Finch & Co



CURIOUS ROYAL GERMAN TOY MODEL OF A TIGER FORMED OF AN INDIAN TIGER COWRY 'CYPRAEA ILGRIS LINNÉ' SHELL

A CURIOUS ROYAL GERMAN TOY MODEL OF A TIGER FORMED OF AN INDIAN TIGER COWRY 'CYPRAEA ILGRIS LINNÉ' SHELL WITH ATTACHED GILDED PAPÎER MACHÉ HEAD PAWS FEET AND TAIL

A LABEL TO THE BASE INSCRIBED IN GERMAN TRANSLATING TO 'BY PRINCESS ANNA VON HESSE BEFORE HER MARRIAGE WITH GRAND DUKE FRANZ OF MECKLENBURG AND SCHWERIN. A GIFT TO MARIA HER FORMER PIANOFORTE TEACHER WHEN SHE TOOK HER LEAVE OF HER AT THE PRINCE CARL PALACE IN MAY 1864'

CIRCA 1860 - 64

SIZE: 5CM HIGH, 10.5CM WIDE, 5CM DEEP - 2 INS HIGH, 4 INS WIDE, 2 INS DEEP

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LITERATURE

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS MARIA ANNA WILHELMME ELIZABETH MATILDE OF HESSE (1843 - 1865) WAS MARRIED IN MAY 1864 TO FRIEDRICH FRANZ MECKLENBURG-SCHWERIN, BUT TRAGICALLY DIED ONLY ELEVEN MONTHS LATER IN 1865.

OVER THE PAST 200 YEARS THE PASTIMES AND ACTIVITIES OF NOBLE, ARISTOCRATIC AND UPPER CLASS WOMEN HAVE REFLECTED THEIR POSITION IN SOCIETY AND THE CONSTRAINTS ON THEIR LIVES. MOST, BECAUSE OF THEIR SOCIAL STATUS WERE PRECLUDED FROM WORKING FOR MONEY, BUT THEY HAD BOUNDLESS TIME TO STUDY AND LEARN NEW SKILLS. THEIR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES INCLUDED SAND PAINTING, EMBROIDERY, ROLLED AND CUT PAPERWORK, JAPANNING, SILHOUETTES, FEATHERWORK, WATERCOLOURS AND SHELLWORK AND THEY BECAME VERY IMPORTANT TO THEM.

SHELL COLLECTING WAS A PASSION IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES AND SAILORS, PARTICULARLY THOSE VOYAGING TO THE EAST AND WEST INDIES, WERE BOMBARDED WITH REQUESTS FOR EXOTIC SPECIMENS. RARE SHELLS WERE REGARDED AS SIGNIFICANT GIFTS AMONG FRIENDS. MRS DELANY, A FAMOUS GROTTO AND SHELL PICTURE MAKER, MENTIONS THE SUM OF 15 GUINEAS FOR A SPECIMEN OF THE ‘TENDER SHELL'D NAUTILUS’. THROUGHOUT BOTH CENTURIES LADIES VISITING THE SEASIDE SPENT HOURS STEPPING DAINTILY ACROSS BEACHES AND OVER ROCKS LOOKING FOR SHELLS WHICH WOULD BE TAKEN HOME, CAREFULLY SORTED INTO CABINETS OR MADE INTO ALL KINDS OF DECORATIONS.

PROVENANCE

EX ROYAL COLLECTION PRINCESS ANNA VON HESSE GIFTED TO HER PIANOFORTE TEACHER THENCE BY DESCENT

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION BATH UK