Finch & Co



ENGLISH GEORGIAN SILVER MOUNTED INDIAN STARRED TORTOISESHELL TABLE SNUFF BOX

AN UNUSUAL ENGLISH GEORGIAN SILVER MOUNTED INDIAN STARRED TORTOISESHELL TABLE SNUFF BOX
THE HINGED SILVER LID ENGRAVED WITH THE ARMS OF BURTON OF TOLETHORPE, RUTLAND
CIRCA 1770 – 1790
SIZE: 9CM LONG, 5.5CM HIGH, 7CM WIDE – 3½ INS LONG, 2¼ INS HIGH, 2¾ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THE INDIAN STARRED TORTOISE 'GEOCHELONE ELEGANS' IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE LEOPARD TORTOISE AND IS FOUND IN SRI LANKA AND PENINSULAR INDIA. THE FASCINATING RADIATING SHELL PATTERN OF THE STARRED TORTOISE ALTHOUGH VERY STRIKING SERVES AS AN EFFECTIVE CAMOUFLAGE IN THE WILD ESPECIALLY WHEN THE TORTOISE IS PARTIALLY CONCEALED UNDER TUSSOCKS OF DRY GRASS. THEY ARE A COMPARATIVELY SMALL SPECIES AND WERE ONCE REGARDED AS THE MOST EXOTIC OF PETS. THEIR SHELLS WERE SOUGHT AFTER AS CURIOSITIES OF NATURE. THE 18TH CENTURY COLLECTOR SIR HANS SLOANE AMASSED 67 DIFFERENT SPECIMENS OF TORTOISESHELL FOR HIS GREAT NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTION, BUT ONLY MANAGED TO OBTAIN TWO EXAMPLES OF THE INDIAN STARRED TORTOISE SUCH WAS THEIR RARITY.