

Finch & C^o



ANTIQUE SPECIMEN OF AN ARCTIC NARWHAL TUSK 'MONODON MONOCEROS'

A FINE AND LONG ANTIQUE SPECIMEN OF AN ARCTIC NARWHAL TUSK 'MONODON MONOCEROS'

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 230CMLONG – 90½ INS LONG / 244CMLONG – 96 INS LONG (INC. BASE) (8 FEET)

LITERATURE

THE TUSKS OF THE 'UNICORN-WHALE', THE NARWHAL, WERE BEING SOLD FOR SUBSTANTIAL SUMS IN EUROPE LONG BEFORE THE REAL ANIMAL WAS WIDELY KNOWN ABOUT. THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE MYTHICAL UNICORN'S HORN LED TO THE BELIEF THAT THEY WERE POSSESSED OF POTENT AND POWERFUL MAGICAL PROPERTIES; ANY CUP FASHIONED FROM IT WOULD INSTANTLY DETECT AND NEUTRALISE POISON, WHICH WAS VERY USEFUL IF LIKE RUDOLF II OF PRAGUE

YOU SUFFERED FROM PARANOIA. PERHAPS WITH GOOD REASON AS IN 1585 THE DUKE OF ANJOU DIED SUDDENLY AFTER HIS VALET HAD FORGOTTEN TO TEST HIS WINE WITH A UNICORN HORN. THE POISON, IT WAS SAID, HAD BEEN ADMINISTERED BY THE DUKE'S MOTHER, THE LOVELY BUT LETHAL CATHERINE DE MEDICI.