

Finch & C^o



A VERY RARE VANUATU, NEW HEBRIDES, MAN'S LOIN BLOCK

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WOOD, FIBRE, GLASS BEADS AND SHELL DISCS

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 31 CM WIDE, 41 CM LONG – 12¼ INS WIDE, 16¼ INS LONG

CF A SIMILAR EXAMPLE AM3996 JAMES EDGE-PARTINGTON COLLECTION

LITERATURE

FROM ESPRITU SANTO, VANUATU, THESE UNIQUE AND CURIOUS LOIN BLOCKS WERE WORN BY MEN AS A FORM OF COSTUME OVER THEIR LOIN CLOTHS. THE CARVED WOODEN OVOID SHAPE OR BLOCK WAS HELD WITH A STRING AROUND THE WAIST SO THAT IT RESTED HORIZONTALLY AT THE REAR ABOVE THE BUTTOCKS. THE LOOP OF SHELL AND GLASS BEAD ORNAMENTED FIBRE WOULD HANG DOWN AS A BUNDLE OVER THE FRONT OF THE MAN'S PUBIC MAT. IT IS NO LONGER KNOWN WHAT THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF THESE BLOCKS WAS, BUT IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT IT WAS USED AS A SEAT WHEN THE WEARER SAT ON DAMP GROUND.