

Finch & C^o



POLYNESIAN FIJIAN SPERM WHALE TOOTH 'TABUA'

A WESTERN POLYNESIAN FIJIAN SPERM WHALE TOOTH 'TABUA', A CHIEF'S BREAST PENDANT OLD STONE DRILLED
SUSPENSION HOLES, ONE DAMAGED AND LATER RE-DRILLED
OLD SMOOTH, SMOKED SILKY PATINA
EARLY 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 15CM WIDE – 6 INS WIDE

LITERATURE

'TABUA' HAVE A PROFOUND CEREMONIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FIJIAN AND WERE HIGHLY IMPORTANT EXCHANGE ITEMS, WHICH WERE OFTEN PRESENTED BY CHIEFS DURING OCCASIONS OF STATE, IN MARRIAGE CEREMONIES OR AT FUNERALS. THE METHODIST MISSIONARY DEAN WROTE IN 1921 THAT 'THE FATES OF MEN, CLANS AND TRIBES HAVE OFTEN DEPENDED UPON THE WAY IN WHICH THE WHALE'S TOOTH HAS BEEN PRESENTED OR RECEIVED.'