

Finch & C^o



AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRAL DESERT BULLROARER

AN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRAL DESERT BULLROARER INCISED ON BOTH SIDES WITH A GEOMETRIC DESIGN AND
PAINTED WITH RED OCHRE

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 87CMLONG, 10.5CMWIDE - 34¼ INS LONG, 4 INS WIDE

LITERATURE

BULLROARERS ARE VERY SIMILAR TO SACRED CHURINGA BOARDS, BUT HAVE A SMALL HOLE DRILLED THROUGH ONE END WHICH ENABLES IT TO BE WHIRLED AROUND BY MEANS OF A STRING TIED THROUGH IT. THIS PRODUCES A LOUD HUMMING SOUND WHICH BY ABORIGINAL WOMEN IS BELIEVED TO BE THE VOICE OF A DANGEROUS SPIRIT.

THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES ATTRIBUTE MAGICAL POWERS TO THEIR SACRED OBJECTS AND THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF THIS IS VERY STRONG, PARTICULARLY ON YOUNG MEN PASSING THROUGH INITIATION CEREMONIES. WHEN A YOUTH LEAVES BOYHOOD BEHIND AND BECOMES A MAN HE MUST UNDERGO, ACCORDING TO THE LOCALITY IN WHICH HE LIVES, SACRED ORDEALS SUCH AS CIRCUMCISION, SUBINCISION OR THE KNOCKING OUT OF SOME OF HIS TEETH. IT IS THEN THE ELDERS OF THE TRIBE WHIRL THE BULLROARERS. THE LOUD MOANING AND HUMMING NOISE THEY MAKE REPRESENTS THE VOICE OF A SPIRIT AND IS A WARNING TO WOMEN AND UNINITIATED YOUTHS THAT A SACRED CEREMONY IS TAKING PLACE AND THAT THEY MUST KEEP AWAY.