An exceptionally rare Charles II boarded oak funeral biscuit box, Yorkshire, circa 1660-80

Sold



REF: 4611

Houlston UK Ltd
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Height: 14.5 cm (5.7")

Width: 32.7 cm (12.9")

Depth: 25 cm (9.8")

Description

With a wonderful trade label to the underside of the one-piece lid, the front board with carved initials and scrolls around the iron lockplate, the one piece baseboard with a projected canted rim matching the lid, the trade label depicting a funeral pall, banners and momento mori centred by a verse, above the trader's name and location, a grand funeral procession below

There appears to have been a particularly strong tradition of funeral biscuits in the North of England during the 17th century through to the 19th century. The biscuits may have born the deceased's initials and were individually wrapped and sealed with black wax, designed to be taken away and possibly even kept rather than consumed at the funeral

Unsurprisingly there appear to be no extant examples of 17th century biscuit wrappers, however an example dating to 1828 is in the collection of The Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, acc. no. 1919.53.1 and it is reasonable to surmise that they had changed very little

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