DIVINER’S BOWL (OPON IGEDEU)
**General Information**

**Materials:** Wood, pigment traces

**Dimensions:** 12 ¼ in. in height; and 11 ½ in. in diameter.

**Cultural Identification:** Yoruba

**Country:** Nigeria

**Artist:** Areogun of Osi-Ilorin. 1880-1956

**Classification:** Ritual Object

**Current location:** The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In the Richard B. Carter Gallery (African Art)

**Owner:** William and Bertha Teel in 1991
Areogun
• Areogun of Osi-Ilorin is a recognized Nigerian sculptor.
• He was influenced by great African Artists.
• He was the first in his family to have become a carver.
• He developed his skills by becoming an apprentice, and an assistant for another sculptor for 16 years.
• Areogun is distinctive for portraying Yoruba culture in a narrative and “modernized” way (during his time). He also tends to repeat the same themes/ scenes in different artworks.
• His work was also influenced from his passed, when he experienced slavery. He depicts warriors wearing turbans, and carrying enlarged swords, and spears.
Map of Nigeria showing the Yoruba sub-groups

Figure 1. Map of Nigeria showing the Yoruba sub-groups and location of Igboninaland.
The "Diviner's Bowl," or Ifa bowl, classified as a ritual object, is a "shrine furniture" and was used for holding materials.

- Ifa is the oracle deity.

- Some of the carved scenes depict aspects of their daily life.
- Figures carved on the side of the bowl depict Yoruba characters at the end of the 19th century.

- The handle depicts a naked kneeling worshipper supporting a basket on her head (which is the joint of the bowl’s lid).

- Warrior flanked by a drummer and a horn player.
The narrative scene

Frontal view (left side of drummer)
-A Woman carrying on her head a pot.
-A man carrying gun
The narrative scene

Right profile view
- Woman with child holding a bowl
- She depicts her biological role which is human fertility
The deity Eshu is a “provocateur”.

The artist was inspired by things in the world around him, including the exotic items like the bicycle introduced by the Europeans, as well as the book, and the pipe.
Areogun’s other carvings


African Art: Diviner’s Bowl (oponigedeu). www.mfa.org