Finch & Co



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SMOOTH AGED MELLOW PATINA

18TH – EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE 39.5CM LONG - 15½ INS LONG

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LITERATURE

WHALEBONE WAS FAVOURED AS A MATERIAL FOR WAR CLUBS BECAUSE OF ITS STRONG TEXTURE AND THE RICH PATINA IT DEVELOPED THROUGH LONG HANDLING. BEFORE THE EUROPEAN WHALERS CAME TO THE PACIFIC, THE MAORI HAD

NO MEANS OF HUNTING WHALES AND WAITED FOR THEM TO BECOME STRANDED ON THE BEACHES. OCCASIONALLY THEY WOULD USE A SACRED 'MAURI' OR TALISMAN, SUCH AS THE ONE ON TE MAHIA PENINSULA WHICH RESEMBLES A WHALE, TO BRING THE WHALES ASHORE.

A MAORI PROVERB STATES: 'MY STRENGTH COMES NOT FROM ONE SOURCE, BUT FROM THOUSANDS; FROM MY ANCESTORS'. 'TUPUNA' OR ANCESTORS PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN MAORI ART AND CULTURE. THEY INCLUDE ALL FOREBEARS FROM THE FOUNDING ANCESTORS WHO ARRIVED IN CANOES FROM EASTERN POLYNESIA AND GAVE RISE TO THE DIFFERENT MAORI GROUPS THAT EXIST TODAY, TO INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE BORN AND DIED WITHIN LIVING MEMORY. MANY PATU HAVE THEIR OWN NAME THAT RECALLS THE ANCESTORS AND THE EVENTS OF THEIR PAST LIVES.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION OF THE LATE PETER DINELEY

CF: SIMILAR EXAMPLES ARE IN THE MAORI COLLECTIONS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM NO. 716