Finch & Co



FIJIAN CHIEF'S SPLIT WHALE TOOTH NECKLACE

A FINE FIJIAN CHIEF'S SPLIT WHALE TOOTH NECKLACE OF 22 POINTS 'WASEKASEKA' THE WHOLE CLOSELY STRUNG ON LATER COIR CORD

EARLY – MID 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: APPROX: 13.5CM LONG (MAX) 9.5CM LONG (MIN)

5¼ INS LONG (MAX) 3¾ INS LONG (MIN)

LITERATURE

OFTEN DESCRIBED AS 'SABRE TOOTHED' BY EUROPEANS THESE NECKLACES OF LONG SPLIT WHALES TEETH WERE HIGHLY VALUED ITEMS OF CHIEFLY REGALIA ON THE ISLANDS OF FIJI. A REFINEMENT OF THE 1820 – 50 PERIOD THEY WERE ALSO FOUND IN SAMOA. THEY WERE OFTEN MADE BY TONGAN CRAFTSMEN 'TUN FUNGA FONO LEI' WHO SPEACIALISED IN CUTTING, CARVING AND POLISHING THE WHALES TEETH INTO CURVED POINTS IN DECREASING SIZES SO THAT WHEN STRUNG AND DRAWN CLOSE AROUND THE NECK THEIR POINTED EXTREMITIES SPREAD OUT CREATING BOTH A WARLIKE AND DRAMATIC ORNAMENTAL EFFECT.