



Important Gold Ring Set With A Toadstone. Western Europe, Late 16th Century.

20 000 EUR

Period : 16th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Gold



Description

An important gold ring set with a toadstone.

Western Europe, late 16th century.

Ring size W UK / 11 US.

The toadstone measures 1.5 x 1.5cm.

Two similar examples can be found in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, accession numbers: M.250-1962 & 389-1864.

The British Museum has a similar example, registration number: AF.1024.

The Ashmolean Museum has two examples,

Dealer

Belle Histoire

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accession numbers: WA1897.CDEF.F817 &
WA1897.CDEF.F589.

William Shakespeare's, As You Like It, circa.
1599;

Sweet are the uses of adversity,?Which, like the
toad, ugly and venomous,?Wears yet a precious
jewel in his head.

Toadstones are mythical stones that were thought
to be found inside the head of a toad. They were
believed to sweat, change colour or even heat up
in the presence of poison. It was thought that a
toadstone placed on bites from snakes, insects,
spiders and shrews would extract poison from the
wound. They were thought to bring good luck and
ward off evil whether in the present life or in the
afterlife.

The Book of Secrets from the 13th century
recommends swallowing the stone to 'cleanse the
bowels of filth and excrements'. The stone could
then be retrieved and used again.

They were often set as amulets and talismans, a
practice that continued in Europe until the 18th
century.

Toadstones are actually the button-like fossilised
teeth of *Lepidotes*, an extinct genus of fish
common in the Jurassic and Cretaceous Periods,
200 to 100 million years ago.