



Chief's regalia (disc pendant)

Not on display

Title/Description: Chief's regalia (disc pendant)

Measurements: diam. 65 x d. 7 mm

Accession Number: 927d

Historic Period: 16th-19th century

Credit Line: Purchased with support from the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Art Trust, 1986

The exceptional group (927a-j) of cire perdue (lost wax) ornaments was purchased as being 'Dogon chief's regalia, Mali. Found in the lower falaise [cliff] of Bandiagara. Site - village of Irrele [?Tireli]'. There is no certainty that the ten pieces form a group, since they are an unmonitored find; in the absence of comparative material from scientific excavations their age and context cannot be established with any certainty.

The disc pendant (d) has an anthropomorphic design of two spirals on either side of a vertical rope-twist, ending in a boss and tripod (cf. Fisher, 1984: 142, fig. 3). The tripod and three small bosses may symbolise the male principle (three is the male number). The Dogon believe that Amma created the world in the form of a spiral; the two spirals on the pendant could refer to this, and also to the male/female duality that is intrinsic to Dogon thought.

Margaret Carey, 1997

Entry taken from *Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, Vol. 2: Pacific, African and Native North American Art*, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997) pp. 106-108.

Provenance

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from Merton Simpson Gallery, New York on the advice of Robert Sainsbury in 1986 out of funds provided by the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Art Trust.

