Finch & Co



SOUTH AFRICAN ZULU OR TSONGA IRONWOOD CHIEFS SCEPTRE OR BATON

AN UNUSUAL SOUTH AFRICAN ZULU OR TSONGA IRONWOOD CHIEFS SCEPTRE OR BATON CARVED WITH THE FIGURE OF A CROUCHING LEOPARD WITH POKER WORKED SPOTS HIS BACK LEGS AND LONG TAIL IN THE BODY OF A POWERFUL BABOON WITH AN OLD ATTACHED LABEL READINGÂ€¦..

'SOUTH AFRICAN KAFFIR KNOBSTICK MADE OUT OF ONE PIECE OF WOOD THIS STICK FULLYÂ€¦.. THEIR QUARRELS WHEN NOT IN USE IT HANGS FROM THEÂ€¦..'

LATE 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 25.5CM HIGH – 10 INS HIGH

LITERATURE

SIMILAR IN ICONOGRAPHY TO THE CARVINGS PRODUCED AND ATTRIBUTED TO THE 'BABOON MASTER' THIS PIECE SUGGESTS THAT A WORKSHOP WAS MAKING EXAMPLES IN THE SAME STYLE AS THAT OF THE 'MASTER'. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT HE WAS A MIGRANT TSONGA CARVER WITH ZULU APPRENTICES WHO PRODUCED A LARGE NUMBER OF FIGURATIVE WORKS IN THE VICINITY OF EITHER PIETERMARITZBURG OR DURBAN IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY. THE UNUSUAL AND INVENTIVE CARVING OF THE LEOPARD CONTAINED WITHIN THE BODY OF A BABOON MAY HAVE BEEN MADE TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE POWERS VESTED IN A CHIEF RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GENERAL WELL BEING OF THE COMMUNITY.