



SEPIK NORTH COAST CEREMONIAL ADZE

An extremely rare and fully carved ceremonial adze supporting three ancestral figures. The flat frontal section is shaped to represent the area where a stone blade would be attached on a working adze. These rare and ornate objects are not well described nor analyzed in the literature. They were probably the property of important men and used in ceremonial and ritual instances. The handle and the sides of front section are beautifully carved with geometric ornamentation.

Lower Sepik and Sepik/Ramu Coastal area between Madang and Aitape, the geometric motifs point possibly to a Tumleo Island origin.

Hard wood with remains of pigment under a thick crusty patina of soot; traces of age and use with minor lacunae.

52,2 cm.

XIX/XXth century

An old white paint inscription on the lower shaft : NEW GUINEA SEPIK RIVER AREA

Literature:

See : Krieger, M., "Neu-Guinea", Berlin, 1899, p.516, fig.54 for the earliest published example, collected at Potsdamhafen (Bogia, Madang Province) on the north coast of New Guinea and described simply as a carved axe handle. Another is illustrated in "Exotische Kunst im Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum", Cologne, 1967, fig.8. One was offered at Lempertz Auction rooms, and another though fragmentary was offered by Voyageurs et Curieux, Paris.