

Transvaal Bonga - head-rest

1987.03.93

object type: head-rest	acc no: 1987.3.93
vernacular:	contact prints
sub-type:	
community: Transvaal Tsonga	
sub-group:	location: [REDACTED]
	shelf: [REDACTED]
geographical location:	b/w: c/t: c/s:
	dimensions:
date and place collected: Elim, Transvaal, c. 1930	h: 12 cm diam:
	w: 18 cm mounted:
date executed:	d: 5,5 cm
artist name, sex: male	medium: wood
use: for resting the head while sleeping	

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY
ARCHIVE SHEET IV
REFERENCE

ARTIST:

ACC. NO.:

Wanless, A African Notes and News, see acc. card
for vol. and page no.

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY
ARCHIVE SHEET V
LOANS / LOCATIONS REGISTER

ARTIST:

ACC. NO.:

placed in [REDACTED] 1987

Placed on display in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] early 1989. Area closed off in early 1990

Base: Two flat circles joined by a bar decorated front and back with four vertical folds.

✓ 126 50/990

Size: Height 160 mm
 Length 205 mm
 Width 70 mm
 Length of base 165 mm

Description: *Crossbar*: Rectangular, curved, and decorated near the narrow ends with a row of zig-zags carved in relief.

Lugs: Filled triangles, facing front.

Column: Three flat rectangular pillars running from crossbar to just below centre, where they meet two flat rectangular pillars which continue down to the base. All five pillars are decorated at centre front and back with a vertical row of zig-zags carved in relief.

Base: Three flat linked circles.

✓ 127 50/991

Size: Height 135 mm
 Length 215 mm
 Width 80 mm
 Length of base 145 mm

Description: *Crossbar*: Roughly rectangular, flaring slightly at ends, curved and undecorated.

Lugs: Rectangular facing sides. One has a piece broken out of it.

Column: Maltese cross-shaped with a vertical disc at centre, and rectangular pillars at sides.

Base: Flat rectangle with rounded corners.

✓ 128 50/992

Size: Height 130 mm
 Length 195 mm
 Width 65 mm
 Length of base 155 mm

Description: *Crossbar*: Rectangular, curved, and decorated on the flattened narrow ends with a row of zig-zags carved in relief.

Lugs: Open arches facing front.

Column: Four flat square pieces link at the centre to form a cross around an open square. Each square is decorated with incised lines. Four short

cylindrical pillars link the "arms" of the cross to the base and the crossbar. Two small open arches extend sideways from the ends of the arms.

Base: Two flat circles, linked by a bar.

✓ 129 50/993

Size: Height 145 mm
 Length 240 mm
 Width 80 mm
 Length of base 190 mm

Description: *Crossbar*: Rectangular, curved, and decorated on the flattened narrow ends with a row of quadrilaterals carved in relief. One corner is worn to a rounded, smooth shape.

Lugs: Quadrilateral, facing sides, and pierced at centre.

Column: A truncated "V" shape rests on an ovoid which is pierced by two rectangular holes, and which, in turn, rests on a truncated, upturned "V" shape. The whole is flat, and the gaps in the centre form a cross.

Base: Two flat, roughly circular pieces joined by a short bar.

✓ 130 50/994

Size: Height 95 mm
 Length 265 mm
 Width 65 mm
 Length of base 150 mm

Description: *Crossbar*: Rectangular, slightly curved, and decorated near the narrow ends with a short row of zig-zags carved in relief.

Lugs: Half cylinders running from front to back with a ridge at centre.

Column: Three short rectangular pillars in a row, the central one being broader, rest on two rectangular blocks and a central open square. The blocks are decorated with an ovoid depression. It appears that the other pieces have broken off, but the base has been smoothed and the head-rest stands fairly firmly.

✓ 131 50/995

Size: Height 120 mm
 Length 180 mm
 Width 55 mm
 Length of base 125 mm

Description: *Crossbar*: Was originally rectangular, now it has a large slice missing from one quarter. Curved and decorated at the narrow ends with a row of zig-zags carved in relief.

Lugs: Short, rectangular blocks.

Column: Shaped like an "S" lying on its side, and attached to the base and crossbar by short flat bars which are decorated with incised crosshatching. Panels of crosshatching are carved at the sides of the "S".

Base: Ovoid, and flaring at the edges.

NOTES AND QUERIES

LETTER HEADING — "Cape Town of Good Hope. From a sketch taken by F. Geare", crudely executed in pen and ink on light blue paper, was sold in a job lot of 19th century original water-colours and drawings at Christies, South Kensington, on 8 October 1986. E.K. Lorimer, in *Panorama of Port Elizabeth* (Balkema, 1971) reproduced across pages 54 and 55 a "view of Port Elizabeth, probably about 1840 . . . from an early print sold by F. Gerds". The copy in my own collection is in fact an illustrated letter heading, captioned "View of Port-Elizabeth Cape of Good Hope", with "sold by F. Gerds" above it, and is printed in blue and green by some early colour processing method. The drawing sold at Christies might well be a copy of a similar letter heading of Cape Town, with "Geare" an incorrect transcription of "Gerds". In presentation the two are very alike: both are views from out in the bay, with houses in rows clearly drawn in, and ships in the foreground. Such letter headings were perhaps the forerunner of today's postcards depicting holiday hotels, the kind in which the sender inks a cross on one of the windows, and writes "Our room" in the margin. My copy of the Port Elizabeth letter heading is fully annotated in this way: "The spot our cottage is built on", "The Scotch Church where we attend" etc. (It is fully described in *Looking Back*, journal of the Port Elizabeth Historical Society, 12(3): 91, September 1972.) I had assumed "F. Gerds" to be a stationer or printseller, the name perhaps even a corruption of "J. Geard", a Port Elizabeth ironmonger of the day, or perhaps of another member of that early settler family. Since seeing the Cape Town sketch one might hazard that he was an artist who sold his own engraved letter headings, though I have been unable to find either Geare or Gerds in any dictionary of British artists. Better known are Thomas Bowler's letter headings, of St George's Street, Cape Town, and Table Bay. They differ greatly from Gerds's, however, being in black only, and uncaptioned but for the engraver's name: J. Harwood, 25 Fenchurch Street, London. The Bowler letter headings are also much smaller than Gerds's. Uncharacteristically, Gordon Brown (in the Bradlows' *Thomas Bowler*, Balkema, 1971), does not give the dimensions of his *Catalogue raisonné* of Bowler prints, but my own

copy of the St
Gerds Port Eliz
Cape Town by
latter size.

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