



Tolai Ceremonial War-Club

A very finely decorated palau bubu type war club with flat beveled tip. Shell money (diwarra) bound around the shaft with the cut and ornamented feather-bunches as well as the twin cane loops covered in red cloth and ferns, shows that this weapon has been transformed into an important ceremonial staff which was used during war related ceremonies and bridal rituals. These staffs also called ram were notably used in the kulau dance and for dukduk ceremonies.

Tolai People, Gazelle Peninsula, New Britain, Bismarck Archipelago, PNG, Melanesia. Black palm wood, rattan, tapa, shell (nassa sp.), and feathers. 152,5 cm. 19th century. An old paper label (probably a German tax or customs stamp) with un-decipherable writing in pencil is affixed to the top of the club.

Literature:

See plate 8, in Parkinson (1907) for a palau bubu type club and two decorated staffs.

Ref. :

Lautz, T.: FEDERGELD UND MUSCHELKETTEN. Geldgeschichtlichen Museum der Kreissparkasse, Köln. 1992.

Parkinson, Richard: DREISIG JAHRE IN DER SUDSEE. Verlage von Streder & Schroder, Stuttgart, 1907.

Heermann, Ingrid (ed.) FORM COLOR INSPIRATION, Oceanic Art from New Britain. Arnoldsche, Stuttgart, Linden Museum, Stuttgart, 2001.

Frank Herreman (Ed.) : OCEANIA. RITUAL SIGNS, AUTHORITY SYMBOLS. Fonds Mercator & ING Cultural Centre, Bruxelles, 2008.