Finch & Co



A FINE SPECIMEN OF A SEYCHELLES 'COCO DE MER'

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OF FEMALE FORM, WITH TRADITIONAL DARK BROWN COLOUR AND PATINA

INDIAN OCEAN

19TH CENTURY

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SIZE: 27CM HIGH, 24CM WIDE - 10¾ INS HIGH, 9¾ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

'COCO DE MER' COME FROM A TALL PALM TREE THAT IS INDIGENOUS TO THE SEYCHELLES ISLANDS. THEY ARE THE LARGEST KNOWN SEED IN THE WORLD AND TAKE 8 TO 10 YEARS TO RIPEN.

THE PALM WAS ERRONEOUSLY CALLED 'LODOICEA MALADIVICA' BY THE BOTANIST RUMPHIUS AFTER OBSERVING THE DOUBLE NUTS FLOATING AROUND THE MALDIVES ISLANDS. IN FACT THEY ARE NOT RELATED TO THE COCONUT PALM, BUT TO THE PALMYRAH OF SRI LANKA, AND WERE DISCOVERED IN 1743 ON THE SEYCHELLES ISLAND OF PRASLIN BY THE

FRENCHMAN BARRE. DESCRIBED IN THE 1737 INVENTORY OF THE ROYAL DANISH KUNSTKAMMER AT ROSENBERG CASTLE IN COPENHAGEN AS ‘COMPLETE, RARE AND BEAUTIFUL’ THE ‘COCO DE MER’ BECAME A LEGENDARY CURIOSITY.

THE SOURCE OF MANY LEGENDS AND MYSTERIES, THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PRIZED FOR THEIR EXOTIC, EROTIC AND SHAPELY BEAUTY, AND THOUGHT TO BE POWERFUL APHRODISIACS. EUROPEAN SAILORS WOULD FIND THEM FLOATING GRACEFULLY IN THE WARM SEAS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AND SO NAMED THEM ‘COCO DE MER’.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE BRITISH COLLECTION