

Title: Queen Mother Pendant Mask: Iyoba

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> Century

Location: Nigeria, Court of Benin

<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/318622>

This is a pendant created for a King of Benin as a memorial to his mother. The Benin society was a matriarchal society and to carry your mother with you as a pendant meant good luck. "The mask is a sensitive, idealized portrait, depicting its subject with softly modeled features, bearing inlaid metal and carved scarification marks on the forehead, and wearing bands of coral beads below the chin. In the openwork tiara and collar are carved stylized mudfish and the bearded faces of Portuguese. Because they live both on land and in the water, mudfish represent the king's dual nature as human and divine. Having come from across the seas, the Portuguese were considered denizens of the spirit realm who brought wealth and power to the "oba"."

