

# THE LUBA SHANKADI STYLE

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Luba art, considered to be one of the most important in central Africa, has been only summarily studied, probably due to the immensity of the region and to its diversity of styles. F. Olbrechts was the first to attempt a study of the various tendencies in Luba art, which is generally characterized by its representation of female figures; although his categories seem too

schematic, we have availed ourselves of certain of his suggestions.

The first obstacle in research is the extreme cultural heterogeneity of the region, which explains the contradictions one encounters in the basic works. Because of the complexity of the context and the artistic forms, we have been obliged to rely, at the outset, on purely formal distinctions, dividing Luba art into morphological categories based on function. This has enabled us to establish several major styles and within these to isolate at times the work of a certain workshop or even of a particular artist. Our initial category consists of upright figures and from it the subsequent categories are derived. This method of work requires a catalogue as complete as possible; for this reason, we would be grateful for a max-

imum of information from owners of Luba works of art! The categories which we have established are the following:

A. STATUETTES AND FETISHES (Fig. 1). The distinction between these two types of objects is not clear. The fetish, according to some, is a statuette associated with magical ingredients placed in a horn or shell or sometimes merely bound to the head. Through a particular rite these fetishes can acquire a protective power.

B. CARYATID STOOLS (Figs. 3, 6). These operate on all levels as symbols of authority. One finds them among the symbols of the *Mulohwe* (king) whose authority extends from the Lualaba to the Lubilash Rivers, and also among the symbols of the tribal chiefs. Furthermore, Colle reports that every household has a stool for the head of the family. Jack D. Flam wrote an interesting article on these objects (*African Arts*, Vol. IV, No. 2).

C. HEADRESTS (Cover, Figs. 8-10). The principal function of these objects is to preserve the elaborate coiffures worn by the Luba. In addition, headrests are used in divination in conjunction with the *katatola*. This custom seems to have originated in the Songye region.

D. BOWL-BEARERS (Figs. 4, 7, 13). These take the form of a squatting or sitting woman holding a calabash. The authors hold divergent views regarding their function. Some believe that the object may serve in divination as it is supposedly inhabited by the protective spirit *Vidyé*, whom the diviner consults. According to Servaes Peeraer, the calabash is filled with white earth and various ingredients, and the client places money or other valuables in it. The diviner then coats both his client and the figurine with white earth to establish contact with the spirit.

E. KATATOLA (Figs. 8, 12). The *katatola*, a small, rectangular frame on which a head is mounted, is used in divination. The heads are female, judging by the coiffures and in some cases by the facial scarifications. The term derives from the verb *kutotola*, which means "to hit several times in order to obtain a result." *Katatola* would designate an object used for that purpose. The term is most often used by white people; *lubuko* is more commonly heard, but it also refers to the diviner and all practices relating to div-



1. STATUETTE BY KILOKO, COLLECTED BY S. PEERAER IN BUSANGU, 1936. 13 1/2". MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE, TERVUREN.

2. STATUETTE. 12 1/2". MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.



(OPPOSITE) 3. CARYATID STOOL, CLASSICAL SHANKADI STYLE. 14 1/2". MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.



ination. According to Theuws, the *katatola* is fashioned from the wood of the *Kikwebai*, the sap of which is used as a vomitive. By analogy, the *katatola* is supposed to "vomit the truth." According to a precise ceremony, it responds to simple questions requiring a yes or no answer. The diviner and his client are seated on either side of a headrest placed on the ground, and each introduces either his index and middle fingers or his middle and third fingers into the opening of the *katatola*. They then slide the object over the upper part of the headrest and the diviner asks a series of questions. If the answer is negative, the *katatola* moves from left to right and sometimes in circles; if the answer is affirmative, it moves up and down, rapping the headrest.

**F. MASKS.** The Luba have several types of masks. In certain regions, the *kifuebe*, or mask, seems to play a role in funeral rites and in the ancestral cult. By comparing this category with the others, we believe it possible, in certain cases, to show similarities which allow the attribution of a particular mask to a known style. However, the problem is too complex to be considered here.

**G. AMULETS AND GOOD-LUCK CHARMS.** Fashioned out of the teeth of the hippopotami or wart-hogs, these are generally anthropomorphic and serve either to ward off ill fortune or to obtain the favor of the spirits. There are two types of amulets: small figures with closed eyes, usually with their hair arranged in the

shape of a cross; and elongated objects with a human head at either end. In the first case, the object invariably represents an ancestor after whom it is named; in the second, it probably relates to the representation of Kalala Munga, the spirit of life and death. Indeed, the Luba believe that their misfortunes or illnesses derive from either the living (that is, from sorcerers) or from the spirits of the dead. It is to protect themselves in advance from malignant actions that they turn to Kalala Munga.

**H. BOWL AND ARROW HOLDERS, CHIEF STAFFS, HATCHETS AND PINS** (Figs. 14-16). These objects symbolize the power of the chief. The pins apparently serve to untangle hair. We have grouped these different objects together because of their basic cylindrical shapes.

**I. COPPER STATUETTE CASTS** (these are poorly molded).

**J. ANTHROPOMORPHOUS POTTERY.**

Further series of objects exist—mostly headrests and stools—with purely geometric patterns; their study will be possible only after we have examined all geometric decorations in Luba art. Whenever possible, we isolated a group of objects and then attempted to localize that particular group; field photographs of individuals wearing ornaments characteristic of a particular area were often helpful.

We have found it worthwhile to submit an ensemble of relationships which we feel can be isolated within one of the styles, the Luba Shankadi style. The term "Shankadi" is often used to designate the Baluba of the Shaba region (formerly Katanga) and particularly those of the area around Kamina. In fact, be it from a historical, a linguistic or an ethnographic point of view, the origin of the term and the populations which it includes are not precise. According to E. Verhulpen, the Luba Shankadi were originally members of the first and second Luba empires, and later all those who spoke the language of the second Luba empire were



(ABOVE) 4. BOWL-BEARER, SHANKADI STYLE. PRIVATE COLLECTION.



(RIGHT) 5. WOMAN WITH TRADITIONAL HAIRDRESS.



6. CARYATID STOOL, MWANZA SUBSTYLE WITH HEMBA INFLUENCE. 20". MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.



7. BOWL-BEARER, MWANZA SUBSTYLE. 20 1/2". MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.



8. HEADREST AND KATATOLA, CASCADE SUBSTYLE. MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.

designated as such.

According to the same author, the Baluba of the west (the Bambo) call the Baluba of the east by the name of "Baluba ba Sangali" or "Baluba Shankadi." The term is said to come from the expression "bantu ba Sangali" (i.e. "people of Sangali"), Sangali being the nickname of the second emperor of the Baluba, Ilunga Liu.

Given these differences, then, we have decided to designate arbitrarily by the term "Shankadi" the populations of the region bordered in the west by the Lubilash River, in the south by the Lubudi and the Lupelu, in the east by the Lualaba (the name of the Congo River in Katanga) and by the lakes Upemba and Kisale, and in the north by the Lubengule River.

Certain characteristics in the representation of their figures distinguish works of the Shankadi style (Figs. 3, 4) from the rest of Luba art. Facial markings present certain constants: the eyes are oval and often slit, like coffee beans; the mouth is similarly shaped and usually the lips are pursed, as if pouting; the form of the ears varies from a simple crescent in relief to a triangle bordered by a curved pad; and the nose is small and triangular.

The second identifying feature of this style is the headdress, composed of a series of crests which descend onto the sides of the head and the nape of the neck (Fig. 5). In certain villages, particularly those of the Bene Nsungu, the crest at the nape is en-

larged and widened; for this reason it is often called the "pagoda coiffure." Several variations in this headdress exist. In some cases the crests are small and wave-like; in others the hair is dressed in a superimposed double fan which presents a cascading coiffure. Sometimes a braid is added, either rolled on the top of the forehead or extending from forehead to nape. Another style is composed of a series of chignons. One finds the latter everywhere, but especially in the villages to the west of Kamina and as far as the Kalundwe, where the Luba Shankadi are also to be found.

The third characteristic of the Luba Shankadi style is the scarification, which is inspired, as pointed out by Peeraer, by motifs which decorate the calabash and ceramics. These motifs, which have their origin in basket-work, are most often small diapers placed around the navel of the figure, with two horizontal lines on either side. The body is cylindrical and frequently schematic. The breasts are small, conical, very pointed, and placed high—almost under the armpits.

The Shankadi style is finally characterized by a geometric pattern engraved on the edges of the pedestals and trays for the headrests and stools, comprised of either diamonds, chevrons or squares.

After studying several hatchets from all the Luba regions, we concluded that those with blades coming directly out of the mouth of the head usually belonged to the Shankadi style. In contrast, the head on a Hamba hatchet is located on the extremity opposite the blade.

With this definition of the Shankadi style we have been able to isolate substyles within it. One of these is the Sungu substyle (Cover, Figs. 1, 13-15). The Bene Sungu are a tribe apparently incorporated into the Luba empire and are therefore considered part of the Luba Shankadi. According to Verhulpen, the first occupants of the Sungu region were reunited by Twite Kanza Mwalaba, who originates from the court of Mulopwe Kumwimba Gombe. This monarch reigned around the year 1800. Kanza was invested as chief with the title of Sungu Muluba, and the Sungu population thus became vassals of the great Luba empire. The Sungu are to be found to the north and northeast of Kamina, between that city and the lakes of Upemba and Kisale, in the basin of the Lovoi and Lujima Rivers.

For the Bene Sungu, the pagoda coiffure is a fan of hair placed around and above the nape of the neck. The waves, rather than encircling the head, start at the face and go towards the back of the head in superimposed arcs along each side. They are sometimes replaced by chignons or by a central braid. This coiffure was very common up to 1928. On a canework frame, it took about fifty hours to complete and



lasted two or three months, requiring a special wooden pillow for sleeping.

The works of this sub-style are characterized by a general cylindrical form onto which the artist seems to have sculpted anecdotal details. The head is an elongated oval in the lower part of which are grouped the mouth, nose and eyes. As in the major style, the eyes and mouth resemble coffee beans. Eyebrows are not indicated. The ears are arc-shaped and jut out. Another characteristic detail is the forehead scarification, consisting of a series of little squares superimposed above the nose. Very long and rectilinear arms encircle a cylindrical body decorated with diamond-shaped scarifications on the belly. Two horizontal lines are added on either side of the navel, which is a raised disk. Breasts are pointed or disk-shaped and are placed high on the torso, legs are elongated and schematic, and the back is bare and completely flat.

We know of approximately twenty examples of work belonging to this sub-style. Among them are those of an individual artist, Kiloko (Cover, Figs. 1, 13, 14), who worked in the village of Busangu, about seventy kilometers from Kamina. Four pieces were acquired from him by Peeraer around 1936, and we believe that at least four others can also be attributed to Kiloko. His works are distinguished from other sculptures of the sub-style by the harshness of the treatment and by the greater emphasis placed upon the rendering of volume.

Within the Shankadi zone, there is a tendency towards abstraction. The origin of the works which we have defined as being of the "wedge-face" sub-style (Fig. 12) has not been precisely determined, but they may come from north of Kamina. In fact, the schematization of the lower part of the face allows one to compare them to works from the meeting ground between

the Luba and the Songye—a zone in which the Songye influence is evident in Luba works by the angular treatment of the jaw. This tendency appears exclusively in the works presenting the coiffure in pagoda form, and seems to be the artist's answer to the equilibrium problem posed by the extreme volumes of the hair. This solution is already evident in the works of the Master of the "Cascade" (Figs. 9, 10), where the horizontal line of the coiffure extends to that of the jaw, creating the triangular or wedge-face profile. For the more schematic works—generally the *katatola*—function seems to have been a factor in determining the simplicity.

The Mwanza sub-style is a good example of the contact between two styles (Figs. 6, 7, 16); therefore we will discuss it here, even though it could just as easily be linked to the Hembra style as to the Shankadi. A Catholic mission at Mwanza supervised the production of female bowl-bearers of identical style. A series of earlier works of superior quality was also found in the area. One of the characteristics of this sub-style is the contrast between the marked

breadth of the shoulders and the roundness of the face—a Hembra influence. The eyes, deeply set into pronounced sockets, still bear the form of a coffee bean which is particular to the Shankadi style. However, the mouth is here a semi-hexagonal prism with a double incision; it is characteristic of this sub-style as is the coiffure which is made up of a crown preceded by waves that fall over the forehead in two points. At times, the Hembra influence appears in the form of a coiffure in the shape of a cross. The face is decorated with scarifications, one beginning at the top of the nose and similar to those of the Bene Sungu, the other linking the external corner of the eye to the ear. The neck and head are placed behind the main axis of the body. The body has typically Shankadi breasts and scarifications, and a supplementary motif surrounds the breasts and ends on the arms. The back, unlike the back of a Shankadi style figure, wears numerous scarifications. Bowl-bearers in this sub-style (Fig. 7) carry bowls which are covered and ornamented. These works, although retaining their own characteristics, bear Shankadi inspiration and a



10. HEADREST. MASTER OF THE CASCADE. THE HAIR ARRANGEMENT OF THE RIGHT FIGURE IS IN THE FORM OF A CROSS, CHARACTERISTIC OF THE LUBA HEMBA. PRIVATE COLLECTION.



11. WOMAN WITH TRADITIONAL HAIRDRESS.

(OPPOSITE) 9. HEADREST. MASTER OF THE CASCADE. SINGLE CARYATID. MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.



12. KATATOLA "WEDGE FACE" SUBSTYLE. 4 1/2".  
MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.



13. BOWL-BEARER BY KILOKO. COLLECTED BY  
S. PEERAER IN BUSANGU, 1936. 10 1/4".  
MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.

certain Hemba influence which is sometimes noticeable in the coiffure and more often in the soft relief of the face.

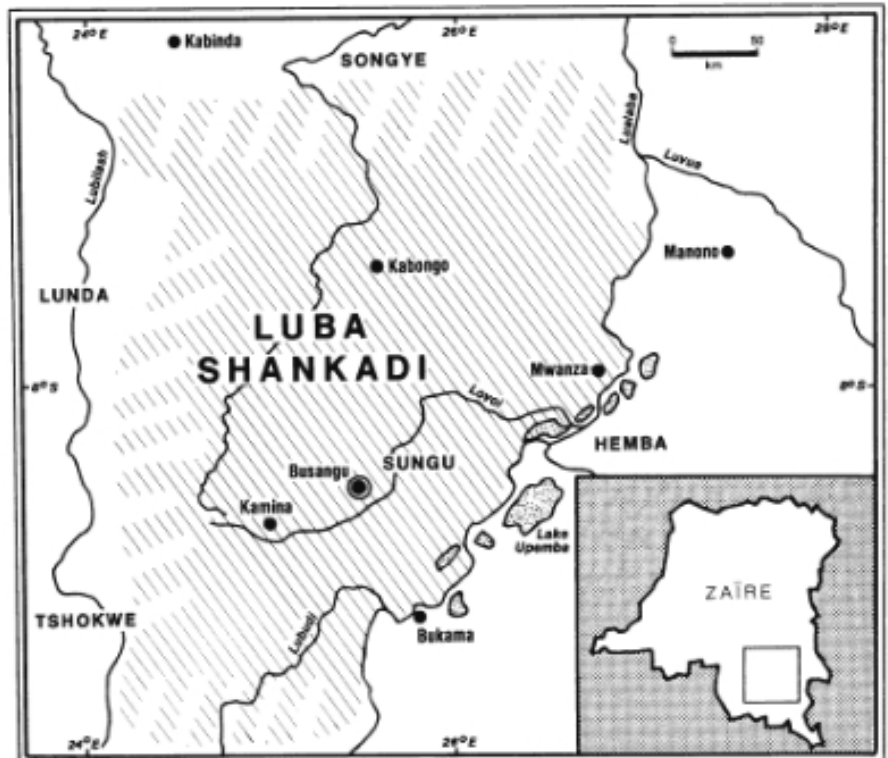
William Fagg was one of the first to bring the Cascade sub-style (Figs. 8-10) to light. It consists of an ensemble of headrests where the pagoda-like coiffure is of great decorative importance. We have distinguished a group of works within this sub-style which, because of their resemblance and their exceptional quality, seem to be the work of one artist. At first, the striking aspect of the Cascade sub-style originates with the general equilibrium of the lines. A rigorous play of geometric forms provokes the maximum possible decorative effect and, while stressing the impression of stability that stems from these works, creates a feeling of airiness. The headrests, supported by two figures, are constructed on a network of horizontal and vertical lines on one hand, and on diagonals on the other, creating a composition which is one of the most complex in African art. As the headrests are conceived for lateral viewing, the profiles of the figures are stressed. The eyebrows, made of accentuated folds, emphasize the coffee-bean eyes which are placed almost as if they were full-face. The pug nose is very schematic and its tip is on the same vertical axis as the mouth which seems to pout. The ears are crescent-shaped, partially encircling a triangle. The jaw, always horizontal, extends into the coiffure in the more beautiful works.

The importance accorded to the pagoda coiffure is the principal characteristic of this sub-style. Here, and above all in the works of the Master of the Cascade, it

reaches the high point of its development. The airy quality, with the play between the horizontal and oblique lines, is accentuated even more by the lines of the hair that emphasize the movement.

The small body is cylindrical and usually has neither breasts nor scarifications. The artists make the best of the limbs. The most common position is that of two persons holding each other, one by the back, the other by the shoulders. The slender, elongated arms end in hands with accentuated fingers. Having never come across men wearing this hair style, we believe that the two figures represented are female. If such is the case, a mythological interpretation is possible, but further research is needed. Each woman has a leg folded beneath her and the other is outstretched, touching her companion's bended knee.

In the works of the Master of the Cascade, the arms and legs, curves and angles, forms and spaces all complement each other, forming a network of wood which is unique in the art of central Africa. The rim of the base and the two extremities of the support are decorated with characteristic incisions; these are mostly triangles arranged in chevrons, but can also consist of square or rectangular decorations. We know of only thirteen works of the Cascade sub-style, among them a *katatola* and a headrest with two caryatids (both in the Museum of Tervuren, Brussels), and a second double headrest which is more schematic (in the Museum voor Land-en Volkenkunde, Rotterdam). Although our study is far from being exhaustive, we feel that it is possible to attribute ten works to the Master of the Cascade.<sup>2</sup> He seems also to



have produced headrests with single caryatids and with a circular base (Fig. 9). We have attributed these works to him because of the similarity in the treatment of the headrest.<sup>7</sup>

The Shankadi style is undoubtedly one of the most important among the extraordinary variety of Luba art. The coherence of this style is impressive, although the limited choice of works presented here may seem arbitrary when considering the differences that appear between the sub-styles. Indeed, the Shankadi style, when examined in the context of Luba art as a whole, presents an obvious unity. The facial features, coiffure, form of the body, scarifications, and decorations on the supports are stylistic characteristics of the Luba Shankadi and differentiate it from the other great styles of Luba art. Shankadi works remain typically Luba by their realism, an iconography chiefly dominated by feminine figures, the softness of the relief which is particularly evident in the rendering of the face, and the limited importance of the lower limbs as opposed to the lengthened arms.

Several aesthetic tendencies, present in other Luba styles, are developed at different levels in the Shankadi style. The most important is the partiality to decoration which at times weakens the cohesion to the point of becoming anecdotic—something that Kiloko cannot avoid. Most of the time, however, this decorative option is tempered by a geometrization of the elements. The relationship between these two tendencies, which can vary greatly from one work to another, is assuredly one of the essential criteria of distinction between different groups of works. In the works of Kiloko, the decorative prevails over the geometric; yet, in other pieces, the geometric can be so rigorous as to produce nearly abstract sculpture. In our opinion, a point of equilibrium between the geometric and the decorative is attained in the works of the Master of the Cascade. The synthesis obtained in his compositions seems to us, without ignoring a certain morphological determination inherent in the object, to sacrifice volume to a network of lines in one plane.

We have also mentioned certain peripheral sub-styles of the Shankadi Confederacy; these pose numerous problems to which solutions can only be proposed after the study of the constituent styles of Luba art has been completed. Perhaps Kanyok influence exists in the west—insofar as one is able to clearly define Kanyok art which, for the moment, seems to be limited to one workshop. There are also Songye influences in the north, and Tshokwe and Lunda influences in the south. Mwanza, to the east, seems to embody the transition between the plastic art of the Shankadi and that of the Hemba. This sub-style, like the works of Kiloko, has undergone European influence.



14. PIN ATTRIBUTED TO KILOKO. 8".  
MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.



15. HATCHET.  
BENE SUNGU SUBSTYLE. 16 1/2".  
MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.



16. (DETAIL) CHIEF STAFF, MWANZA SUBSTYLE.  
WHOLE STAFF, 68".  
MUSEE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE.

One of the most interesting results of this study has been the isolation of an ensemble of works which, by reason of their similarities, can only have been the work of one artist or of one workshop. Whether Kiloko or the Master of the Cascade, artists have managed to extract from the latent tendencies of the Shankadi style a personal interpretation without renouncing tribal canons. Modern artistic and ethnological research is attempting to learn more about the personalities of various artists. It is difficult work but very promising, and will undoubtedly develop in the future. □

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challenge to the skill of the artist with his chisel.

At present the MaShona groups seem to be organizing themselves around two 'schools', although the association seems as much one of relationship and acquaintance as evidence of a deliberate policy of working within some specific artistic style and form. There is the Chinmasaka School founded by Edward Ngoro at Gumbanjera with the help of his wife Jane who runs the local trading store. Ngoro set about gathering a nucleus of dedicated artists to work for their own success. The first to join was Douglas Sande who had been working in the capital of the country, Harari. Next to come was John Karikayi who has a unique eye for portrayal of realistic still life.

Secondly there is the Nyadundu School which is a large but loosely-attached group founded and inspired by the Takawira family, several of whom have already achieved considerable international recognition through the display of their works at the recent show at the Rodin Museum in Paris: John Takawira, Clever Machisa, Sylvester Mubayi and Bernard Manyandure. Their unusual abstract sculptures at this show were all purchased by museums and collectors, including the distinguished connoisseur M. Charles Ratton. Other promising younger artists now associating with this group include Patrick Mukawira (also of the Takawira family), Richard Chiro, Elias Fungirayi and Fedilis Sanyahanga. Douglas Kaiso, who has introduced portrait sculpture in stone, and Patrick Manjoro are nominally associated with the group. Manjoro sees people and life around him, including the spirit world, with such a flare that any piece of his will catch the eye.

Clearly there is continuing evidence of important new work being produced by the Shona people.

Ian Fraser Johnston

### Letters Continued from page 3

The article on Josef Herman's collection of miniatures was a refreshing counterpoint to all of those articles on huge important museum collections (cf. the Museum of African Art article in the same issue). The pieces did not have to be described in grandiose terms, for their loveliness was evidence enough; the tone of the brief text was not one of self-serving pomposity but one of modesty and intimacy well-suited to its subject. If I had my choice of African collections to see, I would opt for the Herman collection, merely on the basis of its straightforward presentation.

Earl Mathias

Liverpool, England

As a new subscriber to your magazine, I was thrilled to find that I was able to identify some of the pieces in the recent African textile and jewelry show after reading my first issue! (Spring 1973) Not only could I point out the Zulu beadwork (thanks to



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Ann Lang and Bronwyn Brottem's article) but I astounded my husband and friends by challenging the Museum of Modern Art's Hausa attribution for one of the blankets—it was identical to the blankets shown in "The Wool Blankets of the Peul of Mali" by Pascal Imperato, M.D. At this rate, I'll be an expert on African art by the end of Volume VII!

Vivian Flourney  
Los Angeles, Calif.

I regret the condescending attitude toward Makonde art expressed by several contributors and letter writers. As with all artistic endeavor, there are those who create and innovate and those who merely plagiarize. Unfortunately, the latter usually predominate and in this instance, this partially reflects the manipulation of the tourist market by unscrupulous dealers. To lump such artists as Robati and Pesa Yakobo, Siwakim and Mwanjema with the practitioners of junk is a mistake. To correct this impression one should read Tony Stout's *Modern Makonde Sculpture* and look into the work of Elimo Njau's *Paa Ya Paa* Gallery and Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya.

Fred Gilbert

New Haven, Connecticut

As a faithful attendant of the African art exhibits, I have been surprised to see consistent showings of few private collections which were at best 20 years old. They were usually owned by the well known nouveau riche of our industrial era.

This in itself would be nice if it had not been done at a virtual exclusion of great art from truly old private collections.

I am addressing my questions to the museum directors in the United States: could it be that the public is merely shown collections of the individuals whose donations are expected to "enrich" your own museum walls?

I feel that as a public we have the right to see the important art, irrespective of your personal institutional ambitions.

So please show us the collections of Admiral B. Egerton, Count de la Burde and Mr. Charles Ratton.

Helena Swigtek  
Colton, Calif.

LUBA SHANKADI, Notes, from page 15

We are indebted to the Royal Museum of Central Africa of Tervuren for their interest and assistance, and especially to Professor A. Maesen and Miss Van Geluwe.

1. Address: Pierre de Maet, 23, rue Paul Lantiers, 1050-Bruxelles, Belgium.

2. The following is a list of works and the collections to which they belong: The British Museum, Stadel-Koch Collection (Zurich) and Charles Ratton Collection (Paris)—three similar headrests with double caryatids and with pagoda style headrest; Copenhagen Museum (Kjermeier Collection) and a private collection in Brussels—two headrests with double caryatids, both comprised of a woman with a cascade of hair facing another with her hair in the shape of a cross. Traces of Hamba influence are discernible. We have unfortunately not had the opportunity to examine one other work from the British Museum.

3. The Hersey Collection had one. The Stillman Collection has one of which the support is lost. The Museum of Tervuren also has in its possession a headrest which has a pearl incrustated in each eye socket of the caryatid. The face of the latter is slightly damaged. The Museum für Völkerkunde of Berlin has one of the finest examples of single caryatid headrests.

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YORUBA DOOR, Notes from page 48

This paper was read in slightly different form at the Frick Symposium in the History of Art, April 28, 1972.

1. My thanks go to Dr. John Dinterfass, the collector who kindly allowed me to study and photograph the door in his collection.

2. The preparation of this article would not have been possible without the generous help of two specialists in Nigerian art, Robert F. Thompson of Yale University volunteered numerous insights into the meaning of various symbols as seen in the minds of the Yoruba and shed much light on problematic details. I am also indebted to Douglas Fraser of Columbia University for an understanding of the structuralist approach used here and for many observations on the interpretation of Yoruba design schemes.

3. I am very grateful to Drs. Dean Avedon and James Atz of the American Museum of Natural History, Departments of Ornithology and Ichthyology respectively, for their efforts to identify the birds and fish shown in the bottom register. Dr. Avedon suggested the birds were Hammerbeak or Hammerkopf (*Scoptes umbretta*), a medium-sized, brown marsh bird related to the ibis and the stork which build huge enclosed nests. Dr. Atz noted that the mudfish aestivates, that is, it becomes dormant in the hot dry summer, coming 'back to life' when the rains return. Even more interesting, he identified one representation, the lobster-caught fish from Owo, as a type of air-breathing catfish (family Clariidae, genus *Clarias*) which in dry weather actually walks on land. It does not require much imagination to see how fish that come back to life and walk on dry land could have impressed the symbol-conscious Yoruba mind.