

Finch & C^o



RARE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL NEW SOUTH WALES DARLING RIVER REGION NARROW WEDGE SHAPED PARRYING SHIELD

A RARE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL NEW SOUTH WALES DARLING RIVER REGION NARROW WEDGE SHAPED PARRYING SHIELD WITH SOLID CUT HANDLE MADE FOR A YOUNG UNINITIATED BOY

SHINY SMOOTH PATINA

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 50CM LONG, 5CM WIDE, 9.5CM DEEP – 19¾ INS LONG, 2 INS WIDE, 3¾ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

CUT FROM A SINGLE BILLET OF DENSE HARDWOOD, THIS SHIELD WAS MADE AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL TO TEACH YOUNG UNINITIATED BOYS HOW TO PARRY THE FORCEFUL BLOWS OF A CLUB DURING INDIVIDUAL HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT. THESE SHIELDS WERE LEFT PLAIN, AS THEY HAD NO NEED TO STATE OR STRESS THEIR IDENTITY WHILST DEVELOPING THEIR FIGHTING SKILLS IN MOCK BATTLES. THEY WOULD NOT YET BE FAMILIAR, EITHER CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY, WITH ENOUGH OF THE VISUAL GRAMMAR AND DIFFERENT MEANINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INCISED GRAPHIC DESIGNS FOUND ON SHIELDS. ONLY AT THE COMPLETION OF A CERTAIN STAGE IN A BOY'S INITIATION WAS HE GIVEN A LARGER DECORATED SHIELD, AS HE WAS THEN REGARDED AS AN ADULT AND ABLE TO IDENTIFY AND INTERPRET THE MULTIPLE DESIGNS.