

# Finch & C<sup>o</sup>



## **WEST AFRICAN NIGERIA YORUBA CARVED IVORY IFA TAPPER FLUTE AND RATTLE**

A WEST AFRICAN NIGERIA YORUBA CARVED IVORY IFA TAPPER FLUTE AND RATTLE  
THE TOP SURMOUNTED WITH A KNEELING WOMAN WHO IS HOLDING HER HANDS TO HER BREASTS  
AGED DARK CRUSTY PATINA WORN SMOOTH IN PLACES  
EARLY 19TH CENTURY  
SIZE: 32CMLONG – 12½ INS LONG

## **LITERATURE**

THE EYELETS ON THIS DIVINATION RATTLE; TAPPER AND FLUTE WOULD HAVE HELD SMALL IVORY RATTLES, WHICH HAD A ROLE IN BRIDGING THE REALMS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. IFA RITUAL INSTRUMENTS FREQUENTLY FEATURE A SCULPTED IMAGE OF A WOMAN IN AN ATTITUDE OF REVERENCE AND THESE ARE BELIEVED TO ACT AS INTERMEDIARIES WITH THE GODS AS WOMEN ARE REGARDED AS BEING THE RECEPTACLES OF THE LIFE FORCE. THESE REPRESENTATIONS OF NUDE FEMALE FIGURES IN A KNEELING POSITION ARE THOUGHT OF AS WOMEN PRAYING AND ACT AS A VISUAL METAPHOR FOR ALL DEVOTEES WHO SEEK THE DEITY ORUNMILA'S WISDOM IN CLARIFYING THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR PERSONAL DESTINIES. THE KNEELING POSITION IS ALSO ASSOCIATED WITH CHILDBIRTH AND THE PROCREATIVE POWER OF WOMEN UPON WHICH ALL HUMAN LIFE DEPENDS.