



Headrest

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Tsonga

Medium

Wood

Description

This is a wooden headrest made by the Tsonga culture of Mozambique and South Africa in the 20th Century.

Headrests are commonly used throughout Africa to help protect intricate coiffures while resting, though in many cases they carry with them a certain degree of spiritual meaning or prestige. The symbolism of Tsonga headrests remains a point of debate, but they were cherished objects that were more valuable for having been used by ancestors and were at time buried with the deceased. The lugs dropping from both ends of the cradle are perhaps

the most characteristic feature of Tsonga headrests. This example is made in two connected parts.

Dimensions

5 × 6 × 2 3/4 in. (12.7 × 15.2 × 7 cm)