Finch & Co



TEKE, REPUBLIC OF CONGO, ANCESTOR FIGURE

TEKE, REPUBLIC OF CONGO , ANCESTOR FIGURE 19TH CENTURY
COLLECTED BY THE REVEREND GRENFELL IN 1884 ON HIS EXPEDITION UP THE CONGO RIVER. WITH OLD LABEL READING 'CONGO IDOL'
34 CM HIGH

LITERATURE

AS A BAPTIST MISSIONARY MINISTER GEORGE GRENFELL LED AN EXPEDITION UP THE CONGO RIVER IN HIS MISSION STEAMER 'THE PEACE'. HE LIVED IN THE CONGO BETWEEN 1875 AND 1906 AS A MISSIONARY AND COLLECTING ARTEFACTS AND MAKING DETAILED NOTES ON THE PEOPLE, LANDSCAPES, GEOLOGY, CLIMATE AND ANIMALS OF THE CONGO. HIS CARTOGRAPHICAL WORK ENABLED THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY TO PUBLISH THE FIRST DETAILED MAP OF THE CONGO IN SECTIONS IN 1902 (SEE FINCH & CO CATALOGUE NUMBER ONE FOR ONE OF GRENFELLS MAPS). MANY TRIBAL ARTEFACTS WERE BROUGHT BACK BY HIM TO THE BRISTOL BAPTIST COLLEGE MUSEUM INCLUDING THIS TEKE FIGURE.

THE TEKE ARE FARMERS AND HUNTERS AND LIVE ON THE LEFT BANK OF THE RIVER IN AN AREA OF PLATEAUX COVERED BY SAVANNA IN VILLAGES GROUPED UNDER A DISTRICT CHIEF. THEIR SYSTEM OF BELIEF IS BASED ON AN INVISIBLE WORLD RULED OVER BY ONE GOD, NZIAM, THE CREATOR. THEY BELIEVE IN REINCARNATION AND THAT THEIR GOD HAS SPIRITS WHO ARE REPRESENTED IN THE FORCES OF NATURE, AND THESE SPIRITS ARE GIVEN SUPPLICATIONS AND RECEIVE PRAYERS.

SCULPTURES SUCH AS THIS FIGURE ARE ATTACHED TO CONTAINERS WITH RELICS OR FETISHES IN THEM AND THEY ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEAD ANCESTOR. WHEN PRAYED TO AND GIVEN SUPPLICATION THE SPIRIT OF THE ANCESTOR BECOMES THE INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN GOD (NZIAM) AND HIS PEOPLE, THE TEKE.