Finch & Co



**ELEMA PEOPLE, GULF OF PAPUA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA ARMBAND**

ELEMA PEOPLE, GULF OF PAPUA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA CLAM SHELL ARM BAND DECORATED WITH GLASS BEADS, AND CUT SHELL DISCS TIED WITH BRAIDED FIBRE

19TH CENTURY

SIZE : 10 CM DIA. X 5 CM WIDE

4 INS DIA. X 2 INS WIDE

**LITERATURE**

THE ELEMA ASSESSED THEIR MOST VALUABLE SHELL ORNAMENTS; CLAM SHELL ARMLETS AND CRESCENT PEARL SHELLS ACCORDING TO THEIR SIZE AND FINISH. THEY WERE OFTEN EXCHANGED AS CURRENCY, AS WELL AS BEING USED AS BODY DECORATION BY MEN. THEY WOULD BE WORN ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS AS A SIGN OF WEALTH, AND WERE SOMETIMES GIVEN TO CEMENT RELATIONSHIPS. WHEN THEY GAVE THEM THEY WOULD CEREMONIALLY HANG THEM FROM A POLE. EXCHANGES WERE THE HIGH POINT OF ALL FESTIVALS WHEN THESE ARMBANDS AS WELL AS STRINGS OF OVERLAPPING SHELL DISCS AND DOGS TEETH WERE EXCHANGED, OFTEN FOR PIGS.