

Basic Detail Report



Samak

Date

ca. 1910

Medium

silver, niello

Description

Round, silver link chain with fish figure hanging from it (fertility symbol). Fish of pure silver with black niello (silver, lead and red copper compound) enamel design depicting sections of fish and flower design in center. FA. 72.25-53 Samak (ca. 1910) (Fig. 46) The fish (Ar., samak) is an ancient Mediterranean symbol of life and fecundity.

It was adopted by the early Christians because the Greek word for fish was the acronym for the phrase "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." This fish amulet is of pure silver and is decorated with niello work. The eye of the fish is brass inlay. (In Morocco, fish eyes are considered to be important prophylactics against the Evil Eye.) Beneath the fish are five silver rings with an Ottoman coin attached to each. They are dated A.H. 1293 and 1327 (A.D. 1876-77 and 1909-10). The charm is on a chain of figure-eight links. The sign of the fish (hut in the Maghrebi dialects) is a principal charm against the Evil Eye in Tunisia. Length of chain: 43.6 cm. Length of fish: 8 cm. (Palestinian Costume and Jewelry, Yedida Kalfon Stillman, 1979 ISBN: 0-82630490-7)

Dimensions

overall: 8 CM (WIDTH OF FISH) X 43.6 CM (TOP OF CHAIN TO END OF COINS)