

# GEOMETRIC BRONZE PENDANT COMPOSED OF A MONKEY OR A MAN SEATED ON A KNOBBED STEM

Greek-Geometric, late 8th century B.C.

Bronze

H: 11 cm

Reference: 21140



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It is composed of two stacked elements: a) a figure seated on a small square base that surmounts a sort of cylindrical, high stool with several levels; b) a thin and long stem decorated with four vertical rows of six rounded knobs.

This statuette – according to interpretations, could either represent a man or more likely a monkey. It displays stylized and still very geometric shapes: the torso is straight with the shoulders resembling a diamond-shape, the circular head is completed by a large pointed nose connected to the hands, and the four limbs, all bent with both elbows rest on the knees, are thin stalks that form openwork type triangles. These objects appeared in several areas of the Greek peninsula around the late 8th and early 7th century B.C. (Macedonia, Thessaly, Epirus, modern-day Albania, Boeotia, rarely in Laconia) and their meaning remains obscure even if the long accepted hypothesis that interpreted them as jug stoppers is now widely questioned, even refuted. Their formal analogy with Near Eastern and Egyptian pendants representing seated monkeys and the fact that they generally come from tombs suggest that, even in the Greek world, these pendants were valued as amulets and used as ornaments for garments, especially for belts, that the deceased would wear in their final resting place.

In the Near Eastern world, figurines of seated monkeys, sometimes associated with the tree of life, were symbols of life and fertility, and generally appeared in relation with female deities; in Egypt, these animals were among the most popular types of funerary amulets. Some archaeologists interpret the knobbed stem of the Geometric amulets as a stylized tree. During this time, which was marked by the transition between the Geometric and the Orientalizing period, in which the Greek world became closer Near East and Egypt, these hypotheses seem

quite rational.

According to the classification proposed by I. Kilian-Dirlmeier, our example belongs to the first existing group (type A), characterized by figurines with slightly less schematic forms than the other types.

## CONDITION

This pendant is in an excellent state of preservation. It was cast entirely in bronze and shows a dark brown colored surface which is partially covered with a green patina.

## PROVENANCE

Ex-French Private Collection W. G., acquired in Paris between 1962-1968.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

On Roman portraits in the 3rd century, see :  
CHRISTIANSEN J., *Greece in the Geometric Period*, Catalogue Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, 1992, p. 57.  
LANGDON S., *From Monkey to Man: The Evolution of a Geometric Sculptural Type in American Journal of Archaeology* 94, 1990, pp. 407 ff.  
KILIAN-DIRLMEIER I., *Anhänger in Griechenland von der mykenischen bis zur spätgeometrischen Zeit* (PBF XI, 2), Munich, 1979, pp. 194-209 (especially n. 1164-1197, Type A), pl. 61 ff.