



PROANTIC

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Copper Axe From The Songye/tetela Tribe Of The Congo--africa--early 20th Century



500 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Copper

Length : 32 cm

Width : 17 cm

Description

A rare, prestigious axe attributed to the Songye or Tetela peoples of the southeastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Crafted from hammered copper, this piece illustrates the symbolic and economic importance of this metal, long associated with power, wealth, and prestige in Central African societies. The blade, with an elegantly flared semicircular shape, is forged from two separate pieces, with the handle and blade made separately. Its balanced profile and harmonious proportions suggest a primarily ceremonial rather than utilitarian function. The surface features a beautiful antique patina with shades of brown and verdigris, attesting to its age and authenticity. The handle is entirely decorated with repoussé and punched motifs. The axe head is adorned with two large circular motifs.

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surrounded by fine geometric dots, while the cylindrical handle is covered with regular bands of dotted decoration. This rich ornamentation underscores the high status of its owner and the prestigious nature of the object. Among the Songye and neighboring groups, copper objects played an important role in prestige exchanges, ceremonies, marriage alliances, and the assertion of social status. Such axes were often symbols of power or insignia of authority held by notables and chiefs.