

Basic Detail Report



Ornament

Date

500-1550

Primary Maker

Tairona

Medium

gold alloy

Description

The Tairona combined technical skill with mythology to produce finely detailed miniature objects which were traded to the Muisca for emeralds. The favorite metal

was a gold and copper alloy called tumbaga (20% copper and 80% gold) which is harder and more durable than its constituent parts making it easier to work by alternate hammering and annealing (Bray 1978:12). Forms unique to the Tairona included anchor-shaped finials or pendants, cylinder-shaped lip plugs, and jewelry components which combined human and birds characteristics. This piece appears to represent a celestial creature composed of serpent heads with bifurcated tongues.

Dimensions

Overall: 7/8 × 7/8 × 1/8 in. (2.2 × 2.2 × 0.3 cm)