



17th- And 18th-century Slave Shackles (atlantic Crossing)



3 800 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Metal

Length : 38 cm

Description

These cast-iron chains date from around the 17th -18th century and were used to shackle enslaved people on the lower decks of ships during the Atlantic crossing from Africa to the Americas. One end of the chain is fitted with a ring, through which a chain was likely threaded to bind several people together. The other end features a roughly carved handle. The surface, marked by pitting and oxidation due to age, displays a rich natural patina. These chains bear witness to the practices of the slave trade that were rampant along the Atlantic Crossing route. The feet of African slaves were bound at each ankle with splints, with a ring inserted at the end to hold the shackles in place. If a slave trader could afford it, he would use a simple, primitive padlock. The Atlantic Crossing was a stage of the triangular trade,

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during which millions of Africans were deported to the New World as part of the Atlantic slave trade. Ships would depart from Europe for African markets loaded with manufactured goods, which were exchanged for Africans who had been purchased or abducted and transported across the Atlantic as slaves. These people were then sold or traded for raw materials, which were shipped back to Europe to complete the journey. The Atlantic crossings represented a considerable financial undertaking, generally organized by companies or groups of investors rather than by individuals. Of the approximately 20 million people torn from their homes and sold into slavery, half never reached the African coast, with most perishing along the way.