Finch & Co



INDO PORTUGUESE CARVED IVORY CHESS PIECE REPRESENTING A KNIGHT ON HORSEBACK

AN UNUSUAL INDO PORTUGUESE CARVED IVORY CHESS PIECE REPRESENTING A KNIGHT ON HORSEBACK
TRACES OF POLYCHROME (OLD DAMAGE)
17TH CENTURY
SIZE: 8CM HIGH, 6.5CM DEEP, 4.5CM WIDE – 3¼ INS HIGH, 2½ INS DEEP, 1¾ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

FROM ITS VERY BEGINNINGS CHESS WAS CONCEIVED AS A COMPLEX GAME OF STRATEGY AND SKILL, BUT THE IDENTIFICATION OF ITS ORIGIN IS BESET WITH DIFFICULTIES. A WALL PAINTING FROM THE TOMB OF QUEEN NEFERTARI OF EGYPT FROM ABOUT 1250BC SHOWS THE QUEEN PLAYING WITH GAMING PIECES, WHICH RESEMBLE THOSE USED IN CHESS. THIS IS MUCH EARLIER THAN THE USUAL ASSOCIATION MADE BETWEEN CHESS AND THE CLASSICAL PAST AND ITS CREDITED INVENTION TO ARISTOTLE, GALEN OR HIPPOCRATES. IN 1694 THOMAS HYDE PUBLISHED A BOOK AND ESTABLISHED A MORE PROBABLE THEORY THAT THE GAME DEVELOPED IN INDIA IN ABOUT THE 6TH CENTURY AD AND SPREAD FROM THERE TO PERSIA.
THE KNIGHT IS THE MOST RECOGNISABLE OF ALL THE PIECES ON THE BOARD AND HIS ANCESTRY IN THE GAME CAN BE TRACED BACK TO THE 'CAVALRY' OF THE ORIGINAL INDIAN GAME.