



### **MARO TAPA Coll. J. VIOT 1929**

Exceptional tapa or maro, representing a large mythological fish and a small, stylized, male ancestral figure. These maro or paintings-on-tapa are originally loincloths made and worn around the waist by married women, the painted bark loincloths symbolizing the passage to adulthood in the societies of Lake Sentani.

The bark-based fabric used to make maro probably comes from the inner bark of a mangrove tree. The original motifs, present on the very first maro before the appearance of more figurative drawings featuring aquatic creatures such as fish, turtles or lizards, or references to the art of fishing, are geometric shapes in appearance, although representing water movements (fouw) and other natural phenomena.

The traditional pigments used to paint the bark are mixed with water and plant resin. Black (nokoman) is made from soot or charcoal, deep red (nime-nime or mele) is obtained from red earth. The white pigment (kéléuman) is made from lime obtained by burning coral and shells.

The great fascination exerted by the maro on Western artists in the 1930s can be explained by the close link between Jacques Viot, author and art dealer, and the surrealist artistic circle. Viot admits to having commissioned a number of maro from the artists of the Tobati village and he reportedly sent 50 painted maro to Galerie Pierre (Pierre Loeb) in 1929.

This example is one of the 50 sent to Galerie Pierre by Viot.

Probably commissioned by Viot in Tobati village, in Humboldt Bay. Laks Sentani/ Teluk Yos Sudarso (Humboldt Bay) Irian Jaya, Indonesian New Guinea.

Tapa (inner bark of mangrove tree ?) and traditional pigments.

67 x 81 cm

Alfred Richet (1893-1992), Neuilly, France. A major collector of paintings, Richet also was one of the early collectors of « Art nègre » (Negro Art). Among his friends were other important collectors and dealers of time such as André Level, René Mendes-France, André Lefèvre and of course Pierre Loeb. Around 1922 he became affiliated with Level's newly opened Galerie Percier, for which he worked as an administrator. André Lefèvre the president director of the gallery had a profound impact on Richet's approach to collecting. In the course of the 1920s, Richet also met the dealers Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Léonce Rosenberg and Leopold Zborowski, becoming a repeat customer. Richet also established lasting friendships with the artists whose art he championed and collected, including Picasso and Georges Braque. He is known to have bought objects of the collection of Georges de Miré in 1931. After the World War II, he became Vice-president of Société des Amis du Musée de l'Homme. The Alfred Richet collection of 20th Century Paintings, Drawings & Sculpture, was offered at Sotheby's-London on November 29, 1994. The tribal art collection was offered by Ribeyre-Baron, Paris, on 19 May 1995 and this Maro was the catalogue cover illustration.

André Amédée Nicolas Lefèvre (1883-1963), Paris

André Lefèvre was a successful financier and stockbroker who retired in 1927 at the age of forty-four in order to fully devote himself to collecting art and books. His collection was especially strong in Cubism, but he also collected art from Africa and the Pacific Islands. Lefèvre was advised in his collecting by the owner of Galerie Percier, André Level. He was also friends with Alfred Richet, businessman and another prominent French collector of modern & tribal art who would later serve as executor of Lefèvre's will. He owned works by Georges Braque, Fernand Léger, Pablo Picasso and Juan Gris. His tribal collection was offered as « Collection André Lefèvre, art nègre, Afrique, Océanie, divers » on Monday 13 December 1965, at Hôtel Drouot, Paris with Etienne Ader & Jacques Ribault-Menetièrre as auctioneers and Jean Roudillon as expert.

### **Exhibitions**

Exhibitions :

Tapas de Nouvelle-Guinée hollandaise. Musée du Trocadéro, Paris, 30 mars - 23 avril 1933 (sans catalogue).

Possibly Oceanic Art : Polynesia – Melanesia, Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York, 29 octobre – 17 novembre 1934, organisé par Charles Ratton

### **Literature:**

Publications :

Duchartre, Pierre-Louis : LES MOROS DE TOBATI ET DE LA NOUVELLE-GUINÉE in ART et DECORATION, Septembre ( ?) 1933, fig. A.

Etude Ribeyre et Baron, 19 mai 1995, Drouot Richelieu. Expert Jean Roudillon. Number 34 and

catalogue cover.

Meyer, Anthony JP: OCEANIC ART / OZEANISCHE KUNST / ART OCEANIEN. Könemann Verlag, Köln. 1995, p.73, fig. 52

Ref. :

Hoogerbrugge Jac : Maro Paintings of Lake Sentani and Humboldt Bay /. in Art of Northwest New Guinea : From Geelvink Bay, Humboldt Bay, and Lake Sentani Rizzoli, New York, 1992

Hoogerbrugge, Jac : Note on the art of barkcloth Painting in the Jayapura Area, Irian Jaya, Indonesia in Smidt and all, Pacific Material Culture, Medelingen van het Rijksmuseum voor Voollkenkunde, Leyden,1995.

Peltier , Philippe : Jacques Viot, the Maro of Tobati, and Modern Painting: Paris-New Guinea: 1925-1935 in Art of Northwest New Guinea : From Geelvink Bay, Humboldt Bay, and Lake Sentani Rizzoli, New York, 1992

Peltier , Philippe : Paris-Nouvelle-Guinée : 1925-1935. Jacques Viot, les Maro de Tobati et la peinture moderne in Gradhiva, 1990, N°8, pp. 38-65

Peltier, Philippe : L'art océanien entre les deux guerres : expositions et vision occidentale in Journal de la Société des Océanistes, Année 1979, N° 65, pp. 271-282

Ratton, Charles in Paris Arts et Metiers Graphiques 1933 Numéro 33, mai 1933.

Collection André Lefèvre, art nègre, Afrique, Océanie, divers : vente, le lundi 13 décembre 1965, à 14h15, salle n°10 / Hôtel Drouot, Paris / Me Etienne Ader, Me Jacques Ribault-Menetière, commissaires-priseurs ; assisté de M. Jean Roudillon, expert.