors. In the meeting, which also involved the eminent Cairene architect Dr. Kamal Ismail, who had once served as architect to the Egyptian King Farouq and now acted as royal advisor for the Holy Mosques in Saudi Arabia, two design alternatives were presented: the so-called "classical candle-style Maria Theresia" and the "Arab-Islamic style with painted glass vases". The Bin Laden contracting company expressed the royal preference for the first "classical" lighting style, as this had prevailed in the Ottoman interior of the Mosque for so long. Peter Rath, however, hankered with this statement given the special sanctity of the site, and pleaded for the second style. He explained that historically, 'in the land of the non muslims', the 'classical candle-style Maria Theresia' was in fact used for ballroom chandeliers! Moreover, he sincerely believed that the provision of carefully designed implements that provide beautiful light to areas of sincere prayer would help to create a spiritual atmosphere of peace and humility transcending the turmoil of this world. The very next day, the royal approval for Rath's proposal was given, and work commenced.



Fig. 1: The 'Arab-Islamic style' chandelier designed by Peter Rath for the old Friday Mosque in Madinah al-Munawwara in 1986/7



Fig. 2

A busy time followed as full-sized shop drawings had to be prepared, full-sized prototypes of the chandelier were produced and a considerable amount of technical survey had to be undertaken, including light density estimations with Philips, the firm responsible for the technical and logistic support of the Mosque's new lighting systems. After a 'Preliminary Report' with all the artistic, technical and logistic details had been submitted for approval, the final order for producing the Arab-Islamic-style chandeliers was placed. Production took one year in total.

All in all four monumental chandeliers, 60 large-scale versions – represented by the example shown in the exhibition (Fig. 1) - and 60 smaller versions were produced together with 2 huge candelabra (Fig. 2) and 360 hanging glass lanterns. Each piece was made by skilled masters, working largely by hand, employing brass and hand-cut crystal glass. The over one thousand, hollow glass shades were hand-blown. They were then individually painted with enamels or carefully decorated with decal-enamel ornaments before being fired in kilns at 520°C, following a technical process very similar to the old Islamic glass techniques that had originally come to Europe in the 13th century from centres like Damascus and Aleppo. 20 kg of pure gold, gifted by His Majesty, formed part of the final ornamentation of the lighting implements.

After completion, the items were installed by the Turkish engineer Mahmoud Mertol on behalf of the Austrian Lobmeyr team, who were not allowed to enter the Madinah Mosque, which is of course exclusively reserved for Muslims.

The Madinah commission marks the largest and most significant chandelier order for Lobmeyr in the 20th century, and it fills the company with pride that its pieces have appeared on Saudi Television as part of the Mosque's interior for all to see and enjoy ever since.

The Madinah commission did not remain the only collaboration with Saudi Arabia with regard to the Holy Mosques. In fact, subsequently, further Lobmeyr lighting

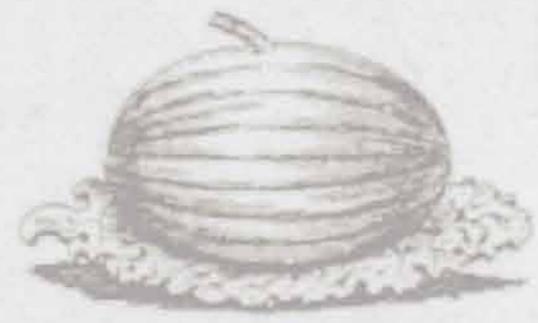
designs were requested for their huge extensions, first those in Madinah and then those in Makkah. Peter Rath and the Lobmeyr team were now tasked with directing the creation of monumental ring-shaped chandeliers, measuring eight meters in diameter, and a range of heavy classical and newly designed lanterns intended to be placed near the entrances. Again, their work was much appreciated. At a subsequent meeting at the Riyadh Fair, Peter Rath and his team were personally praised for the work done by Prince Salman Abdul Aziz, then Governor of Riyadh and now King of Saudi Arabia.

Beyond Saudi Arabia, Lobmeyr has also lit many other mosques and religious buildings. In fact, their largest ever ring-chandelier was constructed for the huge dome of the Kampong Kiarong Mosque in Brunei in 1990. The piece has a diameter of over 8 meters and is 7 meters high. Its imposing presence in the Mosque is complemented further by a set of smaller chandeliers Lobmeyr designed for the ladies' wing and the balustrades.

Why has Lobmeyr been at the forefront of being commissioned for such religiously and culturally sensitive projects? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that over five generations, the Lobmeyr family has been dedicated to sympathetically studying and understanding the artistic needs of other cultures before designing and producing lighting systems that are culturally appropriate for them, including lamps and chandeliers for the Arab and Islamic World.

As early as 1848, Josef Lobmeyr Jnr, son of the company's founder, twice went to Cairo - to install Lobmeyr chandeliers in the new palace of the Khedive Abbas Hilmi I and to deliver mosque lamps, faithful copies of 13th-century Mamluk originals, for Cairo's Sultan Hassan Mosque.

Some one hundred years later, Lobmeyr once again designed Arab-style chandeliers, this time for the palaces of King Khaled, King Faisal and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, soon to be followed by the commissions for the Holy Places.



JOSEPH LOBMEYER

Besitzer der Glasfabriken

Marienthal und Zwechewo

bürgl. Glaser und Glashändler

Karntnerstr. **IN WIEN** No. 940.

zum Fürsten Metternich.



Catalogue

About the Exhibition

This exhibition, which is the first of its kind, presents key examples of the exquisite 19th-century orientalist glass created by the Viennese firm of J.&L. LOBMEYR, one of the foremost international glass manufacturers and in family hands ever since its establishment by Josef Lobmeyr (1792-1855) in 1823.

Famous for its innovative manufacturing and glass refining technologies and its sophisticated designs, Lobmeyr has created a diverse stylistic range of wares and lighting fixtures since the first half of the 19th century. The first section of the exhibition provides a brief chronological overview reaching from Josef Lobmeyr's early designs in the 1840s to those representing the firm's groundbreaking collaborations with renown artists in the 20th and early 21st centuries.

The manufacture of orientalist glass, the main focus of the exhibition, was initiated by Josef's son Ludwig Lobmeyr (1829-1917) after taking over the firm in 1864 following the death of his elder brother. A keen designer as well as a business man, he first started the firm's tradition of inviting well-known artists to collaborate on glass designs. Many exquisite work drawings attesting to the close dialogue between designer and glassmaker in creating orientalist glass still survive in the Lobmeyr archive and are here presented alongside the artworks themselves.

Following the death of Ludwig Lobmeyr, who remained unmarried, his nephew Stefan Rath (1879-1960) took the firm into the 20th century. In the 1960/70s, Stefan's grandson Peter Rath first introduced Islamic elements to Lobmeyr chandelier and lamp designs, following an invitation to help devise appropriate lighting systems for the Holy Mosques in Makkah al-Mukarramah and Madinah al-Munawwarah.

Today, J.&L. LOBMEYR is run by Andreas, Leonid and Johannes Rath, the sixth generation of the family. They continue the firm's commitment to both honouring the historical traditions of Lobmeyr glassmaking and continually exploring innovative, cutting-edge designs with Austrian and international designers.



Josef Lobmeyr Senior, the Founder of the Firm (1792-1855)

Watercolour by Friedrich Kellner, 1840

100 x 140 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Born in Upper Austria, Josef Lobmeyr came to Vienna as a glassmaking apprentice in 1818. In 1823, he opened a small glassware shop in the city's Weihburggasse. Supported by his wife Aloisia, Josef Lobmeyr soon turned his modest business into Vienna's leading purveyor of high quality glassware, chandeliers and mirrors.



Aloisia Lobmeyr (1803-1864)

Watercolour by Friedrich Kellner, 1840

100 x 140 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Originally from Moravia, Aloisia Dobrasky's family had moved to Vienna when she was a child. Here she met and subsequently married Josef Lobmeyr, a young journeyman from Upper Austria, in 1827. Aloisia bore her husband five children, but still found time to help run the business. She remained the driving force behind her husband's success and the rapid expansion of the Lobmeyr company until his death in 1855.



Portrait of Ludwig Lobmeyr (1829-1917)

Dry point etching after a painting by Ferdinand Schmutzer, completed in 1909

525 x 650 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Ludwig Lobmeyr, the younger son of Josef Lobmeyr senior, took over the family business in 1864 after the death of his elder brother, with whom he had managed the firm, known as J.&L. LOBMEYR since 1860, after their father's death. A man of remarkable aesthetic sensitivity and taste as well as business acumen, Ludwig Lobmeyr excelled not only as the leading glass manufacturer of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but as a key figure in the arts, crafts and design scene of 19th-century Vienna.



Design Drawing for the Former Lobmeyr Shop Facade in Vienna's Weihburggasse

Designed by Johann Aminger and Moritz Wappler, ca. 1842

Watercolour on paper

ca 500 x 700 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

By 1844, Josef Lobmeyr's business had expanded considerably. Its fancy shop front, with designs possibly influenced by Islamic ornament, now ran from Vienna's Weihburggasse to Kärtnerstrasse. The company, which soon became the foremost glass purveyor in Vienna, was to remain at the family house for 72 years, until its demolition in 1916.



Lobmeyr Glass Art — An Introduction

During the firm's early years, Josef Lobmeyr (1792-1855) operated mainly as a glass dealer, selling the wares of several different manufacturers. In the early 1850s, he himself began to design items for the firm's assortment, made to his instructions in Bohemian glassworks. Ever since, the most innovative and cutting-edge Lobmeyr series have been designed by the Lobmeyr atelier, often in collaboration with famous artists, and manufactured in Bohemian glassworks around Steinschönau and Haida, the Meyr's Neffe works in Winterberg/ Adolf historically most important among them.

The creation of a Lobmeyr glass starts with artistic designs. Once approved, these are translated into paper cuts reflecting the item's overall shape, technical work drawings with precise visual and written instructions for the glass workers and decorators. The raw glass used is the particularly clear, hard and light-weight 'Bohemian crystal glass' - made from quartz sand, potash (calium carbonate) and lime (calcium carbonate). Various metal oxides may be added to colour the glass. The raw materials are fused into liquid glass at ca. 1400 centigrade before being shaped by free or mould blowing at 700-1000 centigrades. Specialized glass cutters, engravers, gilders and painters then apply the decoration.

It was Josef's son Ludwig Lobmeyr (1864-1917) who first decided to combine the firm's ongoing commitment to long-established historical techniques and styles with the creation of experimental contemporary series and studio glass art developed in collaboration with cutting-edge artists, designers and architects of the time. His strategy has placed Lobmeyr at the vanguard of European glassmaking ever since.



Items from the First Lobmeyr Drinking Set for the Imperial Court in Vienna

Designed by Josef Lobmeyr around 1835
Mouth-blown crystal, hand-cut, hand-polished, copper-wheel engraved Imperial crest

Various measurements

Lobmeyr Family Museum

In the early years of the firm, drinking sets were among the foremost products sold by Lobmeyr. Initially made according to foreign designs, Josef Lobmeyr soon designed his own glasswares, too. Around 1835, the outstanding quality of Lobmeyr's merchandise led to the first order from the Imperial Court in Vienna. Lobmeyr's close association with the ruling Habsburg family was to continue until the end of the monarchy in 1918. Parts of this set are still used at Austrian state functions today.



Plate showing the Greek God of Marriage riding an Eagle

Designed by August Kuehne and Josef von Storck, 1875

Lead-free crystal, mould-blown, hand-cut and polished, copper-wheel engraving

195 x 19 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

By the 1860s, Lobmeyr worked closely with Viennese architects and artists when designing new wares. On this plate, the Renaissance-style design was executed by two artists: August Kuehne designed the mythological scene, while Josef von Storck (1830-1902), also a professor at the Viennese School of Arts and Crafts, supplied the drawings for the scroll around the rim. Exquisite pieces like this one earned Lobmeyr numerous medals and prizes at World Fairs across Europe and the US in the 1860s and 1870s.

Beaker

Designed by Josef Lobmeyr senior in 1846

Mouth-blown glass, triple overlay and deep cut pink, white and blue glass

94 x 144 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

In the earliest days of the firm, Josef Lobmeyr sold the wares of various glass producers, particularly from Bohemia. By the 1840s, however, he had begun to have glass items made to his own designs. This beaker is a rare survival of the very first series designed by Josef Lobmeyr himself. Its technique and coloration reflect the fashion for fanciful coloured glass at the time.



Decanter with Stopper, engraved with 'Meander' Pattern

Part of Drinking Set no. 103

Designed by the Danish architect Theophil von Hansen, 1866

Lead-free mould-blown crystal, copper-wheel engraving

117 x 342 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Theophil Hansen was not only one of the most important architects involved in the later 19th-century urban development of Vienna, but also Ludwig Lobmeyr's close advisor and friend. Together, they designed glasswares and drinking sets with 'Greek' and neo-Renaissance motifs. The shape of this decanter in turn is inspired by classic Greek vases.



Decanter with Cut Glass Stopper and Stem Glass

From the 'Schwarzbronzit Variation A' series

Designed by Josef Hoffmann, 1911/1912

Mould-blown glass, painted and etched decoration in the bronzite technique

118 x 216 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The innovative bronzite glass technique was developed around 1910. The glass is covered with a brown or black, slightly metallic coating. The intended design is then drawn onto the surface with a protective varnish before the unprotected ground around it is etched away with hydrofluoric acid. From 1911, Lobmeyr produced several series in this difficult technique, mostly after designs by Hoffmann. Some are still made by the firm today.



Stem Glass

From the 'Schwarzbronzit Variation A' series

Designed by Josef Hoffmann, 1911/1912

Mould-blown glass, painted and etched decoration in the bronzite technique

66 x 137 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Josef Hoffmann (1870-1956) was a groundbreaking Viennese architect, designer and key figure in the modern arts and crafts movement of 19th-century Vienna. In 1897 he co-founded the Vienna Secession (Union of progressive Austrian Artists) with the painter Gustav Klimt, followed in 1903 by the famous Wiener Werkstaette, a product design association of architects, artists and designers. These Lobmeyr glasses were designed for the 1914 exhibition of the German Association of Craftsmen in Cologne.



Jardiniere (Receptacle for Flowers)

Form designed by Josef Hoffmann, Decoration by Oswald Dittrich, 1910/1912

Mouth-blown glass, hand-cut and polished, painted and etched decoration in the bronzite technique

178 x 126 x 82 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This elegant dish for arranging or planting flowers is one of a series of vessels produced by Lobmeyr in collaboration with the famous Viennese designers Josef Hoffmann and Oswald Dittrich. Cutting-edge pieces at the time, bronzite glasswares were developed around 1910 at the trade school for glassmaking and design in Steinschönau, now in the Czech Republic. Their style later influenced the Art Deco movement of the 1930s.

Tall Vase with Abstract Animal Decoration

Designed by Josef Hoffmann (form), Urban Janke and Ludwig Heinrich Jungnickel (ornamentation), 1912

Mouth-blown glass, hand-cut and polished, painted and etched decoration in the bronzite technique

90 x 60 x 197 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The fact that three different artists contributed to the design of this vase – one of a series of flower containers – demonstrates the commitment to aesthetic sophistication with which Lobmeyr approaches the making of its wares. While Hoffmann probably designed the shape, Janke provided the drawings for the abstract ornamentation and Jungnickel the animal figures. The resulting style was revolutionary at the time.



Two War Tumblers produced for Sale in the Ottoman Empire

Poem and Calligraphy by Ahmed Saadeddin, dated 1330-1335 H (1912-17 CE)

Mouth-blown glass, painted and acid etched in the bronzite technique Mouth-blown glass, enameled and gilt

78 x 104 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

These elegantly calligraphed tumblers were intended for sale in the Ottoman Empire during World War I to raise money for the war effort. We do not know if Ahmed Saadeddin calligraphed the verses as well as compose them, but in any case the exceptionally fine thuluth inscription suggests the hand of an accomplished calligrapher familiar with the Arabic-Ottoman alphabet.



Water Jug DKR 16 with the Crest of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Form first designed by Stefan Rath senior in 1956, this edition made to exclusive order ca. 1983

Mould-blown crystal glass, hot-mounted handle, hand-cut base, enamel painted crest

110 (172) x 160 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Pioneering series designed by Lobmeyr in the past continue to be produced in ongoing editions to this day. The original design of this water jug was designed by Stefan Rath (1879-1960), who led the Lobmeyr firm after the death of his uncle Ludwig Lobmeyr in 1917. In 1983, a drinking set of this type was ordered for the court of King Hussain of Jordan, the plain shapes now enhanced with the Hashemite royal crest.



Water tumbler from Drinking Set No.248 with Crest of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Original form designed by Adolf Loos in 1931, this edition made to exclusive order ca. 1983

Mould-blown crystal, hand-cut base, enamel painted crest

77 x 92 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The tumbler continues a design originally created by the famous Viennese artist Adolf Loos in 1931. Together with other items, it formed part of a drinking set commissioned from Lobmeyr by one of its most famous international clients, the Royal House of Jordan. The occasion for the order may have been the impending state visit of the British Queen Elizabeth II in 1984.



Candy Dish

Designed by Oswald Haerdtl, 1924

Mould-blown lead-free crystal glass

124 x 228 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This exquisitely delicate dish is one of a series made of so-called 'muslin' glass, distinguished by its extremely thin walls (0.7-1 mm) and particular elasticity in forming. Pieces like this were first shown by Lobmeyr at the Paris International Exhibition in 1925 and met with the greatest appreciation. The architect Oswald Haerdtl (1899-1956) was their key designer, pushing the technical possibilities of the thin-walled material to its very limit in creating his graceful forms.

Water Decanter 'Josephine'

Designed by Monika Singer and Marie Rahm of POLKA, 2006

Mould-blown, lead-free crystal 'muslin' glass

94 x 344 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This sophisticated decanter design, which seamlessly combines a drinking glass with a water carafe, represents Lobmeyr's continuing association with contemporary artists and designers in the 21st century. It was designed by the POLKA design studio, run by Monika Singer and Marie Rahm, as part of a range of cutting-edge items that combine references to the 19th-century drinking services of Josef Hoffmann with a contemporary aesthetic vision that continues to challenge the technical limits of the extremely thin-walled muslin glass.



Lobmeyr Orientalist Glass

In 19th-century Europe, a fascination with the decorative arts of the 'Orient' ran through many progressive arts and crafts movements. As the principles of Arab-Islamic ornamentation became better known and appreciated, glassmakers, too, turned their attention eastwards. Orientalist glass was pioneered by French artists, Philippe-Joseph Brocard (1831-1896) most famous among them.

Ludwig Lobmeyr first encountered Brocard's works at the 1867 Paris World Fair, and by the early 1870s he, too, had begun designing glassware inspired by the East. Generally, Lobmeyr himself initiated a particular stylistic departure and designed the desired vessel shapes. Ornamentation and color scheme - contemporary interpretations of historical models - were then designed in collaboration with some of Austria's foremost architects and designers. Most notable among them were Otto Girard and Georg Rehlaender - famous for their orientalist interiors - and Johann Machytka and Franz Schmoranz, both of whom knew the Near East and its arts intimately.

Inspiration for Lobmeyr's orientalist series - based on Mughal Indian, Mamluk, Ottoman Turkish and Moorish art and issued in quick succession between the early 1870s and 1900s - came from mainly French and British publications on Islamic ornament and the direct study of Islamic art objects in Vienna's Imperial Royal Museum of Art and Industry, the city's Oriental Museum, the treasury of St Stephen's Cathedral and private collections. A further crucial design source for orientalist glass, entitled 'Old Oriental Gilt and Enamelled Glass Vessels Extant in Public Museums and Private Collections', was published by Schmoranz's brother Gustav in Vienna in 1898/9.





Ewer No. 7887 from the Arabian Series

Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, after 1877

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass with gilding and coloured enamel painting

141 x 255 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This magnificent ewer exemplifies the exuberant creativity and technical sophistication of Lobmeyr's 19th-century orientalist glass. The shape is inspired by a particular type of early Islamic metal ewer. The ornamentation and colour scheme meanwhile are a 19th-century interpretation, drawing freely from a range of historical sources.

Oval Pitcher No. 8254-1876 from the Aquamarine Series

Designed by Ludwig Lobmeyr (form), Otto Girard & Georg Rehlender (decoration), 1876

Aquamarine-blue, clear glass, mould-blown and facet-cut, with gilding and coloured enamel painting

138 x 105 x 229 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The Aquamarine series was first designed around 1873 and made until 1880. It was inspired by historical Islamic and orientalist artworks Ludwig Lobmeyr had first seen at the 1867 Paris World Fair. Fascinated by their beauty, he invited the Viennese architects Otto Girard and Georg Rehlender – both famous for their orientalist interiors at the time – to work with him on the creation of this series, which included more than 20 different glass shapes - many designed by Lobmeyr himself.



Workshop Drawing for Ewer No. 7887 from the Arabian Series

Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, 1877

Watercolour on paper

345 x 370 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This detailed work drawing was made for the artisans who decorated the raw glass vessel. It provides precise instructions for the placing of individual design elements, the application of the various enamel colours and the drawing of the gilt or enameled borderlines on the transparent, colourless body. The drawing is signed by the designers as 'Machytka & Schmoranz, 5.11.1877'.



Plate No. 1656 from the Aquamarine Series

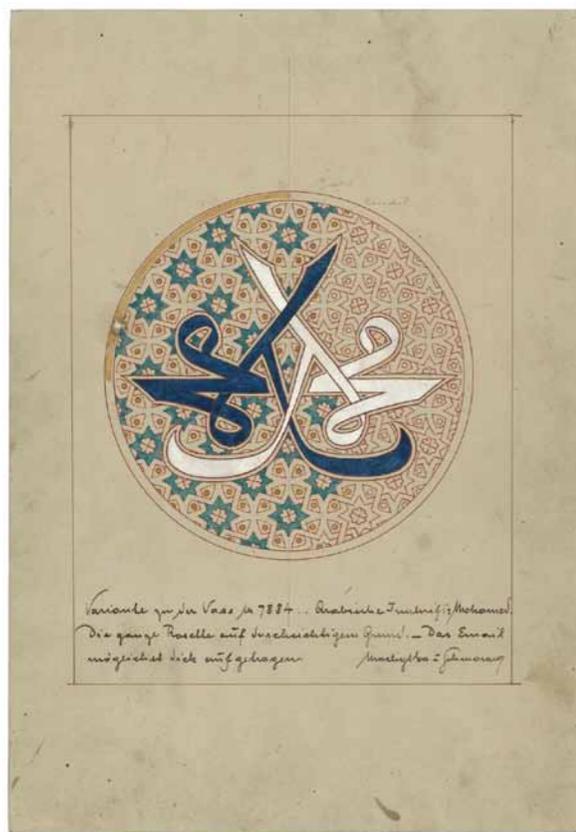
Designed by Ludwig Lobmeyr (form), Otto Girard & Georg Rehlender (decoration), 1876/7

Aquamarine-blue, clear glass, mould-blown and facet-cut, with gilding and coloured enamel painting

326 x 37 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

In designing the Aquamarine series, Girard and Rehlender consulted several of the international publications on Islamic ornament which were becoming increasingly popular at the time, in particular 'Art Arabe' from A. Racinet's 'L'ornement polychrome' (Paris 1869-1872, Vol. III). The Austrian fascination with the Orient was part of a Europe-wide phenomenon, but also resulted specifically from Austria's involvement in the construction of the Suez Canal in 1869.



Calligraphic Composition in Thuluth-Style Arabic giving the name of the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh)

Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, 1876

Watercolour on thick paper

180 x 254 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The design uses mirror script (musenna, aylani), a calligraphic technique particularly popular in the Ottoman empire among adherents of the mystical Bektashi order between the 17th and 20th century. Machytka and Schmoranz probably adapted the design from a pattern book. It was among others originally proposed to Lobmeyr for one of its early Arabian pieces (vase 7884-76).

Plate No. 3873 from the Arabian Series

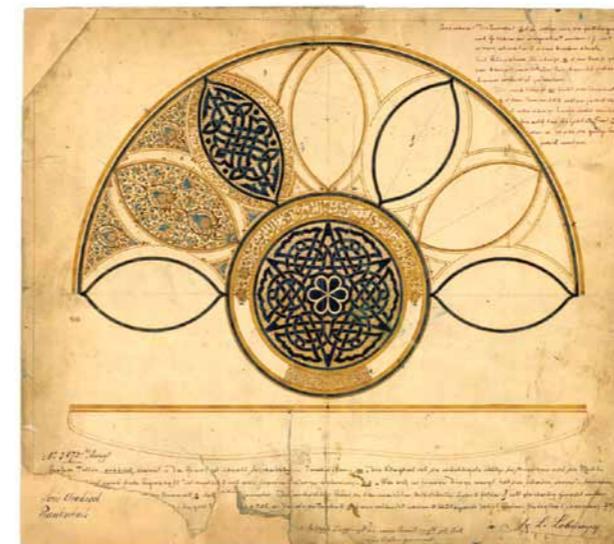
Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, after 1878

Lead-free, mould-blown and hand-cut crystal glass with gilding and coloured enamel painting

383 x 41 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

From 1876, some 50 different 'vessels in Arabian style of yellowish crystal glass with colored enamel painting and gold' were designed by Ludwig Lobmeyr in collaboration with Johann Machytka (1845-1885) and Franz Schmoranz (1845-1892), two Viennese architects famous for designing orientalist buildings and interiors for elite clients. On this plate, the inscriptions refer to sayings of the Prophet (pbuh): 'He who concerns himself with matters that are not his business, will suffer'; 'wisdom is man's mightiest support and righteousness his best virtue'. In the centre: 'reason is man's strongest foundation, fearing God his best' and 'He who concerns himself with matters that are not his business, will suffer'.



Workshop Drawing for Plate No. 3873

Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, November 21st, 1878

Watercolour on thick paper (drawn on the back of an outline drawing for a chandelier)

450 x 400 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This workshop drawing includes numerous handwritten details for the artisans that were to apply the decoration to the raw glass plate. One states that 'the Arabic calligraphy is to be translated into German and painted onto the base in white enamel'. The note in red ink on the upper right explains how to apply the gold borders and when, or when not, to polish the gold painting with an agate pencil.

Flacon from the Arabian Series

Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, 1878

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass with gilding and coloured enamel painting

84 x 173 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This flacon once belonged to a set to be displayed on a tray. The ornamentation is inspired by a 14th-century enameled Mamluk glass amphora, preserved in the treasury of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. The flacon's Arabic inscriptions in thuluth-style script read 'Ya Hafez (Oh Preserver)', 'Ya Amin (Oh Faithful)', 'Ya Qadhi al Hajat (Oh Fulfiller of all Needs)'. The German translation appears inside the base.



Workshop Drawing for Sherbet Glass No. 1480 from the Arabian Series

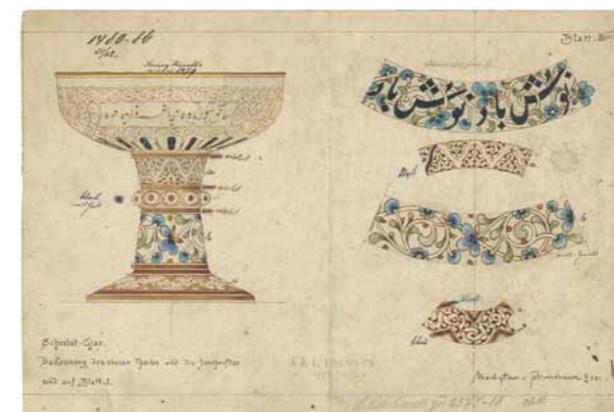
Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, April 2nd, 1880

Watercolour on hard paper

270 x 175 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Drawings like this one for the master decorator Lenhardt – then working for Lobmeyr in Steinschönau, Bohemia – outlined every aspect of the ornament in greatest detail. They also included precise instructions regarding the correct application of enamel paints and gilding in relation to each other, essential for achieving an immaculate end result.



Sherbet Glass No. 1480-86 from the Arabian Series

Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, 1880

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass with gilding and coloured enamel painting

104 x 97 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Given its delicate decoration, which includes two cartouches with Persian verses by the poet Hafez, this sherbet glass was probably rarely used for drinking but rather as a showpiece in one of the many orientalist smoking rooms that the Viennese elite were fond of creating within their homes at the time.



Stem Cup No. 238-19/3872 from the Arabian Series

Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, 1878

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass with gilding and coloured enamel painting

77 x 145 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Carrying a thuluth-style inscription that invites its owner to drink 'the pure sweet water' and wishing him good health in doing so, this cup combines complex enamel with gilt decoration. The gilding was applied in a first firing at high temperature. Then the enamels were gently fused to the vessel in a second firing at much lower heat. At the end, the gold lines were polished with an agate stone.



Half-Finished Vase No. 3870 from the Arabian Series

Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, after 1878

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal, gilding

145 x 135 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

In its unfinished state, this small vase tells of the complex way in which glasses from the Arabian Series were decorated. Each item was fired twice. The first firing, at high temperature, fixed the gliding to the glass. Only then the coloured glass enamels were applied and gently fused to the vessel in a second firing at a much lower temperature.

Workshop Drawing for Lidded Glass Box No. 4347-97 from the Arabian Series

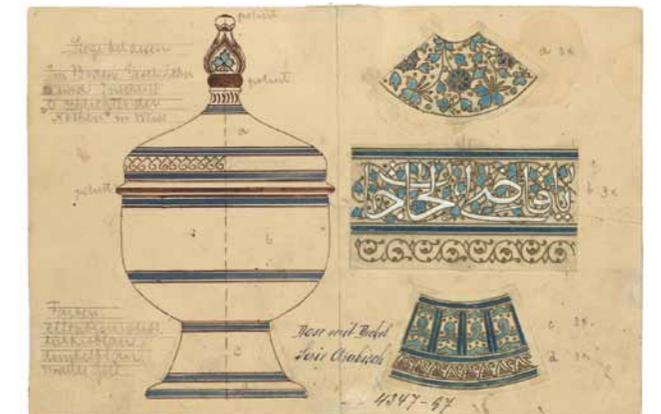
Originally designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz around 1878; design possibly further enhanced in 1897

Watercolour on hard paper

225 x 115 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This drawing is particularly interesting in that it includes additional, separately drawn designs glued onto the original sheet at a later stage. As this particular Arabian type was made from 1878 until the late 1890s, it is possible that the original design was modified by the architect and art historian Gustav Schmoranz, Franz's brother, who worked with Lobmeyr after his brother had died in 1892.



Workshop Drawing for Stem Cup No. 238-19/3872 from the Arabian Series

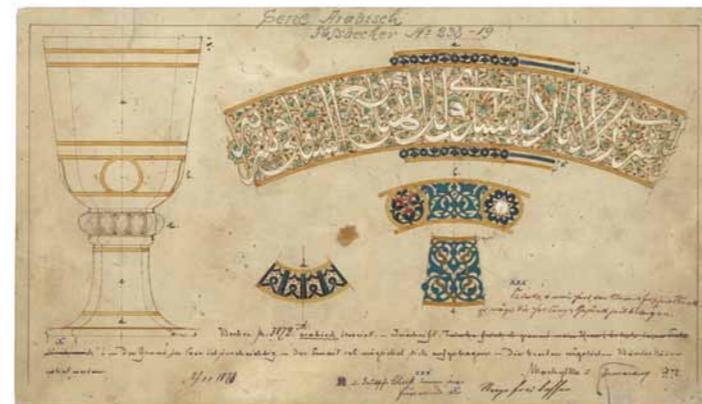
Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, November 2nd, 1878

Watercolour on hard paper

340 x 200 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The detailed instructions added to the drawing by Machytka and Schmoranz include the request to add the Lobmeyr trademark, in use since 1860, and the German translation of the Arabic drinking verse in white enamel inside the base.



Lidded Glass Box No. 4347-97 from the Arabian Series

Originally designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz around 1878; design possibly further enhanced in 1897

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass, with gilding and coloured enamel painting

80 x 145 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This decorative box is decorated with a thuluth-style inscription giving one of the names of Allah – Ya Qadhi al Hajat (Oh Fullfiller of all Needs).

Neo-Mamluk Beaker

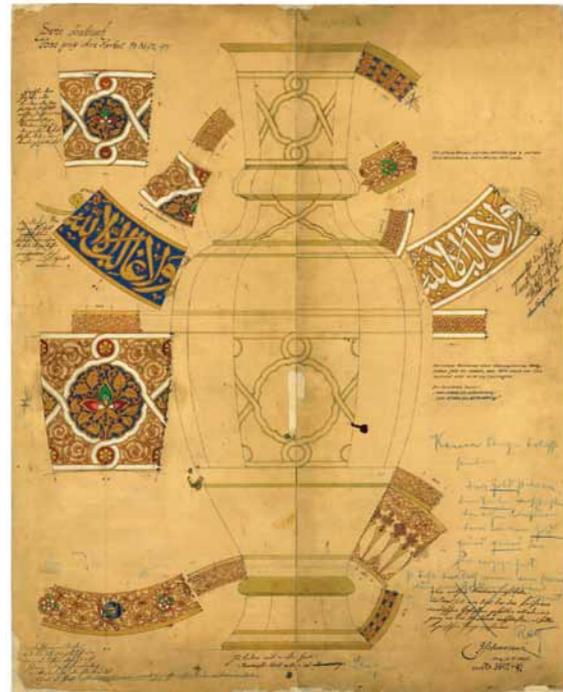
Designed by Gustav Schmoranz in the 1890s

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass with gilding and coloured enamel painting

101 x 159 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This delicate glass with its seated figures, heron and swan motifs was inspired by the drawing of a 13th-century Syrian original preserved in Kassel, Germany, and reproduced in 'Old Oriental Glass Vessels', a book prepared by Franz Schmoranz and eventually published by his brother Gustav in 1898 after Franz's death. Gustav was professor at the Prague School of Arts and Crafts and collaborated with Lobmeyr on orientalist designs throughout the later 1890s. Unlike his brother Franz, Gustav preferred to stay as true to the historical originals as possible.



Workshop Drawing for Large Vase No. 3892-97 from the Arabian Series

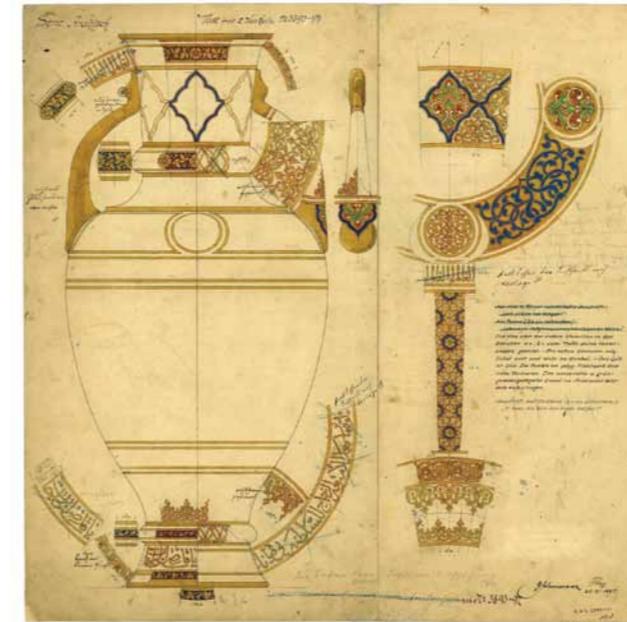
Designed by Gustav Schmoranz, 1896

Watercolour on thick paper

520 x 635 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This drawing exemplifies Gustav Schmoranz's astonishingly detailed and precise designs. Signed 'Prague May 5th 1896', it includes Islamic inscriptions ('There is no victor but Allah'), decorative motifs inspired by 13th/14th-century Islamic art and handwritten technical instructions. The notes in blue pencil are later amendments by Stefan Rath, effectively in charge of the Lobmeyr firm since 1902. They show that such designs remained popular and continued to be made for many years.



Workshop Drawing for Double-Handled Vase No. 3893-97 from the Arabian Series

Designed by Gustav Schmoranz, 1895

Watercolour on thick paper

500 x 500 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Among the Arabic inscriptions in this drawing, which also include invocations to Allah as the 'Fulfiller of all Needs', a fascinating passage on the lower right reads 'Lobmeyr manufacture(r) of the most delightful glass for the sultanate (court?) in Vienna'. Handwritten pencil corrections, cancelling the inscriptions, were later added by Stefan Rath. His instructions – obviously intended for later versions of the vase – were signed with 'R' and dated September 12th 1901.



Paper Envelope with Two Paper Fragments (A and B) showing Arabic inscriptions for Vase No. 3893-97 from the Arabian Series

Drawn by Gustav Schmoranz around 1896/7

Black ink on transparent tracing paper

160 x 125 mm; 350 x 145 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The two spiritual and moral inscriptions – in carefully executed Arabic calligraphy – were intended for the shoulder and foot of the vase.





Large Double-Handled Vase No. 3893-97 from the Arabian Series

Designed by Gustav Schmoranz, 1896/7

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass with gilding and coloured enamel painting

215 x 450 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This majestic amphora was inspired by a Mamluk Syrian vase in the Treasury of St. Stephen's in Vienna. It was created as a showpiece for Lobmeyr displays at the Great Exhibitions of the late 19th century. The raw glass form was made in many variations, with or without handles, and with a wide range of decorative styles. The ornament here represents an innovative fusion of motifs and colours derived from 13th/14th-century Islamic glass and metal vessels.

Large Plate No. 3192 from the Persian Series

Designed by the Lobmeyr Atelier (form) and Georg Rehlender (decoration), around 1878

Mould-blown clear glass with gilding and thickly applied enamel painting

392 x 41 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Lobmeyr's series with Persian decoration designed after Rhodian (Persian) faïences was introduced in 1878. The inspiration came in fact from 16th/17th-century Turkish ceramics, which at the time were still falsely attributed to Iran. Now known as Iznik wares, they were well known to designers like Rehlender from displays at the Vienna Museum of Art and Industry and contemporary publications dedicated to Islamic ornament.



Workshop Drawing No. XIV for Large Plate No. 3912 from the Persian Series

Designed by the Lobmeyr Atelier (form) and Georg Rehlender (decoration), around 1878

Watercolour on grey-brown cardboard

430 x 490 mm

This intricate workshop drawing shows the largest size of plate type No. 3912, with the decoration set against a light brown rather than a clear background - the earliest decorative approach for this form.



Vase No. 3886-78 from the Spanish-Moorish Series

Designed by Franz Schmoranz and drawn by Moritz Knab, around 1878

Yellowish opaque, mould-blown glass with gilding and blue enamel painting

142 x 240 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The Spanish-Moorish series of yellowish, semi-opaque glass, decorated with blue enamel and gilding was designed from 1878 onwards by Franz Schmoranz and the young artist Moritz Knab, who was in fact employed by Lobmeyr at the time. Inspired by 15th/16th-century Hispano-Moresque lustre ceramics from Southern Spain, the series was presented at the 1878 Paris World Fair to great acclaim.

Workshop Drawing for Vase No. 3886-78 from the Spanish-Moorish Series

Designed by Franz Schmoranz and drawn by Moritz Knab, dated 6.12.1884

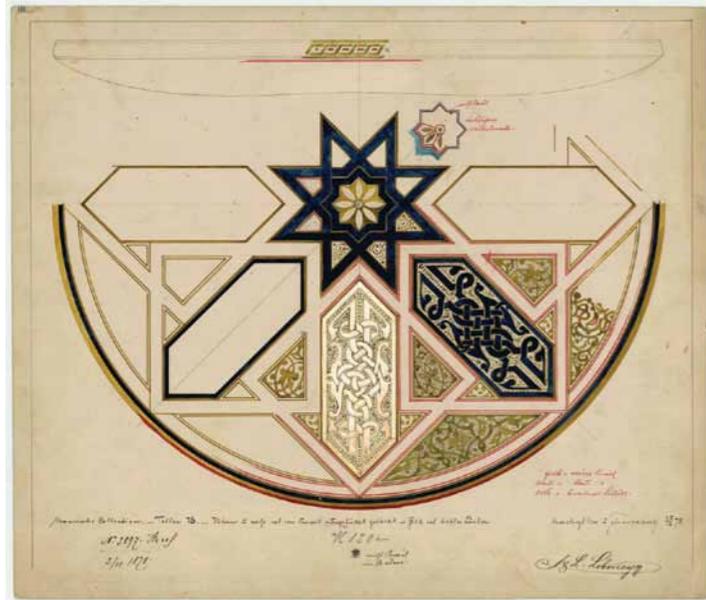
Watercolour on hard paper

200 x 340 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This design includes motifs borrowed from several historical artefacts. The blue flower heads were copied from a Hispano-Moresque lustre bowl then in the collection of Prince Johannes Liechtenstein, the golden blossoms from another one belonging to Baroness Goedel-Lannoy at the time. Schmoranz may not have seen the originals, but probably consulted prints in the 'Collection of Representations of Ceramic Objects from the Near and Far East', published by the Oriental Museum in Vienna in 1885.





Workshop Drawing for Large Plate No. 3897 from the Spanish-Moorish Series

Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, 1878

Watercolour on hard paper

385 x 330 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Dated 'October 25th 1878', this drawing includes an interesting note stating that the ornamentation is intended for a glass plate blown in the Meyer's Neffe glass factory in the town of Adolf in the Bohemian Forest. The sheet is countersigned by Ludwig Lobmeyr and even includes the calculated price – 120 Kronen, a considerable amount at the time.

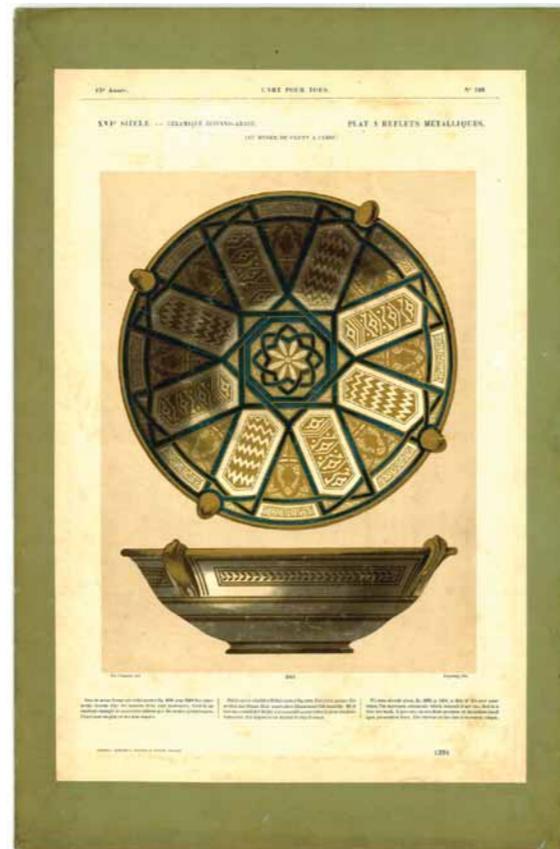
Print taken from "L'ART POUR TOUS" Vol. 13, No. 348 (1874), p. 1391

Coloured print on thin paper mounted on cardboard

325 x 500 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

'L'Art pour tous' was a French encyclopedic periodical for the industrial and decorative arts, published in Paris between 1861 and 1906. Aimed at contemporary craftsmen and artisans like those working for Lobmeyr, it introduced outstanding examples of arts and crafts to help them improve the aesthetic appeal of their works. Hispano-Moresque designs based on originals like this bowl from the Musée de Cluny in France became particularly popular after the publication of the 12-volume 'Alhambra' studies by the British architect Owen Jones between 1836 and 1845.



Large Plate No. 3897 from the Spanish-Moorish Series

Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz Schmoranz, 1878

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass with gilding, brown lustre and blue, white and red enamel painting

336 x 35 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Although this plate seems to successfully imitate an item of Hispano-Moresque pottery from Southern Spain, its decoration yet again represents a free interpretation of historical motifs according to contemporary 19th-century taste. Indeed, for the design of this plate, the artists consulted many 15th/16th-century originals in the private and public collections of Vienna as well as published prints like the one shown nearby.



Large Ewer No. 4240-88 from the Alhambra Series

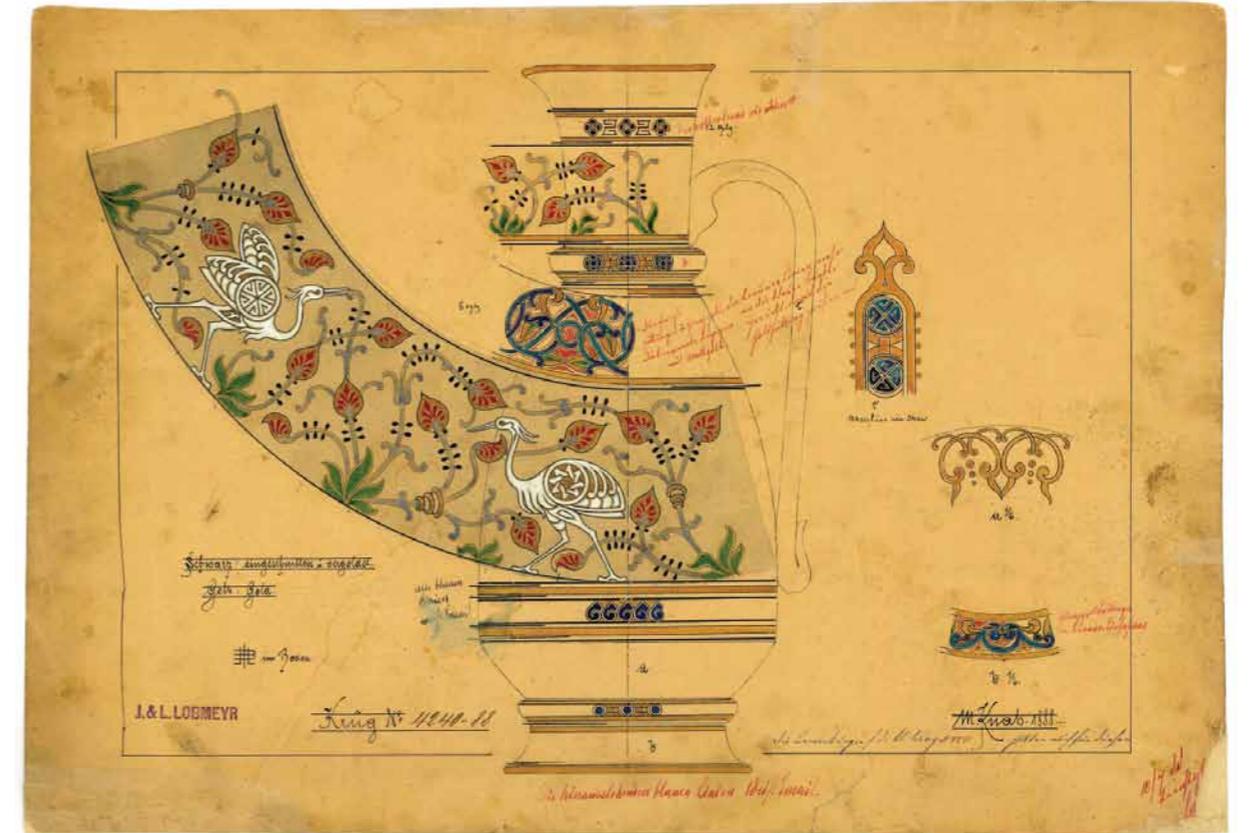
Designed by the Lobmeyr Atelier (form),
Franz Schmoranz and Moritz Knab
(decoration), 1888

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass
with gilding and coloured enamel painting

122 x 287 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The designs for the Alhambra series (1888) were inspired by the famous 'La Jarra' vase from the Alhambra palace in Granada, a tall ceramic amphora with wing-like handles and exquisite geometric, arabesque and animal designs. This ewer, whose shape is derived from an 11th-century Islamic rock-crystal vessel, is covered with an innovative interpretation of 'Alhambra' as well as Mamluk motifs. The colour scheme, too, reflects contemporary tastes rather than a faithful adaptation of historical models.



Workshop Drawing for Large Ewer No. 4240-88 from the Alhambra Series

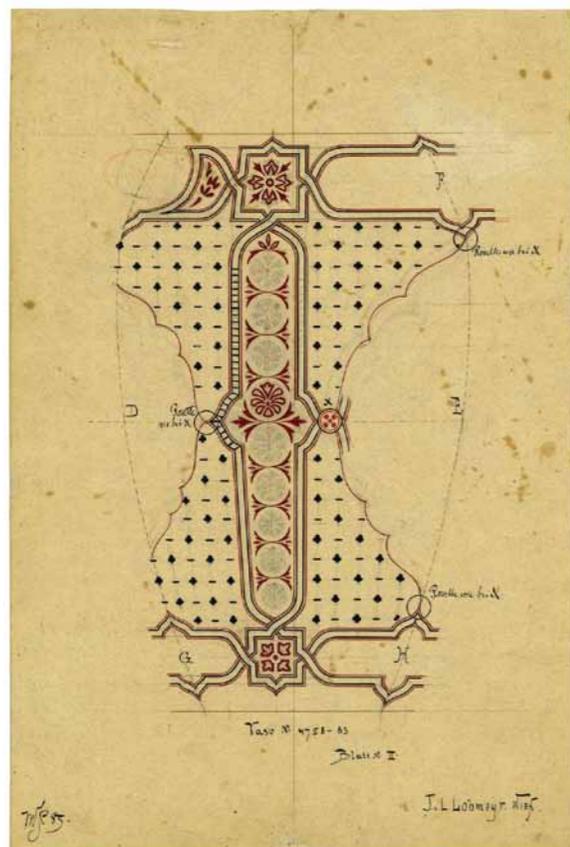
Drawn by Moritz Knab, 1888

Watercolour on paper

490 x 430 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

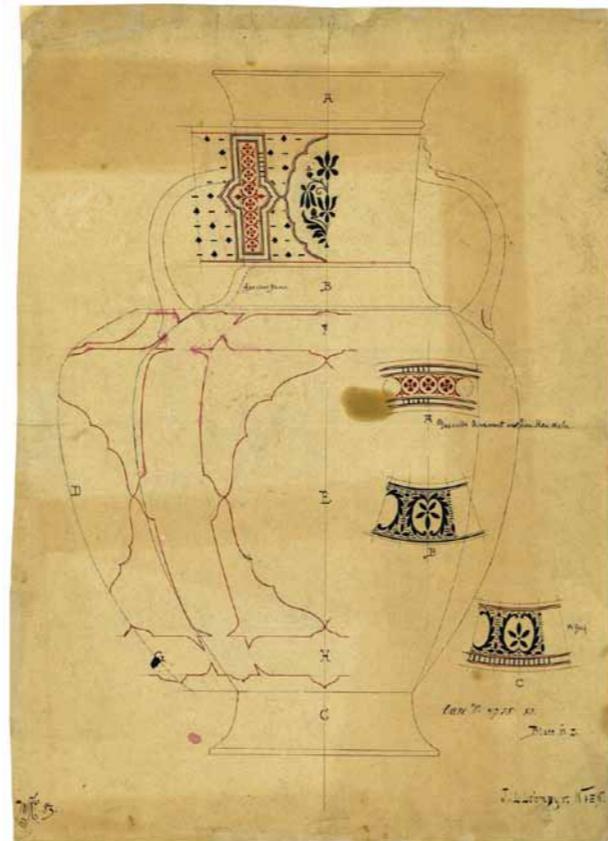
Like others of its kind, this design, too, had to be presented for inspection by Ludwig Lobmeyr before being sent to the glass refineries for implementation. Often, designs were adjusted after discussions between the designers and the glass expert - either to maximize the impact of the design or to make their realization in glass technically possible. Notes like the red ones here, dated July 10th 1888 and requesting both technical and colour-related corrections, were common place.



Part 1 of a 1:1 Scale Drawing of the Indian Ornament for Vase No. 4758-83 from the Indian Series

Drawn by Moritz Knab, 1883
 Pen and watercolour on hard paper
 440 x 610 mm
 Lobmeyr Family Museum

As with other orientalist series, here too, Moritz Knab, who worked in the Lobmeyr atelier at the time, successfully translates decorative motifs taken from a different artistic medium – in this case metal - into glass. The design includes details of the neck and foot ornament drawn to scale and instructions for those parts to be engraved and filled with silver-coloured aluminium foil - which did not discolour like pure silver - and gold leaf.



Part 2 of a 1:1 Scale Drawing of the Indian Ornament for Vase No. 4758-83 from the Indian Series

Drawn by Moritz Knab, 1883
 Pen and watercolour on hard paper
 310 x 465 mm
 Lobmeyr Family Museum



Large, Double-Handled Vase No. 4758-83 from the Indian Series

Designed by Moritz Knab, 1883
 Transparent dark-greenish, mould-blown glass, with deeply cut designs filled in cold technique with aluminium and gold leaf
 280 x 240 x 500 mm
 Lobmeyr Family Museum

Lobmeyr had experimented with Indian-style designs as early as 1870, inspired by Mughal glass, metal and ceramic wares. In 1883, a series of glass objects based on India's famous Bidri metalware was launched. Named after its main production centre Bidar, Bidri objects were distinguished by a blackened zinc and copper alloy body inlaid with silver and gold. Popular in Europe since the 1851 World Fair in London, they soon featured in many publications on Islamic ornament and European museum collections including the Austrian Museum for Arts and Industry.



Ewer from the Indian Series

Designed by Moritz Knab, 1883

Transparent dark-greenish, mould-blown glass, with deeply cut designs filled in cold technique with aluminium and gold leaf

95 x 212 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Although Bidri metalware remained fashionable in Europe for much of the later 19th century, Lobmeyr's ambitious glass versions were to enjoy only limited success. Critics praised the technical achievement, but viewed the overall effect as strange, resembling polished wood rather than metal or glass. Ludwig Lobmeyr himself conceded that the vessels 'due to their sombre colouring did not catch on. Not everything works out fine'.



Bottle No. 4770-83 from the Indian Series

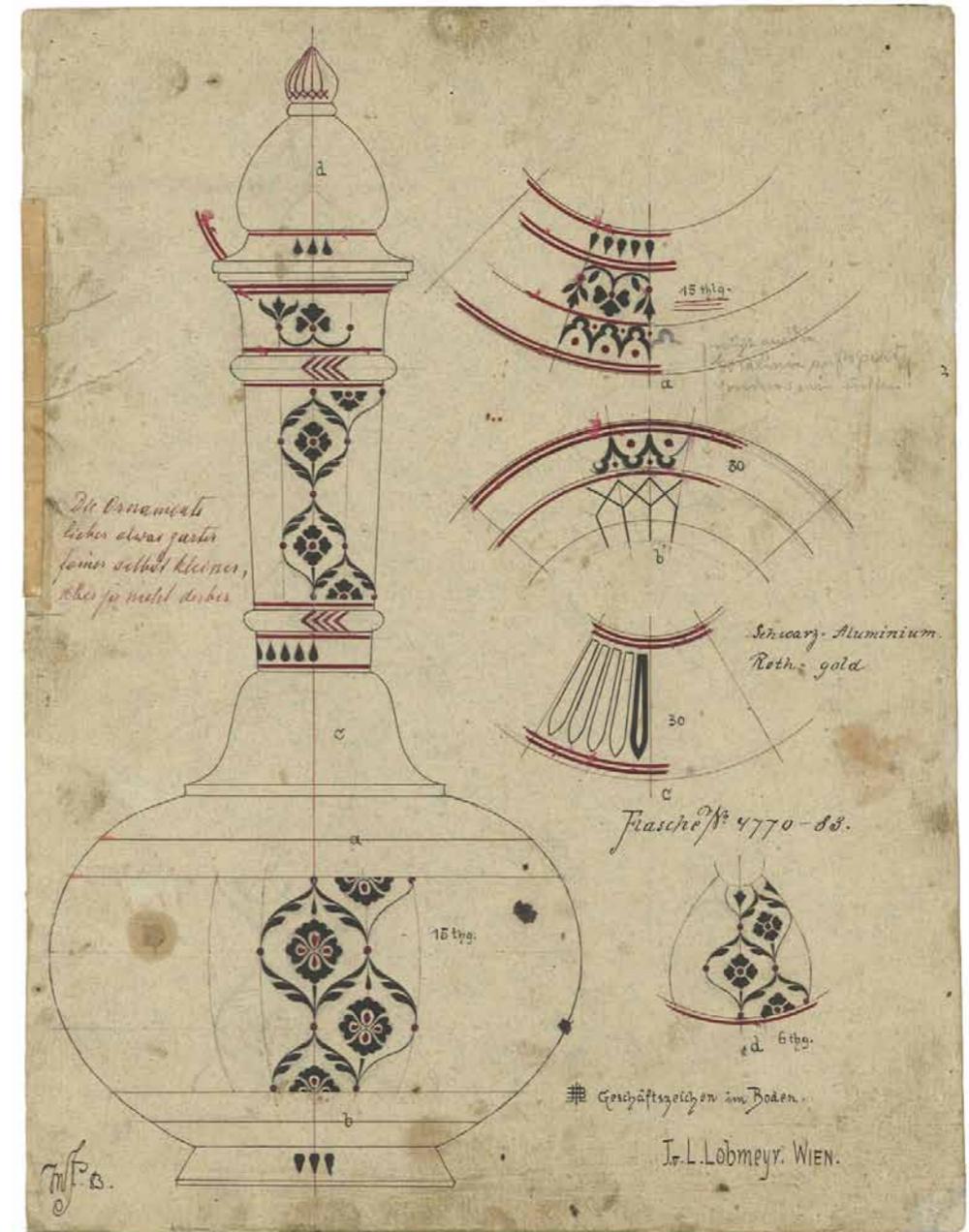
Designed by Moritz Knab, 1883

Transparent dark-greenish, mould-blown glass, with deeply cut designs filled in cold technique with aluminium and gold leaf

137 x 297 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

In the monthly journal of the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry, Lobmeyr's small-scale Bidri wares were reviewed favourably: 'the effect is noble and pleasant, especially with regard to the small vessels, which retain the original [metal] shapes'. This bottle faithfully reflects the shape, decorative techniques and style of an 18th-/19th-century Bidri original.



Scale Drawing of the Indian Ornament for Bottle No. 4770-83 from the Indian Series

Drawn by Moritz Knab, 1883

Pen and watercolour on hard paper

240 x 310 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Despite the outstanding precision and beauty of this design, Lobmeyr requested further improvements. The following comment was added for the artisans near the neck: 'The ornaments preferably slightly more delicate, finer, even possibly smaller, but under no circumstances heavier'.

Scale Workshop Drawing of Vase No. 6597-84 from the Turkish Series

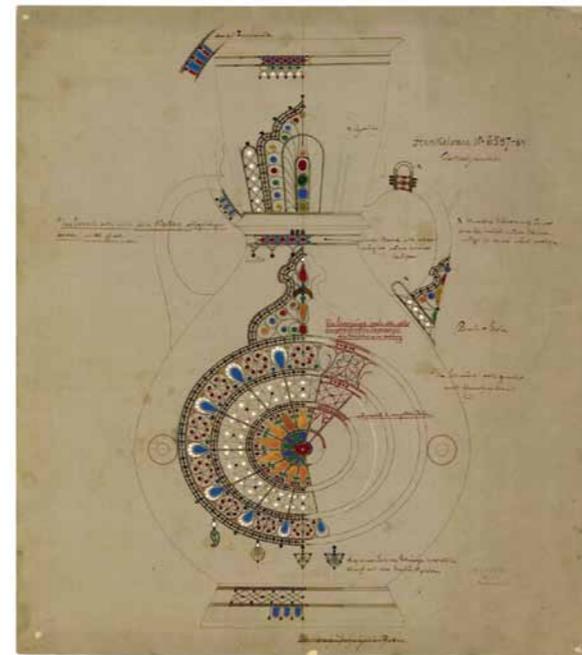
Designed by the Lobmeyr Atelier, 1884

Watercolour on hard, grey paper

470 x 530 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

For this series, Lobmeyr designers were apparently inspired by 17th-century Ottoman vessels with gold filigree and stone inlay as well as the colourful folk arts of the Austro-Hungarian empire. The drawing includes corrections to the design (in red), the request to apply enamels thickly rather than flat and the Lobmeyr logo, to be incorporated into the ornamentation.



Large Double Handled Vase No. 6597-84 from the Turkish Series

Designed by the Lobmeyr Atelier, 1884

Transparent deep-purple, mould-blown and engraved glass, with gilding and enamel painting

270 x 186 x 480 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

For the Turkish series of transparent black-brown glass decorated with engraved gilded filigree and opaque enamel, Lobmeyr designers were partly inspired by 17th-century Ottoman jade and metal vessels inlaid with gold filigree and precious stones. Further aesthetic impulses undoubtedly came from the colourful folk arts of the Austro-Hungarian empire.



Lidded Goblet No. 9226-85 from the Transparent Arabian Series

Designed by the Lobmeyr Atelier (form) and Moritz Knab (decoration), 1886

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass with gilding and enamel painting

83 x 302 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The design of this goblet with its central 'tree-of-life' and vase motifs was inspired in part by 19th-century Ottoman and Egyptian stucco windows. The Transparent Arabian Series was first made in 1884. It comprised some 16 different glass shapes. The transparent enamel colours are surrounded by gilt borders to prevent them bleeding into each other during firing.

Scale Workshop Drawing of Lidded Goblet No. 9226-85 from the Transparent Arabian Series

Designed by Moritz Knab, 1886

Watercolour on hard paper

270 x 380 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

As was his custom, Ludwig Lobmeyr added crucial instructions for the production process to Moritz Knab's artistic design. His handwritten instructions state that the raw glass should be painted in coloured transparent enamels, enclosed by finely engraved lines as indicated in black. The Lobmeyr trademark should go on the base.



Large Vase from the Crystal with Silver Filigree and Turquoise Enamel Dots Series

Designed by the Lobmeyr Atelier, 1884

Clear mould-blown and engraved crystal glass, with aluminium and blue enamel decoration

144 x 319 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Derived from the Turkish Series, the design here focuses on the series' two main decorative principles – the imitation of filigree work (here achieved by painting liquid aluminium into finely cut lines) and precious or semi-precious stone inlay (here evoked by the application of turquoise-blue enamel dots). Its delicate effect was much praised at exhibitions like the 1888 Arts and Crafts exhibition in Munich.





Mosque Lamp

Made to drawings by Gustav Schmoranz after a 14th-century Mamluk original, 1898

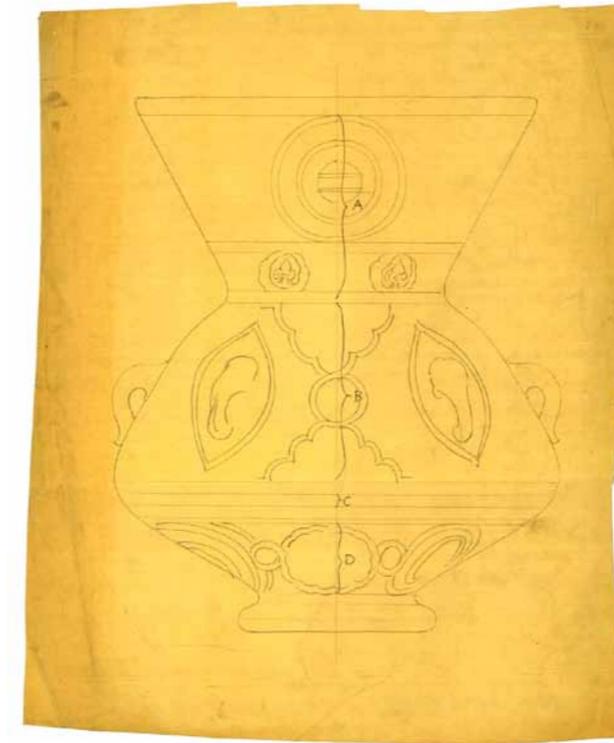
Dark blue, mould-blown glass with coloured enamel decoration

150 x 242 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This Lobmeyr mosque lamp copies an Islamic original which once – together with three other examples – belonged to the Parisian auctioneer Charles Mannheim (1833-1910)¹. Since 1878, Islamic mosque lamps became fashionable among European collectors. As their number decreased in Near Eastern mosques, European craftsmen were sometimes brought in to make replacements. Some were also made by Lobmeyr, perhaps in part because Egypt's last viceroy, Abbas Hilmi II, studied in Vienna before ascending the throne in 1892.

1 The four mosque lamps are published in Emile Molinier, Objets d'art, Collection Charles Mannheim, Paris 1898, p.38-39, no. 130.



Scale Drawing of a Mamluk Mosque Lamp

Lobmeyr Atelier, late 19th century

Pencil drawing on thin transparent paper

400 x 500 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This sketch served as model for a subsequent, simplified paper cut. The latter was used to carve a wooden mould in which the semi-liquid glass could be shaped to the right proportions by a skilled glass blower.

Coloured Print of a Mamluk Mosque Lamp from 'Alt-Orientalische Glasgefäße' 1898

Original drawing by Gustav Schmoranz after a 14th-century Mamluk original, 1898

Coloured print

200 x 345 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Gustav Schmoranz (1858-1930) was an architect and professor at the Prague Arts and Crafts school, who studied traditional glass-making in Cairo in 1892/3 before working with Lobmeyr. His 1898 publication 'Old Oriental Gilt and Enamelled Glass Vessels Extant in Public Museums and Private Collections' became a crucial design source for glass makers. Orientalist Lobmeyr glassware designed by Schmoranz was still shown at the Paris World Fair in 1900.



Corrective Drawing of a Mamluk-Style Mosque Lamp

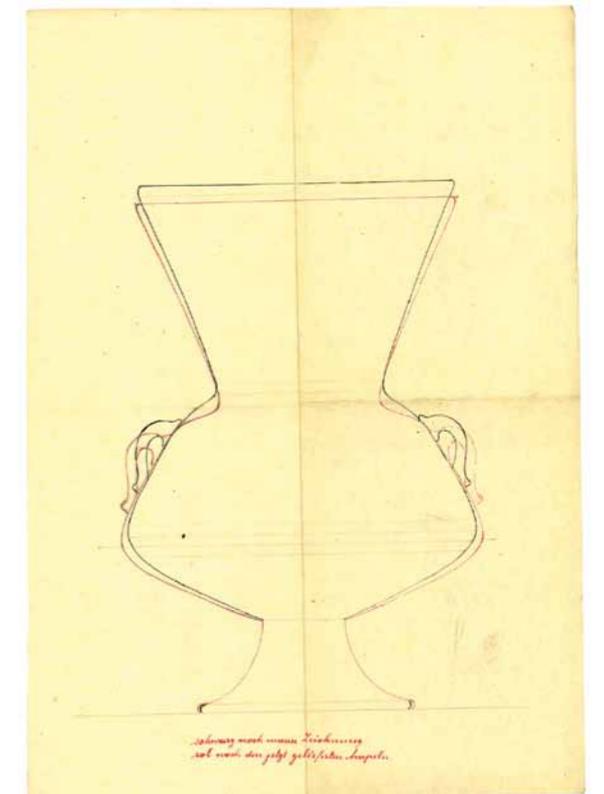
Lobmeyr Atelier, late 19th century

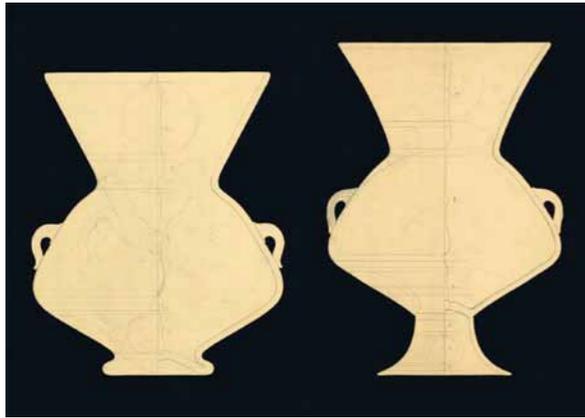
Black and red ink drawing on transparent paper

350 x 500 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This drawing reveals the ongoing efforts in the Lobmeyr atelier to ensure a mosque lamp's historically accurate shape and proportions. Originally, the black outline drawing had been sent to the glass factory for production. The red corrections indicate the outlines of the slightly misshaped prototype that was delivered. The adjusted drawing would be sent back to the factory as feedback and with a request for improvement.





Paper Cut-outs of Mamluk-Style Mosque Lamps

Lobmeyr Atelier, late 19th century

Pencil on brown paper

280 x 39 mm

300 x 360 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Paper cut-outs like these were sent from the Lobmeyr atelier to the glass factory. Here a wooden mould would be carved to exactly match the silhouette of the respective paper cut. The mould would later be used to produce the raw glass lamp.

Raw Glass Mosque Lamp

Lobmeyr workshop, late 19th century

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass

225 x 335 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This type of raw glass mosque lamp, based on a well-known Mamluk shape, was made by the Lobmeyr glass factories from the 1870s onwards. After completion, it would have been handed over to the refinery for gilding and enameling according to 14th-century designs. First shown at the 1873 Vienna World Fair, a diverse range of Lobmeyr mosque lamps continued to be made until 1900.



Original Drawing for Plate XII of 'Altorientalische Glassgefäesse', 1898

Drawn by Gustav Schmoranz after a 14th-century Mamluk original, 1898

217 x 332 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Gustav Schmoranz had many opportunities to draw historical mosque lamps while studying glassmaking in Cairo in 1892/3. The 14th-century Mamluk mosque lamp shown here continues to be preserved in the collections of the Museum of Islamic art in Cairo.

Sketch of a Thuluth-Style Arabic Inscription on the Rim of a Mamluk Mosque Lamp

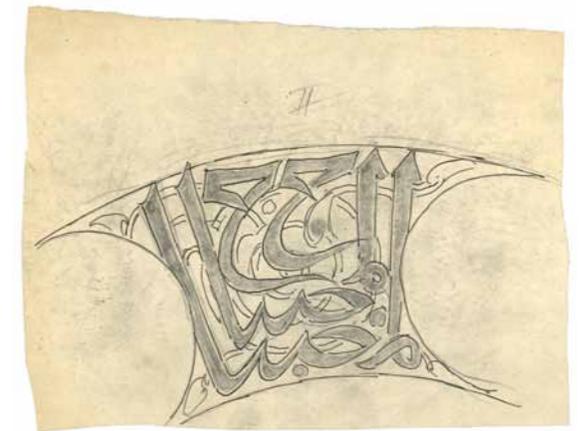
Drawn by Gustav Schmoranz, late 19th century

Black ink and pencil on transparent paper

170 x 230 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Most probably traced from Schmoranz's original mosque lamp drawing (shown nearby), this sketch, together with many others, would have been used to transfer the design elements onto the final workshop drawing. The detail shown belongs to the neck decoration of the mosque lamp displayed nearby.



Mamluk-Style Mosque Lamp

Made to drawings by Gustav Schmoranz after a 14th-century original, 1898

Lead-free, mould-blown crystal glass with gilding and coloured enamel painting

217 x 332 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Schmoranz was famous for his accurate drawings of historical glass models. This late 19th-century mosque lamp produced by Lobmeyr recreates a 14th-century original preserved in what is now the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. Examples like this were partly exported to Egypt and partly sold to the Viennese elite, who displayed them in specially designed orientalist interiors.



1:1 Scale Drawing "A" for the Neck of a Mamluk-Style Mosque Lamp

Drawn by Gustav Schmoranz, late 19th century

Watercolour on transparent paper

680 x 600 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This artistic sketch of the mosque lamp's upper part was presented to Lobmeyr with many others in preparation of a detailed, overall workshop drawing of the lamp. As with other drawings for Lobmeyr glass wares, this would include specific technical instructions for the glassworkers with regard to the application of the gilding and enamels.

Lighting for the Holy Places

Since the 1830s, Lobmeyr also provided luxury lighting for palaces, public and religious buildings, hotels, ballrooms and concert halls at home and abroad. The most cutting-edge examples – designed by the Lobmeyr atelier and prominent Viennese artists – were exhibited at World Fairs, first using candles and then, from the 1880s onwards, electric bulbs. Indeed, in 1882, Lobmeyr and the American inventor Thomas Edison together developed the first electric chandelier in the world. In the 20th and early 21st centuries, Lobmeyr lighting systems have been in demand for prominent architectural structures across the world, including the Met opera house in New York, the Kremlin in Moscow and the Fukuoka concert hall in Tokyo.

The first contact with the Muslim world came in 1848, when the Viceroy of Egypt ordered chandeliers and wall lights for his palace in Cairo. In the 20th century, Lobmeyr's contacts with the region intensified. From the 1950s, regular orders came in for palaces, mosques and public buildings in Kuwait, Oman, Afghanistan and Brunei. A particularly close relationship was established with Saudi Arabia. Here, not only palaces and city mosques were enhanced with Lobmeyr chandeliers, but even the Holy Places themselves.

In the 1960s, Lobmeyr was the first international firm to introduce traditional Islamic designs to contemporary lighting with its designs for the Mosque in Makkah al-Mukarramah. Over 1000 chandeliers and lamps based on Lobmeyr designs were fitted across the Mosque and its extensions over the next thirty years. Between 1986 and 1990, Lobmeyr also helped to create a new system of illumination for the Mosque of the Prophet (pbuh) in Madinah al-Munawwarah. The unique Islamic designs for the Makkah and Madinah chandeliers, candelabra and lanterns were later patented exclusively to Lobmeyr.

Skizze
nr 8000 B.



Drawing of 'Arabian'
Mosque Lamp

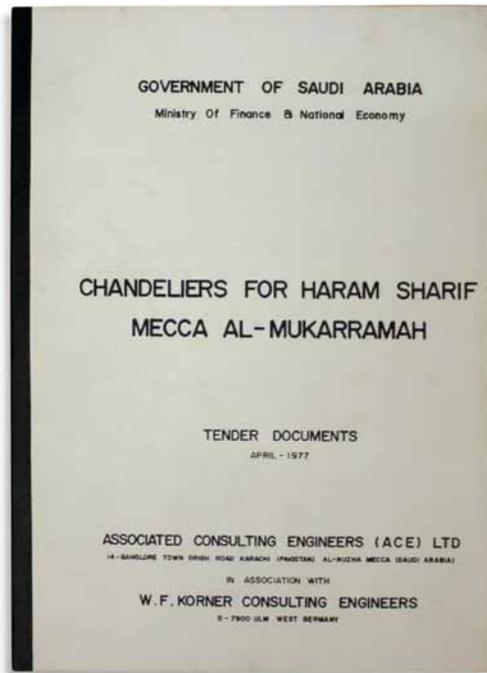
Designed by Johann Machytka & Franz
Schmoranz, dated 2.12.1880

Watercolour on paper

425 x 345 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Historical drawings and prints like this one helped to inspire contemporary Lobmeyr lighting designs for the Holy Places from the 1970s to 1990s.



Preparatory Report and Tender Document Relating to New Lighting Fixtures for the Haram al-Sharif in Makkah al-Mukarramah

Prepared by Stefan Rath jun. in collaboration with W.F. Korner Consulting Engineers, 1976/77

Project binders with chandelier designs, technical plans and explanatory text in English and Arabic

210 x 300 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Stefan Rath, Lobmeyr's senior representative for the project, worked with contracted Saudi-based colleagues Ahmad Abdul Hameed, representing Associated Consulting Engineers Ltd., and Mohammad Waheed Zaman for W.F. Korner Consulting Engineers, in providing first planning suggestions and the final tender document for new lighting fixtures in the Makkah mosque for the Minister of Finance and Economy in Riyadh. The proposal was for 1807 chandeliers of four different sizes equally distributed throughout.

Final Report relating to the Production, Supply and Installation of Lobmeyr Chandeliers for the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah al-Munawwarah

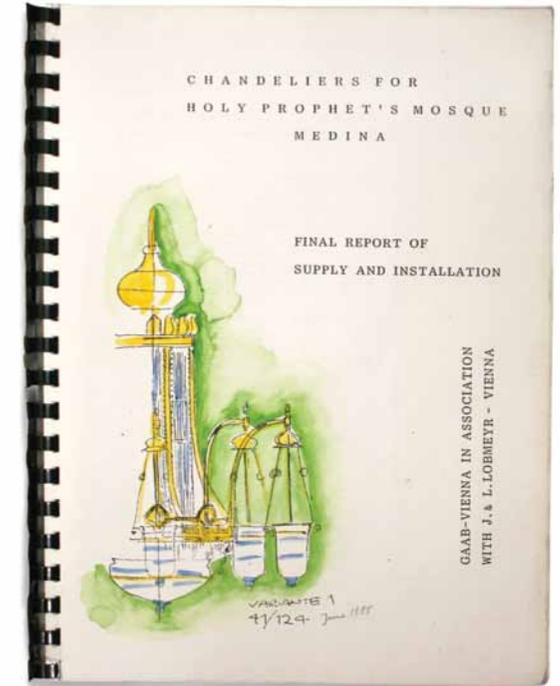
Submitted by J.&L. LOBMEYR in collaboration with GAAB Vienna, 1986/7

Project binder

210 x 300 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This report summarises all aspects of the lighting project within the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah al-Munawwarah, including the amount of lighting fixtures that were supplied by the House of Lobmeyr: 124 chandeliers, 360 vase lanterns, 2 large candelabra, 190 light strips between the columns and 138+46 ring channels.



Specification Document relating to Lobmeyr Chandeliers and Wall Lighting for the Extension of the Haram al-Sharif Mosque in Makkah al-Mukarramah

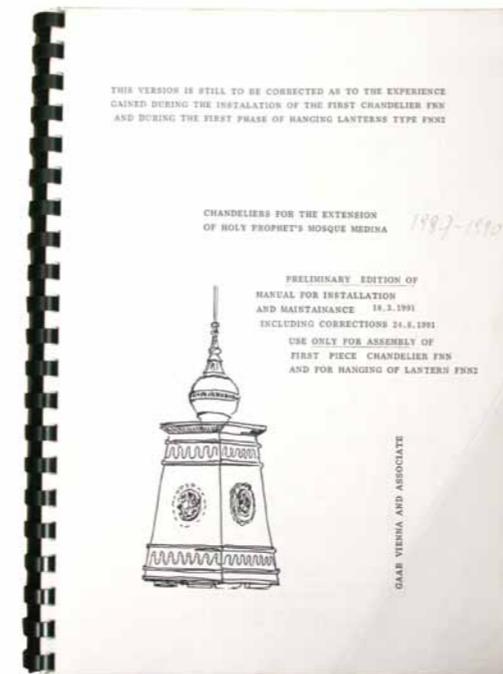
Prepared by J.&L. LOBMEYR in collaboration with GAAB Vienna, 1993

Project binder

210 x 300 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

For the lighting project within the Makkah extension, Lobmeyr provided the final designs and produced both the prototypes and the final fixtures, while GAAB Vienna was responsible for the overall project management. This binder includes detailed workshop drawings for all Lobmeyr lighting elements designed to make subsequent assembly on site and future repair easily manageable.



Preliminary Installation and Maintenance Manual for Lobmeyr Lighting supplied for the Madinah Mosque Extension Project

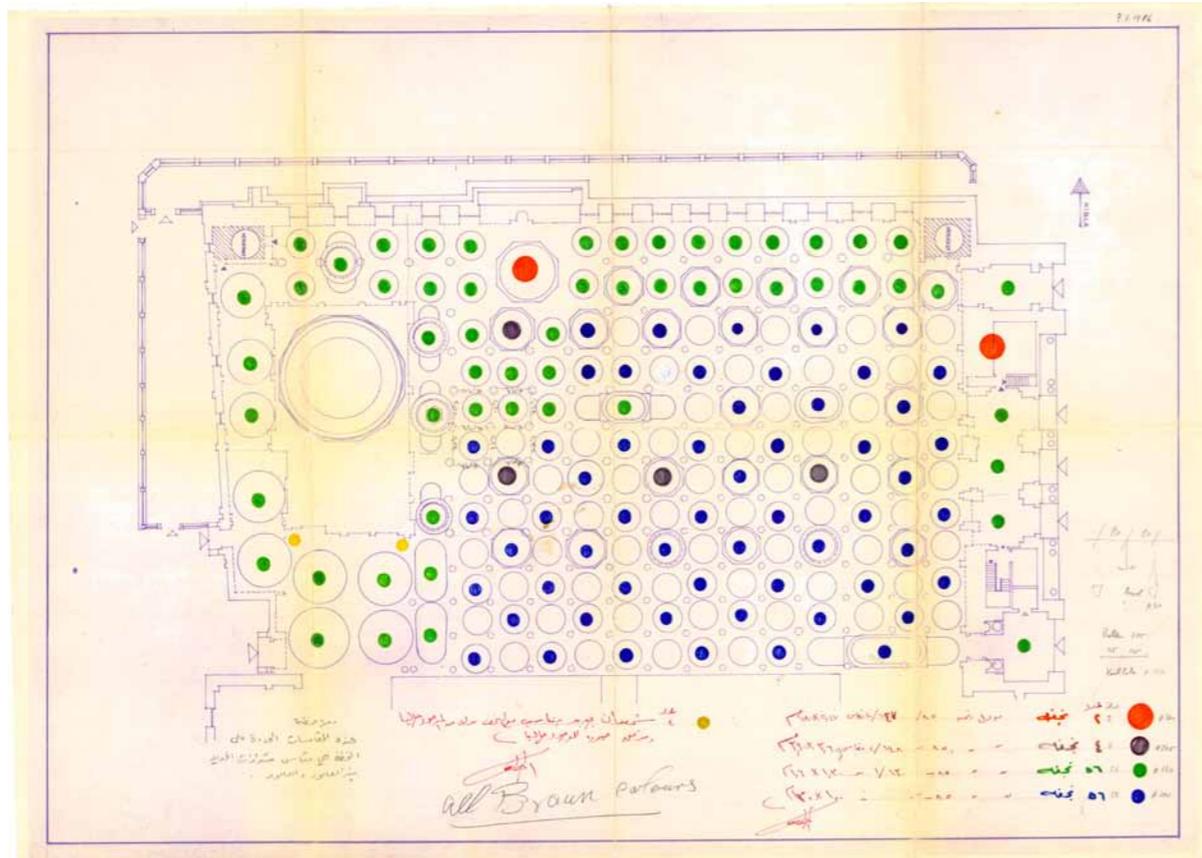
Prepared by the Lobmeyr Atelier, 1991

Project binder

210 x 300 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

The cover page of this report shows a sketch of the FNN2 Lobmeyr mosque lantern. Of brass with multi-coloured glass rosettes and an open base to direct the light downwards, this style of lantern was designed to provide light in the entrance areas and complement the other Lobmeyr fixtures in the mosque extension.



Finalised Distribution Plan for Lobmeyr Lighting Elements within the Old Friday Mosque in Madinah al-Munawwarah

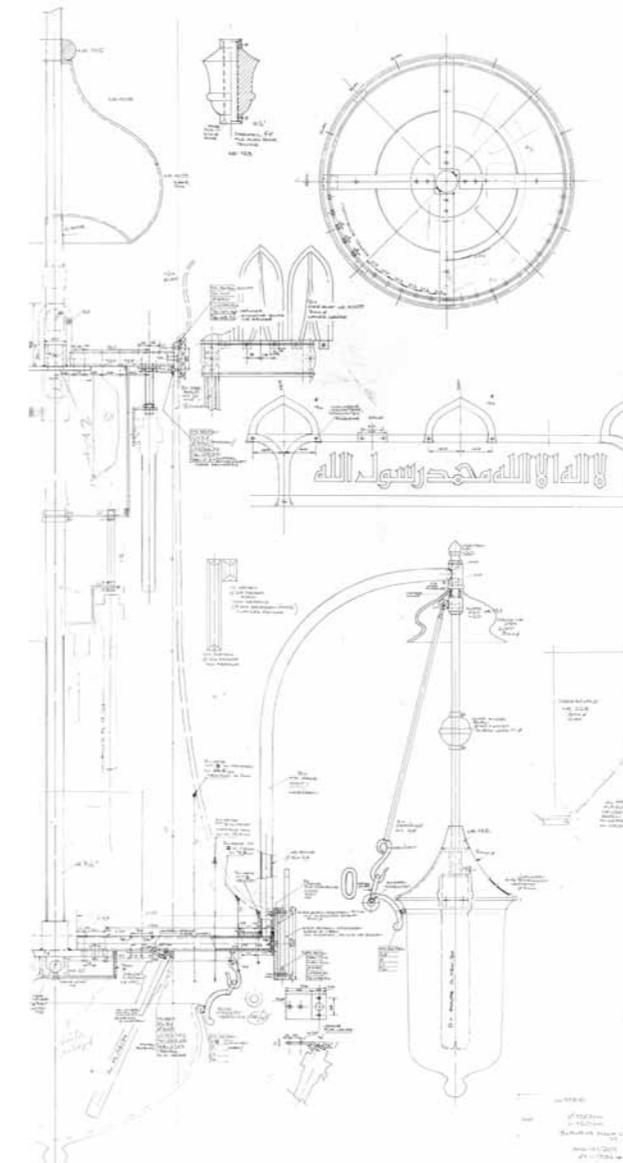
Prepared by Bin Laden Contractors, 9 January 1986

Blueprint plan on paper, coloured markings indicating the specific positions for the four different chandelier sizes of chandeliers and for the two large candelabra (yellow).

680 x 495 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

Along the right edge of the plan, tiny preliminary pencil sketches for additional lighting elements designed by Lobmeyr - hanging lanterns and lighting bars that were to go between the columns - have been added.



Full-size Technical Workshop Drawing for the Madinah Chandelier Type No. 201

Designed by the Lobmeyr Atelier around 1986

Ink drawing on transparent paper

860 x 1620 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

124 examples of this type were installed in the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah al-Munawwarah in 1987. After the successful completion of the project, Lobmeyr was invited to design further lighting fixtures for subsequent extensions added to both the Madinah Mosque and the Haram al-Sharif in Makkah al-Mukarramah.

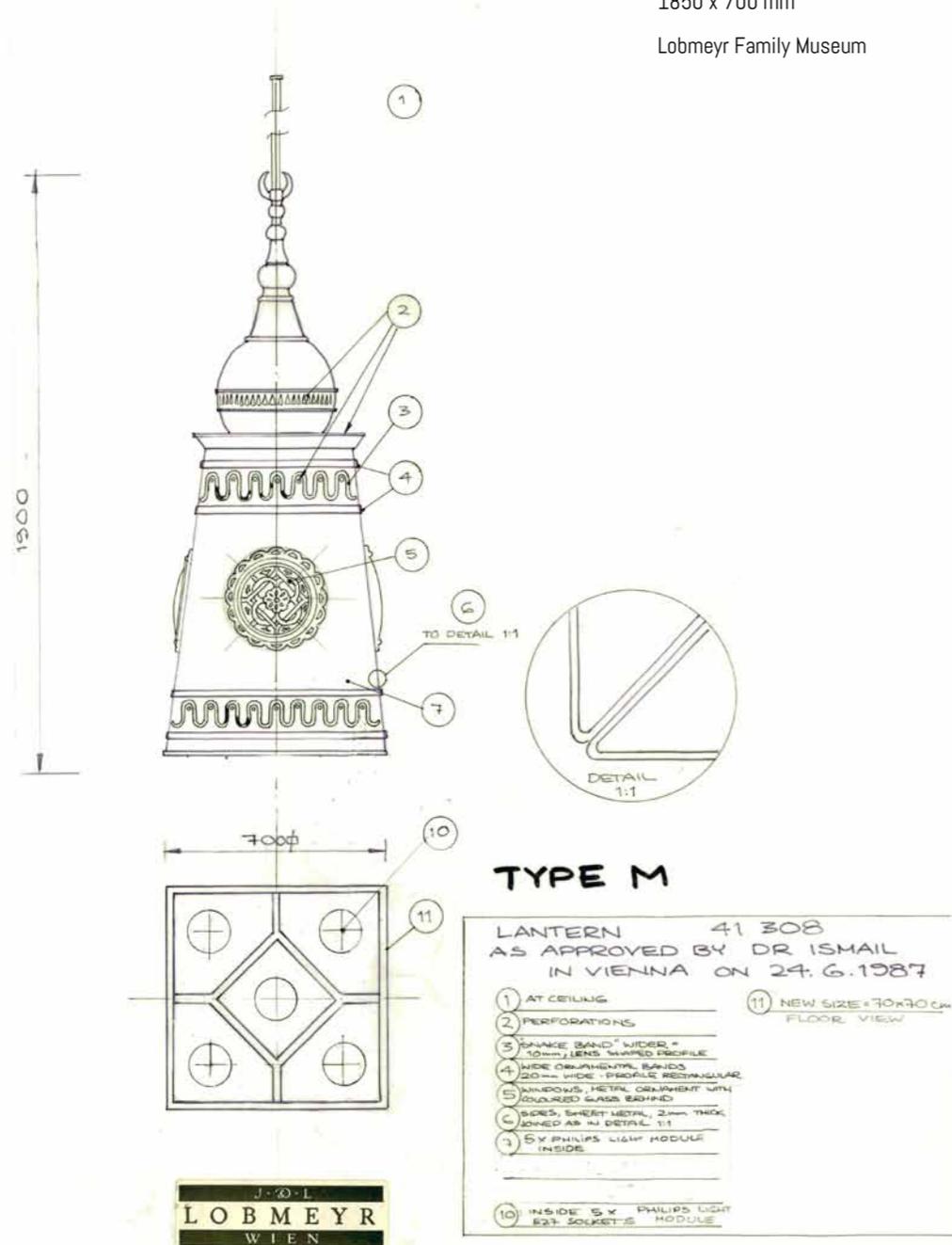
Scale Drawing of Oriental Lantern Type "M"

As approved by architect Dr. Kamal Ismail in June 1987 for the extension project of the Mosque in Madinah al-Munawwarah Designed by Peter Rath for J.&L. LOBMEYR, 1986/7

Black ink on paper

1850 x 700 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum



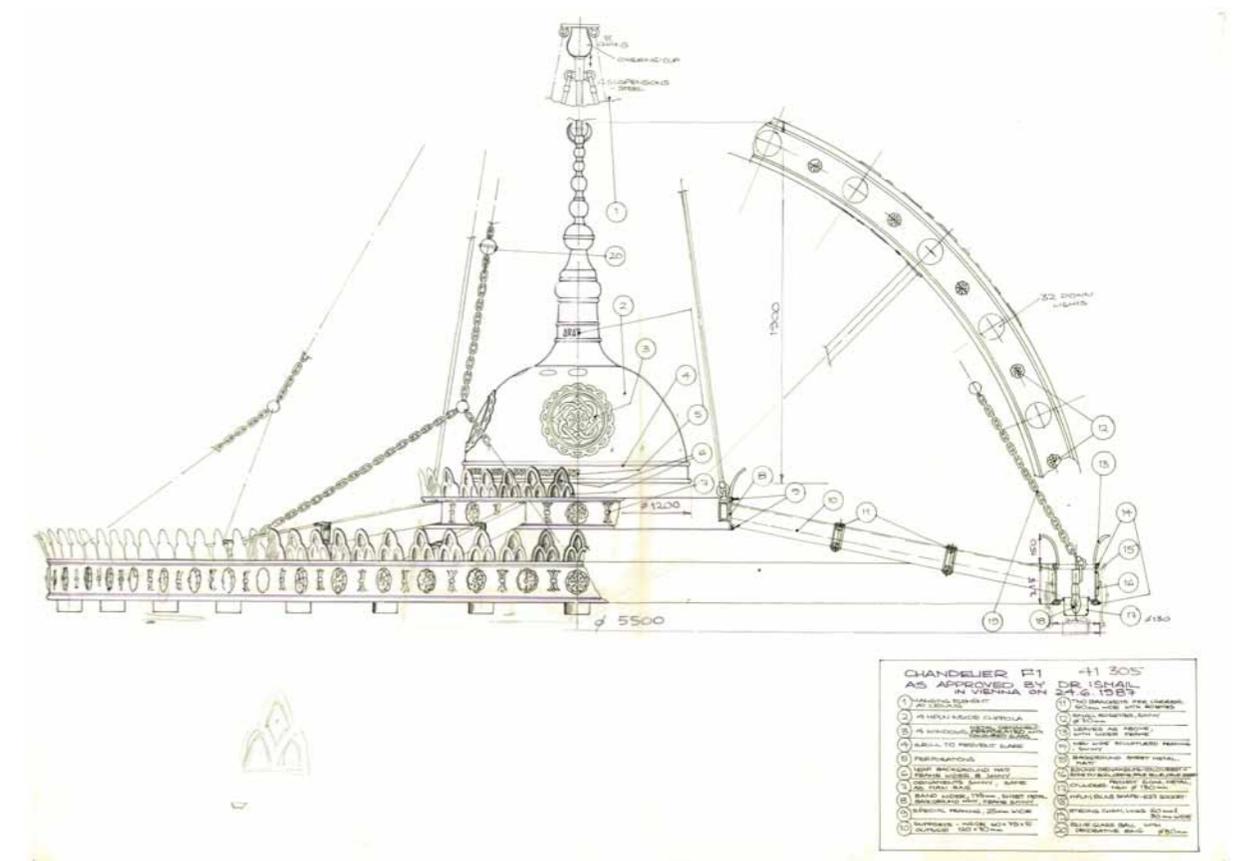
Scale drawing of Oriental Ring Chandelier Type F1

As approved by architect Dr. Kamal Ismail in June 1987 for the extension project of the Mosque in Madinah al-Munawwarah Designed by Peter Rath for J.&L. LOBMEYR, 1986/7

Black ink on paper

4080 x 6800 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum





Chandelier No. 41/201 for the Old Friday Mosque in Madinah al-Munawwarah

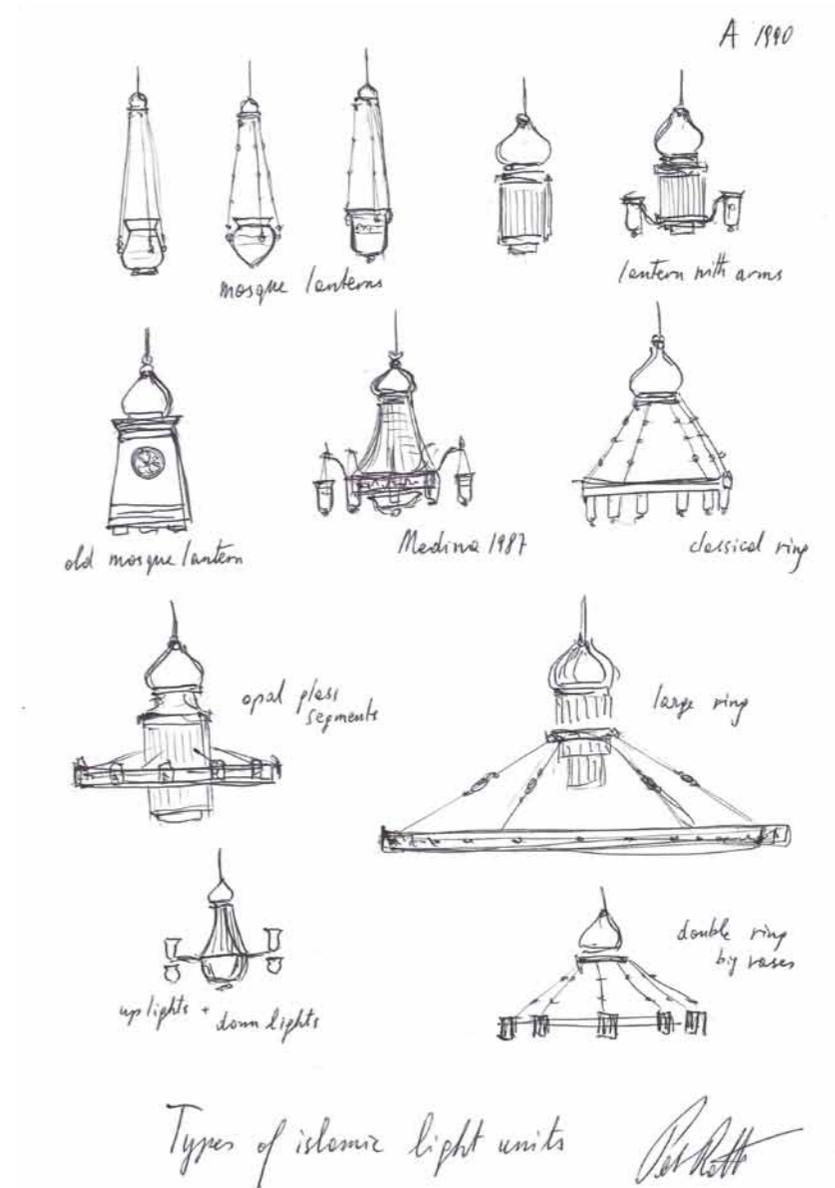
Designed by Peter Rath for J.&L. LOBMEYR, 1986/7

Gilt brass, cut crystal and decal-painted and matted crystal vases and bowl, the electric system designed for PL18W tubular lamps

1300 x 1600 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

For the Madinah lighting project, Lobmeyr's Peter Rath collaborated with Dr Kamal Ismail, consultant architect to His Highness King Fahd, and the Saudi Bin Laden construction company. On Lobmeyr's advice, the idea of reinstalling European-style 'Maria Theresia' chandeliers was abandoned in favour of a more dignified 'Islamic' model with Qur'anic inscriptions, especially designed by Peter Rath himself and covered with gold provided by HH King Fahd. The chandelier displayed here is one of 60 such units delivered in 1987.



Preliminary Sketches for Different Types of Islamic Light Fittings intended for the Madinah Mosque Extension project

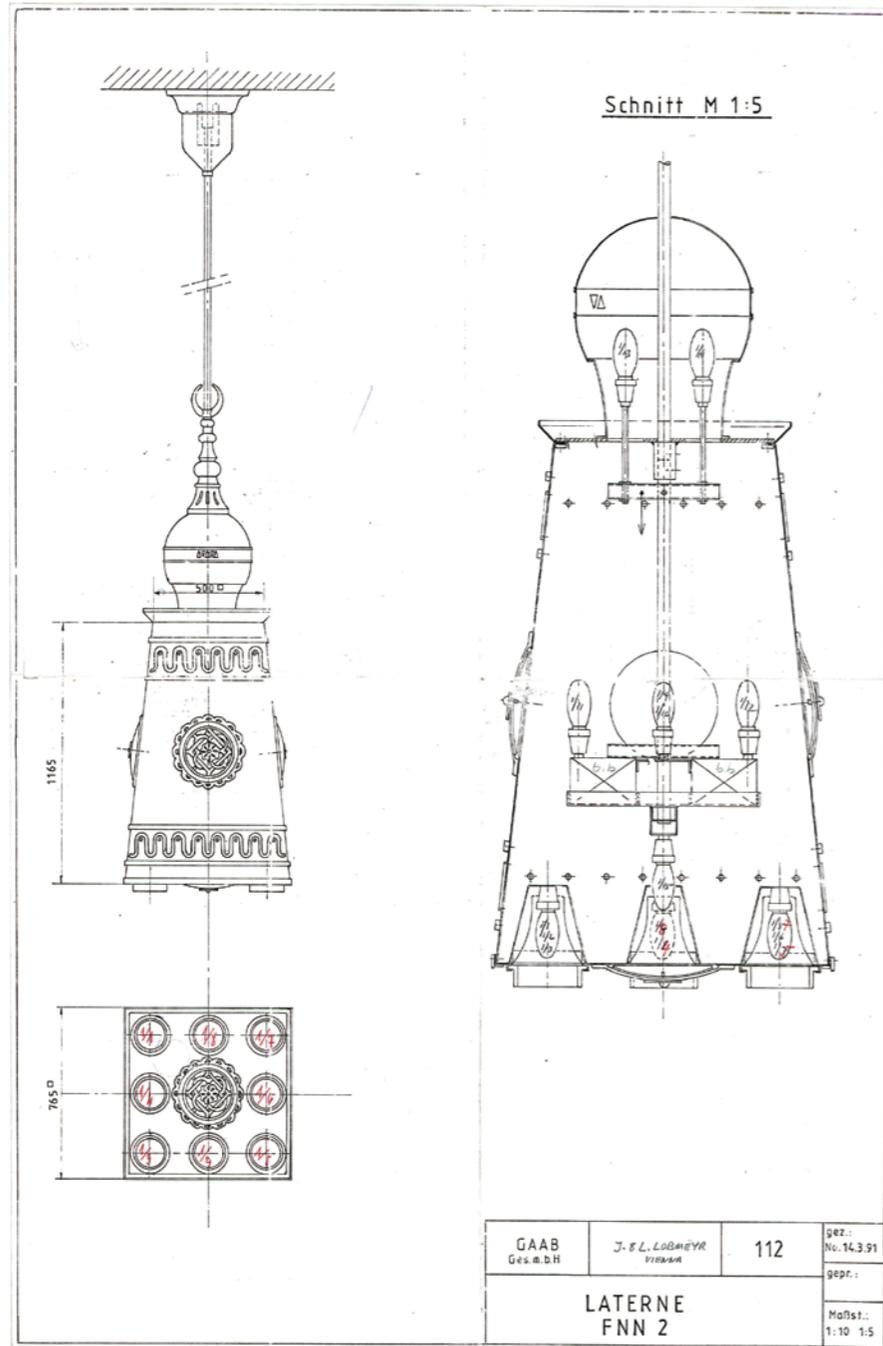
Designed by Peter Rath for J.&L. LOBMEYR, 1990

Black ink on paper

210 x 300 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

These sketches refer back to Arab-Islamic lighting fixtures that Lobmeyr had already worked with during the original Madinah Mosque lighting project with GAAB Vienna in the late eighties. Obviously, it was crucial to ensure stylistic continuity when thinking about the provision of chandeliers and lanterns for the planned extension to the mosque.

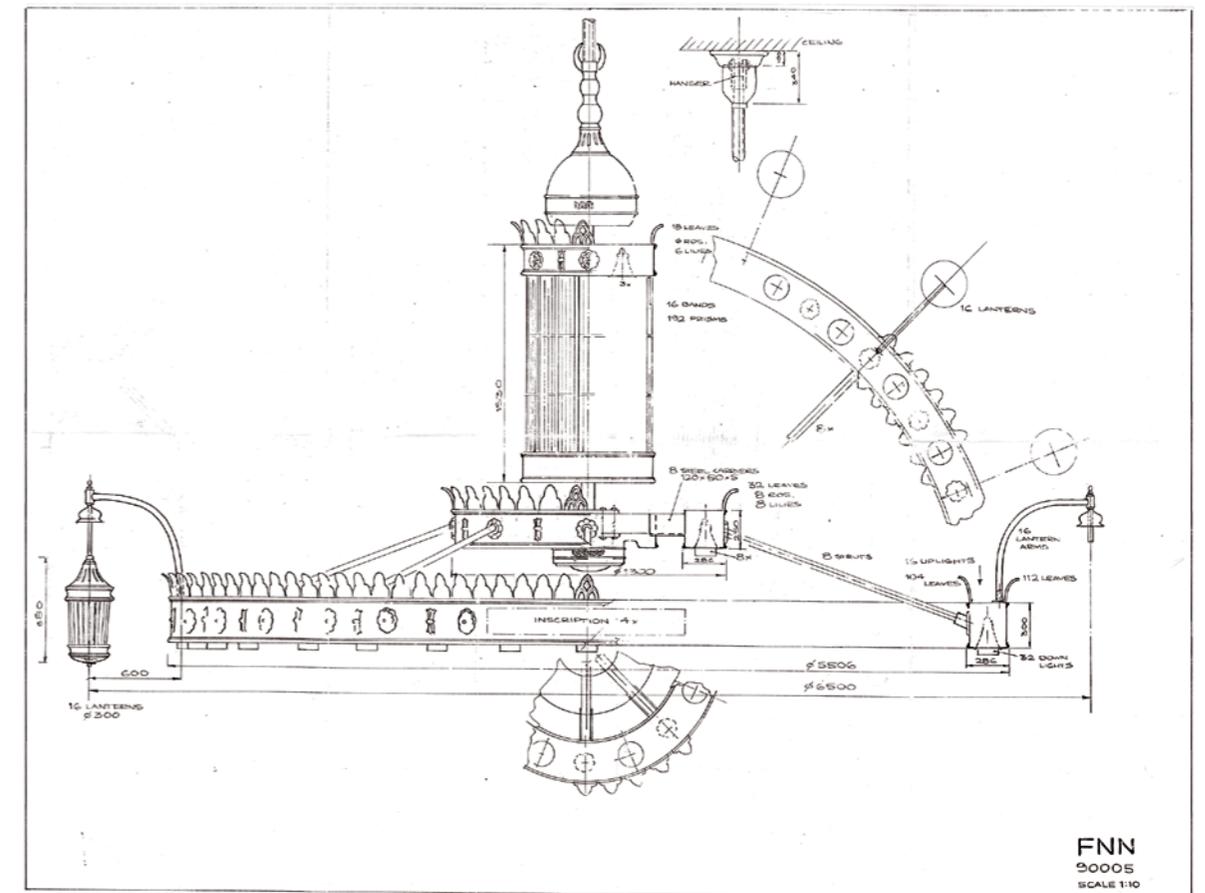


Copy of a 1:5 Scale Workshop Drawing of Madinah Mosque Lantern FNN2

Designed by Peter Rath for J.&L. LOBMEYR, 1991

390 x 595 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum



Copy of a 1:10 Scale Workshop Drawing of Madinah Mosque Chandelier No. FNN 90005

Designed by J.&L. LOBMEYR in collaboration with GAAB Vienna, 1991

760 x 570 mm

Lobmeyr Family Museum

This enormous ring-shaped, crystal chandelier with a diameter of seven meters was designed to have a tall, domed lantern in the centre as well as slender lanterns hanging from sixteen arms and small down lights distributed all around the expansive ring element.



J. & L. Lobmeyr

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