



PERIOD OAK ANTIQUES

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A MEDIEVAL OAK HIGH-VAULT BOSS WITH FIGURATIVE CARVING. ENGLISH. CIRCA 1400.

Probably made for a church or even a cathedral. This boss stands apart from the majority of medieval wooden ceiling bosses because it was designed as a load-bearing member, rather than just a decorative cap. Its form is that of a stone boss. In its original location (the centre of a vaulted ceiling above chapel within a major church), it functioned as a “keystone” by locking together the intersecting ribs of a vault. The base of the boss is composed of coarse-grained oak that, although difficult to carve, is exceedingly strong. Four large mortises cut in moulded sockets around base once house the tenons at the end of the vault ribs. Pined onto the base is a decorative cap composed of fine-grained oak and carved with an Old Testament prophet holding a scroll.



Bosses of this type, whether in stone or wood, were used primarily for major churches during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Wooden bosses of larger size but of the same form from the now dismantled extension to the Exeter Bishop's Palace built by Bishop Grandisson between 1335 and 1340 are now in the collection of the V&A (Charles Tracy, English Medieval Furniture and Woodwork, cat. 5). By 1400 masonry and carpentry technology had moved on with the introduction of the “fan-vault” roof.

7" DIAMETER AT BASE.

STOCK NO.1084.

£4,950

Dimensions:

Height: 7.5 inches (19.1 cms)

Diameter: 7 inches (17.8 cms)

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