

Finch & C^o



MUGHAL INDIAN GUJARATI MOTHER OF PEARL CASKET

A FINE AND RARE MUGHAL INDIAN GUJARATI MOTHER OF PEARL CASKET PROBABLY MADE FOR THE TURKISH MARKET
CONSTRUCTED OF TWO LAYERS OF SHELL THE STYLISED PETAL SHAPED PLAQUES OF THE EXTERIOR LAID OVER
LONGER STRIPS OF SHELL THAT CONSTITUTE THE INTERIOR INLAID TO THE OUTSIDE WITH RED LACQUER GEOMETRIC
CYPRESS TREES THE WHOLE SECURED WITH IRON PINS THE VAULTED LID WITH BRASS HINGES AND FRONT PLATE
A FEW MOTHER OF PEARL PANELS REPLACED
EARLY 17TH CENTURY

SIZE: 12.5CM HIGH, 20CM WIDE, 13.5CM DEEP - 5 IN HIGH, 8 INS WIDE, 5¼ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

JAN HUYGHEN VAN LINSCHOTEN IN HIS 'VOYAGE AUX INDES ORIENTALES' WRITES ABOUT THE GUJARATI ARTISANS IN THE 1580'S 'THEY MAKE ALSO AL SORTES OF DESKES, CUBBOARDS, COFFERS, BOXES AND A THOUSAND SUCH LIKE DEVICES INLAID AND WROUGHT WITH MOTHER OF PEARL WHICH ARE CARRIED THROUGHOUT AL INDIA, ESPECIALLY TO GOA AND COCHIN, AGAINST THE TIME THAT THE PORTINGALS SHIPPES (COME) TETHER TO TAKE IN THEIR LADING'. MOTHER OF PEARL FASHIONED FROM THE SHELL OF A NOCTURNAL SNAIL 'TURBO MARMORATUS' WAS A FAVOURED MATERIAL AT THE MUGHAL COURT. THESE LUXURIOUS, EXOTIC ARTICLES WERE MADE IN GUJARAT IN WESTERN INDIA AND EQUALLY PRIZED IN THE INDIAN AND EUROPEAN COURTS. THE PORTUGUESE COMMISSIONED MANY ARTICLES EXPORTING THEM TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND TO EUROPE AS PRECIOUS NOVELTIES, AND THEY WERE OFTEN PROMINENTLY FEATURED IN 'WUNDERKAMMER'. THE DRESDEN 'GREEN VAULT' STILL PRESERVES EXAMPLES FROM THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES. ALTHOUGH PRODUCED IN TRADITIONAL WESTERN SHAPES, THE DELICATE MOTHER OF PEARL ARTICLES WERE NEVER INTENDED TO BE USED FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN OSTENTATIOUS DISPLAY.