Finch & Co



WEST AFRICAN NIGERIAN YORUBA CARVED IVORY DIVINATION TAPPER AND RATTLE 'IROKE IFA'

A WEST AFRICAN NIGERIAN YORUBA CARVED IVORY DIVINATION TAPPER AND RATTLE 'IROKE IFA'
AGED SMOOTH SILKY PATINA, THE TIP WORN FROM USE
MID 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 24CM LONG – 9½ INS LONG

LITERATURE

THE LITTLE IVORY CLAPPERS SET IN THE END OF THIS TAPPER ARE RATTLED TO INVOKE THE SPIRITS, THEN THE DIVINER TAKES THE HEAVY END AND GENTLY STRIKES THE DIVINING BOARD WITH THE POINTED END MURMURING PRAYERS AND CHANTS INVITING THE SPIRITS AND THE GOD ESHU TO BE PRESENT AND HEAR THE PRAYERS.
IFA WAS A SPIRIT OFTEN IDENTIFIED WITH A DEITY CALLED 'ORUNMILA' MEANING 'HEAVEN KNOWS SALVATION' AND IT IS HE WHO DIRECTED CREATION UNDER ORDERS FROM GOD. HE WAS BELIEVED TO BE A GREAT LINGUIST KNOWING ALL THE TONGUES OF EARTH AND HEAVEN AND WAS ABLE TO ADVISE MEN OF EVERY NATION MEDIATING AND INTERCEDING WITH THE GODS ON THEIR BEHALF. THE DIVINATION IS PERFORMED BY CASTING SACRED PALM NUTS IN A COMBINATION OF FOUR AND SIXTEEN AND MARKING A PATTERN ON THE DIVINING BOARD, WHICH IS THEN READ BY THE PRIEST.