Finch & Co



A RARE BEZOAR STONE PROBABLY FROM A GOAT OR CAMEL

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17TH OR 18TH CENTURY
SIZE: 6.5CM DIA – 2½ INS DIA

LITERATURE

BEZOAR STONES ARE FORMED FROM ACCRETIONS IN THE STOMACHS OF RUMINANTS THAT HAVE BECOME OSSIFIED AND WERE BELIEVED TO BE MAGICAL. CERTAINLY EMPEROR RUDOLF II OF PRAGUE WORE THEM IN THE HOPE OF CURING HIS CHRONIC MELANCHOLIA. HE HAD ONE MADE INTO A CUP MOUNTED IN ENAMEL AND GOLD AND STUDDED WITH RUBIES AND EMERALDS, WHICH IT WAS THOUGHT, COULD RENDER POISON HARMLESS.
THE WORD BEZOAR COMES FROM THE PERSIAN 'BAD-SAHR' MEANING POISON ANTIDOTE, AND IN 16TH CENTURY EUROPE IT IS SAID THAT THEY WERE WORTH UP TO 10 TIMES THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD SO STRONG WAS THE BELIEF IN THEIR MAGICAL POWERS AND BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES.