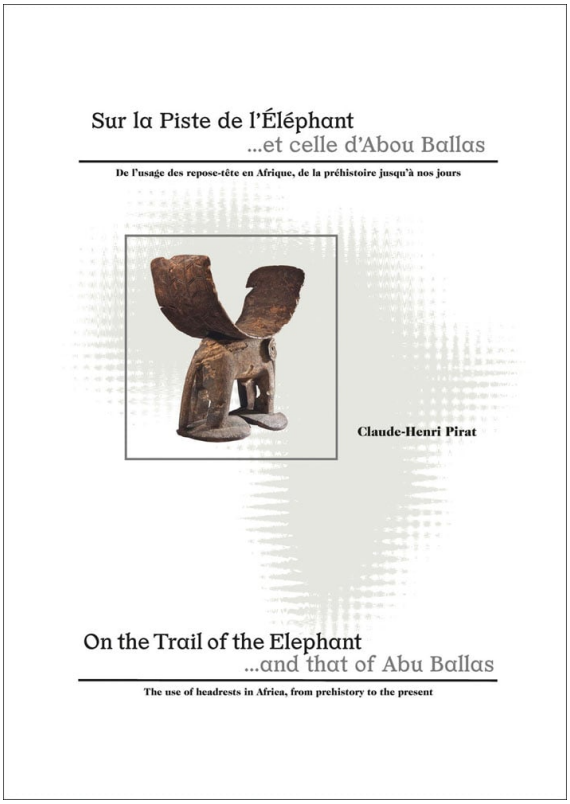
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On the Trail of the Elephant

...and that of Abu Ballas

Claude-Henri Pirat

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- A detailed study on the headrest or neck rest, which is one of the most widely spread among humans, as is the need for a seat

The need for a pillow, a headrest or a neck rest is one of the most widely spread among humans, as is the need for a seat. They may not be an exclusively African invention, but the oldest known carved headrests nonetheless come from Africa, for the most part from the Egypt of the Pharaohs. Their use is attested in prehistoric times in the Neolithic Sahara and several centuries ago in West, Central and Southern Africa. It continued until the early 20th-century in the savannah and the forested regions along the coasts of the Gulf of Guinea, in the Congo and Zambesi basins and until nowadays in the Horn of Africa, in the regions of the Omo Valley and the Jade Sea. In this work, the author sets out to tell its history spanning several millenia. He takes the opportunity to invite himself to the controversy regarding the links and relations between Ancient Egypt and Black Africa, a controversy that has been livening up the world of Egyptologists and historians of Africa for more than a century.

Furthermore he sets about breaking down a few generally accepted ideas regarding the actual use of these magnificent objects. The author illustrates his words with an exceptional election of items chosen from the finest public and private collections.

Text in English and French.

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