

Wall plaque from Oba's Palace (Benin Plaque)
(1550–1680)

Brass

H. 19 7/16 x W. 16 1/2 x D. 4 1/2 in.

African kings of the Benin Empire (found in present-day Nigeria) were called Oba. The Oba is recognizable by his coral beaded necklace. (Figure 1)



Figure 1

Two servants are shown shielding the Oba (African King) from a possible attack or simply, the sun. This privilege was for Obas only.

The figures in this piece dramatically range in size. The figures were not actually all varying heights; it is simply a show of social hierarchy.

Originally, this plaque was displayed with several of its kind on posts throughout the Oba's palace. These plaques would have shown the history and lineage of the Obas.

The technique in which the Benin Plaque was created is called the "lost wax casting process".

