

Basic Detail Report



Ceremonial Ring

Date

16th century

Primary Maker

Nigeria, Yoruba people

Medium

bronze

Description

Rings such as this were apparently used to display the head of a deceased ruler – either the actual head severed

from the corpse or a cast-bronze replica of it. It is equally possible that the head could have been that of a victim sacrificed during the annual rites of purification and renewal of the king. Similar rites also attended the installation of a new king. Imagery on the ring suggests the Ogboni society, one of the most ancient Yoruba institutions. The function of Ogboni is to control or restrain the power of the king when such power is not used wisely.

Dimensions

Overall: 10 5/8 x 10 1/2 x 2 1/4 in. (27 x 26.7 x 5.7 cm)