Finch & Co



A VERY RARE AND LARGE BEZOAR STONE , PROBABLY FROM AN ELEPHANT

A VERY RARE AND LARGE BEZOAR STONE , PROBABLY FROM AN ELEPHANT . WITH TURNED OAK STAND
17 TH – 18 TH CENTURY
SIZE : 21.5 CM HIGH (OVERALL) , 13 CM DIA. - 8½ INS HIGH (OVERALL) , 5 INS DIA.

LITERATURE

THE WORD 'BEZOAR' COMES FROM THE PERSIAN BAD-SAHR MEANING 'POISON ANTIDOTE' , AND IN THE 16 TH CENTURY THEY WERE BELIEVED TO BE PANACEAS FOR NUMEROUS ILLS . A 'MUST HAVE' FOR ANY RENAISSANCE OR ENLIGHTENMENT KUNSTKAMMER A BEZOAR STONE IS FORMED FROM ACCRETIONS IN THE STOMACHS OF RUMINANTS THAT HAVE BECOME OSSIFIED . THIS EXAMPLE IS SO LARGE THAT IT IS PROBABLY FROM AN ELEPHANT . A SMALLER ONE EXISTS OF LATE 16 TH CENTURY ORIGIN IN THE CABINET OF EMPEROR RUDOLF II OF PRAGUE (NOW IN THE KUNST HISTORISCHES MUSEUM , VIENNA) MOUNTED IN GOLD , RUBIES AND EMERALDS , WHICH IS SAID TO BE FROM A CAMEL OR GOAT .

RUDOLF BORROWED BEZOARS FROM HIS KUNSTKAMMER AND WORE THEM IN THE HOPE OF CURING HIS CHRONIC MELANCHOLY . HE HAD A CUP MADE OF ONE MOUNTED IN ENAMEL AND GOLD FOR IT WAS BELIEVED THAT WHOEVER DRANK FROM SUCH A CUP COULD BE CERTAIN THAT ANY POISON IN THE DRAFT WOULD BE RENDERED HARMLESS . IN 16 TH CENTURY EUROPE BEZOARS FETCHED UP TO TEN TIMES THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD SUCH WAS THE BELIEF IN THEIR MAGICAL POWERS AND BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES .