Finch & Co



GERMAN CARVED IVORY STAFF OR CANE HANDLE

A GERMAN CARVED IVORY STAFF OR CANE HANDLE CARVED WITH THE HEAD OF A ROARING MANED LION AND WITH AN ANTHROPOMORPHIC SNAKE/JESTER'S HEAD EMERGING FROM THE OPPOSITE CURVED END
SMOOTH RICHLY COLOURED SILKY PATINA
EARLY 17TH CENTURY
SIZE: 4CM HIGH, 2CM WIDE, 9.5CM DEEP – 1½ INS HIGH, ¾ INS WIDE, 3¾ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

THE JESTER/SNAKE'S HEAD IS A REPRESENTATIVE FIGURE OF HUMANITY FOUGHT OVER ALTERNATELY BY GOOD AND EVIL FORCES. THE LION SYMBOLISING STRENGTH AND MAJESTY IS THE EMBLEM OF ST MARK WHO EMPHASISED CHRIST'S KINGSHIP. HIS GOSPEL OPENS WITH ST JOHN'S VOICE 'CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS', LIKE THE 'ROAR OF A LION'. IN MEDIEVAL TIMES IT WAS THOUGHT THAT LIONS SLEPT WITH THEIR EYES OPEN MAKING THEM A SYMBOL OF ETERNAL VIGILANCE. POWERFUL LIONS ARE USED FOR THIS REASON AS DEFENSIVE BULWARKS IN ITALIAN CHURCHES WHERE THEIR STATUES SUPPORT PORCH COLUMNS. EVER ALERT THEY CATCH SMALL CREATURES IN THEIR CLAWS, SYMBOLISING SIN, THAT TRY TO SLIP IN PAST THEM.