Finch & Co



CARVED LARGE SCRIMSHAW SPERM WHALE TOOTH

A MAGNIFICENT AND UNUSUAL RELIEF CARVED LARGE SCRIMSHAW SPERM WHALE TOOTH
INTRICATELY CARVED WITH THE STERN OF A NAVAL GUN SHIP OF THE LINE, SURROUNDED WITH ARMS, FLAGS, BANNERS AND TROPHIES OF WAR. BELOW CANNON GUNS ARE FINELY CARVED OPPOSING EACH OTHER TIED WITH ROPE
EARLY 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 22CM LONG, 9CM WIDE, 6CM DEEP – 8¾ INS LONG, 3½ INS WIDE, 2¼ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

THE BULK OF ALL SCRIMSHAW WAS MADE FROM THE TEETH OF THE SPERM WHALE. OF ALL THE WHALES ONLY THEY HAVE TEETH AND THEN ONLY ON THEIR LOWER JAWS. HOWEVER, THEY WERE NOT HUNTED FOR THEIR IVORY, BUT FOR THE OIL IN THEIR HEADS AND THEIR BLUBBER AND FOR THE AMBERGRIS IN THEIR INTESTINES.
BROUGHT HOME IN THE POCKETS AND SEA CHESTS OF SAILORS, SCRIMSHAW WAS A MUTE REMINDER OF THE LONG AND ARDUOUS VOYAGES ENDURED IN FOLLOWING THE WHALE, OF THE ENDLESS DAYS AND WEEKS OF WAITING TO SIGHT AND PURSUE THEM. THE FORTY YEARS BETWEEN 1825 AND 1865 ARE DESCRIBED AS THE ‘GOLDEN AGE OF WHALING’ AND THIS PERIOD SAW THE RISE AND THEN DECLINE OF AN INDUSTRY AND A WAY OF LIFE THAT AFFECTED THOUSANDS OF WHALING SEAMEN.