

Finch & C^o



BLOND SHELL OF A SOUTH AMERICAN AMAZONIAN ARRAU RIVER TURTLE 'PODOCNEMIS EXPANSA'

THE BLOND CARAPACE OF AN AMAZONIAN ARRAU RIVER TURTLE 'PODOCNEMIS EXPANSA' WITH TWO BRASS STAR-SHAPED APPLIQUÉS

ONCE USED AS A VICTORIAN FIRE SCREEN

OLD SMOOTH GOLDEN CREAMY PATINA

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 67CM HIGH, 50.5CM WIDE, 5CM DEEP - 26¼ INS HIGH, 20 INS WIDE, 2 INS WIDE

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LITERATURE

KNOWN AS 'CHARAPA' IN BRAZIL THE ARRAU RIVER TURTLE IS THE MOST ANCIENT TURTLE GENUS EXTANT AND WAS ONCE THE MOST WIDESPREAD. IT HAS BEEN KNOWN IN SOUTH AMERICA FROM THE LATE CRETACEOUS PERIOD ONWARDS AND HAS A WIDE DISTRIBUTION EMBRACING THE ENTIRE AMAZONIAN RIVER SYSTEM OF BRAZIL REACHING BOLIVIA VIA THE MADEIRA RIVER, AND COLUMBIA AND PERU VIA THE SOLIMÕES OR UPPER AMAZON. LARGE INDIVIDUALS ARE SOMETIMES WASHED UP IN TRINIDAD WHEN THE ORINOCO IS IN FLOOD.

FIRE SCREENS WERE MADE OF THE CARAPACE BY EUROPEAN SAILORS ON THEIR RETURN VOYAGE FROM THE CAPTURED TURTLES THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN FOR FOOD ON BOARD SHIP. NEARLY EVERY 19TH CENTURY HOUSE HAD A FIRE SCREEN TO SHIELD PEOPLE FROM THE INTENSE HEAT GIVEN OUT WHILST SITTING CLOSE TO THE HEARTH.

PROVENANCE

PRIVATE UK COLLECTION