



## Chief's regalia (animal shaped pendant)

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**Not on display**

**Title/Description:** Chief's regalia (animal shaped pendant)

**Object Type:** Ornament, Regalia

**Materials:** Bronze

**Measurements:** l. 75 x w. 36 x d. 7 mm

**Accession Number:** 927e

**Historic Period:** 16th-19th century

**Production Place:** Africa, Mali

**Cultural Group:** Dogon

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

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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 animal-shaped pendant (e) may represent the crocodile at the centre of the earth, where the genital of the dismembered *nommo* was thus transformed (see 928). The pale green patina has flaked off in a few places to show dark metal below, which may be copper, or a copper-rich alloy. Copper is associated with the serpent Lébé, the *nommo* who was sacrificed when the eight heads of lineage reached the earth. Lébé, the guiding spirit of the Third World of Amma (the present world), is an important figure to worship among the Dogon, and the *hogon* are the priests.

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.

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## 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.

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