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# Antiochene-type Byzantine Reliquary Or Urn In Gypsum Alabaster -- 6th-7th Century



11 500 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : En l'etat

Material : Marble

Length : 19cm

Width : 10cm

Height : 14cm

Depth : 10cm

## Description

Antiochene-Type Reliquary or Urn in Gypsum AlabasterEastern Mediterranean, 6th-7th Century ADA rectangular reliquary in fine gypsum alabaster, carved from a single block, with a gabled lid crowned by small scrolled acroteria at the corners. The walls are entirely covered with a delicate all-over pattern of small compass-drilled circles forming crosses -- a decorative technique found on a distinct group of protobyzantine reliquaries from the Levant.The aperture pierced at the top of the lid and the oil outlet visible on the front face of the casket correspond to the mechanism known as "Antiochene type": oil, poured over the relics and collected as it emerged, was distributed to the faithful as a sanctified substance believed to carry protective and curative powers -- a practice well documented

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among Christian writers of the 4th-6th centuries (John Chrysostom, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Severus of Antioch).This type of reliquary, defined by M.-Ch. Comte in her reference study of Near Eastern and Cypriot reliquaries (Brepols, 2012), is represented by 267 recorded examples across the whole protobyzantine period. The closest parallels to this piece -- in scale, material, and mechanism -- are two small reliquaries from Emesa (Homs), now in the National Museum of Damascus, and a comparable example from the Palmyra museum. Further reliquaries of related form and function are held in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the RISD Museum, Providence.H. 14 cm (with lid) × L. 19 cm × D. 10 cmProvenance: private European collectionDate: 6th-7th century ADBibliography: M.-Ch. Comte, Les reliquaires du Proche-Orient et de Chypre à la période protobyzantine, Brepols, 2012; C. Vanderheyde, review, Journal of Roman Archaeology 28 (2015), p. 941-945.Documentation available upon request