

Finch & C°



TWO RARE AND UNUSUAL SOUTH AFRICAN CAPE NGUNI ZULU TALISMANIC SNUFF CONTAINERS

TWO RARE AND UNUSUAL SOUTH AFRICAN CAPE NGUNI ZULU TALISMANIC SNUFF CONTAINERS IN THE FORM OF
HORNED BULLS

BULL'S BLOOD, TESTICLE SKIN AND CLAY

19TH CENTURY

SIZES: 10.5CM HIGH, 14CMLONG (MAX), 8CMWIDE (MAX)

4 INS HIGH, 5½ INS LONG (MAX), 3 INS WIDE (MAX)

LITERATURE

THESE SNUFF CONTAINERS ARE OF A PARTICULAR TYPE THAT ARE TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE XHOSA SPEAKING PEOPLES OF THE CAPE. THEY HAVE A PROTECTIVE FUNCTION AND A HIGH SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUE BEING CAREFULLY FASHIONED FROM THE TESTICLE SKIN OF SACRIFICIAL BULLS SLAUGHTERED IN HONOUR OF THE ANCESTORS.

CHIEFS AND MEN OF RANK POSSESSED SNUFF CONTAINERS, WHICH INDICATED THEIR STATUS, AND THEIR WEALTH WAS MEASURED IN CATTLE THAT WERE VIEWED AS A SOURCE OF EARTHLY PROSPERITY. ZULU MEN WERE BOTH HUNTERS OF GAME AND THE HERDERS OF CATTLE, WITH EACH KRAAL CONTAINING A CENTRAL CIRCULAR CATTLE PEN WHERE MASCULINE MEETINGS INVOLVING THE SHARING OF FOOD, DRINK AND SNUFF OCCURRED.

CATTLE WERE IMPORTANT TO RURAL ZULU SOCIETY WITH EACH CHIEF REGARDING THE CATTLE IN THE FOLD AS HIS PROPERTY AND ALSO THAT OF THIS ENTIRE ANCESTRAL MALE LINEAGE. THUS IT WAS BELIEVED THERE WAS AN ANCESTRAL PRESENCE AMONGST THE CATTLE, WITH THE PEN BEING A PLACE OF INTENSE SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL POWER. THESE BULL SHAPED SNUFF CONTAINERS EMBODY THIS POWER LINKING THE LIVING TO THE ANCESTORS THROUGH THE SHARING OF SNUFF.