Finch & Co



AN UNUSUAL SOUTH AFRICAN TSONGA WOOD HEADREST

AN UNUSUAL SOUTH AFRICAN TSONGA WOOD HEADREST OF ARCHITECTURAL FORM
FINE OLD GLOSSY PATINA
LATE 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 16 CM HIGH, 19 CM WIDE, 6.5 CM DEEP – 6¼ INS HIGH, 7½ INS WIDE, 2½ INS DEEP
SEE FINCH AND CO CATALOGUE NO. 8, ITEM NO. 42, CATALOGUE NO. 7, ITEM NO. 28, AND CATALOGUE NO. 3, ITEM NO. 67 FOR OTHER EXAMPLES

LITERATURE

THE TSONGA CARVERS LIVED IN AN AREA THAT INCLUDES SOUTH EASTERN ZIMBABWE, SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE AND THE NORTH EASTERN TRANSVAAL SO A CORRECT REGIONAL ATTRIBUTION IS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE, ESPECIALLY FOR A WORK WITH SUCH AN INTERESTING COMBINATION OF GEOMETRIC FORMS.
HEADRESTS WERE NECESSARY FOR THE PROTECTION OF AN ORNATE HAIRSTYLE WHILST ASLEEP, AND OVER TIME THESE UTILITARIAN OBJECTS WOULD BECOME ASSOCIATED WITH THE SPIRITUAL IDENTITY OF THEIR MALE OWNER. SOMETIMES THEY WERE BURIED WITH THEIR OWNER, BUT MORE OFTEN THEY WOULD BE KEPT AS AN INSTRUMENT OF MEDIATION ALLOWING SUPERNATURAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE WORLD OF THE ANCESTORS.