Finch & Co



TWO PAIRS EAR SPOOLS

A PAIR OF ANCIENT PRE-COLUMBIAN COAST RICAN GREEN JADE EAR DISC SPOOLS
WITH STONE DRILLED HOLES FOR SUSPENSION
CIRCA 100 – 500AD
SIZE: 4.5CM DIA. – 1¾ INS DIA.
A RARE PAIR OF PRE-COLUMBIAN MEXICAN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS AZTEC OBSIDIAN AND CERAMIC EAR DISC SPOOLS
CIRCA 1300 – 1500AD
SIZE: 4.5CM DIA. – 1¾ INS DIA.

LITERATURE

PERSONAL ADORNMENT WAS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ASPECT OF INDIVIDUAL STATUS FOR ALL ANCIENT SOUTH AMERICAN PEOPLES. SPOOLS AND DISCS WORN THROUGH DISTENDED EAR LOBES ADORNED THE EARS OF DIGNITARIES AND WERE MADE FROM VARIOUS MATERIALS FROM THE NOBLEST JADE AND GOLD TO THE MOST MODEST, WOOD. THE QUALITY OF THE CHOSEN MATERIAL DEPENDED ON THE SOCIAL STATUS OF THE PERSON WHO WAS TO WEAR THEM. THE COLOUR GREEN WAS OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE IN ANCIENT MESOAMERICA AND WAS EQUATED WITH THE LIFE GIVING FORCES OF WATER AND VEGETATION, AND THUS GREEN STONES WERE TREASURED, WITH JADE BEING THE MOST VALUED OF SUBSTANCES. JADE WAS CARVED INTO HEADDRESSES, LIP PLUGS, NOSE PINS, NECKLACES, BRACELETS AND ANKLETS AS WELL AS EAR ORNAMENTS, SOME OF WHICH HAVE SURVIVED IN GRAVE CONTEXTS AS PART OF A FUNERARY OFFERING GIVEN TO THE DEAD.

OBSIDIAN IS A NATURALLY OCCURRING VOLCANIC GLASS THAT WAS EXTENSIVELY EMPLOYED IN ANCIENT MESOAMERICA FOR UTILITARIAN PURPOSES AND WAS PUT TO ORNAMENTAL USE IN THE FORM OF PERSONAL JEWELLERY ONLY SPARINGLY IN LATE PRE-CONQUEST TIMES. EAR SPOOLS WERE THE EMBLEMS OF HIGH RANKING MALES AND GENERALLY THE LARGER THE SPOOL THE HIGHER THEIR RANK.