

Basic Detail Report



Currency (Mitako)

Date
19th Century

Primary Maker
Ngombe

Medium
Copper

Description

Mitako, sometimes referred to as teke, is a currency piece made of copper wire, shaped into the form of rings. They are similar to coiled manillas, except they do not have the disks enclosures on the ends. A standard sized Mitako measured about twenty inches, making this particular, at about nine inches, rather small. However, over time, the size of the Mitako seem to be bracelets that determined someone's wealth or status in the Ngombe tribe. Although Mitako were used in other regions, the Ngombe sometimes cut off pieces of the Mitako to gain a profit. According to Charles Opitz, one time a male slave was worth 600 mitako, a female slave worth 200, a fowl worth 10 and an egg worth one mitako (2000, p. 224).

Dimensions

Overall: 9 1/4 x 4 in. (23.5 x 10.2 cm)