Finch & Co



A RARE NEW CALEDONIAN HARDWOOD WAR CLUB WITH A NOTCHED MUSHROOM SHAPED HEAD

A RARE NEW CALEDONIAN HARDWOOD WAR CLUB WITH A NOTCHED MUSHROOM SHAPED HEAD AND INDIGENOUS , DISTINCTIVE , EXPANDED FLANGE AT THE BUTT .

LATE 18 TH – EARLY 19 TH CENTURY

SIZE : 72.5 CM LONG , 11.5 CM DIA. (HEAD) – 28½ INS LONG , 4½ INS DIA. (HEAD)

LITERATURE

IN 1774 THIS ISLAND SO REMINDED CAPTAIN COOK OF SCOTLAND THAT HE NAMED IT NEW CALEDONIA . IT IS A STRANGE AND CURIOUS LAND HAVING BROKEN AWAY FROM THE WESTERN TIP OF PREHISTORIC AUSTRALIA . IT IS OUTSTANDINGLY RICH IN UNIQUE SPECIES AND IT'S NATURAL FAUNA IS STILL RULED BY REPTILES , THE SOLE RESIDENT MAMMAL BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF MAN BEING THE FRUIT BAT OR FLYING FOX . IT'S TREES ARE PREHISTORIC REMNANTS OF WHAT ONCE EXISTED 80 MILLION YEARS AGO .

MOST OF THE OBJECTS COOK BROUGHT BACK FROM NEW CALEDONIA THAT EXIST IN THE VOYAGE COLLECTIONS WERE CLUBS . ALL NEW CALEDONIAN WAR CLUBS HAVE A HIGH NATURAL POLISH AND THIS VARNISH LIKE SHEEN WAS ACHIEVED USING SHELLS AND QUARTZ FRAGMENTS TO RUB DOWN THE GRAIN OF THE WOOD , THEN SMOOTHED WITH A PLANT RICH IN SILICIC ACID . LATER 19 TH AND EARLY 20 TH CENTURY CLUBS HAVE A CRUDER AND MORE EASILY MADE FINISH ACHIEVED WITH GLASS SHARDS RATHER THAN WITH SHELLS .