Finch & Co



ADZE, 'TO'I'. INSCRIBED IN WHITE SCRIPT 'OTAHEITE'

A FINE ADZE, 'TO'I' . INSCRIBED IN WHITE SCRIPT 'OTAHEITE' FROM TAHITI
LATE 18TH - EARLY 19TH CENTURY
49.5 CM LONG

LITERATURE

HUMPHREY NO. 210 : WITH THESE ADZE THE NATIVES OF THE SOCIETY ISLANDS HOLLOW OUT THEIR CANOES, MAKE PLANKS AND FELL TREES ETC'.
THE BLADE IS MADE OF FINE GRAINED BLACK BASALT FIRMLY BOUND WITH COCONUT FIBRE TO THE HARDWOOD SHAFT AND HANDLE.
TOGETHER WITH SHARKS TEETH AND MUSSEL SHELL KNIVES THESE ADZE WERE AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOLS IN THE SOCIETY ISLANDS, THE SMALLER ONES SUCH AS THIS BEING USED FOR CARVING AND POLISHING.
ONCE CONTACT WITH EUROPEANS WAS ESTABLISHED ON THE ISLANDS THESE ADZE WERE VERY QUICKLY REPALCED WITH IMPORTED METAL AXES AND AS A CONSEQUENCE ADZES SUCH AS THIS HAD ALMOST COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED IN TAHITI BY THE TIME OF COOK'S THIRD VOYAGE.