Finch & Co



GERMAN CARVED IVORY SKULL 'MEMENTO MORI'

A GERMAN CARVED IVORY SKULL 'MEMENTO MORI'
OLD SMOOTH CREAMY PATINA
IN FINE CONDITION
17TH CENTURY
SIZE: 4CM HIGH, 3.5CM WIDE, 5CM DEEP - 1½ INS HIGH, 1¼ INS WIDE, 2 INS DEEP

LITERATURE

TO PLAN ONE'S OWN FUNERAL IS TO CONFRONT ONE'S OWN MORTALITY, AND IN PRE-REFORMATION ENGLAND PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THEIR OWN DEATH AS A MATTER OF COURSE AS THE STATES OF LIFE AND DEATH WERE INEXTRICABLY INTERTWINED AND NOT INVARIABLY OPPOSED. THE REFORMATION HAD A DRAMATIC IMPACT ON PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEATH. THE LOSS OF BELIEF IN PURGATORY DISTANCED THE DEAD FROM THE LIVING. CONTACT HAD TRADITIONALLY BEEN SUSTAINED WITH THE DEAD THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF PRIESTS, BUT THE OUTLAWING IN 1529 OF MASSES FOR THE DEAD GREATLY REDUCED THE CLERGY'S ROLE IN THE DEATH RITUAL AND GRADUALLY OVER TIME DEATH BECAME A PRIVATE RATHER THAN A SHARED DEVOTIONAL EXPERIENCE.