Finch & Co



KANAK NEW CALEDONIAN BIRD BEAKED WAR CLUB

A FINE KANAK NEW CALEDONIAN BIRD BEAKED WAR CLUB
SILKY SMOOTH LIGHT BROWN PATINA
19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 70.5CM HIGH - 27¾ INS HIGH / 71CM HIGH - 28 INS HIGH (WITH BASE)

LITERATURE

FINE CLUBS SUCH AS THIS WERE OWNED BY HIGH RANKING MEN. THE WEAPON SIGNIFIED THEIR STATUS AND INDICATED THAT THEY SHOULD BE TREATED WITH RESPECT. WARFARE WAS WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT THE ISLANDS OF MELANESIA UNTIL THE INFLUENCE OF COLONIAL MISSIONARIES AND GOVERNMENTS BROUGHT IT TO AN END SOON AFTER 1840. GUERILLA TACTICS WERE USED RATHER THAN THE BATTLES OF THE FIELD HELD BY THE FIJIANS IN THE PACIFIC. THE NEW CALEDONIANS FAVOURED SURPRISE ATTACK AND DEADLY AMBUSH TO OPEN COMBAT.
TO THE KANAK THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD WERE DEPENDENT ON THE BODIES OF THE DECEASED, AND SO IT WAS CRITICAL TO SECURE THE DEAD AND WOUNDED FROM THE ENEMY AS THE PHYSICAL REMAINS CONTAINED THE POWER TO ATTRACT ANCESTORS TO THE PLACES WHERE THEY WERE KEPT. ANCESTORS WERE HIGHLY IMPORTANT IN SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING THE MINDS OF THE LIVING DURING WARFARE.