

# *Finch & C<sup>o</sup>*



## **SOUTH AFRICAN ZULU WOODEN DANCE STAFF**

A SOUTH AFRICAN ZULU WOODEN DANCE STAFF CARVED WITH AN ABSTRACT ANTHROPOMORPHIC HEAD AND  
'AMASUMPA' DECORATION TO THE SHAFT

OLD DEEP GLOSSY PATINA

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 72.5CMLONG – 28½ INS LONG

## **LITERATURE**

DANCE STAFFS WERE PART OF THE ACCOUTREMENTS USED IN THE 'IGOMA' DANCE. THE COSTUMES WORN BY THE DANCERS CLOSELY RESEMBLED 19TH CENTURY NGUNI MILITARY ATTIRE WHICH CONSISTED OF LAYERS OF ANIMAL SKINS, BEADS AND FEATHERS. THIS WAS MEANT TO 'IMPRESS, FRIGHTEN, CONFUSE AND MAGICALLY CHARM AN ENEMY INTO IMPOTENCY' (M. CONNER. GREUB; 1988, PG 104).

DANCE STAFFS WERE OFTEN CARVED WITH ABSTRACT FORMS ALLUDING TO THE SHAPE OF A HUMAN HEAD AND THESE STAFFS WERE TREATED AS IF THEY WERE A FEMALE DANCING PARTNER. THE SUGGESTIVE SHAPED SPHERICAL HEAD FACING THE MALE DANCER AND THUS INFUSING HIS MOVEMENTS WITH GRACE AND VIGOUR.