Finch & Co



RARE OCEANIC SOLOMON ISLANDS MALAITA PROVINCE WARRIOR'S RITUAL BATON OR CEREMONIAL SCEPTRE 'HAU AANO RERO' OR 'WARI-HAU'

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INLAID WITH ANTHROPOMORPHIC DESIGNS IN NAUTILUS SHELL THE BALL TO THE END OF IRON PYRITE CONTAINED WITHIN A WOVEN FERN FIBRE COVERING

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 48CM LONG - 19 INS LONG

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LITERATURE

THESE CURIOUS BATONS WERE FIRST SEEN BY EUROPEANS IN 1568 WHEN THE CREW OF A SPANISH SHIP CAPTAINED BY ALVANO DE MENDANA MISTOOK THE HEAVY PYRITES KNOPS FOR GOLD, TRIGGERING RUMOURS OF GOLD IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS AND MAKING THE CLUBS COLLECTABLE EVER AFTER.

CONSECRATED TO THE ANCESTORS AND KEPT IN THE MEN'S HOUSE THE RITUAL BATONS SYMBOLISED A WARRIOR'S POWER AND WERE WORN SUSPENDED BY A CORD FROM THE BACK OF THE NECK WITH THE STONE SECTION AT THE TOP. MOST IMPORTANTLY THE BATON INDICATED THAT THE WARRIOR HAD SUCCESSFULLY TAKEN HEADS EITHER IN WARFARE OR AS A HIRED ASSASSIN.

PROVENANCE

CF: 'AN ALBUM OF THE WEAPONS, TOOLS….' BY EDGE-PARTINGTON AND HEAPE, MANCHESTER 1898, PLATE 34 NO. 1 FOR A SIMILAR BATON