



PROANTIC

LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

A Pure Gold 'magic' Amulet With Four Small Pendant Bezoars. Byzantium, Circa 10th-12th Century.



4 200 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Gold

Length : cm. 5

Width : cm.3

Description

A 'Magic' amulet in pure gold with four small pendant bezoars, mother-of-pearl, and two rubies. The partially granulated metal finish suggests that the jewel dates back to the Byzantine period, between the 10th and 12th centuries. Bezoars were introduced into Western medicine by Arab physicians during the 12th century. They were used as antidotes to arsenic, the most common poison employed in European courts. Bezoars were widespread in the 16th century, and their value exceeded ten times their weight in gold. They were rare and expensive objects, and many kings owned one or more, some of them set as jewelry. Physicians of the 16th and 17th centuries wrote extensively about them, describing their properties and uses. "Oriental bezoars" (mainly from Asian porcupines) were also introduced

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during this period. The difficulty in obtaining bezoars led to the production of numerous and dangerous counterfeits containing highly toxic substances, including cinnabar, mercury, and antimony. Probably for these reasons, their use declined at the end of the 17th century and ceased altogether from 1800 onwards. In strict mineralogical terms, bezoars are not actually stones but stones. ct. Maria do Sameiro Barroso)Send feedback