

Basic Detail Report

"Fleur de lis" pole

Description

Carved tent pole ____ Tuaregs are frequently hailed "Blue People" for the indigo powder, pounded into their clothing, that rubs off onto their skin; the garments protecting their bodies from a harsh desert climate give them the additional tag "People of the Veil." But the images these names produce, and the romantic notion that they are the "lords of the western part of the Sahara," hardly illustrate the Tuaregs' current minority status--as nomads who inhabit not their own state, but a large region extending across Algeria, Libya, Mali, and Niger. Descended from the Berbers, who lived along the northern coast of Africa five thousand years ago, they migrated south after the Arabs invaded in the eighth century and became a powerful trading people, relying on camels (their "Ship of the Desert") for caravanning rare goods such as ebony and ostrich feathers. Society is predominantly matriarchal, as legend has it that the Tuaregs descended from the daughters of one woman; while men plant and irrigate, women exercise a powerful role as landowners and skilled artisans, although the growth of Islam has led to the strengthening of patriarchal ties. Today, the nomadic lifestyle the Tuaregs have nurtured for centuries is threatened as droughts and famine restrict their movement and as governments force them to become more settled. -- Erica Anderson, `02 ~~~ 2000-11-17

Dimensions

41 3/4 × 7 1/2 × 2 1/4 inches (106 × 19 × 5.7 cm)