Finch & Co



A FINE NEW ZEALAND MAORI NEPHRITE 'HEI TIKI'

A FINE NEW ZEALAND MAORI NEPHRITE 'HEI TIKI'

THE HEAD WITH SOME OLD DAMAGE WORN SMOOTH TO THE SIDE, AND WITH THE LATER ADDITION OF RED SEALING WAX TO THE EYES

AN OLD LABEL TO THE REVERSE READING 'MAORI HEI TIKI, NEW ZEALAND. SEE JOURNAL OF R. ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOC VOL XLVI PLATE XX'

OLD WORN AND SMOOTH SILKY PATINA

18TH – EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 11 CM HIGH, 5 CM WIDE – 4¼ INS HIGH, 2 INS WIDE

LITERATURE

IN 1770 CAPTAIN COOK NOTED : 'THE MEN WEAR A PIECE OF GREEN TALC OR WHALEBONE, WITH THE RESEMBLANCE OF A MAN CARVED ON IT, HANGING TO A STRING ROUND THE NECK'.

HEI TIKI ARE MADE FROM TRANSLUCENT NEPHRITE, THE HARD GREENSTONE OR 'POUNAMU' OF THE MAORI, AND ARE POWERFUL SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF 'MANA', AND THE INTERFUSION OF SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL LIFE.'MANA' WAS ONE MANIFESTATION OF A PSYCHIC FORCE THAT GAVE ITS POSSESSORS POWER, PRESTIGE, AUTHORITY, AND THE ABILITY TO SUCCEED IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE AND EVEN GAVE SOME CONTROL OVER SPIRITUAL BEINGS. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE 'MANA' WAS CONFERRED BY BEING BORN INTO THE RIGHT ANCESTRAL LINE, ALTHOUGH IT HAD TO BE MAINTAINED BY PERSONAL ACTIONS UNDER TAKEN BY THE INDIVIDUAL THROUGHOUT LIFE. 'MANA' WAS A MAJOR PRE-OCCUPATION AND THE MOST CHERISHED POSSESSION OF THE MAORI AND TO DISPLAY A SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF AN ANCESTOR OF HIGH 'MANA' WAS TO PROCLAIM ONE'S OWN OR ONE'S TRIBAL 'MANA'.