

Finch & C^o



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WOOD, FIBRE, SHARK TOOTH

GILBERT ISLANDS, MICRONESIA

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 50.5CMLONG - 19¾ INS LONG AND 52CMLONG - 20½ INS LONG

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LITERATURE

THE GILBERT ISLANDS LIE IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC AND ARE GEOGRAPHICALLY PART OF MICRONESIA. THE ISLANDS HAVE BEEN UNDER CONTINUOUS BRITISH RULE SINCE THE 18TH CENTURY.

BEFORE EUROPEAN INTERFERENCE AND THE ONSLAUGHT OF INTRODUCED DISEASES MICRONESIA WAS HEAVILY POPULATED AND FIGHTING WAS COMMON. ON THE GILBERT ISLANDS COMBAT WAS SO FREQUENT, ELABORATE OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE EQUIPMENT WAS EXTENSIVELY MANUFACTURED.

SHARKS, TEETH WERE A USEFUL SUBSTITUTE FOR THE FLAKINESS OF STONE, AND COCONUT FIBRE CORDAGE, BOTH TWISTED AND PLAIED, WAS EXPERTLY MADE AND USED IN GREAT NUMBERS ON WEAPONS EACH INDIVIDUALLY PIERCED AND SEWN INTO GROOVES ALONG THE SIDES OF DAGGERS AND SPEARS. TO COUNTERACT THE LACERATING EFFECT OF THESE WEAPONS THICK PLAIED COIR ARMOUR WAS DEVELOPED IN THE GILBERTS COMPOSED OF A RIGID CUIRASS WITH HIGH COLLAR AND SEPARATE TROUSER AND SLEEVE SECTIONS. A SPIKY FISH SKIN HELMET COMPLETED THE OUTFIT.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE UK COLLECTION

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