

# COLNAGHI



## *Stele Fragment with a Bull's Head*

South Arabian (Sabaeen),  
1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. — 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

Alabaster

18.4 cm; 7 ¼ in. (without mount)

25.4 cm; 10 in. (with mount)

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### Provenance:

From the collection of the late Dr Cenydd Jones who was based in Aden as part of the British Colonial Health Service from 1960-68, brought back to the UK in 1968 and thence by descent.

Ex. Bonhams, London, 29th April 2009, lot 210;

28th April 2010, lot 310;

23rd May 2012, lot 112.

Private Collection, London.

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The present stele fragment, depicting a bull's head in high relief, was carved from a block of red veined alabaster. The transparency of alabaster, a very soft stone which is easy to carve, allows for light to shine through it in stark contrast to the strong red veins, while the eyes, ears and nostrils are carefully incised.

Traditionally, the bull has been identified as a symbol of the leading Sabaeen god Almaqah, and thus was considered a lucky motif to decorate architecture.

## References:

See for the type "Jemen – Kunst und Archäologie im Land der Königin von Saba", Wilfried Seipel (Hrsg.), Nr. 170 and Nr. 223

## Comparanda:



British Museum, London (acc. no. 130884).