Finch & Co



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL MINANG PEOPLES SAW KNIFE 'TAAP'

AN UNUSUAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL MINANG PEOPLES SAW KNIFE 'TAAP' THE HARDWOOD INSET WITH POSSUM TEETH A GUM HANDLE WITH ATTACHED FIBRE WRIST THONG

LATE 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 21.5CM LONG, 3.5CM WIDE, 1.5CM DEEP - 8½ INS LONG, 1¼ INS WIDE, ½ INS DEEP

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CF: EDGE PARTINGTON ETHNOLOGICAL ALBUM OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS SERIES III PG. 129, NO. 1 WITH SHARK'S TEETH

MACLEAY MUSEUM, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, TWO SAW KNIVES COLLECTED BY GEORGE MASTERS 1869 WITH

QUARTZ FLAKE BLADES H1081, H1080

LITERATURE

'TAAP' APPEAR TO BE UNIQUE TO THE SOUTHWEST REGION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND WERE MOSTLY COLLECTED AROUND KING GEORGE SOUND. THEY CAN BE FOUND WITH QUARTZ FLAKES, SHARKS' TEETH OR POSSUMS' TEETH BLADES AND WERE USED TO CUT AND SEPARATE THE FLESH OF ANIMALS. MEN OF THIS REGION CARRIED AT LEAST ONE AFFIXING THEM TO A BELT MADE OF POSSUM FUR.

WHEN THE SHIP MERMAID SPENT SEVERAL DAYS AT KING GEORGE SOUND IN DECEMBER 1821 PHILIP PARKER KING AND HIS CREW OBTAINED ONE HUNDRED SPEARS, THIRTY THROWING STICKS, FORTY HAMMERS, A FEW HAND CLUBS, AND ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY 'TAAP' KNIVES. KING RECORDED THAT HAMMERS, SPEARS AND KNIVES WERE OFFERED FOR BARTER WITH THEIR VALUE RANGING FROM HALF TO ONE-EIGHTH OF A SHIP'S BISCUIT.

PROVENANCE

EX COLLECTION MELBOURNE MUSEUM, AUSTRALIA

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