Finch & Co



ANTIQUE BLONDE CARAPACE OF A GIANT SOUTH AMERICAN AMAZONIAN RIVER TURTLE

A FINE AND UNUSUALLY SMALL ANTIQUE BLONDE CARAPACE OF A GIANT SOUTH AMERICAN AMAZONIAN RIVER TURTLE 'PODOCNEMIS EXPANSA'

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 43CM HIGH, 37CM WIDE - 17 INS HIGH, 14½ INS WIDE

C.I.T.E.S DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT OUTSIDE OF THE UK / EU

LITERATURE

COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE ARRAU RIVER TURTLE OR 'CHARAPA' BY THE AMAZONIAN INDIANS, PODOCNEMIS EXPANSA IS THE MOST ANCIENT TURTLE GENUS EXTANT, OCCURRING FROM THE LATE CRETACEOUS PERIOD ONWARDS IN SOUTH AMERICA. ENTIRELY HERBIVOROUS, MATURE FEMALES HAVE WIDE AND DISTINCTLY FLATTENED SHELLS AND CAN WEIGH UP TO 200LBS.

IN THE MID 19TH CENTURY THE AMERICAN NATURALIST HENRY WALTER BATES ESTIMATED THAT 48 MILLION EGGS WERE GATHERED FROM THE TURTLE NESTS ON THE LARGE EXPOSED SANDBANKS OF THE AMAZON RIVER. THE OIL FROM THE EGGS WAS USED FOR LAMPS, LUBRICATION AND FOR COOKING. THE ADULT TURTLES WERE KILLED IN LARGE NUMBERS FOR FOOD, AND OFTEN TAKEN ON BOARD SHIP BY EUROPEAN SAILORS TO UTILISE AS FRESH MEAT ON THEIR LONG VOYAGE HOME.