



Inv. no.

BEGGING BOWL (KASHKUL), COCO DE MER

IRAN; 19TH CENTURY

Together with the staff, axe, special amulets, and articles of clothing, the begging bowl is among the classical (and few) possessions of the mendicant Sufi. According to the lender, this begging bowl did not belong to an unknown, poor ascetic, however. It was owned by Zagrafos Bey, the last Ottoman sultan's financial advisor.

The legendary *coco de mer* is a special type of coconut that washed up onto the shores along the Indian Ocean after floating on the water for months. Sufis used it for begging bowls (for both food and drink) and also saw it as a symbol of the mystic's inner journey. Until 1768, the source of the *coco de mer* was unknown. Today we know that the species grows on the Seychelles – and nowhere else.

On loan from Mr. Oliver Hoare.