Finch & Co



FIJIAN SPERM WHALE TOOTH CHIEF'S BREAST PENDANT 'TABUA'

A LARGE FIJIAN SPERM WHALE TOOTH CHIEF'S BREAST PENDANT 'TABUA'
OLD WORN SUSPENSION HOLES FOR SINNET CORD
EARLY 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 19CM WIDE – 7½ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

TABUA WERE OF GREAT CEREMONIAL SIGNIFICANCE ON THE ISLANDS OF FIJI WHERE THEY WERE USED AS IMPORTANT PRESENTATION OBJECTS DURING DYNASTIC EXCHANGES AT LARGE CLAN GATHERINGS HELD FOR WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS. PRIOR TO 1800 WHALE IVORY ARTEFACTS WERE THE MOST VALUABLE FORM OF PROPERTY ON FIJI, BUT AS THE EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN 19TH CENTURY WHALING SHIPS BEGAN TO HUNT AND WORK REGULARLY IN THE SOUTH SEAS THE GREAT SPERM WHALE TEETH BECAME MORE READILY AVAILABLE. TOGETHER WITH IRON, THE TEETH WOULD BE USED AS MERCHANDISE TO BARTER FOR FIJIAN SANDALWOOD AND BÍªCHE DE MER.