



Rare Medieval Purse With Metal Frame - Northern Europe - 15th-16th Century



1 500 EUR

Period : 16th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Leather

Width : 23

Height : 27

Description

RARE MEDIEVAL METAL FRAME PURSE -
Northern Europe, 15th-16th century. An exceptional travel purse or merchant's pouch made of leather and wrought iron, a remarkable example of late medieval European craftsmanship. It measures 27 cm high by 23 cm wide (an imposing size). The leather body, probably calfskin or goatskin, has a deep, natural patina. The frame and clasp are made of wrought iron, with hand-forged rivets indicating pre-industrial production. An iron suspension ring completes the piece. The construction reveals a characteristic flattened pear shape, typical of 15th-century purses. The central latch closure system operates with a spring mechanism. The hand-hammered rivets and the partially preserved original leather stitching attest to the

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craftsmanship of the period. This purse is unique in that it bears a stamp on the upper part of its metal frame. Dating from between 1480 and 1550, it likely originates from Northern Europe, Flanders, the Burgundian Netherlands, or Southern Germany. This authentic object shows traces of historical use and natural aging over several centuries. The leather displays an antique patina, cracks, and desiccation consistent with its age. Tears and material losses attest to the actual historical use of this piece. The superficial corrosion of the metal is typical of an object over 500 years old. The closure mechanism remains functional, and the wear is authentic, not artificially recreated. Purses with metal frames became widespread in the 15th century, replacing drawstring purses and offering greater security in medieval market streets. The imposing size of this example suggests professional use, that of an itinerant merchant or collector, rather than a simple personal purse. Complete medieval leather goods are exceptionally rare in private collections, as the organic material is difficult to preserve. The museum collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of London, and the British Museum primarily hold isolated metal frames, the leather having long since disappeared. Similar pieces are held in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Cloisters, New York), notably a 15th-16th century European purse catalogued as 52.121.2; the Museum of London, which has a significant collection of medieval purse frames; the British Museum, with its hanging purse frames dating from around 1450; and the Deutsches Ledermuseum in Offenbach, which houses a remarkable collection of medieval purses. A rare and sought-after piece, this purse provides tangible evidence of daily life and commerce at the very end of the Middle Ages. A valuable object of study for collectors of medieval objects.