

Ndoto

Description: a wooden rounded cylinder, two feet by one foot by one foot. It is polished, as if by long use. The item is enchanted; anyone who uses it as a head or body pillow will simultaneously have a refreshing night's sleep, and be instantly and alertly awakened in case of danger.

Made of African pearwood, Ndoto is very possibly the oldest magical artifact in the world. It was first found in a covert 1995 archeological dig in Zambia's Bangweulu Swamps; the item was found preserved in a ceramic container tentatively identified as being 16th Century AD Mutapan. No other items of significance were found at the site. Carbon dating is impossible, of course, **because** Ndoto is magical (preservation spells thoroughly scramble mundane analysis methods); but standard scrying magic pegs the item as being at somewhere in the range of two hundred thousand years old.

It is entirely possible that Ndoto is not, strictly speaking, of human origin at all. There have been reported incidents of non-human magic use, and the spells on Ndoto could have been created using the gradual-accretion method of spontaneous enchantment. If this is true, and it can be

proven, it might prove to be one of the most exciting developments in arcana in centuries. An entire academic discipline could be conceivably created off conclusive proof, in fact.

And that means exactly what you think it means; a Symposium on the topic. They're holding this one in Wilmington, Delaware (no particular reason); and it's going to have the usual four or five magical factions in not-quite-friendly attendance. But everything will be more or less civilized, and probably not even all that dramatic.

Well, not unusually dramatic. You know how academics are. And mages. And, well, academic mages.

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