Finch & Co



A FINE AND RARE TURNED RHINOCEROS HORN WINE COASTER

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EARLY 19TH CENTURY
SIZE : 11.5 CM DIA. X 3 CM HIGH
4½ INS DIA. X 1¼ INS HIGH

LITERATURE

RHINOCEROS HORN HAS BEEN LONG PRIZED IN BOTH EUROPE AND ASIA. THE STORE OF MAGICAL LEGENDS SURROUNDING THE HORN GREW TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT THE HORN ITSELF BECAME CREDITED, IN CHINA ESPECIALLY, WITH POWER TO MAKE ITS OWNER OR USER IMMORTAL. IN EUROPE, A CUP MADE OF THE HORN WAS BELIEVED TO BE ABLE TO DETECT POISON, AND IN THE RENAISSANCE COURTS OF EUROPE THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT QUALITY, PERHAPS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.
EMPEROR RUDOLF II OF GERMANY (1522-1612) PAID FABULOUS SUMS FOR HIS DRINKING CUPS ALTHOUGH HIS COLLECTION IS NOW FOUND TO INCLUDE SEVERAL BUFFALO HORN IMITATIONS. A CHINESE WORK DATED 1388 DISCUSSING THE CONNOISSEURSHIP OF ANTIQUITIES STATES THAT, 'RHINOCEROS HORN PIECES ON GIRDLES ARE OFTEN MADE OF ORDINARY HORN WITH A THIN LAYER OF RHINOCEROS STUCK ON TOP'!