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Byzantine Pilgrim Reliquary Cross For Relics 12th-14th Century Christian Art



350 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Sterling silver

Description

This is a remarkable example of a Byzantine reliquary cross, also known as an enkolpion, dating from approximately the 12th to 14th century. These small, wearable reliquaries were used by monks and pilgrims as both devotional objects and containers for sacred relics. Crafted from silver or silvered bronze, the cross features a hinged design, allowing it to open and house relic fragments. The front displays a deeply worn engraved Crucifixion scene, characteristic of Byzantine iconography, with Christ flanked by stylized borders, an INRI banner, and an overall stepped outline. The reverse also displays inscribed decoration, typical of liturgical symbolism of the era. The enkolpion was often worn on a chain close to the heart, believed to offer protection and spiritual merit. The relic

Dealer

Soul Antiques

Antiques & Sacred Art

Mobile : +34 616144707

Rue de Bosnie

Saint-Gilles 1060

chamber, now empty, would have once held sanctified material such as bone fragments, soil from holy sites, or cloth touched to a saint's tomb. Its heavy patina, wear from devotion, and intact hinged mechanism all attest to its age and long religious use. This piece is not only a devotional artifact but a tangible remnant of Eastern Christian spirituality.

Measurements: Height: ~4.5 cm Width: ~3.5 cm Depth: ~1.3 cm Condition: Good antique condition. The cross shows oxidation and patina consistent with age. The hinge is intact and functioning. Interior shows residue from past relics. No structural damage. Provenance: Belgium private collection-----

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