

SA1212807

Antique African Ceremonial Axe | 19thC Royal Dahomey Messenger Récade

Price

GBP 450

| USD \$609 | EUR 527

Item Reference: SA1212807

Date of manufacture: 19th Century

Dimensions

Height = 50 cm (19.7")

Width = 18.5 cm (7.3")

Depth = 4.5 cm (1.8")

Description

Here we have an antique 19th century ceremonial axe, known as a récade, originating from the Kingdom of Dahomey (present-day Benin, West Africa). These objects were carried by royal messengers and officials as symbols of the king's power and authority. The récade, sometimes referred to as a royal messenger's staff, would often feature a carved or cast metal head in the form of an axe, representing both strength and divine sanction. Such pieces were central to Dahomean court culture, serving not as weapons but as emblems of rank, diplomacy, and ceremony. The design of this example reflects the traditional blend of authority and artistry, characteristic of the Amazons and court of King Ghezo and King Glélé in the 19th century. Each récade carried distinct motifs or symbols that communicated the king's message and lineage. These objects hold deep historic and cultural importance, representing the artistry and hierarchical structure of one of West Africa's most powerful pre-colonial kingdoms. Today, they are rare survivors of Dahomey's royal court traditions, with many known examples held in major museum collections. A significant and evocative piece of African royal ...

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