Finch & Co



A FINELY CARVED ZOOMORPHIC HEADREST IN THE FORM OF AN 'ANTELOPE'

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FINE COLOUR AND PATINA

WOOD

SHONA / TSONGA ZIMBABWE / SOUTH AFRICA

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 16CM HIGH, 15CM WIDE, 7CM DEEP - 6¼ INS HIGH, 6 INS WIDE, 2¾ INS DEEP

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LITERATURE

HEADRESTS WERE VERY PERSONAL OBJECTS; ASIDE FROM SERVING AS A PILLOW AND PROTECTING ORNATE HAIRSTYLES, THEY BECAME CLOSELY LINKED WITH THE OWNER'S IDENTITY OVER A LIFETIME OF USE. HEADRESTS BEAR EITHER A COVERT OR EXPLICIT RESEMBLANCE TO A BULL AND WERE GIVEN BY A BRIDE TO HER HUSBAND WITH THE INTENTION OF RECALLING THE GIFT OF CATTLE THAT HIS FAMILY HAD GIVEN TO HERS IN RECOGNITION OF HER WORTH, AND AS A WAY OF SEALING AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE TWO FAMILIES.

A HERD OF CATTLE WAS THE SUPREME SYMBOL OF SOCIAL HARMONY, WEALTH, PRIDE AND POWER TO THE PEOPLE OF THE CATTLE BASED MIGRANT CULTURE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. CARING FOR CATTLE DETERMINED THE MIGRATORY NATURE OF THE GROUP'S EXISTENCE, RESULTING IN A SET OF BELIEFS COHERENT WITH THIS WAY OF LIFE. REVERENCE FOR THE ANCESTORS ALIGNS WITH A PROFOUND RESPECT FOR CATTLE, THUS CREATING A SYMBOLIC WORLD THAT REINFORCES AND UNDERPINS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GROUP AND ITS CATTLE, ANCESTORS AND THE FERTILITY REQUIRED FOR FUTURE SURVIVAL.

PROVENANCE

ENGLISH AUCTION 2016

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