Finch & Co



FIJIAN IRONWOOD THROWING CLUB 'I ULA TAVATAVA'

AN UNUSUAL FIJIAN IRONWOOD THROWING CLUB 'I ULA TAVATAVA' THE HEAD INLAID WITH A LARGE HUMAN TOOTH. THE INITIALS 'W.L.H.' PROBABLY OF A EUROPEAN SAILOR ETCHED INTO THE STEM

SMOOTH SILKY PATINA

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 40CM LONG – 15¾ INS LONG

LITERATURE

THE LARGE KNOTTED HEAD OF THIS THROWING CLUB IS FORMED FROM THE BUTTRESS ROOTS OF A IRONWOOD SAPLING. THE DECORATION OF ZIG-ZAG LINES CARVED ON THE GRIP OF THE HANDLE IS KNOWN AS 'TAVATAVA', HENCE THE WEAPONS NAME, AND ENABLES THE WARRIOR TO GRASP THE CLUB FIRMLY WHEN SWINGING OR THROWING IT. A TALLY OF THE KILLS MADE WITH A CLUB WAS OFTEN KEPT BY MEANS OF NICKS OR NOTCHES ON THE HEAD OR HANDLE, BY BORING SMALL HOLES IN THE SHAFT, OR BY INLAYING A TOOTH FROM THE VICTIM IN THE CLUB'S HEAD.
THE REVEREND THOMAS WILLIAMS WROTE IN 1884 IN HIS BOOK 'FIJI AND THE FIJIANS' Â€¦..'ANOTHER WEAPON MUCH USED IS THE MISSILE CLUB WHICH IS WORN IN THE GIRDLE. SOMETIMES IN PAIRS, LIKE PISTOLSÂ€¦.. THIS IS HURLED WITH GREAT PRECISION AND USED FORMERLY TO BE THE FAVOURITE IMPLEMENT OF ASSASSINATION.'