Finch & Co



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FINE COLOUR AND PATINA

WOOD

TONGA

LATE 18TH CENTURY

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LITERATURE

FINELY ENGRAVED USING STONE, BIRD BONE OR SHARK’S TOOTH TOOLS THIS CLUB EXPRESSES THE CHARACTERISTICALLY REFINED AND COMPLEX STYLE OF TONGAN DECORATION PRACTISED ON WAR CLUBS IN THE 18TH AND EARLY 19TH CENTURIES. THE NUMEROUS ZOOMORPHIC AND ANTHROPOMORPHIC FIGURES SYMBOLICALLY DISPLAY THE WEAPON’S ‘MANA’ AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A TREASURED POSSESSION.

ON TONGA AND FIJI WAR OCCUPIED THE ENTIRE MALE POPULATION. BOYS WERE TRAINED IN THE WIELDING AND PARRYING OF ARMS FROM INFANCY, ONLY BEING BESTOWED WITH A REAL MAN’S NAME ONCE THEY HAD SLAIN AN ENEMY. MOST FIGHTS BEGAN WITH A SKIRMISH, SHOWERS OF ARROWS, SLUNG STONES AND SPEARS BEING EXCHANGED, BUT CASUALTIES BECAME SERIOUS WHEN OPPOSING PARTIES CAME TO GRIPS WITH CLUBS. EFFECTIVE IN CLOSE COMBAT, CLUBS COULD SHATTER AN ENEMY’S SKULL AND CAUSE IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE TO WHAT TONGANS AND FIJIANS CONSIDERED THE MOST SACRED PART OF THE ANATOMY – THE HEAD.

PROVENANCE

PRIVATELY ENTERED LOT, ENGLISH AUCTION

PURCHASED THROUGH FINCH AND CO, JUNE 2010

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION