Finch & Co



PORTUGUESE JESUIT MISSIONARY'S PORTABLE GILT BRONZE CRUCIFIX

A PORTUGUESE JESUIT MISSIONARY'S PORTABLE GILT BRONZE CRUCIFIX MOUNTED ON A CROSS OF BOMBAY ROSEWOOD CONTAINED IN A VELVET LINED SHARKS SKIN CASE

FIRST HALF 18TH CENTURY

SIZE: 34CM HIGH, 16.5CM WIDE - 13½ INS HIGH, 6½ INS WIDE / 35CM HIGH, 17CM WIDE - 13¾ INS HIGH, 6¾ INS WIDE (SHAGREEN CASE)

LITERATURE

SUPPORTED BY PAPAL BULLS AND DECREES THAT HAD BEEN PROMULGATED IN THE 15TH CENTURY, THE PORTUGUESE KING CLAIMED JURISDICTION OVER CHURCHES AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT AFRICA AND ASIA, A CONCEPT KNOWN AS 'PADROADO REAL' OR ROYAL PATRONAGE. THE FRANCISCANS WERE ACTIVE IN SOUTHERN INDIA AS EARLY AS THE 1520'S, BUT IT WAS THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, A NEW ORDER FOUNDED IN ROME BY IGNATIUS LOYOLA IN 1540, THAT DOMINATED MISSIONARY ACTIVITY IN THE 'ESTADO DA INDIA'. KNOWN AS JESUITS, THEY WERE DEDICATED TO WORKING AMONG LAYMEN RATHER THAN TO CONTEMPLATION, AND MADE EDUCATION AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITY THEIR PRIMARY GOALS. THEY ESTABLISHED SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE PORTUGUESE EMPIRE WHICH BOTH PRODUCED PRIESTS TO CARRY ON THE ORDER'S EVANGELICAL WORK AND ALSO HELPED TRAIN THE ADMINISTRATORS NEEDED BY THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT TO RUN THE EMPIRE. THE FIRST GREAT JESUIT MISSIONARY WAS FRANCIS XAVIER (1506 - 1552) WHO SET OFF FOR INDIA AT THE BEHEST OF KING JOÄO III REACHING MALACCA, THE MOLUCCAS AND JAPAN BEFORE DYING WHILST TRYING TO GAIN ENTRY TO THE CHINESE MAINLAND.