Finch & Co



A FINE GERMAN CARVED IVORY AND COQUILLA NUT SNUFF FLASK

A FINE GERMAN CARVED IVORY AND COQUILLA NUT SNUFF FLASK WITH SCREW TOP
THE COQUILLA NUT SIDES CARVED WITH SCENES OF MUSICIANS PLAYING STRINGED INSTRUMENTS, THE IVORY MIDDLE BAND CARVED WITH ACANTHUS LEAVES AND TWO MASK HEADS
MID 17TH CENTURY
SIZE: 7CM HIGH, 3CM DEEP – 2¾ INS HIGH, 1¼ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

COQUILLAS ARE THE NUTS OF THE ATTALEA FUNIFERA PALM TREE WHICH GROWS EXTENSIVELY IN SWAMPY GROUND ALONG THE EASTERN SIDE OF SOUTH AMERICA. THEY WERE FIRST INTRODUCED TO WESTERN EUROPE IN THE MID 16TH CENTURY AND WERE VERY POPULAR FOR CARVING INTO SMALL OBJECTS. THE OILY NATURE OF THE COQUILLA NUT MAKES IT IDEAL FOR KEEPING SNUFF IN GOOD CONDITION WITHOUT IT DRYING OUT. IN THE 17TH CENTURY SNUFF FLASKS OR BOTTLES WERE USED IN ARISTOCRATIC CIRCLES, KEPT IN THE POCKET, AND FILLED BY MEANS OF A SMALL FUNNEL THROUGH THE SPOUT AT THE TOP.