



Sepik Headrest "KAMBDI" La Korrigane

An important headrest in the form of a thick neck-bar with a central rib running the full length of the underside. Large heads of Kambdi, a mythological snake are carved at either end. These heads are composites incorporating elements of the snake (the dangerous death adder *acanthophis* spp), the dog and of humans. The protruding tongue is typical of canine representations, the pierced ornate spirals that extend from the eyes to become the ears can also be related to the dog. The two horns that rise from the upper lip represent the snake and the long nose and flaring nostrils are anthropomorphic elements. When the heads are viewed from above the faces definitely have a human feel.

Kamindimbit Village, Middle Sepik, PNG, Melanesia. Wood with bent cane feet and binding. Traces of red, white and black pigments. 58.5 x 10 x 14 x 12 cm. 19/20th century. The Musée de l'Homme deposit inv. N° D.39.3/980 is painted on the underside.

AMBUTUGUT on the inventory card is a close transcription of the latmul word for headrest : nambuteget, nambu being the "head" and teget the "stool". The word mi simply means "tree". It is indicated by a later hand on the inventory card that the Comtesse Monique de Ganay paid one laplap for it (the laplap is a piece of cloth worn like a sarong). Information kindly supplied by Christian Coiffier

Literature:

Published & Exhibited :

Meyer, Anthony JP.: OCEANIC HEADRESTS / APPUIE-NUQUE OCEANIENS. Catalogue d'exposition. Galerie Meyer, Paris. 2004, N° 26, p. 40/41.

A Bord de la KORRIGANE, Carnets de Voyage de Régine van den Broek d'Obrenan aux Nouvelle-Hébrides, aux Iles Salomon, et aux Iles de l'Amirauté (1934 à 1936). Galerie Meyer, Paris, 11-23 Dec. 2014.