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AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO PENDE PEOPLES RITUAL DANCE STAFF

A CENTRAL AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO PENDE PEOPLES RITUAL DANCE STAFF INSCRIBED IN INK TO THE SHAFT: 'AU R.P. DUBOIS EN SOUVENIR DE JEAN MARIE PERIN LOUVETEAU 1952 – 1953 LEOPOLDVILLE':
(A GIFT FROM THE CUB-SCOUTS TO PRIEST DUBOIS)
EARLY TO MID 20TH CENTURY
SIZE: 21CM HIGH – 8¼ INS HIGH

LITERATURE

THE STRONGLY CHISELLED FEATURES AND STRIKING RED AND BLACK POLYCHROMY OF THE MINIATURE MASK CARVED ON THIS DANCE STAFF ARE DISTINCTIVE OF THE PENDE. THESE WOULD HAVE ASSURED ITS POWERFUL VISUAL EFFECT WHEN CARRIED IN THE HAND BY A LEADING DANCER DURING BOTH MASQUERADES AND UNMASKED DANCES. THE HAIRSTYLE DERIVES FROM THAT OF EARLIER TIMES IN WHICH THE HAIR WAS MIXED WITH CLAY AND OIL AND THEN BRAIDED WITH RAFFIA, COWRY SHELLS, NAIL HEADS AND BEADS. MISSIONARIES CONDEMNED THE WEARING OF THESE ELABORATE HEADDRESSES, BUT IN THE EARLY 1930'S A REVIVAL OF THE HAIRSTYLE IN A MORE RESTRAINED FORM TOOK PLACE AS PROTEST AGAINST 'WHITE RULE'.