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Islamic Gold Earring

A gold Islamic basket earring formed of joined hemispheres ornamented with twisted wire filigree, and hollow balls along the joins.

Ca. 11th century AD.
Height: 1 in. (2.5 cm).



During the Byzantine and early Islamic periods, jewelry both beautified the body and conveyed its owner's wealth. It also commemorated special occasions, such as betrothals or weddings, as in Byzantine women's belts depicting marriage scenes, and in surviving rings enscribed with words like "harmony."Jewelry also served amuletic functions, protecting wearers against bad luck or harm. Personal adornments in precious metals were furthermore forms of liquid wealth that could be melted down in time of need. Female figures in the frescoes of Qusayr ‘Amra are depicted wearing large pieces of jewelry, giving a sense of the adornments worn by the elegantly attired. One can almost hear the large bracelets, armlets, and anklets of these courtly figures jingling as they dance.

Formerly in an American private collection.

inventory number: 7134

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