Finch & Co



FINE MARQUESAS ISLANDS BOARS-TUSK / TOOTH EAR PENDANT 'HA'AKAI' WITH THREE TIKI FIGURES

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OLD VERTICAL PIERCED STONE DRILLED HOLE, WORN THROUGH USE

SUPERB COLOUR AND PATINA

BOAR TUSK

MARQUESAS ISLANDS

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 2CM HIGH, 5CM WIDE - ¾ INS HIGH, 2 INS WIDE

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LITERATURE

MARQUESAS CHIEFS AND MEN OF RANK ADORNED THEMSELVES FOR FEASTS AND IMPORTANT CEREMONIES WITH EAR ORNAMENTS IN A VARIETY OF TYPES, FROM LARGE AND IMPOSING, TO SMALL AND DISCRETE. KNOWN AS 'HA'KAKAI' THEY WERE CARVED FROM SPERM WHALE TEETH WITH THE SMALLER EXAMPLES SOMETIMES MADE FROM BOARS TUSKS. ORIGINALLY THE TEETH WERE OBTAINED FROM THE SEASONAL AND OCCASIONAL BEACH STRANDINGS OF THE WHALES, AND WERE REGARDED AS PRECIOUS AND VALUABLE OBJECTS. LATER IN THE EARLY 19TH WITH THE COMING OF THE EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN WHALERS, AND THE SANDALWOOD TRADERS, THE WHALES TEETH BECAME MORE PLENTIFUL AS THEY WERE TRADED BY THE SHIP'S CAPTAINS AND CREW IN EXCHANGE FOR FOOD AND OTHER SUPPLIES. BOTH MEN'S LARGE, AND WOMEN'S SMALL, 'HAKAKAI' WERE CARVED WITH THE ENIGMATIC TIKI FIGURES, HOWEVER THESE ARE NOT RECORDED OR DESCRIBED BEFORE THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY. IT COULD BE SUGGESTED THAT THE EARLIER TYPE OF PENDANT WERE CARVED FROM BOARS TUSK DUE TO THEIR AVAILABILITY. PIGS AND BOARS HAVE BEEN RECORDED AS BEING BROUGHT TO THE ISLANDS AS EARLY AS THE 4TH CENTURY AD.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE LONDON COLLECTION

SEE: FINCH AND CO ITEM NO. 40, CATALOGUE NUMBER 33, WINTER 2019 FOR A LARGER 'HA'AKAI' AND ALSO, POLYNESIA, THE MARK AND CAROLYN BLACKBURN COLLECTION OF POLYNESIAN ART, ENTRY NUMBER 241 FOR A SIMILAR PENDANT OF THE SAME SIZE