Finch & Co



ANCIENT BRITISH RED SANDSTONE CELTIC HEAD OF A DEITY

AN ANCIENT BRITISH RED SANDSTONE CELTIC HEAD OF A DEITY WITH RECESSED 'SPECTACLED' OVAL EYES TRIANGULAR FLATTENED NOSE AND LONG MOUSTACHE

THE SURFACE WEATHERED

1ST CENTURY BC - 1ST CENTURY AD

SIZE: 28CM HIGH, 23CM WIDE, 17.5CM DEEP - 11 INS HIGH, 9 INS WIDE, 7 INS DEEP

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LITERATURE

MOST PROBABLY PLACED NEAR A SACRED SPRING, RIVER OR WELL IN A SHRINE OR TEMPLE, THIS POWERFULLY CARVED HEAD WITH HIS FLOWING MOUSTACHE SCULPTED OVER A PROTRUDING LOWER LIP SERVED AS A CELTIC DEITY AND WAS USED FOR OFFERINGS. THE CUSTOM OF TAKING HEADS WAS AN ESSENTIAL WAY OF LIFE AND INTEGRAL PART

OF CELTIC RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND PRACTICE UP TO THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF BRITAIN. THEREAFTER, THEY ATTEMPTED TO BAN IT TOGETHER WITH HUMAN SACRIFICE, BUT THE CLASSICAL WRITERS DEMONSTRATE THROUGH THEIR LITERATURE HOW DEEPLY ROOTED IN TRADITION THIS PRACTICE MUST HAVE BEEN. LIVY DESCRIBES HOW A ROMAN CONSUL GENERAL, LUCIUS POSTUMIUS, DIED FIGHTING THE CELTIC GAULS WITH HIS ARMY IN A FOREST. HIS HEAD WAS SEVERED AND TAKEN TO THEIR TEMPLE, THE FLESH REMOVED AND THE SKULL ADORNED WITH GOLD. IT WAS USED AS A SACRED VESSEL FOR LIBATIONS ON HOLY DAYS AND BY THE PRIESTS AS A CEREMONIAL DRINKING GOBLET. THE APOTROPAIC AND PROTECTIVE POWERS OF SUCH SKULLS WENT ON TO BE APPRECIATED AND VALUED LONG AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE ROMAN OCCUPATION OF BOTH ANCIENT GAUL AND BRITAIN.

PROVENANCE

FOUND PRE 2000 BY A METAL DETECTORIST IN A GARDEN IN BARROW CHESHIRE AND GRANTED A LICENSE BY THE LIVERPOOL MUSEUMS SERVICE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME (COPY AVAILABLE)

EX PRIVATE ENGLISH COLLECTION

EX PRIVATE LONDON COLLECTION

CF: A SIMILAR HEAD WITH A MOUSTACHE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE CARTWRIGHT HALL MUSEUM BRADFORD