Finch & Co



FIJIAN SPERM WHALE TOOTH BREAST PENDANT 'TABUA'

A FINE LARGE FIJIAN SPERM WHALE TOOTH BREAST PENDANT 'TABUA'
OLD SMOOTH SILKY PATINA
19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 18.5CM WIDE – 7¼ INS WIDE
SEE: FINCH & CO CATALOGUE NO. 13, ITEM NO. 81, AND CATALOGUE NO. 18, ITEM NO. 83, FOR OTHER EXAMPLES

LITERATURE

'TABUA' ARE IMPORTANT SYMBOLS OF RANK WORN ON THE BREAST BY MEN AND HAVE A POWERFUL VALUE AS RITUAL EXCHANGE ITEMS. THE METHODIST MISSIONARY DEAN REMARKED 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'.