



NEW INFORMATION Yahray Headhunters ornament

A very important Headhunter's decoration called *ramog* in the language of the Yahray Tribe of Southern Irian Jaya. It possibly represents a phallus, partly covered with a fringed skirt made of Jobs Tears seeds and is worn hanging on the back of the distinguished warrior. The neck-strap is decorated with several pieces of bamboo. This type of decoration was made by the old men of the tribe and was officially awarded during the *batik-jamé*, a pig feast that followed some successful headhunting raids.

There are four levels of distinction amongst the Yahray headhunters and the *ramog* is the first – awarded to a warrior who had succeeded in killing eight opponents during headhunting raids. The others are the *tok* for at least 12 kills; the *oana* for at least 15 kills; and finally, the ultimate distinction is the *gouwa* awarded to those who possessed the *ramog*, *tok* and *oana*.

Yahray Area (formerly known as the Mappi), Mouth of the Digul River, Southern Irian Jaya, Indonesian New Guinea. Gourd, feathers, seeds, and fiber.

Exhibitions

Asmat Art, Oceanic & Eskimo Art, and Paintings by Eugène Brands. Galerie Meyer - Oceanic & Eskimo Art, TEFAF 2019, N° 19.

Literature:

Pub. : Catalogue of Asmat Art, Oceanic & Eskimo Art, and Paintings by Eugène Brands. Galerie Meyer
- Oceanic & Eskimo Art, TEFAF 2019, p. 19.

I wish to thank Niels Beckers for not only bringing this important information to my attention but for also publishing an in-depth study of these ornaments and the Yahray tribe as well as bring into the limelight the published works of rev. father Jan Boelaars (1915 - 2004) a Dutch missionary.

Ref. : click here for the PDF of the Niels Beckers article on Jan Boelaars and the Yahray :

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