

Basic Detail Report

**Title**

Bowl with Zodiac Signs

Date

Late 13th century

Dimensions

Overall (H x Dia. x Rim Dia.): 3 1/2 x 9 1/4 x 7 1/8 in.
(8.9 x 23.5 x 18.1 cm)

Medium

Glass; blown, with enamelled and gilded decoration.

Classifications

Glass

Credit Line

Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of
Edward Drummond Libbey

Object number

1941.37

Published References

Atil, Esin, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks*,
Washington DC, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981, no.
48, p. 129, repr. (col.).

Exhibition History

Washington, National Museum of Natural History; Minneapolis Institute of Art: N.Y., Metropolitan;
Cincinnati; Detroit; Phoenix; Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks*,
Washington, 1981, no. 48, p. 129, repr. (col.).

Collections

Glass

Label Text

The design of this rare glass Zodiac bowl reflects the Islamic belief in the influence of celestial events on human affairs. The study of the movement of planets and stars was gradually shifting from the hard-science realm of astronomy toward the popular, often mystical terrain of astrology that viewed the universe as a circles-within-circles hierarchy. In Islamic decorative art from this period, the central motif is commonly the sun – here represented by a hexagonal star – rather than the earth. Although astrology was considered a branch of astronomy because it required an understanding of the movement of the planets and the ability to calculate their positions in the future, this view was controversial and not universally accepted as a scientific or ethical practice. Objects with astrological decoration were thought to have talismanic powers and protected the owner from sickness, bad luck, or defeat.

Not On View