

Finch & C^o



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A PAPUA NEW GUINEA TROBRIAND ISLANDS MASSIM CARVED EBONY LIME SPATULA 'KENA' WITH HUMAN FIGURAL FINIAL
DECORATED WITH INTERLOCKING SCROLLS THE SHAFT CARVED WITH SYMBOLIC MOTIFS REPRESENTATIVE OF BIRDS
HUMANS AND THE SEA

OLD SMOOTH SILKY PATINA

OLD CHIP TO THE TIP

EARLY 20TH CENTURY

SIZE: 57.5CM LONG - 22½ INS LONG / 60CM HIGH - 23½ INS HIGH (WITH BASE)

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LITERATURE

THE TERM 'MASSIM' IS THOUGHT TO BE A CORRUPTION OF 'MISIMA' THE NAME OF AN ISLAND IN THE LOUISIADÉ ARCHIPELAGO. AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY WESTERN CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY STATIONS WERE ESTABLISHED IN THE AREA WHEN THE POPULATION NUMBERED AROUND 38,000. ALTHOUGH TOBACCO IS GROWN LOCALLY, IT IS THE BETEL NUT, THE SEED OF THE ARECA PALM WHICH IS MOST USED AS A STIMULANT. PEOPLE WITH GOOD TEETH CRUSH THE NUT IN THEIR MOUTHS WHILST THE OLDER GENERATION USE A MORTAR AND PESTLE. THE LEAF OR FRUIT OF THE BETEL PLANT, AND A LITTLE LIME TAKEN FROM A POT WITH THE AID OF A LIME SPATULA, IS ADDED TO THE CRUSHED AND CHEWED STIMULATING NUT. THE LIME IS PRODUCED BY BURNING CORAL WHICH IS THEN POWDERED AND PUT INTO BOWLS, OFTEN MADE OF COCONUT. THE MASSIM DO NOT PRACTICE ANCESTOR WORSHIP, BUT IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE HUMAN FIGURES CARVED TO THE TOP OF THE SPATULA REPRESENT SPIRITS THAT WILL PROVIDE PROTECTION TO THEIR OWNER.

PROVENANCE

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