Finch & Co



RARE EARLY ENGLISH CARVED WALRUS IVORY LOTTERY OR TEETOTUM GAMBLING BALL

A RARE EARLY ENGLISH CARVED WALRUS IVORY LOTTERY OR TEETOTUM GAMBLING BALL ETCHED WITH AN EXCISE CROWN AND WITH 32 EQUAL FACETED SIDES INCISED 1 TO 32

OLD CREAMY SMOOTH YELLOW PATINA

LATE 17TH CENTURY

SIZE: 4.5CM DIA. - 1¾ INS DIA.

LITERATURE

TEETOTUM BALLS GIVE THE GAMBLER MORE OF A WINNING CHANCE THAN SPINNING DICE BECAUSE WHEN THROWN THE FACETED NUMBERED SIDES OF A BALL GIVE AN EQUAL CHANCE OF ANY NUMBER TURNING UP, UNLIKE DICE.
THE ETCHED SYMBOL OF THE ROYAL CROWN DENOTES THAT THE BALL IS SUITABLE FOR USE BY THE EXCISE MEN FOR THE LOTTERY. LOTTERIES FIRST BEGAN TO BE AN ACCEPTABLE FORM OF RAISING MONEY FOR GOVERNMENT FUNDS UNDER QUEEN ELIZABETH I IN 1568 - 69 WHEN URGENT REPAIRS TO THE HARBOURS AND COASTAL FORTIFICATIONS OF SOUTHERN ENGLAND WERE NEEDED TO REPEL ANY SEABORNE INVASION FROM THE SPANISH. SUCCESSIVE ACTS OF PARLIAMENT THEN ESTABLISHED LOTTERIES AS A LEGITIMATE MEANS OF INCREASING REVENUE AND THEY ARE STILL TODAY A LUCRATIVE SOURCE OF GOVERNMENT INCOME.