Carved Boxwood Tobacco Box - Louis XV Period, 18th Century, Architectural Scene

400 EUR

Period : 18th century
Condition : Bon état
Material : Solid wood
Length : 13.5 x 6.5 cm

Description

18th-Century French Carved Boxwood Tobacco Box - Louis XV Period, Religious Architectural Scene
Origin: France
Period: Mid-18th Century (c. 1740-1770)
Material: Carved boxwood with ebonized panels
Dimensions: 13.5 cm (L) x 6.5 cm (W) x 4.2 cm (H)
Condition: Excellent for age; original patina, minor wear consistent with use

Description:
A rare and exquisitely carved 18th-century French tobacco or snuff box, executed in fine boxwood during the Louis XV period, around 1740-1770. This masterful piece exemplifies the refined Rococo aesthetic of the era and is

Dealer

Art Classique
curiosités, art premier et Asiatique
Mobile : 0032-475272534

Bilzen 3740

distinguished by its intricately carved religious architectural scene on the domed lid--possibly representing a stylized church, abbey, or "Gate of Heaven" motif, richly framed by LXV scrollwork and flanked by symbolic pierced star-shaped openings.
The relief carving on the lid features a central arched gateway beneath twin domed towers, enclosed within a scalloped medallion evocative of a halo or mandorla--a device frequently used in devotional art to suggest sanctity and divine light. The lid's decorative structure hints at both architectural majesty and spiritual symbolism, aligning the object with devotional tabatières of the period.
Each side of the box is adorned with sunburst and floral rosettes, punctuated by a series of symbolic paired holes and a blackened cartouche featuring traces of engraved foliate scrollwork. The bottom is carved in a delicate basket-weave pattern, showcasing the artisan's technical mastery. The box opens via original hand-forged iron hinges, and the interior retains its original hollow cavity, darkened from historic use.

Historical Context:
Boxes of this kind were often personal items carried by aristocrats, clergy, or educated gentlemen in Ancien Régime France, used to store snuff or tobacco--then a symbol of refinement. Unlike plain utilitarian forms, this example integrates religious symbolism and high craftsmanship, making it both a functional object and a statement of personal devotion and taste. Comparable devotional and architectural snuff boxes from the 18th century appear in collections such as the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Paris) and The Wallace Collection (London).