

Basic Detail Report



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 both cradles are perhaps the most characteristic feature of Tsonga headrests, but the chain connecting this double headrest is also rarely seen outside of the culture. This would have been used by a husband and wife.

Dimensions

6 7/8 × 32 × 2 1/2 in. (17.5 × 81.3 × 6.4 cm)