Finch & Co



A STRING OF NINETEEN CHINESE INTRICATELY PIERCED IVORY COURT BEADS

A STRING OF NINETEEN CHINESE INTRICATELY PIERCED IVORY COURT BEADS
17TH / EARLY 18TH CENTURY – QING DYNASTY (1644 – 1912)
SIZE: 40CM LONG – 15¾ INS LONG (APPROX.)
2.5CM DIA. – 1 INS DIA (EACH)

LITERATURE

IN 1644 THE MANCHU CAPTURED BEIJING AND ESTABLISHED THE QING DYNASTY. BEADS OF PRECIOUS AND SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES, IMPORTED CORAL, AMBER, IVORY, LAPIS LAZULI AND TURQUOISE WERE MADE INTO NECKLACES CALLED 'COURT BEADS' OR 'MANDARIN CHARMS' AND WORN BY THE EMPERORS AND THEIR COURT. THESE BEADS WERE EXPRESSIONS OF STATUS AND AS SUCH WERE PERMITTED TO BE WORN ONLY BY PEOPLE OF HIGH RANK. CHINESE DYNASTIC LAW LAID DOWN THE BEAD MATERIALS THAT COULD BE WORN BY CERTAIN COURT WOMEN SUCH AS THE EMPERORS CONCUBINES, BUT THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE WOMAN OF THE OLD ARISTOCRACY REFUSED TO WEAR MANCHURIAN DRESS AND THE COURT BEADS, AS THEY REPRESENTED THE HATED 'FOREIGN' MANCHU RULERS.