

CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

PROTECTION MEDAL / (*QUEBRANTO* MEDAL)

19th century (assigned date)

Unknown origin

Metallic alloy

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Quebranto, in the Portuguese original, is a concept that is defined in general as a morbid condition associated by the popular beliefs to an evil eye. It involved weakness, prostration and morbidity and people believed that it could cause serious effects on the physical and mental health of the affected person.

In this sense, a *quebranto* medal is, above all, a symbol of protection in the context of a magic-religious system.

This piece, that is integrated in the Angra do Heroísmo Management Unit of Memorabilia, Collection and Miniatures, is a medal in a metallic alloy of a greenish yellow colour, presenting several engravements with esoteric symbols in both faces. In one face, the engravements remit to symbols connected with the Ancient Egypt. The medal is escorted by a typewritten text aiming to explain the implied creed.

Accordingly to the popular beliefs, this medal, if set around the neck of a new born, had the power to prevent that the “sorcerers” came to suck his blood (sic), under the form of spiders coming down through their webs, in a period of eight days after birth. After this time, the child would be safe.

It was a rare and very sought for object, that mothers would ask to those who owned one. They believed that, without this protection, unavoidably, the babies would have their blood sucked, incurring then in serious danger, including death.