Finch & Co



PACIFIC FIJIAN HALF SHELL COCONUT KAVA DRINKING BOWL 'BILO'

A PACIFIC FIJIAN HALF SHELL COCONUT KAVA DRINKING BOWL 'BILO' RETAINING A FINE YAQONA BLOOM AND PATINA TO THE INSIDE

AN OLD INK LABEL ATTACHED 'KAVA BOWL MADE IN FIJI AND USED IN VANIPORO FOR DRINKING KAVA MADE FROM YAQONA ROOT ONLY. PRESENTED BY MR C.L. DAVIS 23.1.28'

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 12.5CM DIA. 4CM HIGH - 5 INS DIA. 1½ INS HIGH

LITERATURE

THE BLOOM ON THIS KAVA BOWL WAS ACHIEVED BY ALLOWING THE YAQONA TO STAND IN THE CUP AND COAT THE SURFACE. THE RESULTING LAYER OR 'KANI' COULD THEN BE SCRAPED OFF AND REUSED TO MAKE A MORE POWERFUL VERSION OF THE DRINK. YAQONA IS MADE FROM THE ROOT AND SOMETIMES THE LOWER STEM OF A SPECIES OF PEPPER BUSH 'PIPER METHYSTICUM' MIXED WITH FRESH WATER. 'BILO' WERE RESERVED FOR DRINKING YAQONA AS WATER WAS POURED DIRECTLY INTO THE MOUTH FROM WATER BOTTLES MADE FROM WHOLE COCONUT SHELLS OR BAMBOO SECTIONS. THE CHIEF'S BILO WAS RESERVED FOR HIS EXCLUSIVE USE AND SOME HABITUAL YAQONA DRINKERS OFTEN ALSO HAD THEIR OWN. DURING THE 19TH CENTURY IN MANY PLACES ON FIJI THE DRINKING OF THE HIGHLY ALCOHOLIC KAVA BY THE CHIEF, HIS HERALD AND SENIOR OFFICIALS, WAS A DAILY MORNING RITUAL.