Finch & Co



PAPUA NEW GUINEA SEPIK REGION WOSERA-ABELAM PEOPLES CEREMONIAL DIGGING STICK

A PAPUA NEW GUINEA SEPIK REGION WOSERA-ABELAM PEOPLES CEREMONIAL DIGGING STICK
CARVED IN THE FORM OF A BIRD
TRACES OF RED AND BLACK PIGMENT
19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY
SIZE: 46CM HIGH – 18 INS HIGH

LITERATURE

THIS CEREMONIAL DIGGING STICK WAS USED FOR PLANTING THE FIRST YAM TUBERS OF THE SEASON. YAM, SAGO AND COCONUT IN VARIOUS FORMS CONSTITUTE THE BASIS OF THE DIET OF THE WOSERA-ABELAM. INTENSE COMPETITION CENTRES ON OBTAINING YAM TUBERS THAT ARE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. AT HARVEST TIME DURING SPECIAL RITUALS THESE TUBERS ARE DISPLAYED DECORATED WITH SCULPTED FACES, FEATHERED BASKETRY, SEA AND SNAIL SHELLS AND BRIGHTLY COLOURED FRUIT, AND ARE CONSIDERED IMAGES OF CLAN ANCESTORS AND OF THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY. THE SPECIAL PLANTATIONS WHERE THE YAMS GROW CAN ONLY BE WORKED BY EXPERIENCED AND INITIATED MEN WHO MUST OBEY STRICT RULES OF CONDUCT, SUCH AS SEXUAL ABSTINENCE AND TABOOS RELATING TO PARTICULAR FOOD AND DRINK. THESE RULES ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE APPLIED TO IMPORTANT MALE PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS.