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FRITWARE DRINKING BOWL IN THE SHAPE OF A HARPY

IRAN, KASHAN; C. 1200

H: 16.5; L: 15 CM

The harpy, which is a bird with a humanoid head, is known from Antique Greece, the ancient Middle East, and India. Like other mythical creatures in Islamic art, its development and decorative use were influenced by different traditions. In Islamic times, the harpy has been associated both with the Greek harpy, which was threatening and demonic, and with an enormous Indian bird called Garuda. The *hadith* literature mentions a divine mythical bird called al-Anka (the griffin), which was perfect when it was created, but in time became so bothersome that God had it banished to the ends of the Earth.

We do not know why the drinking bowl was given this shape, but the harpy often appears as a kind of guardian figure in Islamic art.

Published in:

C.L. Davids Samling. Fjerde Del : Jubilæumsskrift 1945-70,
København 1970, cat.no. 19, p. 209;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Fabelvæsner fra Islams Verden,* Davids Samling,
København 1991, cat.no. 20;