Finch & Co



A PAIR OF UNUSUAL MUGHAL ARCHER'S THUMB RINGS

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STEEL, BRASS (GOLD ?)

INDIA

LATE 18TH / EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 3.5CM HIGH - 1⅓ INS HIGH

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LITERATURE

THE BOW RING WORN BY ARCHERS ON THE THUMB HAD A PRIMARILY FUNCTIONAL USE, BUT THEY WERE OFTEN VERY DECORATIVE AS WELL, AS HUNTING GAME WITH A BOW AND ARROW WAS OFTEN A ROYAL SPORT.

THE ADVANTAGE OF THE EASTERN ARCHER'S THUMB RING OVER THAT OF THE EUROPEAN PRACTICE OF USING THE LEATHER COVERED TIPS OF THREE FINGERS IS THAT IT IMPROVES THE HANDLING OF THE BOW AND ARROW, AND INCREASES THE RANGE AND STEADIES THE FLIGHT OF THE ARROW, VERY SIMILAR TO THE ACTIONS ACHIEVED BY USING A SPEAR THROWER. THE CLOSER THE FEATHERS ARE TO THE NOCK OF THE ARROW THE GREATER THE DISTANCE THE ARROW WILL TRAVEL, AND THE STEADIER ITS PATH.

PROVENANCE

EX JOHN HARWOOD, INDIA, 2005

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION