

Finch & C^o



CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CHURINGA

A RARE CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CHURINGA OF UNUSUAL FORM DECORATED ON BOTH SIDES WITH INTRICATE TOTEMIC DESIGNS

AN OLD STONE DRILLED HOLE PERMITTING ITS USE AS A 'BULLROARER'

POSSIBLY WARDAMAN PEOPLES

OLD DRY CRUSTY PATINA

EARLY TO MID 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 15CM LONG, 12CM WIDE - 6 INS LONG, ¾ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

CHURINGAS ARE MANUFACTURED WITH GREAT CARE AND PATIENCE AS THEY ARE SACRED OBJECTS REPRESENTING THE ANCESTRAL AND THE INDIVIDUAL SPIRIT OF ITS OWNER. EACH ABORIGINAL TRIBE IS DIVIDED INTO TOTEMS RELATED TO ANIMALS, PLANTS OR OBJECTS, AND THE LEGENDS AND RELATIONSHIP OF EACH TOTEMIC GROUP ARE RECORDED ON THE CHURINGAS. THE HIGHLY CONVENTIONALISED ABSTRACT DESIGNS ARE ENGRAVED ON THEM BY MEANS OF POSSUM TEETH, AND IT IS THESE DESIGNS THAT RECORD THE LEGENDS. THE VARIOUS ENGRAVED SYMBOLS HELP THE TRIBAL ELDER WHO KNOWS THE LEGEND TO RECITE IT CORRECTLY.

SOME CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN WOODEN CHURINGAS HAVE A SMALL HOLE DRILLED THROUGH ONE END, AND IF A STRING IS FASTENED THROUGH IT, THEY CAN BE WHIRLED AROUND ABOVE THE HEAD. THEY PRODUCE A LOUD HUMMING SOUND WHICH WOMEN BELIEVE TO BE THE VOICE OF A DANGEROUS SPIRIT; THEY ARE KNOWN AS 'BULLROARERS'.