Finch & Co



ABORIGINAL WEST AUSTRALIAN DISTRICT OF VICTORIA PADDLE SHAPED SPEAR THROWER 'MERU'

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AN OLD PAPER LABEL TO THE SHAPED BLADE INSCRIBED 'NATIVES WOMMERA. W. AUSTRALIA. J.B. ROE'

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 57CM HIGH, 11CM WIDE - 22½ INS HIGH, 4¼ INS WIDE / 61CM HIGH - 24 INS HIGH (WITH BASE)

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LITERATURE

SPEAR THROWERS ADD AN EXTRA POINT TO THE ARM AND SO GREATLY INCREASE THE VELOCITY OF THE SPEAR THROWN MAKING THE THROW MORE POWERFUL AND ACCURATE. THIS TYPE OF SPEAR THROWER WAS USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH TWO OR THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF SPEARS AND WAS CALLED A 'MERU'. A SHALLOW HOLE AT THE END OF SPEAR SHAFT ACCOMMODATED THE THROWING PEG OF THE SPEAR THROWER.

THE CONTINUAL NOMADIC EXISTENCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLES RESTRICTED THE WEAPONS AND GOODS THAT COULD BE CARRIED WITH THEM FROM PLACE TO PLACE. SPEAR THROWERS WERE REGARDED AS TOO HEAVY FOR LONG JOURNEYS SO AN INGENIOUS METHOD OF CUTTING THEM FROM THE MULGA TREE 'ACACIA ANEURA' WAS DEVISED. UNFLAKED BOULDERS FROM NEARBY HILLSIDES WERE GATHERED AND THE OUTLINE OF THE SPEAR THROWER CUT FROM THE TREE, THE ENTIRE MANUFACTURE OF THE THROWER TAKING ABOUT THREE HOURS.

(TECHNIQUES DESCRIBED IN DETAIL BY MOUNTFORD PP 312-316 1941 'AN UNRECORDED METHOD OF MANUFACTURING WOODEN IMPLEMENTS WITH SIMPLE STONE TOOLS' TRAUS. ROY. SOC. S.AUST. VOL 65. NO 2 ADELAIDE)

PROVENANCE

EX COLLECTION JAMES BROWN ROE. J.P. (1833 - 1907) SECOND IN COMMAND OF A GOVERNMENT EXPLORATORY EXPEDITION ALONG THE MURCHISON RIVER IN 1858

CF: W.J. MACLEAY COLLECTION (H1100) HAS A VERY SIMILAR EXAMPLE COLLECTED BY GEORGE MASTERS 1869 IN THE MACLEAY MUSEUM UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA