

Finch & C^o



GERMAN MEERSCHAUM AND AMBER STEMMED TOBACCO PIPE

AFINE CARVED GERMAN MEERSCHAUM AND AMBER STEMMED TOBACCO PIPE IN THE FORM OF A SKULL RESTING ON THE OUTSTRETCHED PALM OF A CUFFED HAND 'MEMENTO MORI'

CIRCA 1840-60

SIZE: 15.5CM LONG – 6 INS LONG

LITERATURE

THE WORD 'MEERSCHAUM' LITERALLY MEANS 'FOAM OF THE SEA' AND IT IS A WHITE MINERAL COMPOSED OF MAGNESIA, SILICA AND WATER. WHEN FRESHLY MINED IT IS SOFT AND CAN FORM A LATHER-LIKE SOAP. BLOCKS WERE SHIPPED FROM EAST AFRICA AND ASIA MINOR IN THE 19TH CENTURY BEFORE BEING CARVED AND POLISHED BY HAND WITH PUMICE AND FRENCH CHALK. AS A MATERIAL IT VARIES GREATLY IN DENSITY, SOME LUMPS FLOATING AND OTHERS SINKING IN WATER. THAT OF MEDIUM DENSITY FORMS THE BEST PIPE. ITS MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF SOFTNESS, LIGHTNESS, PURITY AND POWER OF ABSORPTION MAKE IT AN ADMIRABLE MATERIAL FOR THE LASTING SMOKING PROPERTIES NEEDED FOR A TOBACCO PIPE.