Finch & Co



ENGLISH CARVED IVORY LOTTERY OR TEETOTUM GAMBLING BALL

AN EARLY ENGLISH CARVED IVORY LOTTERY OR TEETOTUM GAMBLING BALL ETCHED WITH A CROWN AND INCISED ON 32 SIDES WITH THE NUMBERS 1 TO 32

OLD SMOOTH CREAMY YELLOW PATINA

LATE 17TH CENTURY

SIZE: 5CM DIA. – 2 INS DIA. (MAX)

SEE: FINCH & CO CATALOGUE NO. 20, ITEM NO. 42, FOR AN EXAMPLE INSCRIBED 'ROYAL OAK' AND ALSO CATALOGUE NUMBER 21, ITEM NUMBER 35, FOR A SIMILAR EXAMPLE

LITERATURE

TEETOTUM BALLS GIVE THE GAMBLER MORE OF A WINNING CHANCE THAN A SPINNING DICE, BECAUSE WHEN THROWN THE FACETED NUMBERED SIDES OF A BALL GIVE AN EQUAL CHANCE OF ANY NUMBER TURNING UP, UNLIKE DICE. LOTTERIES FIRST BEGAN TO BE AN ACCEPTABLE FORM OF RAISING MONEY FOR GOVERNMENT FUNDS UNDER ELIZABETH I IN 1568-69 WHEN URGENT REPAIRS TO THE HARBOURS AND COASTAL FORTIFICATIONS OF ENGLAND WERE NEEDED TO REPEL ANY SEABORNE INVASION FROM THE SPANISH. SUCCESSIVE ACTS OF PARLIAMENT THEN ESTABLISHED LOTTERIES AS A LEGITIMATE MEANS OF INCREASING REVENUE AND THEY BECAME A LUCRATIVE SOURCE OF GOVERNMENT INCOME EVEN DURING THE COMMONWEALTH UNDER THE PURITAN RULE OF OLIVER CROMWELL.