

Finch & C^o



MELANESIAN SOLOMON ISLANDS NECKLACE OF DOGS TEETH

A MELANESIAN SOLOMON ISLANDS NECKLACE OF DOGS TEETH INTERSPACED WITH BEADS OF COCONUT SHELL A SPIRAL GROUND CLAM SHELL PENDANT TO THE CENTRE

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 46CM LONG – 18 INS LONG

LITERATURE

CLAM AND CONUS SHELLS WERE MADE INTO A WIDE VARIETY OF NECKLACES IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS. THEY COULD BE CUT AND GROUND TO PRODUCE OPEN RINGS OR FLAT DISCS OR PLATELETS AS IN THIS EXAMPLE. DOGS TEETH REPRESENTED CONSIDERABLE WEALTH IN MANY OF THE ISLAND'S CULTURES AND BOTH MEN AND WOMEN WORE THEM.

THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN CURRENCY AND ORNAMENT WAS A FINE ONE AS PEOPLE DISPLAYED THEIR WEALTH DECORATING THEMSELVES WITH 'SHELL MONEY' AND THE TEETH OF DOGS, PORPOISES, CUSCUS AND FRUIT BATS. ALL OF THESE NATURAL MATERIALS WERE MADE INTO JEWELLERY AND ALSO REGARDED AS CURRENCY, AND USED AS PAYMENT, FOR CERTAIN RITUAL TRANSACTIONS, ESPECIALLY BRIDE PRICE.