Finch & Co



SOUTH GERMAN SILVER MOUNTED TIGER COWRY SHELL 'CYPRAEA TIGRIS' TABLE SNUFF BOX

AN UNUSUAL LARGE SOUTH GERMAN SILVER MOUNTED TIGER COWRY SHELL 'CYPRAEA TIGRIS' TABLE SNUFF BOX TOGETHER WITH A SMALLER SILVER MOUNTED TIGER COWRY SHELL POCKET SNUFF BOX, PROBABLY NETHERLANDISH LATE 17TH – EARLY 18TH CENTURY

SIZES: A: 6.5CM HIGH, 12CM WIDE, 8.5CM DEEP – 2½ HIGH, 4¾ INS WIDE, 3¼ INS DEEP

B: 3.5CM HIGH, 7CM WIDE, 5CM DEEP – 1¼ INS HIGH, 2¾ INS WIDE, 2 INS DEEP

LITERATURE

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN COLLECTING SHELLS SINCE PREHISTORIC TIMES, FOR FOOD, FOR ESSENTIAL TOOL MAKING AND FOR ORNAMENTATION, BUT IT WAS DURING THE RENAISSANCE WHICH BROUGHT THE GREAT VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY THAT 'CONCOLOGY' TOOK OFF. IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES MARINE MOLLUSC SHELLS FROM TROPICAL WATERS ACROSS THE WORLD WERE HIGHLY PRIZED EXOTIC COLLECTORS ITEMS AND WERE OFTEN MOUNTED TO BE USED AS SPOONS OR BOXES. THE TIGER COWRY SHELL IS CALLED THE 'PORCELAIN SNAIL' IN GERMAN DUE TO ITS BEAUTY OF DECORATION AND ITS LUSTROUS SURFACE.