

Finch & C^o



A VERY FINE FIJIAN STRIATED HARDWOOD POLE CLUB 'BOWAI' WITH A WHALE-TOOTH INLAY TO THE 'BUTT'
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WOOD

FIJI

LATE 18TH - EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 110CMLONG - 43¼ INS LONG

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LITERATURE

A SUPERB CLASSIC 'BOWAI', WHICH WERE NOT USUALLY GIVEN DECORATIVE CARVING AND WERE POPULAR IN FIJI AS TWO HANDED FIGHTING CLUBS. DESIGNED FOR SHATTERING BONE AT CLOSE QUARTERS DURING COMBAT ON THE BATTLEFIELD THESE CLUBS OFTEN INFLICTED VERY HEAVY CASUALTY RATES OF UP TO FIFTY PER CENT. THEY ALSO HAD IMPORTANT 'CEREMONIAL' FUNCTIONS. 'BOWAI' WERE STOOD UP ON THE BUTT IN RELIGIOUS DIVINATION RITES AND WOULD REMAIN STANDING IF THE OMEN WAS GOOD, BUT IF IT WAS BAD, THE CLUB WOULD FALL OVER.

THE FLARED SHAFT, TERMINATING WITH A CONVEX ENDED HEAD. A 'WHALE-TOOTH' TWELVE POINTED 'STAR' DISC INSET INTO THE BASE. THE HAND GRIP ENGRAVED WITH TYPICAL 'ZIG-ZAG' CARVING. SUPERB HONEY COLOURED OLD SILKY SMOOTH PATINA TO THE BEAUTIFULLY 'STRIATED' AND 'STRIPY' SHAFT.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE ENGLISH COLLECTION