



## Large Imperial Porphyry Mortar - 44cm - 17th Century



14 500 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : En l'etat

Material : Marble

Diameter : 44cm

Height : 24cm

### Description

Imperial porphyry mortar - 17th century  
Very important imperial porphyry mortar (44cm diameter, 24cm height, and 42kg weight) of circular form with four lobes, carved from a single block of Egyptian porphyry. The surface preserves traces of tools and use accumulated over time. By its size and weight, this piece belongs to the category of large mortars intended for apothecaries' dispensaries, the kitchens of religious communities or aristocratic homes. The material is imperial porphyry, a magmatic rock mined in ancient times at Mons Porphyrites, in Egypt's eastern desert. From Roman times, its use was reserved for the emperor and his entourage. Porphyry columns, sarcophagi, busts and facings became markers of imperial power. This association is such that the color purple and

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porphyry remain closely linked to the idea of sovereignty. Quarrying ceased in the 5th century and the deposits gradually fell into oblivion. No new blocks were quarried in modern times.

Objects made in the 17th and 18th centuries are therefore necessarily carved from reused antique elements, most often columns or architectural fragments from monuments in Rome. From the reign of Louis XIV onwards, imperial porphyry regained a special place in the European decorative arts. Sovereigns, collectors and Grand Tour travelers then sought out materials from Roman antiquity. Italian workshops, notably in Rome, produced mortars, bowls, vases and cabinet objects from antique columns recovered from archaeological sites or from the storerooms of the great Roman families. Complete photos available on request  
Era: 17th century  
Material: imperial porphyry from Egypt (antique reuse)  
Origin: Italy, probably Rome  
Size: maximum diameter 44cm -width 33cm -height 24cm  
Weight: 42 kg