

Finch & C^o



RARE EARLY FIJIAN SPERM WHALE TOOTH NECKLACE 'VUASAGALE'

A RARE EARLY FIJIAN SPERM WHALE TOOTH NECKLACE 'VUASAGALE' COMPOSED OF TWELVE WHOLE TEETH BOUND TOGETHER WITH SENNIT CORD THROUGH STONE DRILLED HOLES

OLD INVENTORY NUMBER TO ONE TOOTH '0399'

18TH – EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: APPROX: 10.5CMLONG (MAX TOOTH) 27CM WIDE - 4 INS LONG (MAX TOOTH) 10½ INS WIDE

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LITERATURE

WITH THE ADVENT OF COMMERCIAL WHALING IN THE PACIFIC THE PRECIOUS WHALE TEETH SO VALUED BY THE FIJIAN BECAME MORE PLENTIFUL AND THE 'SABRE TOOTHED' LONG SPLIT TEETH NECKLACES BEGAN TO BE MADE BY THE TONGAN CRAFTSMEN 'TUFUNGA FONOLEI' AND WORN IN FIJI, TONGA AND SAMOA. THE EARLIER 'VUASAGALE' NECKLACES MADE FROM THE SMALLER TEETH GATHERED FROM THE JAWS OF STRANDED WHALES BECAME FORGOTTEN IN FAVOUR OF THE MORE ORNAMENTAL AND DRAMATIC ONES.

BOTH TYPES OF NECKLACE FUNCTIONED AS HIGHLY REGARDED OBJECTS MARKING THE STATUS OF HIGH RANKING FIJIAN, BUT THEY WERE WITHOUT THE RITUALISED SPIRITUAL OVERTONES OF THE LARGE CEREMONIAL 'TABUA', AND

SO DID NOT POSSESS THE RESTRICTIONS OF 'TABOO' OBJECTS PLACED UPON THEM

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION OF THE LATE ADELE VAN RIJCKEVORSEL (1921 - 2017) NETHERLANDS