



Prestige Staff Solomon Islands

A superbly carved figural prestige staff. An object of this caliber can only have belonged to a highly important person representing his status and degree of wealth and rank. The figure with its large head, supporting a spherical ornament is shown in a seated position of power on a stylized stool. The facial features are well defined in an exaggerated manner, and the wide flaring ears are set to the rear of the median line. The face, neck, torso and waist are extensively inlaid with ornamental sections of dentate pear shell, and discs set into black puttynut, a natural vegetal cement. The shaft is cylindrical and ends with a flat tip.

Makira (San Cristobal) Island, Solomon Islands, Melanesia. Wood, nautilus shell, and puttynut (parinariu) with a fine patina of age and wear. 89,5 cm. 19th/20th century.

Literature:

We can relate the carving style of this prestigious object to that of lime sticks in the Hooper collection and to another in the Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa museum, Rotorua.