

Finch & C°



A VERY RARE SWAZI , SOUTH AFRICA , ANTHROPOMORPHIC CARVED WOOD HEADREST

A VERY RARE SWAZI , SOUTH AFRICA , ANTHROPOMORPHIC CARVED WOOD HEADREST . OLD DRY PATINA
19 TH CENTURY

SIZE : 18 CM HIGH , 57 CM LONG – 7 INS HIGH , 22½ INS LONG

ANTHROPOMORPHIC HEADRESTS ARE VERY RARE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA . ALTHOUGH THE SWAZI SHARED MANY CULTURAL PATTERNS WITH THE ZULU THE SCORED DOWNWARD FOLDS OF THE LEGS IS TYPICAL OF SWAZI DESIGN AND THEY MAY DELIBERATELY REPLICATE THE SMALL PLEATS OF A MARRIED SWAZI WOMAN'S LEATHER SKIRT . POKER WORK TONALLY DIFFERENTIATES THE FORM AND THE SURFACE OF THE HEADREST AND IS A CHARACTERISTIC OF SOUTH AFRICAN ART . IT WAS A CUSTOM OF NEWLY MARRIED SWAZI BRIDES TO COMMISSION A PAIR OF HEADRESTS , ONE FOR THEMSELVES AND ONE FOR THEIR HUSBANDS . PERHAPS THIS HEADREST WAS MADE FOR A BRIDEGROOM .

LITERATURE

AN EXAMPLE OF AN ANTHROPOMORPHIC SWAZI HEADREST IS ILLUSTRATED IN 'UBUNTU' PARIS 2002 : PAGE ; 262 NO. 84 .