

Object Summary



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Clear Blown-Glass Bottle (Ashkdan) with Molded Decoration

18th - 19th century

Iran

Qajar

Glass

Overall: 14 5/8 x 7 in. (37.1 x 17.8cm)

This elegant, swan-necked bottle is part of a corpus of glasswares that has been produced in Iran (notably Shiraz and Isfahan) since the Safavid period. Poetically known as “tear containers” (ashkdan), ostensibly to hold the teardrops of bereft women whose husbands were away at war, the vessels were almost certainly put to more prosaic use. Contemporary paintings illustrate their use as containers for wine and sherbet, as well as sprinklers for scented liquids such as rosewater or perfume. The fine walls and delicate ribbing of this bottle were achieved by first blowing the molten glass into a mold, and then - after removing it - inflating it further to create the globular base, which has lost much of the molded definition visible on the upper part of the object, as a telling trace of this glass blowing technique. The origin of this distinct and graceful shape is unknown, but may have originated in Venetian glass production of the 15th-16th centuries. This Qajar example points to the continued appreciation of the form and function of these vessels, centuries after they were first introduced to Iran.