



A Greek early Hellenistic gold and amethyst 'Herakles Knot' necklace.

Circa: 4th century BCE L. 34,8 cm; app. 13 g

Hellenistic period, 4th century BCE

Gold and amethyst necklace from the Hellenistic period. Ten gold motifs representing the Herakles knot alternate with lenticular purple amethyst beads. Original hook clasp.

The Herakles Knot

An emblematic motif in ancient Greek goldsmithing, the Herakles knot (nodus Herculaneus) symbolizes the indestructible strength of the mythological hero who tied the skin of the Nemean lion. Imbued with protective virtues, this apotropaic symbol warded off the evil eye and ensured health and longevity for its wearer. During the Hellenistic period, it became the favored emblem of matrimonial unions, representing fertility and the indissoluble marital bond.

The Sacred Amethyst

A gemstone highly prized in Antiquity, the amethyst derived its name from the Greek amethystos, meaning "protector against intoxication". The Greeks attributed to it the power to preserve clarity of mind and sobriety. Its purple-violet hue, a symbol of power and spirituality, was associated with Dionysus and the divine realm. A stone of wisdom and temperance, amethyst was also renowned for its calming and protective properties.

This necklace thus combines two powerful symbols of protection and harmony, exemplifying the technical refinement and aesthetic sophistication of Hellenistic workshops.