GALERIE MEYER
OCEANIC & ESKIMO ART



Tonga/Fiji Ula Throwing Club

A rare form of throwing-club with the head carved as a series of cut off stalks forming a conical top. The shaft and handle are plain and undecorated. The striking head resembles the top of a pandanus palm tree when all the fronds have been cut off. Most often Tongan and Fijian club forms are based on natural shapes and forms that are imitated with a high degree of stylization and a qualitative level reminiscent of early Japanese wood and root worked objects or Chinese philosopher stones. In the present case this club, used for throwing short distances (and in hand-to-hand combat) is superbly rendered with a remarkably refined simplicity and elegance.

Tonga or Fiji, Polynesia.

Ironwood (casuarina esquitifolia), with a fine patina of wear and age, minor chips of a later period to the shaft on reverse.

48 cm.

XIXth century or earlier.

Literature:

Pub. : CASSE-TÊTE II : ARMES ET ARMEMENTS DE L'OCÉANIE. Exhibition catalogue, Gal. Meyer, Paris, 2022, pages 202-203

See two other examples collected by Edmond de Ginoux de la Coche between 1843 and 1850 in the collection of the Musée des Explorations du Monde, Cannes N° 2008.0.233 & 2013.0.46 ; another in the Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac N° 71.1917.1.103 D, another in the W.O. Oldman collection 614c. PL. 55, and yet another in the collection of Alexandre Bernand illustrated in CHASSEURS et GUERRIERS - Quand l'Art Tribal Envahit le Chateau de Longpra. Serge Le Guennan (ed.), Editions Glenat, Grenoble, 2014, p. 45 which makes 6 recorded examples of the type so far.