Finch & Co

INDIAN BOMBAY CARVED LIMESTONE AND POLYCHROMED PORTRAIT HEAD OF A HINDU

AN INDIAN BOMBAY CARVED LIMESTONE AND POLYCHROMED PORTRAIT HEAD OF A HINDU MARATHA WAR CHIEF

HIS DEVOTIONAL INSIGNIA ON HIS FOREHEAD INDICATING HIM TO BE A CHITPAVAN BRAHMIN

SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 31CM HIGH, 21CM WIDE, 17CM DEEP – 12¾ INS HIGH, 8¼ INS WIDE, 6¾ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

CHITPAVANS WERE ENERGETIC AND INFLUENTIAL ADMINISTRATORS WITHIN THE MARATHA STATE AND IT WAS FROM THEIR CASTE THAT THE PESHWA FAMILY HAD COME. IN THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY THE REINS OF POWER IN THE MARATHA STATE WERE SEIZED BY A FAMILY OF CHITPAVAN BRAHMINS, MEMBERS OF WHOM HAD SERVED THE LEGENDARY 17TH CENTURY HINDU LEADER SHIVAJIS SUCCESSORS AS PESHWA OR CHIEF MINISTER. POWER THEN SHIFTED TO THE NEW CITY OF POONA AND THE MARATHAS BEGAN TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS THE 'BRAHMIN KINGDOM'. DESPITE THEIR LONG STRUGGLE WITH THE DECLINING MUGHALS THE MARATHAS ADAPTED MANY MUGHAL FORMS OF STATECRAFT TO THEIR OWN USE. IN THE LATER 18TH CENTURY GREAT MARATHA WAR CHIEFS SUCH AS THE SCINDIA, BHONSLES AND HOLKARS EMERGED ALONGSIDE THE PESHWAS' BRAHMIN FAMILY AND THIS MARATHA CONFEDERACY WENT ON TO FIGHT THREE FIERCE WARS WITH THE EAST INDIA COMPANY FOR THE CONTROL OF PENINSULAR INDIA.