



Medieval Pilgrimage Sign, Mirror Sign, 14th-15th Century, Pewter, Gothic Period



550 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Tin

Width : 3.5 cm

Height : 5 cm

Description

Medieval pilgrimage badge, mirror badge, 14th-15th century, pewter, Gothic Middle Ages. Rare medieval pilgrimage sign in the shape of a small mirror, made of pewter and adorned in the center with delicate strips of period glass. These remarkable mirror-badges constitute a particularly unique category of medieval pilgrimage artifacts. Sold at shrines, they could be worn on clothing as a memento of the pilgrimage, but also served a devotional and protective function. The mirror symbolically allowed the pilgrim to capture and appropriate from a distance the blessings associated with the relic. At major shrines, where crowds could make it difficult to approach the reliquaries directly, the reflection of the relic in these small mirrors could be seen as a way to indirectly receive its virtues. The object

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thus became a true symbol of protection and remembrance, to which apotropaic value could be attributed. Denis Bruna specifically discusses this practice in his seminal study on medieval insignia: *Enseignes de plomb et autres menues chosettes du Moyen Âge*, Paris, Le Léopard d'Or, 2006, particularly pp. 173-174. He mentions, for the 14th century, the case of a pilgrim in Aachen who wore small mirrors on his clothing in the hope of remotely receiving the blessings of the relic preserved in the sanctuary. A comparable example is housed at the Gruuthuse Museum in Bruges, under inventory number 07148, attesting to the rarity but also to the well-documented existence of this type of object. The specimen presented here has a particularly interesting provenance: it was discovered in London, in the River Thames, where it had been found previously. Due to its small size, its material, and above all the preserved presence of glass elements, this sign offers a particularly evocative insight into the devotional practices and beliefs associated with pilgrimage objects in the Middle Ages. Dimensions: 3.5 × 5 cm

Police Registry Ref.: A189

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