



Asmat Carved Dagger

An important and early fighting dagger of exceptional size and craftsmanship. The weapon is decorated with a metamorphosis representing a hybrid praying mantis - crocodile - human being carved in low-relief openwork on the front of the blade. This anthro-zoomorphic representation brings together the three major entities of headhunting. Carved from the femur of a large individual (male in principle) this dagger would have belonged to a man and a warrior of importance – a great headhunter. The head of the femur is decorated with a complex knotted rope sheath and embellished with three tufts of cassowary feathers indicating the taking of at least three heads. Central Asmat region, possibly Yiwa River region, Indonesian New Guinea, Melanesia. Human bone with a superb patina of age and use, bush rope, Job's seeds and cassowary feathers. 37,5 cm. 19th/20th century.