

THE TRADITIONAL SCULPTURE OF AFRICA



18

October 13 through November 12, 1961

The Art Institute of Chicago

A loan show from The Museum of Primitive Art

15 West 54th Street, New York City

DAHOMEY

- 1 Buffalo. Dahomey, Abomey. Silver, iron, brass; 17¼" long. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. René d'Harnoncourt
From the treasure of Behanzin, the last king of Dahomey, this is an example of court art with little relation to lesser objects of Dahomean ritual.
- 2 Staff. Dahomey, Abomey. Silver over wood, 24⅞" high. 57.257
With the exception of plebian sculpture in wood, the art of Dahomey was a court art, produced for royalty or nobility, and controlled by a restricted family guild whose members worked as their retainers. The technique of this staff, in which a wooden core is covered with an appliqué of small sheets of silver, themselves covered with a fine over-all hammered design, is characteristic of many of the objects of the royal treasure found at the capitol city of Abomey.
- 3 Staff. Dahomey. Wood and iron, 19½" high. 60.87. Gift of Mr. Arthur A. Cohen

GHANA

- 4 Gold dust container (Kuduo). Ghana: Ashanti. Bronze, 6½" high. 60.72
- 5 Gold dust container (Kuduo). Ghana: Ashanti. Bronze, 10⅝" high. 60.69
These containers for gold dust were prestige objects, often buried with the owner at his death.
- 6 Funerary head. Ghana: Ashanti. Clay, 12⅜" high. 59.241
Funerary heads, or Ntiri, were placed in the graves of the king, the queen mother, counselors and elders to honor the spirits of the dead, which often were further propitiated with offerings of food and palm wine.
- 7 Mask. Ghana. Wood; black, white and terra cotta paint; 94" high. 60.168
This is said to be one of a pair of war-ceremony masks, perhaps Ashanti. The larger of the pair, this one, is male; the other female.

TOGO

- 8 Water-buffalo head. Togo. Clay, 9" high. 56.36
The significance of this head is unknown, but heads of this type are hung on walls in Ghana and Togo as decorations.

NIGERIA

- 9 Maternity figure. Nigeria: Yoruba. Wood, traces of red and black paint, 28½" high. 56.220
The headdress worn by this figure may be construed as a double ax, and marks her as a devotee or priestess of the god of thunder, Shango. In Yoruba myth Shango was the grandson of the legendary founder of Ife, and was known for his cruelty. In later



54

With the exceptions of the works from Benin, which were made between the 16th and 18th centuries; and the Kissi heads, which may be prior to 1800, most of the objects in this exhibit are thought to have been made in the last one hundred and fifty years.

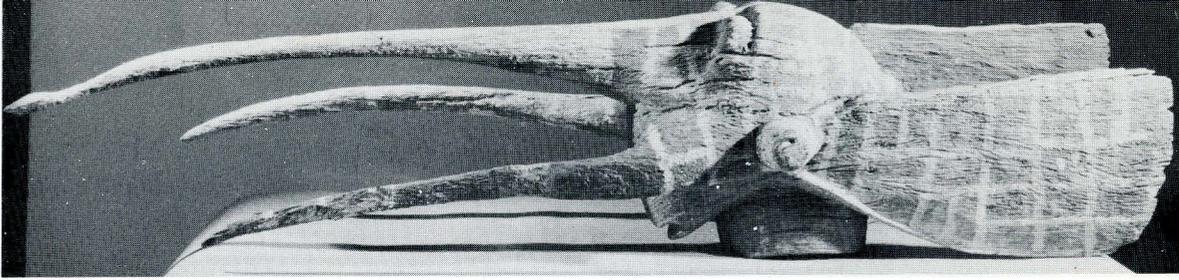
generations he was recognized as the god of thunder, and always was served by women. He is reputed to have rewarded the faithful with fertility.

- 10 Helmet mask. Nigeria: Yoruba, Epa Society. Wood; red, black and white paint; 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ " high. 60.118
- 11 Helmet mask. Nigeria: Yoruba, Epa Society. Wood; red, black and white paint; 31 $\frac{5}{8}$ " high. 60.119
- 12 Helmet mask. Nigeria; Yoruba, Epa Society. Wood; red, black and white paint; 34" high. 60.122
Worn by young men in strenuous dances to honor Epa, the principal spirit of the Ora people of Omuaran village, who is supposed to have been a great carver who now guards his people.
- 13 Twin figure (Ibeji). Nigeria, Yoruba. Cowrie shells, metal, beads, cloth. 12" h. 61.68
These figures are carved at the death of a twin and cared for by the surviving twin. They are then kept in a family shrine. The costume addition is unusual and may indicate the high rank of the deceased.
- 14 Helmet mask. Nigeria, Yoruba. Gourd, feathers, twine, animal fur, paint. 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ " h. 61.83
- 15 Plaque. Nigeria, Benin: Bini. Bronze, 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high. 57.231
The art of Benin is essentially a court art of which the Oba, or king, is the focal point. Art is an integral part of court life, virtually belonging to the Oba, and used basically for commemorative or ceremonial purposes.
This plaque, which depicts the Oba and his retainers, was once used with others similar to it, to adorn the mud pillars of the palace. The plaques are regarded as historical, recording events and legends of the court at Benin.
- 16 Horn player. Nigeria, Benin: Bini. Bronze, 24 $\frac{7}{8}$ " high. 57.255
One of the traditional members of the Oba's retinue is the horn player. Representations of horn players are believed to have been placed on altars for religious ceremonies; the horn player may also have attended important chiefs and warriors.
- 17 Leopard. Nigeria, Benin: Bini. Bronze, 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long. 58.90
In the kingdom of Benin, the leopard is symbolic of the kingly power of the Oba, who is believed to have kept live leopards at the palace. This leopard was probably an aquamanile, with the nostrils used as pouring holes. The lid of the vessel, found on top of the head, has been hammered closed.
- 18 Head. Nigeria, Benin: Bini. Bronze, 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ " h. 58.180
Used as an altar decoration, a carved ivory tusk was fitted into a hole at the top of the head.
- 19 Bell. Nigeria, lower Niger area. Bronze, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ " high. 61.21
This kind of bell is found often in Nigeria. Many have been found at nearby Benin, although they do not belong to the Benin style, and lack the decorative detail of that symbolically richer art. These bells are thought to have served a ritual function, and appear with animal as well as human faces.

- 20 Drum, Nigeria; lower Niger area. Wood, 37 $\frac{3}{8}$ " h. 60.80
- 21 Mask. Nigeria: Ibibio. Wood, 23" high. 55.5. Gift of Mrs. Margaret Plass
Exchange between the Ibibio and the Ibo, neighboring tribes in the Cross River region of southeast Nigeria, occasionally extends to major ritual objects created expressly for use in some particular ceremony or celebration common to both tribes. The mask shown (a segment broken from a tri-facial helmet mask worn in a ceremonial play) is known to be of Ibibio craftsmanship though it was part of the ritual paraphernalia belonging to an Ibo village in Ozuitem where, in 1939, the American anthropologist, Dr. J. Sargent Harris, saw the complete piece and acquired the present segment as a gift of esteem from elders of the tribe. It was formerly covered with skin.
- 22 Female figure. Nigeria: Ibibio. Wood, black and white paint, 28 $\frac{3}{8}$ " high. 60.127. Gift of the Matthew T. Mellon Foundation
Movable limbs and hinged jaws are characteristics of Ibibio figures and masks. This figure is a dance headdress which was attached to a basketwork cap on the head of a male dancer.
- 23 Mask. Nigeria: Ibibio. Wood, black and white paint, matting, 22 $\frac{3}{8}$ " high. 59.32
- 24 Mask. Nigeria: Ibibio, Ekpo society. Wood, 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ " h. 60.165
The Ekpo society for which this mask was worn was concerned with tribal government and revolved around ancestor spirits.
- 25 Dance headdress. Nigeria: Ibibio. Wood, animal skin, 22" h. 56.399. Gift of Eliot Elisofon.
As a headdress, this was fastened to a basket cap. It was used in the Ogboni dance to encourage tribal fertility.
- 26 Guardian spirit (Ejiri). Nigeria: Western Ijo. Wood, traces of black and white paint, 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high. 60.128. Gift of the Matthew T. Mellon Foundation
The rider of this stylized leopard may be either a divinity or an ancestor. Ijo figures were frequently commissioned by the chief to honor his ancestors. They were placed in rows in a shrine, in a screen-like arrangement four to six feet high; in front of the screen were placed free-standing figures.

LIBERIA

- 27 Mask. Liberia: N'gere. Wood; orange, blue and white paint; red fabric; tin; cotton cord; fibre, cloth and wooden ornaments; nails; cartridge cases; 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high. 56.215
In central Liberia, where the Poro Society was a dominant influence on the lives of all, having the power of life and death, terroristic masks such as this were worn outside actual rites by society members when raiding villages for food or killing cattle.
- 28 Mask. Liberia: Toma. Wood, 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ " h. 58.51
This mask belongs to the powerful Poro society which dominates the religion of much of central west Africa. It represents a legendary tribal chief.
- 29 Mask. Liberia: Dan. Wood, 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ " h. 57.109



- 30 Mask. Liberia: Dan. Wood, cord, hair, iron nail, clay, red paint, 8½" high. 59.260
The Dan tribes are a group of people known by various names inhabiting eastern Liberia and the western Ivory Coast. Their art is largely confined to masks, although figures, ritual ladles and small brass castings are also found. The masks range in style from fairly naturalistic representations to strongly geometrical formulations.
- IVORY COAST*
- 31 Animal mask. Ivory Coast, Baule. Wood, paint, 34¾" h. 57.25
The ox represented here is another Baule protective totem.
- 32 Animal mask. Ivory Coast: Baule. Wood; black, terra cotta and white paint; 34¾" high. 58.349. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Heller Kakagye, the spirit of the dead who resides in this mask, goes forth at night to devour witches and demons. He also gives protection against bullets; the sight of him is forbidden to women.
- 33 Ape deity (Mbotumbo). Ivory Coast: Baule. Wood, white paint, cloth, fibre, 29¼" high. 58.182. Gift of Mr. J. J. Klejman
Unlike Ndyadan, who is used by the society collectively, Mbotumbo is a divinity besought by his individual devotee alone. He may be acquired by any adult male in the society after the fulfillment of certain prescribed conditions, the first and indispensable one being a supernatural sign. Mbotumbo figures in annual agrarian rites; for his services the devotee places a food offering in the bowl held by the figure.
- 34 Ape deity (Ndyadan). Ivory Coast: Baule. Wood, iron, bronze, reed, cotton, 32¼" high. 58.321
Ndyadan is a major deity of the Baule, accessible to all members of the society, both men and women. His original function of protection from lightning was considerably extended and he is appealed to for help in sickness and to realize such wishes as good crops, marriage, offspring, making money and so on. When the figure of Ndyadan is shown in the public square there are dances in his honor.
- 35 Pendant mask. Ivory Coast: Baule. Gold, 3½" high. 60.37
- 36 Gold-weight. Ivory Coast: Baule. Brass, 4½" high. 60.133
- 37 Ring: scorpion. Ivory Coast: Baule. Gold, 2½" long. 59.304
- 38 Animal mask. Ivory Coast: Baule. Gold, 3¾" high. 56.398
- 39 Gold-weight. Ivory Coast: Baule. Brass, 3¾" high. 60.132
These metal objects were cast by the lost wax process, which required a unique design and mold for each object. The brass figures were used as weights, in sets of several dozen each, to measure gold dust, used before European contact as currency. The gold ring and pendant mask were made by the same process as the weights.
- 40 Female figure. Ivory Coast: Baule. Wood, white paint, red and white beads, iron, 20¾" high. 60.85
The stylistic similarities of Nos. 32 and 33 suggest that they have been carved by the same artist.
- 41 Male figure. Ivory Coast: Baule. Wood; traces of white paint; blue, black, ochre and red beads; 21¾" high. 60.84
- 42 Female figure. Ivory Coast: Baule. Wood, glass beads, white paint, 18½" high. 56.365
- 43 Seated figure. Ivory Coast: Baule. Wood, 20" high. 61.36
- 44 Female figure. Ivory Coast, Dabakala: Baule. Wood, traces of white and terra cotta paint, 23" high. 60.130
- 45 Flute player. Ivory Coast: Krinjabo. Clay, 10¾" high. 60.106
Clay figures of this style have been discovered in association with abandoned graves from the time of the ancient kingdom of Krinjabo. They date in part from the seventeenth century, and some of them may be likenesses of rulers. They were originally clothed and ornamented.
- 46 Female figure. Ivory Coast: Guro. Wood, white paint, beads, 25⅞" high. 59.23
Generally regarded as repositories of ancestral spirits, Ivory Coast figures may be as well portraits of individuals or indeed made purely for aesthetic pleasure.
- 47 Mask. Ivory Coast: Guro. Wood, red and black paint, 17⅞" high. EL 114.61. Extended loan from Mrs. Gertrud A. Mellon
Guro art is directed principally toward the making of dance masks. The dances were held to promote fertility.
- 48 Headdress. Ivory Coast: Senufo. Wood; red, black and white paint; 50⅞" high. 60.17
- 49 Mask, Ivory Coast: Senufo, Korubla society. Wood, 23½" l. 56.342
Such masks were used as protection against sorcery. They are popularly known as "firespitter" masks because it is said they were worn at night with burning tinder in the mouth. This one represents a boar.
- 50 Animal mask. Ivory Coast: Senufo. Wood, 12¼" l. 56.258
Worn either at initiation ceremonies or funerals, this mask represents a goat, one of the Senufo clan symbols.
- 51 Mask. Ivory Coast: Senufo. Wood, traces of white and terra cotta paint, 16" high. 59.293
This mask subtly combines the characteristic Senufo bird emblem with the excrescences and vestigial legs of another common Senufo style of mask.
- 52 Ancestor figure: rhythm marker. Ivory Coast: Senufo. Wood, red and white paint, 45⅞" high. 61.24
- 53 Ancestor figure: rhythm marker. Ivory Coast: Senufo. Wood, red and white paint, 38⅞" high. 61.25
Ancestor figures with heavy bases are said to have been used in dances of the men's initiation society, called Lo. The figures were lifted by the arms and struck against the ground with a thumping sound to mark the rhythm of the dance.

54 Ancestor figure: rhythm marker. Ivory Coast, Korhogo, Lataha Village: Senufo-Tyembara. Wood, 42½" h. 58.7

55 Mask. Ivory Coast: Senufo. Bronze, 8¼" high. 61.37
This mask is of a style very characteristic of the Senufo; it is notable because it is cast in bronze, and somewhat smaller than the more common wooden mask, which is worn at dances.

56 Headdress. Ivory Coast: Senufo. Wood, paint, 55¾" high. 60.16
This headdress, formerly polychromed, represents a bird, tribal emblem of the Senufo.

57 Headdress. Ivory Coast: Senufo. Wood, paint, 59¾" h. 60.57

UPPER VOLTA

58 Mask. Upper Volta: Mossi. Wood, 29½" high. 58.173

59 Mask. Upper Volta: Mossi. Wood, black and white paint, 30¾" high. 58.322

Masks from the western Sudan are often surmounted with representations of human figures or animals. This one is unusual because of the highly abstract form the figure takes.

60 Dance headdress. Upper Volta: Mossi. Wood, paint, cord, beads. 15¼" h. 59.267

This abstraction of an antelope was probably worn for crop fertility ceremonies.

61 Antelope headdress. Upper Volta, Aribinda region: Mossi, Kurumba Society. Wood; blue, black, white, terra cotta, umber and orange paint; iron staples; nails; twine; 45¼" high. 60.19

This stylized head, with painted geometrical decoration typical of the Mossi style, was a headdress surmounting a fibre mask. Headdresses of this kind are used in the ritual dances of the young men's society at their annual festivals and at the burial ceremonies of old men of the community by both the Mossi and the older Fulse population whom the Mossi have absorbed.

62 Antelope headdress. Upper Volta: Mossi, Kurumba society. Wood, red, yellow and white paint. 14½" h. 56.380

63 Seat. Upper Volta: Bobo. Wood, 22½" high. 60.34

64 Mask (Do). Upper Volta: Bobo. Wood; black, white and terra cotta paint; twine; 72" high. 57.179

Young men of the Bobo tribe grasped this mask by the handle below the face in their ritual dances at funerals and fertility ceremonies. Long raffia strips attached to the back of the round face hid the wearer; he looked out through the jagged teeth.

65 Mask. Upper Volta: Bobo. Wood; white, red and black paint; braided rope; 51¼" wide. 60.167

Masks of this type, incorporating geometric designs said to be heraldic, were worn at farming fertility ceremonies.

66 Mask. Upper Volta: Bobo. Wood; black, terra cotta and white paint; 14½" high. 60.116

Used in agricultural rites, Bobo painted masks often represent the warthog.

67 Six masks. Upper Volta, Boni Village: Bobo. Wood, paint. a: 9⅛" l., b: 14" l., c: 8" h., d: 9⅜" h., e: 10⅞" h., f: 8½" h. Gift of Warner Meunsterberger. 59.263

This series of masks, representing both animal and human images, was used during fertility ceremonies.

MALI

68 Hippopotamus. Mali: Dogon. Wood, 20½" long. 59.284

The Dogon protective or ancestral figure with its upraised arms (see no. 56) is often used as a decorative motif for the adornment of ritual and functional objects; we see a variant on the sides of this hippopotamus.

69 Food vessel. Mali: Dogon. Wood, metal staples, 33¾" high. 60.39
Ritual bowls of this type were reserved for the exclusive use of the Hogon, or spiritual leaders, of the Dogon.

70 Ancestor figure. Mali: Dogon. Wood, 17" h. 60.18

71 Ancestor figure. Mali: Dogon. Wood, 82⅞" high. 58.97

The significance of this figure is unknown. The upstretched arms (which appear frequently on archaic "Tellem" figures and on door reliefs) are said to represent a gesture imploring rain, but this is problematical.

This is probably the largest figure sculpture yet known from the Dogon area and is indeed of exceptional size for all Africa. When found it was in four pieces: the head, the right arm and shoulder, a fragment of the right thigh, and the rest of the figure. Surface erosions on the neck, abdomen, right buttock, right thigh, and other smaller areas have been patched with plaster.

72 Mask. Mali: Dogon. Wood, paint, string, 33" l. 59.288

73 Mask. Mali: Dogon. Wood, traces of paint, 43⅝" high. 61.5

Dogon masks are used primarily in funeral rites to expel the souls of the dead and in memorial ceremonies. There are a great number of types representing various animals, birds or human beings. Each has its own name, special song and dance, and refers to a particular myth.

74 Housepost. Mali, Bandiagara district? Dogon. Wood, 74¼" high. 58.328

Only a few examples of these posts from a shrine building (to-gouna) have been collected, the others being similarly carved with human or animal figures.

75 Musicians. Mali: Dogon. Wood, 15½" high. 59.181

Double figures are common in Dogon art, most often representing a mythological ancestral couple; it is very likely that this traditional double figure composition suggested a similar form for the portrayal of the pair of musicians.

76 Boy's initiation mask (N'tomo). Mali, Segou district: Bambara.

Wood, shell, seeds, latex, 29" high. 59.286

The N'tomo society of the Bambara organizes much of the life of the boys of the tribe until the time of circumcision when, as men, they enter the other societies. The mask is worn by those about to be circumcised and is regarded as the receptacle of the evil power which must be shed during the ceremony.

- 77 Female fertility figure. Mali, Bamako district: Bambara. Wood, brass tacks, thread ornaments, 24½" high. 56.223

The small female figures of the Bambara, which have been known for some time, have usually been called fertility figures and are said to have been placed near, or around altars. The more recently discovered larger figures whose attitude and attributes suggest high rank, are known generally as "Queen figures." They may portray chiefs and chiefs' wives and thus be ancestral figures of a more general kind.

- 78 Ancestral figure. Mali, Bougouni district: Bambara. Wood, 48½" high. 59.110

- 79 Ancestral figure. Mali, Bougouni district: Bambara. Wood, 46¾" h. 59.307

- 80 Mask. Mali, Bougouni district: Bambara. Wood, white paint, 56¼" high. 61.67

This sculpture, representing an elephant, was probably not worn as a mask, but rather used as a sacred altar, like other such objects from the Bambara.

- 81 Mask. Mali, Marka style: Bambara. Wood, brass, paint, cotton. 11½" h. 59.186

Marka masks are always used in pairs, to represent a man and a woman courting.

GUINEA

- 82 Head (Elek). Guinea: Baga. Wood, 31⅝" high. 57.107

This head is said to be carried by members of the Simo Society at dances held after harvest, at the threshing of grain. It is also taken to funerals of members of the society. The apertures in the head held small horns containing magical powders.

- 83 Headdress (Nimba). Guinea: Baga, Simo Society. Wood, 46½" high. 56.261

Used in the fertility ceremonies of the Simo, a secret society of the Baga, this great shoulder mask or nimba was fashioned so that its considerable weight could be borne by one or more tribesmen whose presence was concealed by an enormous raffia skirt extending from the shoulder braces to the knees.

- 84 Mask (Banda). Guinea: Baga. Wood, paint. 52½" h. 57.181

The fusion of human, crocodile and antelope features is typical of this type of mask. It was worn on top of the head in a horizontal position and also belongs to the Simo society.

- 85 Female figure. Guinea: Baga. Wood, 25¼" h. 59.118

It is believed that these figures were used as altar decorations for the Simo society.

- 86 Animal mask. Guinea: Baga, Landouman sub-tribe. Wood, metal tacks, 30½" l. 61.76

This is yet another accessory for the Simo society.

- 87 Serpent (Kakilambe). Guinea: Baga. Wood; black, white and terra cotta paint; 54½" high. 58.336

The snake is an important religious symbol for many tribes in this area of Africa. However, the myths or legends connected with them vary greatly. These huge Baga representations of pythons were unknown until very recently; consequently little information about them is available. Since most Baga sculpture is connected with the Simo society, it is likely that these may be also. They represent the daughters of the goddess Niniganni, the "dispenser of riches."

- 88 Helmet mask. Guinea: Mendi. Wood, 25" h. 60.129

The Bundu society, one of the few women's secret societies of Africa, used these masks for their initiations.

- 89 Head. Guinea: Kissi. Stone, 6¾" long. 61.22

Many stone heads and figures have been found in Guinea and Sierra Leone; unrelated to later indigenous art, their age and origin are uncertain. They are revered by the inhabitants, who believe them to be of divine origin.

SIERRA LEONE

- 90 Head. Sierra Leone: Kissi. Stone, 10¼" high. 60.35

CAMEROUN

- 91 Head. Cameroun: Bamum? Wood, 22⅞" high. 57.301. Gift of Mrs. Gertrud A. Mellon

Large, almost life-size heads such as this may have been used in secret societies as ancestral figures.

- 92 Stool. Cameroun. Wood; red, white, light and dark blue beads; cowrie shells; 19⅞" high. 60.21

- 93 Drinking horn. Cameroun: Bamum. Horn; red, blue, yellow and white beads; 16½" long. 56.358

Beadwork such as this is typical of the Cameroun area and was also used to decorate masks, figures and stools. The beads are glass and obtained from European traders.

GABON

- 94 Funerary figure (Mbulu ngulu). Gabon: Bakota. Wood, copper, brass, 21½" high. 57.230

A plated figure which was placed over baskets containing the bones of ancestors on the family shrine, this is a general rather than a specific representation. The concave form of the face may indicate that it is female. The areas around the face probably are stylizations of the headdress, while the lozenge shape below is a summary indication of the arms.

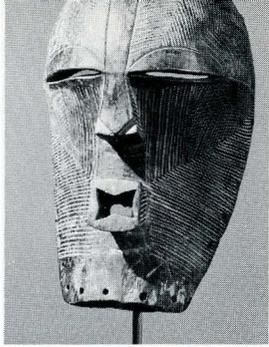
- 95 Ghost mask. Gabon, Ogowe River area: Balumbo? Wood, red and white paint, 11⅞" high. 56.403. Gift of Mr. Eliot Elisofon

Such masks, representing ancestral or guardian female spirits,

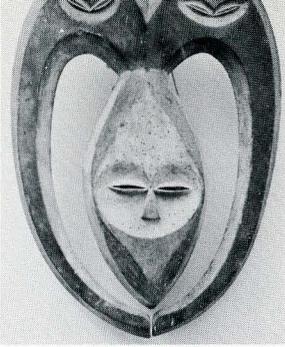
103



108



119



were worn for funerary and initiation rites by both men's and women's societies, the latter greatly feared in this area of Africa. In the women's ceremonies, only the leader wore a mask, painted white to indicate the color of spirits. The lozenge-shaped scars on the forehead and cheeks were traditionally depicted in groups of nine.

- 96 Mask. Gabon. Wood, white paint, 11 3/4" high. 56.343
White-faced masks are common in Gabon. They appear among many tribes in the area, often at points far removed from each other, and in a variety of shapes and forms. They are frequently associated with female or ghost spirits.
- 97 Funerary figure. Gabon: Fang. Wood, 14" high. 59.104
These figures, believed to embody powerful protective spirits, are attached to boxes containing ancestral skulls. At intervals both figures and skulls are cleaned and anointed with materials intended to rejuvenate their powers.
- 98 Throwing knife. Gabon: Fang. Iron, wood handle bound in brass wire, 10 3/4" long. EL.160.58. Extended loan of Dr. Burton Benedict
- 99 Reliquary figure. Gabon: Ambete. Wood, paint, metal, 36 1/4" h. 56.241
- 100 Reliquary figure. Gabon: Ambete. Wood, paint, 21 3/4" h. Gift of Gustave Schindler. 57.270
These figures were used to hold relics in their hollowed out bodies of deceased society members.

CONGO (LEOPOLDVILLE)

- 101 Maternity figure (Ntadi). Congo (Leopoldville): Baboma. Stone, 14 1/4" high. 61.47
According to the traditions of the area, this fertility figure represents a sister or niece of a chief without a male heir, who was enabled to exercise the prerogatives of the chieftaincy until such time as the new chief was named.
- 102 Stool. Congo (Leopoldville): Baluba. Wood, blue and white beads, 23 1/4" high. 58.55
A decorated utilitarian object made to enhance the prestige of an important tribal or village personage.
- 103 Ancestor figure. Congo (Leopoldville), Kivu province, Kimano village: Baluba, Babuy sub-tribe. Wood, 31 1/4" h. 61.27
Ancestors were worshipped by the Baluba to help maintain the life force. This one is said to be a portrait of Akessa, an important chief of the 19th Century.
- 104 Mask. Congo (Leopoldville): Baluba. Wood, black and white paint, 14 5/8" h. 56.56
Much as the Kifwebe mask from the neighboring Basonge, this mask was used in connection with a change of ruler. It was also worn at the visit of an important person.
- 105 Head. Congo (Leopoldville): Warega. Ivory, 8 5/8" high. 61.65
This is the largest Warega head yet known. The state of the
- ivory indicates considerable age. This was a fetish that ranked extremely high; it was accessible only after the contribution of a large sacrifice. Formerly the head was surmounted by a small cloth or fibre cap.
- 106 Head. Congo (Leopoldville): Warega. Ivory, cowrie shells, grass, 8 1/2" high. 57.249
Many Warega carvings are small in scale and made of ivory. A great part of this art is consecrated to a powerful secret society, Mwami, in which small masks and figures are used as emblems of rank.
- 107 Cup. Congo (Leopoldville): Bushongo. Wood, traces of tukula powder, 8 1/4" high. 59.7.
A palm wine cup in the form of a human head. Each of the geometric motives decorating this cup has a distinct name and symbolic meaning. These cups were an important part of ceremonies connected with certain secret societies, and they appear in many and various forms among the Bushongo.
- 108 Mask (Kifwebe). Congo (Leopoldville): Basonge. Wood, red and white paint, 17 1/2" high. 58.171
Kifwebe secret society masks were used in ceremonies connected with the death of the king and the appointment of a new one. It is thought that they may have derived their great spiritual power from their use in sacrificial rites.
- 109 Mask. Congo (Leopoldville): Wabembe. Wood, 13 7/8" h. EL 183.58. Extended loan of Mrs. Meta Legat
- 110 Ancestor figure. Congo (Leopoldville): Bakongo. Wood, 13 5/8" h. 56.351
Although the underlying theme of this carving is maternity, such figures were used as representations of ancestors. It is possible that the mother of an important witch doctor is represented here.
- 111 Fetish figure (Konde). Congo (Leopoldville): Bakongo. Wood, paint, nails, beads, cloth, shells, iron, twine, leather, 23 3/8" h. 59.154
The addition of nails on each occasion of use to this figure added to its magical power. It was used both for protection and actively against other individuals as well.
- 112 Mask. Lower Congo (Leopoldville). Wood, 14 5/8" h. 56.347
- 113 Throwing knife. Congo (Leopoldville), Mobangi River area. Iron, braided leather, 14 1/2" long. EL.166.58. Extended loan of Dr. Burton Benedict
- 114 Throwing knife. Congo (Leopoldville), Ubangi and Welle Rivers area. Iron, copper, 11 3/4" long. 58.224
- 115 Throwing knife. Congo (Leopoldville): Azande. Iron, braided string, 17 7/8" long. EL.163.58. Extended loan of Dr. Burton Benedict
- 116 Throwing knife. Congo (Leopoldville), Ubangi and Welle Rivers area: probably Azande. Iron, braided string, 19" long. 58.225
Hurlled with a circular motion at the legs of an enemy, the

throwing knife is apparently of Libyan origin; it is thought that the prototype form was brought to central Africa and there evolved into the many varieties now found there and to the west.

- 117 Knife. Congo (Leopoldville) : Mangbetu. Brass and ivory, 15½" long. EL.177.58. Extended loan of Dr. Burton Benedict
Thought to have been made as badges of office for chiefs, such knives may as well have been used for currency.

- 118 Vessel. Congo (Leopoldville) : Mangbetu. Clay, 11½" h. 60.121
One of the few ceramic styles of Africa, these jars were used to hold water and wine.

CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE)

- 119 Mask. Congo (Brazzaville) : Bakwele. Wood; white, rust and umber paint; 20¾" high. 56.218

Of the several tribal styles from the Middle Congo, perhaps the least familiar is that of the Bakwele. Typical of their masks is the heart-shaped treatment of the face, the narrow lozenge-form eyes, the smooth planes of the wood, and the subdued color. The mask was worn vertically before the face and is believed to represent one of the tribal demon-spirits.

- 120 Mask. Congo (Brazzaville) : Bakwele. Wood, black and white paint, 17¼" h. 57.236

- 121 Mask. Congo (Brazzaville) : Bakwele. Wood, black, white and traces of red paint, 30½" h. 56.216

- 122 Mask. Congo (Brazzaville). Wood, red and white paint, 14⅝" high. 60.157. Gift of the Matthew T. Mellon Foundation

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

- 123 Figure. Central African Republic: Azande. Wood, 7⅞" high. 61.48

This figure may have been used in the rites of Mani, a powerful secret society unusual for the fact that women and children participated as well as men.

CHAD

- 124 Female figure. Chad: Kenga. Wood, yellow paint, metal band, nails, 11⅞" high. 56.350

These figures seem unrelated stylistically to other art traditions indigenous to the Chad area; there is however a similarity to sudanese styles to the west. As caravans trading between west Africa and the eastern Horn long traversed this region, this traffic may have influenced the development of the art of Chad.

EGYPTIAN SUDAN

- 125 Ancestor figure. Egyptian Sudan: Bari. Wood, paint, 17" h. 57.233

Not much is known of the art of these people. It is probable, however, that this is ancestral in significance.



71

SOMALIA

- 126 Headrest. Somalia. Wood, 6½" high. 56.354

MALAGASY

- 127 Funerary figure. Malagasy, Tulyear province, Massif du Mackay. Wood, about 42" high. Collection Mr. John Tunstall

This carving was obtained from the royal tombs of a lost matriarchal dynasty which ruled the southern part of the island until 150 years ago. Largely ancestor worshippers, the Malagesque still slaughter oxen at burials; near the tomb marked by this object were about thirty other graves and the horns of over 300 oxen.