Finch & Co



POLYNESIA TONGAN IRONWOOD POLE CLUB 'AKAU TAU'

A WESTERN POLYNESIA TONGAN IRONWOOD POLE CLUB 'AKAU TAU' COVERED IN CAREFULLY ZONED ENGRAVING INCORPORATING FOUR ANTHROPOMORPHIC AND ZOOMORPHIC FIGURES

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 92CM LONG – 36¼ INS LONG

LITERATURE

THE MOST NUMEROUS OF ALL TONGAN ARTEFACTS, WAR CLUBS WERE MADE IN A VARIETY OF SHAPES AND EACH ONE PRODUCED WAS A WORK OF ART. DECORATED WITH FINE AND ELABORATE INCISING BY MEANS OF A SHARK'S TOOTH TIED TO A WOODEN HANDLE THE GEOMETRIC DESIGNS SOMETIMES INCORPORATE HUMAN FIGURES, BIRDS, SHARKS AND FISH. AFTER EUROPEAN CONTACT, IRON NAILS WERE USED IN THE SAME WAY MAKING THE INCISED DESIGNS DEEPER AND SHARPER IN THE IRONWOOD. THE MEANINGS OF THE ZONING AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF TONGAN CLUB DESIGNS ARE OBSCURE, BUT ARE PROBABLY CONNECTED TO TATTOO AND BARK-CLOTH DESIGNS THAT IN THEMSELVES WERE METAPHORS FOR CHIEFLY ATTRIBUTES.