

Finch & C^o



SILVER MOUNTED SOUTH AMERICAN PERUVIAN DECORATED CALABASH GOURD

A SILVER MOUNTED SOUTH AMERICAN PERUVIAN DECORATED CALABASH GOURD

PROBABLY USED FOR MATÉ TEA

18TH CENTURY

SIZE: 9.5CM HIGH, 8CM DIA – 3¾ INS HIGH, 3 INS DIA

LITERATURE

THE CONSUMPTION OF YERBA MATÉ TEA CROSSED ALL SOCIAL BOUNDARIES IN SOUTH AMERICA. IT WAS ONLY THE STYLE OF THE VESSEL THAT VARIED. THE POOREST CUSTOMARILY DRANK IT FROM SIMPLE DRIED GOURDS FROM WHICH THE DRINK TOOK ITS NAME, 'MATI' BEING THE QUECHUA WORD FOR THE SQUASH PLANT THAT PRODUCED THE GOURDS.

THE WEALTHIEST TOOK THEIR BEVERAGE FROM BOWLS OF VARIOUS MATERIALS INCLUDING GOURDS AND EXOTIC WOODS PARTLY ENCASED IN PRECIOUS METALS. A PORTION OF THE GOURD WAS OFTEN LEFT TO REVEAL ITS IDENTITY AND TRADITIONAL USE, BUT THE MOUNTING GAVE THE VESSEL THE LOOK OF A TREASURED KUNSTKAMMER OBJECT.