

Finch & C^o



A RARE PAPUA NEW GUINEA , MILNE BAY PROVINCE , TROBRIAND ISLANDS CANOE PROW ORNAMENT

A RARE PAPUA NEW GUINEA , MILNE BAY PROVINCE , TROBRIAND ISLANDS CANOE PROW ORNAMENT CARVED WITH THE HEAD OF A FRIGATE BIRD . CARVED , PAINTED AND LIMED WOOD

WITH OLD LABEL STATING : 'PROW BOAT HEAD - TROBRIAND OR KIRIWINA ISLANDS - (PAPUA NEW GUINEA)'

19 TH CENTURY

SIZE : 46 CMLONG – 18 INS LONG

LITERATURE

THE ARCHIPELAGO OF ISLANDS THAT LIE OFF THE EASTERN END OF NEW GUINEA ARE GENERALLY KNOWN AS 'MASSIM' AND THE ART FROM THIS AREA IS CHARACTERISED BY ITS DETAILED AND COMPLEX SCROLL DESIGNS CARVED IN LOW RELIEF INCORPORATING THE HEADS OF FRIGATE BIRDS .

THE 'KULA' OR SAILING DUGOUT CANOE IS PROBABLY THEIR GREATEST ARTWORK AND IS THE PRESERVE OF MEN TRAINED AS CARVERS WITHIN A MASTER / APPRENTICE SYSTEM . BOTH CARVING SKILLS AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF MAGIC RELATING TO THE CARVINGS ARE PASSED ON WITHIN THIS SYSTEM .

THE MASSIM PEOPLE ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR MARITIME SKILLS AND OFTEN UNDERTAKE LONG CANOE TRIPS ACROSS THE OPEN SEAS TO TRADE WITH THE OTHER ISLANDS . THE FRIGATE IS REVERED BY THEM AS IT IS A BIRD OF GREAT STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE , AND ITS TOTEMIC IMPORTANCE IS EVER PRESENT IN THE ART OF THE CARVED PROW CARRIED WITH THEM ON THEIR ARDUOUS SEA VOYAGES .