



Wrist Guard (Igitembe)

Date
20th Century

Primary Maker
Tutsi

Medium
Wood and metal

Description

This Tutsi archer’s wrist guard would have been worn to protect an archer’s arm from the recoil of the bowstring. This style of large, wooden guard is particularly rare. Most guards even from the Tutsi were fashioned from grass and closely resembled a bracer. This indicates that the archery rings were an aesthetic preference rather than a functional one—intended to be used by elite warriors and chiefs. The copper used as studs also lends itself to this theory as it would have been imported from Katanga in Zaire and been a relatively expensive medium.

Dimensions

3 × 6 1/4 × 6 1/4 in. (7.6 × 15.9 × 15.9 cm)