

Finch & C^o



SAILORS WORK SLAVERS WHIP A NATURAL 'CAT OF NINE TAILS' FASHIONED FROM THE LONG SPIKED TAIL OF A GIANT ATLANTIC EAGLE RAY

A RARE SAILORS WORK SLAVERS WHIP A NATURAL 'CAT OF NINE TAILS' FASHIONED FROM THE LONG SPIKED TAIL OF A GIANT ATLANTIC EAGLE RAY 'MYLIOBATIS AQUILA'
THE HANDLE CRAFTED FROM KNOTTED HEMP FIBRES WITH A TURKS HEAD TURBAN SAILORS KNOT AND WRIST THONG TO THE TOP
LATE 18TH – EARLY 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 96.5CM LONG - 38 INS LONG

LITERATURE

EAGLE RAYS SWIM IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN FROM BRITAIN TO SENEGAL AS WELL AS THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ADRIATIC SEAS. THEY ARE MORE ACTIVE THAN STINGRAYS FEEDING ON CRUSTACEANS AND MOLLUSCS THEY FORAGE ON THE SEA BED. THEY ARE LARGE GRACEFUL FISH WITH POINTED WING LIKE PECTORAL FINS AND EXTRAORDINARY LONG THIN TAILS. THESE WERE SOMETIMES PUT TO USE BY SAILORS AND MADE INTO AN INSTRUMENT OF PUNISHMENT. DURING THE HORRIFIC TRANSPORTATION OF SLAVES ACROSS THE ATLANTIC THEY WERE OFTEN FORCED TO 'DANCE' ON DECK AS WILLIAM JAMES, THIRD MATE ON THE BRITANNIA IN 1768 REPORTED: 'WHILE THEY ARE UPON DECK IT IS THOUGHT NECESSARY THAT THEY SHOULD TAKE EXERCISE FOR WHICH PURPOSE THE CHIEF MATE AND BOATSWAIN ARE STATIONED WITH A CAT OF NINE TAILS, TO COMPEL THEM TO 'DANCE', AS IT IS CALLED'.