



Sepik Drum Sankt Augustin

A large, and very powerfully carved hand drum or kundu. The handle represents a strongly carved crocodile with the body serving as the grip. The lower section of the waisted drum forming the resonance chamber is decorated with imbricated circles each decorated with lines of incised dots, along with filling motifs of chevrons. The arched tail of the crocodile morphs into the beak of the hornbill and becomes the powerful nose, with wide nostrils, of a low relief ancestral face carved on the lower body of the drum.

latmul language group, Middle Sepik, PNG, Melanesia.

Hard wood (*vitex cofasus*) with traces of pigment and a fine, dry patina of age and use.

81 cm.

19th/20th century or earlier.

Literature:

The Society of the Divine Word, an order of priests and Brothers devoted to preaching the Gospel in foreign lands, was founded in Steyl, Holland, in 1875 by Father Arnold Janssen, a young German Catholic priest. The SVD Mission in colonial German New Guinea was founded on Tumleo Island, between Wewak and Aitape, in 1886 by Fr Eberhard Limbrock, together with Fr Joseph Erdweg, Fr Franz Vormann and three Brothers. By 1900 another SVD mission station was established at Bogia, near Madang. SVD missions were subsequently established along the North Coast and advanced up the Sepik and Ramu Rivers, leading to exploration and expansion into the New Guinea Highlands. The mission in Sankt Augustin inventoried and catalogued all their holdings accumulated over the previous decades and centralized in Sankt Augustine by their missionaries in 1970/71 thus the inventory number beginning with 71.