Finch & Co



AN UNUSUAL CHINESE CARVED MOTHER OF PEARL AMULETIC PLAQUE DEPICTING ST CHRISTOPHER

AN UNUSUAL CHINESE CARVED MOTHER OF PEARL AMULETIC PLAQUE DEPICTING ST CHRISTOPHER
WITH A HALO CARRYING THE CHRIST CHILD
CIRCA 1800-20
SIZE: 6 CM HIGH, 4 CM WIDE – 2¼ INS HIGH, 1½ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

JESUIT INFLUENCE ON THE CHINA TRADE IS APPARENT IN A LETTER DATED 1720 FROM A FRENCH CATHOLIC MISSIONARY, DE MAILLA, WHO WRITES THAT THE EMPEROR K'ANG HSI HAS BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH EUROPEAN PAINTED ENAMELS THROUGH MISSIONARIES AND TRADERS IN CANTON AND NOW WISHES TO ESTABLISH THE WORKSHOPS IN PEKING. DE MAILLA APPEALS FOR JESUIT BROTHERS SKILLED IN THE PAINTING OF LIMOGES ENAMELS TO COME AND TRAIN CHINESE ARTISTS.
THE CHINESE WERE, AND ARE, SKILLED IMITATORS AND WERE TRAINED TO USE THE SUBJECT MATTER IN EUROPEAN PRINTS IN THEIR CARVING OF IVORY, TORTOISESHELL, MOTHER OF PEARL, WOOD AND IN THEIR REVERSE PAINTINGS ON GLASS. ALL OF WHICH OFTEN BETRAY, IF SOMETIMES ONLY SLIGHTLY, THEIR ORIENTAL ORIGINS.