

Finch & C^o



A FINE SOUTH AFRICAN SHONA/TSONGA HEADREST

A FINE SOUTH AFRICAN SHONA/TSONGA HEADREST
DARK GLOSSY PATINA WITH PATCHES OF ENCRUSTATION
19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 12CM HIGH, 15CM WIDE, 6.5CM DEEP – 4¾ INS HIGH, 6 INS WIDE, 2½ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

HEADRESTS WERE UTILITARIAN OBJECTS MADE BY MEN, NECESSARY FOR THE PROTECTION OF THEIR ORNATE HAIR STYLES WHILST ASLEEP. HOWEVER OVER TIME THEY WOULD BECOME IMBUED WITH THE SPIRIT OF THEIR OWNER, BEING POLISHED BY HIS BODY AND HAIR, AND WERE OFTEN REGARDED AS SO MUCH A PART OF HIM THAT UPON HIS DEATH THE HEADREST WOULD BE BURIED WITH HIM.

SOMETIMES THOUGH THE FAMILY OF THE DECEASED WOULD KEEP THE WOODEN PILLOW AS A WAY OF ESTABLISHING A BOND BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR ANCESTORS. WHILST SLEEPING ON 'THE SUPPORT OF DREAMS' VISIONS WOULD UNITE THE SPIRIT OF THE DECEASED WITH HIS LIVING ANCESTOR.