

A Figure for *Cibola*: Art, Politics, and Aesthetics among the Luluwa People of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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A PARAGON of female beauty, the maternity figure at The Metropolitan Museum of Art exemplifies a well-known sculpture type of the Luluwa people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Figures 1, 2). Luluwa figures that depict a pregnant woman or a mother and her child are generally related to the cult of *Bwanga bwa Cibola*, the goals of which are to prevent infertility and infant mortality and to foster the reincarnation of a deceased ancestor.¹ The Metropolitan Museum's figure offers an opportunity to explore Luluwa notions of fertility and aesthetics, and to investigate the formal and stylistic variety of the Luluwa's figurative carvings in the context of their history and sociopolitical organization.

A few years ago, I contributed an essay on a very similar Luluwa maternity figure at the Art Institute of Chicago.² On the basis of the complementary research that I have conducted since, the present article offers some additional data and new interpretations. After a brief introduction to the Luluwa and the core concepts of their traditional religion, I will analyze the *Bwanga bwa Cibola* cult and compare it with a possession ritual of the neighboring Mongo. In passing, I will also shed some light on a cult called *Bwanga bwa Bwimpe*. I will then focus attention on the striking body decorations that grace both male and female figures and discuss the different regional substyles that characterize Luluwa figurative sculpture. In conclusion, I will address the so-called hemp cult, popularized in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the iconoclasm it allegedly entailed.³

THE LULUWA PEOPLE

The Luluwa, or Beena Luluwa, live in a vast region between the Lubudi and Kasai Rivers in West Kasai Province in the southern central part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly the Republic of

Zaire; Figure 3).⁴ Together with the Luntu, the Konji, and the Luba-Lubilanji, the Luluwa, who comprise a number of subgroups, form what might be termed the Luba-Kasai cluster. These peoples all speak Chiluba dialects and share many cultural traits, and they all trace their origins to Nsanga a Lubangu, a mythical place said to be located in Katanga Province in southeastern Congo. There are also many overlappings in these peoples' social and political organization, economy, and religion. The general consensus is that Luba emigrants from Katanga Province settled in their present-day environment in successive waves between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They assimilated with the local population of their new habitat, which consisted of peoples identified as Bindji (or Bindi) and Kete and different pygmoid groups. Although hunting is still considered a prestigious activity by the male population, today the Luluwa are mainly farmers. They have always been active traders, but it was especially their involvement in the long-distance trade at the end of the nineteenth century that had a profound impact on their culture.

About 1875 Chokwe traders from Angola immigrated to Luluwa country; some of them founded villages amid the Luluwa, the traces of which can still be seen today. The traders introduced the Luluwa to products previously unknown in the region and left their mark on the local culture. Body decoration, architecture, and masking are among the aspects of material culture that clearly show Chokwe influence. Elsewhere, I have discussed the diffusion of the Chokwe boys' *mukanda* puberty ritual and associated masks among a number of Luluwa subgroups.⁵ Chokwe immigrants also inspired the Luluwa's political organization and social structure. Kalamba Mukenge, of the Luluwa Bakwa Katawa subgroup, and other power-hungry Luluwa chiefs became close allies of the Chokwe chiefs who led the northward migrations. These Luluwa chiefs emulated the Chokwe's more centralized state formation, overruled neighboring Luluwa chiefs, and gradually created a social divide between chiefs and commoners. As we shall

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The notes for this article begin on page 253.



Figure 1. Maternity figure (*Bwanga bwa Cibola*). Luluwa (Bakwa Mushilu subgroup), Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood, metal ring; H. 24.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979 (1979.206.282)



Figure 2. Rear view of Figure 1

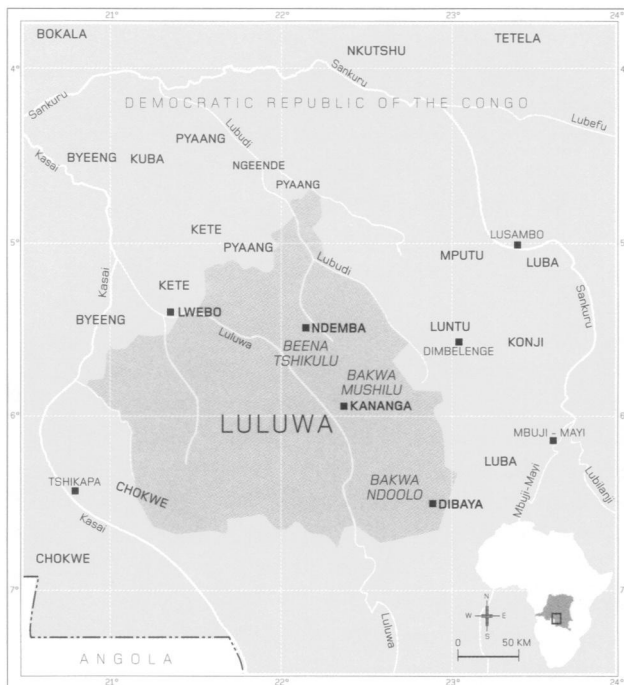


Figure 3. The Luluwa and neighboring peoples in West Kasai Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (map: Charles Meur and Marc Felix, Brussels)

see, this class distinction also had an effect on the Luluwa's artistic production in that a number of ritual objects evolved into symbols of status.

The Luluwa and their Luba neighbors believe that both the spiritual and the physical world are permeated with a life-force (*mooyo*). The ritual specialist (*mpaka manga* or *mupaki wa manga*) evokes the life-force's powers by using charms (*manga*; sing. *bwanga*). The term *bwanga* refers to an object that serves as a container or support of power substances or ingredients (*bishimba*). It also refers to the cult associated with this object and the rituals that define the cult. If the container has the shape of an anthropomorphic figure, it may be regarded as a "real" power figure, in which case the term *lupingu* (plural, *mpingu*), a generic name for man-made figures, is also applicable.⁶

The above-mentioned ingredients assure the efficacy of both *manga* and *mpingu*. They are composed of mineral, plant, animal, and human substances and act as mediators or conductors. The ritual specialist determines the composition of the ingredients and the way they are to be introduced into the container. The power of both the *manga* and the ingredients is sustained by recharging the mixture at regular intervals, particularly with the appearance of the new moon. The most powerful substance used to effect this recharging or revitalization is kaolin (*lupemba*).

Manga are diverse in both form and function. Although a distinction is sometimes made between positive and negative *manga*, all may be used both to heal and to harm. There is also a distinction between "large" (or collective) and "small" (or individual) *manga*. They can be of a permanent nature and have a lasting power or be used periodically and have merely a temporary effect. The manipulation of these charms resembles the worship of ancestors in that charms incite the ancestral spirits (*bakishi*, *bashangi*, or *ban-kambwa*).⁷ People placate and make sacrifices to the ancestral spirits in exchange for their help and protection. Some forms of ancestor worship involve the explicit manipulation of charms.

BWANGA BWA CIBOLA

The *Bwanga bwa Cibola* fertility cult and the accompanying charms are popular among the Luluwa and their Luntu, Konji, and Luba neighbors.⁸ There are many regional and even local differences regarding certain details of the cult. Sometimes, it is called *Mbombo* instead of *Cibola*. Several of the Luluwa's numerous *manga* are concerned with issues of fertility and the protection of pregnant women, newborns, and small children. The *Cibola* cult deals specifically

with women who have had a succession of miscarriages or whose newborn children have died shortly after birth. The cult must ensure a successful outcome of the pregnancy and a safe delivery and see to it that the child grows up without problems. Its ultimate goal, however, is to provoke the reincarnation of a deceased ancestor in the newborn child.

Like other *manga*, *Bwanga bwa Cibola* in many ways relates to the veneration of so-called spirit-trees, trees that are believed to inhabit or shelter spirits and are the focus of prayers and offerings.⁹ Indeed, as in the *Cibola* cult, a tree altar called *Mulopo* is addressed when a woman's children die after birth. The *Mulopo* also promotes the reincarnation of the deceased child's spirit in a newborn infant. A female and a male spirit-tree, respectively called *mumbu* and *kasambankusu*, are planted to ensure that the ancestors of both lineages watch over the pregnancy and the delivery. A small conical clay mound is erected between them. The whole is consecrated with a mixture of palm wine, rainwater, and water from a pond. This mixture is kept in a bowl, which is later placed on the mound. Another spirit-tree, the *kapulwayi* (*Jatropha curcas*), fulfills a function similar to that of the *Mulopo* and *Bwanga bwa Cibola*. This spirit-tree is planted when a woman suffers from sterility or experiences difficulties during pregnancy, or when a child dies after birth.

As a rule, initiation into the *Cibola* cult follows upon consultation with a diviner. This religious specialist is called in by the unfortunate woman or by her relatives when traditional medical treatments with plant and other vegetal extracts are not effective. Initiation into the *Cibola* cult is the sole effective remedy to the woman's problem. Many potential causes are taken into consideration. Most often, sorcery is thought to be the determining factor in calamities and bad fortune. Sometimes, the diviner will reveal that the woman is the victim of a fickle ancestral spirit or a malevolent *manga* maker. Occasionally, it is believed that the woman is possessed by a metaphysical force identified as *cibola*. However, this kind of possession is often perceived as the result of the transgression of certain behavioral rules and norms. Thus, women who have had premarital sexual relationships are especially vulnerable.

Possession by the *cibola* leads to a relationship of reciprocity and mutual dependence. The relationship of the patient to the *cibola* force is one of ambivalence, ambiguity, and reversibility. Those who do not respect the imposed rules and prohibitions run the risk of being severely punished. *Bwanga bwa Cibola* is therefore sometimes characterized as a double-edged sword (*mwele wa nkanza*). As I have noted elsewhere, *Bwanga bwa Cibola* is clearly related to other healing

and fertility cults shared by various Bantu-speaking peoples in central and southern Africa.¹⁰

At least in some respects, the initiation process into *Bwanga bwa Cibola* resembles a possession ritual called *Zebola*, *Jebola*, or *Yebola*, which is widespread among the peoples of the Mongo complex living north of the Luluwa.¹¹ *Zebola*—note the homophony with *Cibola*—is a female healing ritual for either purely physical or mental health problems thought to be caused by ancestral spirits that are also called *Zebola*. Through divination the spirit inhabits the woman's body and thus reveals the source of the disease. The ensuing healing ritual entails taking various kinds of medicine and learning the *Zebola* songs and dances. As we shall see, as in *Cibola*, emphasis is placed on the beautification of the patient's body. Unlike *Cibola*, however, *Zebola* has a communal and public character, and choreography and music play a much more important role. *Zebola* also addresses a much wider range of problems.

After having determined the cause of the woman's misfortune, the Luluwa diviner will direct her to a *mupaki wa manga* (ritual specialist). A *mupaki wa manga* who specializes in *Bwanga bwa Cibola* is often a woman. It is the *mupaki* who organizes the initiation into the cult and determines the proscriptions to be respected by the woman. Although the initiation process as such allows for many variations and often reflects the personal preferences of the ritual specialist, it always follows the same basic pattern and consists of a number of essential phases. The prohibitions, which are shared by the ritual specialist, concern both the woman's diet and her behavior. Thus, certain game animals are forbidden to her, and sometimes her food is even restricted to the consumption of manioc porridge. Most often she will be secluded in a special fenced-in house at the edge of the village. The initiation always involves the learning of ritual cult songs, a confession of past sins or crimes, and the sacrifice of chickens. Although intense sexual activity at the beginning of a new pregnancy is believed to stimulate the fetus's growth, a mother-to-be will soon have to abstain completely from sexual intercourse. In the past, the mother had to wait until the child born after her initiation into the *Cibola* cult had reached the age of three before she was allowed to resume intimate relations with her husband.

After the birth of the child, the diviner will be asked to identify which deceased ancestor is reincarnated in the newborn. In order to do so, he—or she—will look carefully for possible congenital signs or handicaps (*misangu*; sing. *musangu*).¹² The identity of the ancestor will later become clearly evident through the child's way of walking and manner of speaking. The first child, boy or girl, born after a successful initiation

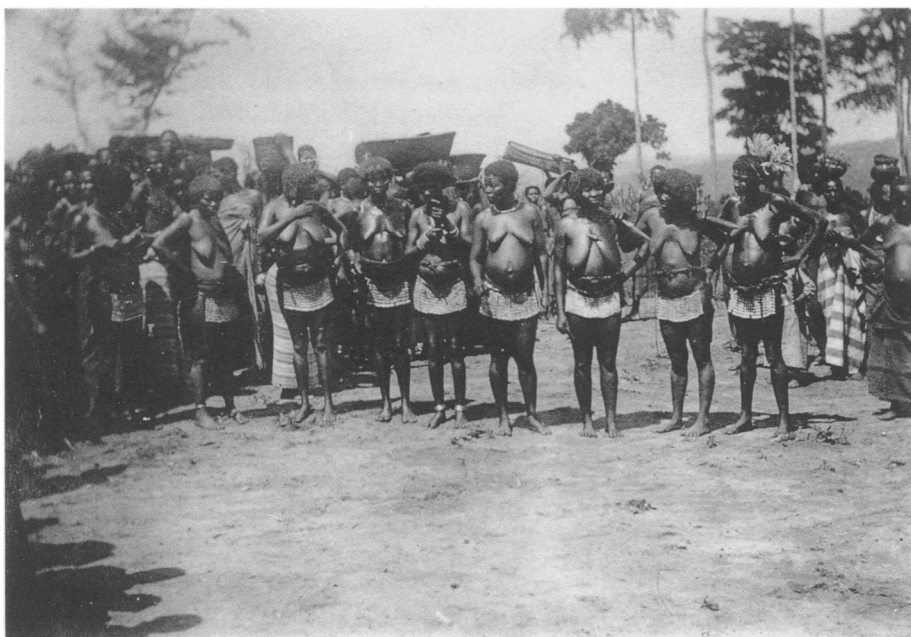


Figure 4. Mothers of “special children” (*mapanga*) performing a ceremonial dance on market day near the city of Kananga (formerly Luluabourg), ca. 1900. Luluwa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Unknown photographer. Frobenius-Institut an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, L1/2360 (photo: Frobenius-Institut)

into the cult is always named Tshibola. Usually, when she—or he—is three months old, the child will be officially presented to the community in a solemn coming-out ceremony called *dyala*, scheduled to take place during the new moon. Prior to the *dyala* ceremony the child may only be approached by other initiates into the *Cibola* cult. As a way of giving thanks to the ancestors, a meal is shared by the ritual specialist and the families of both spouses, and a plantain tree—for a boy—or a banana tree—for a girl—is planted near the parents’ house in the village.

The mother and her child will continue to live apart from the village until the child starts to walk. During this postnatal seclusion period, the newborn infant, like its mother, must regularly be rubbed with a mixture of red clay and palm oil. At the rising of each new moon the mother must sing ritual songs in her baby’s honor and sacrifice a chicken for her *manga*. Blood of the chicken is poured over her *manga*, and her *Cibola* figure is “fed” a piece of chicken liver or some manioc porridge. At the end of the seclusion period, the ritual specialist will shave the heads of both mother and child, neither of whose hair has been cut since the child was born, and lift the ban on the mother’s sexual activity. In exchange for her or his services, the happy couple will present the *mupaki* with money or goods. A final communal meal signals the end of the ritual cycle. Like the birth of other “special children,” generally called *mapanga*, that of a *Cibola* child is always accompanied by a public closing ceremony (Figure 4). Mothers of such children will continue to perform ceremonial dances on market days, Sundays, and other

holidays.¹³ The parents of such a child usually remain cult members until their fifth child is born, after which they are allowed to lead *Cibola* initiations themselves.

POWER OBJECTS AND SYMBOLS OF STATUS

Bwanga bwa Cibola does not often involve the use of carved figurative *manga*. Instead, as is the case in many other cults, horns, snail shells, leather or cloth bags, pouches, or bundles serve as containers for ingredients. Some of the cult accessories are depicted on related figurative *Bwanga bwa Cibola* sculptures, at least on those carved in a naturalistic style. The figure at the Metropolitan Museum bears on its back the carved imitation of a snail shell stuffed with all kinds of ingredients (Figure 2). A snail shell (*nyonga*; *Achatina marginata swains*) is the central object of the *Bwanga bwa Cibawu*, one of the most popular types of *bwanga*.¹⁴ *Bwanga bwa Cibawu* is a general term that encompasses different important *manga* with multiple functions, combining defensive and offensive powers. It is the most important collective protection of both the community (*ditunga*) and the family’s yard (*lubanza*) and is therefore sometimes called *Bwanga bwa Ditunga* or *Bwanga bwa Lubanza*. Its main function is to offer protection against sorcerers in general and so-called lightning senders in particular.¹⁵ Because several primary sources have explicitly linked the cult with problems of infant mortality, there is a direct relationship between the *Bwanga bwa Cibola* and the *Bwanga bwa Cibawu*.



Figure 5. Ceramic vessel filled with dirt, medicinal ingredients, and two snail shells (*Bwanga bwa Cibawu*). Luba, Luluwa, or Kete, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 19th–early 20th century. H. 11 cm, Diam. 17 cm. Field-collected by Frederick Starr in the village of Tshimbundu in 1906. American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1910, 90.0/6215 (photo: Craig Cheseck, courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History)

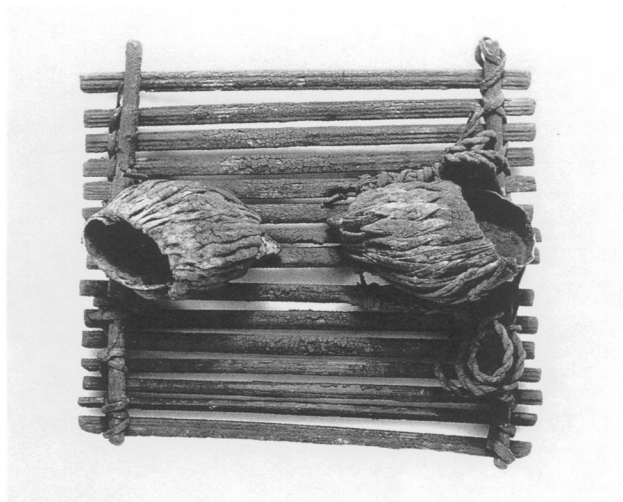


Figure 6. Two wrapped snail shells attached to a twig framework (*Bwanga bwa Cibawu*). Luba, Luluwa, or Kete, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 19th–early 20th century. H. 24.5 cm, W. 22 cm. Field-collected by Frederick Starr in or near the town of Lwebo in 1906. American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1910, 90.0/9003 (photo: Craig Cheseck, courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History)

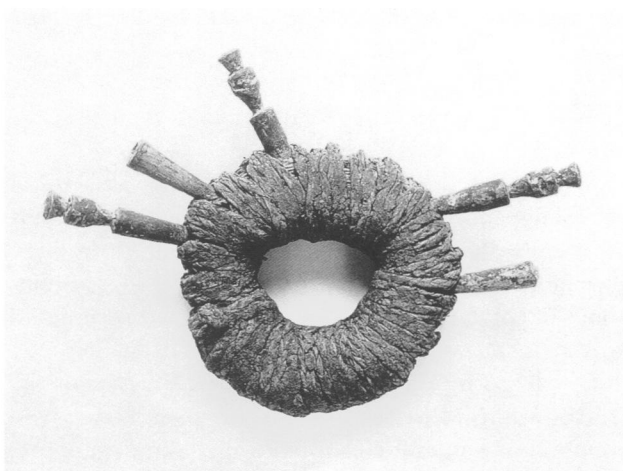


Figure 7. Wooden peglike half-figurines inserted in a wrapped fiber ring (*Bwanga bwa Ditunga* or *Bwanga bwa Lubanza*). Luba, Luluwa, or Kete, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 19th–early 20th century. Field-collected by Frederick Starr in 1906. American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1910, 90.1/9033 (photo: Craig Cheseck, courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History)

The shell's surface is normally divided into two halves, one red and one white. The white mostly derives from kaolin (*lupemba*) and has essentially positive connotations. The red is obtained either from camwood powder (*kakula*) or from red clay-earth (*mpisha*, *cilaabu*, *kamuma*, or *budinda*). This color signals the punishment, even the destruction, of sorcerers.¹⁶ The

bichromy of many power objects connotes the combination of defensive and offensive powers. The few known figurative *Cibawu* objects usually also combine this partition of the body surface in two opposing colors with a Janus face or multiple heads on a single body.¹⁷ Two singular objects at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, which were collected by Frederick Starr, a professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago from 1892 to 1923, in the mixed area around Lwebo in 1906, are rare examples of *Cibawu* snail shells (Figures 5, 6). Another type of object, identified as a *Bwanga bwa Lubanza* or *Bwanga bwa Ditunga*, of which Starr also collected examples, consists of a ring made of fibers and twigs into which a number of schematically carved half-figures are inserted (Figure 7).

Contrary to the cleaned and polished surface of many Luluwa figures in Western collections, the original powderlike red surface of the figure in the Metropolitan Museum is almost intact and closely resembles the way people beautified their bodies in various rituals and ceremonies. Indeed, the figure's appearance is strikingly similar to that of the conservative elders who opposed the reforms of chief Kalamba Mukenge, described in early travel accounts (see below, p. 248). It is clothed in a small loincloth that imitates those made of red-dyed fiber or banana leaves that constituted a Luluwa woman's only covering. Like the Metropolitan's figure, Luluwa women also typically wore a metal ring or a bamboo stick through the septum. Although



Figure 8. A twelve-year-old girl in the village of Katende wearing beads woven into her hair and bamboo sticks through her earlobes and septum, 1905. Luluwa (Bakwa Mwanza subgroup), Democratic Republic of the Congo. Frobenius-Institut an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, SkB XI 3 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, in Leo Frobenius, *Ethnographische Notizen aus den Jahren 1905 und 1906*, Hildegard Klein, ed., vol. 3, *Luluwa, Süd-Kete, Bena Mai, Pende, Cokwe*, Studien zur Kulturkunde 87 [Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1988], p. 83, fig. 6)

women undergoing initiation into the *Cibola* cult sometimes had to shave their heads, most related figures are shown with elaborate hairstyles. The example depicted here wears a three-lobed coiffure (*makata*) that resembles the wigs made of vegetable fibers and human hair and adorned with cowrie shells (*mibela*; *Cypraea moneta*) that were woven into the hair (Figure 8). This type of headdress was also smeared with palm oil, red camwood powder, and clay. The central pointed extension on the skull depicts a headdress called *dis-unga* or *disungu*.¹⁸ The attention devoted to the construction of the hair also recalls the aesthetics of the above-mentioned Mongo *Zebola* possession rituals.

Usually, a woman receives a number of protective *manga* from the ritual specialist, including one or more carved figures and other cult accessories, when she enters seclusion. According to some sources, the figurative carvings are given to the mother-to-be in the course of the eighth month of pregnancy. This month, generally called *cizaba*, constitutes a crucial time in the woman's initiation process. At this time, the many pro-



Figure 9. Half-figure of a woman holding a child (*Bwanga bwa Cibola*). Luluwa (Beena Tshikulu subgroup), Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood (*Balanites wilsoniana*), metal tack, glass beads; H. 33 cm. Field-collected by Henri Morlighem in 1934. Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, 1935, RG 35964 (photo: Hughes Dubois, Brussels–Paris)

hibitions enter into force and the *manga* start to work. The *cizaba* month is, accordingly, sometimes also referred to as “the month of the *manga*.” The term *cizaba* also refers to a clay container, filled with water and various other ingredients, that the future mother receives from the ritual specialist. Placed at the entrance of her house and, later, near the newborn, this object is meant to offer protection against evil forces. The woman will wash herself daily with the *cizaba*'s contents and drink them regularly to stimulate the growth of the unborn child and ensure a safe delivery.

In times past, it seems that a woman always received two figures. Albert Maesen reported that, traditionally,



Figure 10. Half-figure (*Bwanga bwa Cibola*). Luluwa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 19th–20th century. Wood; H. 35.7 cm. Ex coll. Henri Pareyn, Antwerp. Etnografisch Museum, Antwerp, 1920, AE 758 (photo: Etnografisch Museum)

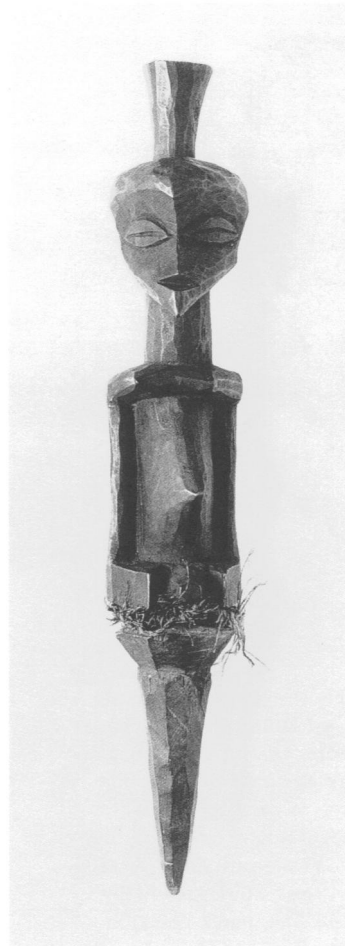


Figure 11. Half-figure. Luba, Luluwa, or Kete, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 19th–early 20th century. Wood, fibers; H. 37.5 cm. Field-collected by Frederick Starr in the village of Tshikoma Pinda in 1906. American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1910, 90.0/8958 (photo: Craig Cheseck, courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History)

she would receive the same number of figures as the number of children she had lost.¹⁹ The figures were sometimes identical, but more often one was a replica of the other in miniature. The larger figure was kept at home; the smaller replica was carried around. The maternity figure at the Art Institute of Chicago is perhaps the only standing full-figure with a short wooden peg under the feet that has been preserved. It thus relates formally to some pointed-base half-figures holding a child (Figure 9). However, I have found that at least one other mother-and-child figure at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, shows the remains of a similar peglike extension.²⁰ This formal characteristic indicates how these carvings were actually used. Both types of *Cibola* figures seem to have been kept in a corner of the house in a clay pot or a basket filled with dirt and several ingredients, into which the pointed base was inserted. The face of the figure was oriented toward the door in order to prevent evildoers and negative forces from entering the house.

As mentioned earlier, true-to-life and elaborately detailed statues like the one at the Metropolitan Museum are rare. The majority of Luluwa carvings,

including those related to the *Bwanga bwa Cibola*, are rough-hewn, even to the point of male figures being indistinguishable from female figures (Figure 10). Luluwa figurative sculpture can thus be classified according to two styles, one realistic, or even naturalistic, the other schematic, or even abstract. This classification would point specifically to the sociopolitical context of the second half of the nineteenth century. Naturalistic images are as much symbols of status as ritual objects. They are related to the development in some parts of Luluwa territory of a class distinction that reached its culmination in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

This development is strongly reminiscent of the evolution from “process art” to “statement art” that Allen Roberts has described with regard to the Tabwa people of Lake Tanganyika in eastern Congo.²¹ An understanding of the distinction between the two may be useful to our discussion of the schematic and the naturalistic styles of Luluwa art. Like ritual, process art is “transformatory” and meant to provoke change or to solve problems connected with change. Statement art, on the other hand, is “confirmatory” and con-

cerned with the celebration of authority and the safeguarding of an existing order.

Among the Luluwa, the contact with Chokwe tradesmen from Angola and the influence of the slave trade gradually led to the formation of a small elite of noblemen. Some Luluwa chiefs tried to imitate the more centralized political organization of the Chokwe. They attempted to overrule neighboring lesser chiefs, a goal they achieved at least in part thanks to the accumulation of imported Chokwe firearms. Not every Luluwa chief benefited from the newly developed long-distance trade. And because exploration of the region was not extensive, only a few chiefs appear in the travel accounts written by German explorers at the end of the nineteenth century. Among the best-known headmen are Mfwamba, Tshinkenke, and Kalamba Mukenge, all of them reigning in the central Luluwa region.

The sociopolitical evolution must have occurred concurrently with the development of workshops under the direction of master sculptors. It seems obvious that refined sculptures, such as the one at the Metropolitan Museum, were produced by professional carvers in a workshop environment, whereas rudimentary carvings in the schematic style are the work of ritual specialists or even their clients.²² Figures in the naturalistic style are thus not only less common than those in the schematic style; they are also more recent, since they are the result of the above-mentioned class distinction. A case in point is that some of the oldest Western collections, such as that in the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, hold many more Luluwa carvings in the schematic style than in the naturalistic style. Also, some schematically carved figures at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, which Starr collected as "Baluba" around Lwebo in 1906, may in fact originate from the Luluwa, whom Starr, like many other early travelers, considered to be a subgroup of the Luba (Figure 11).²³

Female figures in the naturalistic style were probably the exclusive property of an elite group of women in positions of authority. Along with the stratification of Luluwa society sketched above, women close to powerful male leaders possibly also gained sociopolitical prominence. Traditionally, a polygynous man's first wife already held control over the other women of her husband's harem in domestic matters, and chiefs turned to their sisters, mothers, and/or wives for political council. When several villages are collectively struck by repeated misfortune or adversity, the chiefs call in the help of elderly women and widows to perform the *Lwendu lwa Mucipu* ritual as a last resource. At night, these women, wearing only a small



Figure 12. Female figure holding a cup and a pounder (*Bwanga bwa Bwimpe*). Luluwa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 28.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979 (1979.206.37)

loincloth, their bodies painted white with kaolin, march through the village and secretly sacrifice a dog at a crossroads on the village border. In imitation of the Chokwe example, the advisory role of the female population in public matters must have acquired a new dimension with the emergence of a nobility at the end of the nineteenth century. It is very likely that small rudimentary figures were meant for private use and could be owned by any woman, whereas refined and elaborately carved larger statues in the possession of a select group of wealthy and powerful women were put to the service of the whole community.²⁴

BWIMPE, OR THE MORAL BASIS OF BEAUTY

Although their appearance testifies to the fact that naturalistic female *Cibola* figures portray high-ranking women with ritual and political authority, the figures' iconography also reflects the initiation process discussed above. Ultimately, maternity figures and representations of pregnant women are meant to glorify and celebrate fertility and motherhood. It is here that



Figure 13. Female figure holding a cup and a walking cane (*Bwanga bwa Bwimpe*). Luluwa (Bakwa Mbusha subgroup), Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 51 cm. Field-collected by Leo Frobenius between the town of Lwebo and the Luluwa River in 1905. Ex coll.: Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 5854:06; Charles Ratton, Paris; Helena Rubinstein, New York; Comte Jean-Jacques de Launoit, Brussels; Jay C. Leff, Uniontown, Pa. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Ralph Harman Booth Bequest Fund, Abraham Borman Family Fund, Joseph H. Boyer Memorial Fund, Joseph M. DeGrimme Memorial Fund, General Endowment Fund, New Endowment Fund, Mr. and Mrs. Benson Ford Fund, K. T. Keller Fund, Laura H. Murphy Fund, Mary Martin Semmes Fund, Barbara L. Scripps Fund, Edna Burian Skelton Fund, Mr. and Mrs. Conrad H. Smith Memorial Fund, Henry E. and Consuelo S. Wenger Foundation Fund, and Matilda R. Wilson Fund, 1982, 82.49 (photo: Detroit Institute of Arts)

the Luluwa's notions of aesthetics and ethics come into play. Beauty, especially female beauty, is at the core of both the *Cibola* cult and the naturalistic carvings it relies on. The term *bwimpe*, sometimes replaced by *bulenga*, is generally used by the Luluwa and their Chiluba-speaking neighbors to denote beauty, which refers to both physical and moral beauty and thus combines the Western terms "beautiful" and "good." Indeed, physical beauty is a sign of moral integrity. Moreover, emphasis is placed on cultural, or "human," beauty—that is, beauty created by human hands.

This union of aesthetics and ethics also lies at the basis of the production and use of yet another category of female carvings. Female figures holding a little cup filled with white chalk in one hand, a fine example of which can be found in the Metropolitan Museum's collection (Figure 12), are generally related to a cult called *Bwanga bwa Bwimpe*. Accordingly, the figures themselves are called *Lupingu lwa Bwimpe*, *Bwanga bwa Bwimpe*, or simply *Bulenga*, although the latter name seems to be proper to the neighboring Luba-Lubilanji, who would have imported their sculptures from the Luluwa. The Detroit Institute of Arts has an example of a special subcategory of *Bwimpe* figures measuring some forty centimeters in height and carrying a cup in one hand and a walking cane or stick in the other (Figure 13).²⁵ The *Bwimpe* cult was meant first and foremost to safeguard and foster the fertility of a young mother and the beauty and health of a newborn. It was specifically concerned with the well-being of those mothers who had given birth to a child with a pale skin, called *mwana mukunse* (literally, "red child"). Such a child was deemed exceptionally beautiful by the Luluwa and required special protection against sorcerers and envious people. Usually, the birth of a pale-skinned child was also accompanied by the planting of a white-barked spirit-tree called *mwabi* (*Sterculia quinqueloba*) next to the mother's house (Figure 14).

The ideal combination of morality and physical beauty, as expressed by the Chiluba terms *bwimpe* and *bulenga*, is widespread in sub-Saharan Africa.²⁶ Among the Luluwa, it is clearly reflected in the style and iconography of the naturalistic *Cibola* carvings. It is also evident from the time and attention the Luluwa accord to skin care and skin beautification. As mentioned before, the face and body of a woman undergoing initiation into *Bwanga bwa Cibola* are covered with a mixture of palm oil and red clay, sometimes also red camwood powder and white kaolin. The same treatment will be applied to her *Cibola* figure and, later, to her newborn child. Similar concerns of beauty were the basis of the intricate scarification marks on the face and body of both women and carved female



Figure 14. A *mwabi* tree (*Sterculia quinqueloba*) in the village of Kamembe, 1996. Luluwa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. (photo: Constantine Petridis)

figures. In the past, a woman's body had to be perfected and "humanized" through the application of geometric and curvilinear scarifications, true "marks of civilization," in order to be fully appreciated.²⁷

Among the Luluwa, cicatrizations are generally known as *nsalu*, a term also applied to decorations in relief on carved objects, such as drums and drinking horns. It seems that the Luluwa practiced two types of cicatrization, one characterized by raised designs in low relief, the other by graphic color patterns that are closer to tattoos in the strict sense of the word. Sometimes the term *ndundu*—referring to the rubber smeared into cuts to cause black lines in the skin, which tend to fade with the passage of time—is used for the latter types; but it is also used to refer to facial scars as opposed to body marks. It is very likely that the two types of scars were used in different parts of Luluwaland, but, as we shall see, like headdresses and other body decoration, scarifications also changed over time.²⁸

According to the Luluwa, children with a spotless

and healthy skin run the least risk of falling victim to sorcery, while children with skin disorders and physical handicaps are seen as potential sorcerers. Of course, the value accorded to the smoothness of the skin can only be applied to the unscarified body of small children. It is significant in this regard that the above-mentioned *Bwanga bwa Bwimpe* also dealt specifically with the beauty and health of newborns and infants. Research by Albert Maesen indicates that, as signs of *bwimpe* or *bulenga* and as emanations of the ideal combination of physical beauty and moral virtue, scarification marks and other skin treatments were also thought of as the best protection against sorcery.²⁹ This is one of the reasons that some of the finest *Cibola* figures, like the one at the Metropolitan, are distinguished by such a careful and naturalistic rendering of these body marks and other physical signs of beauty.

As power objects and mediators between the ancestral spirits and men, designed to protect against misfortune and adversity, the ultimate function of *Cibola*

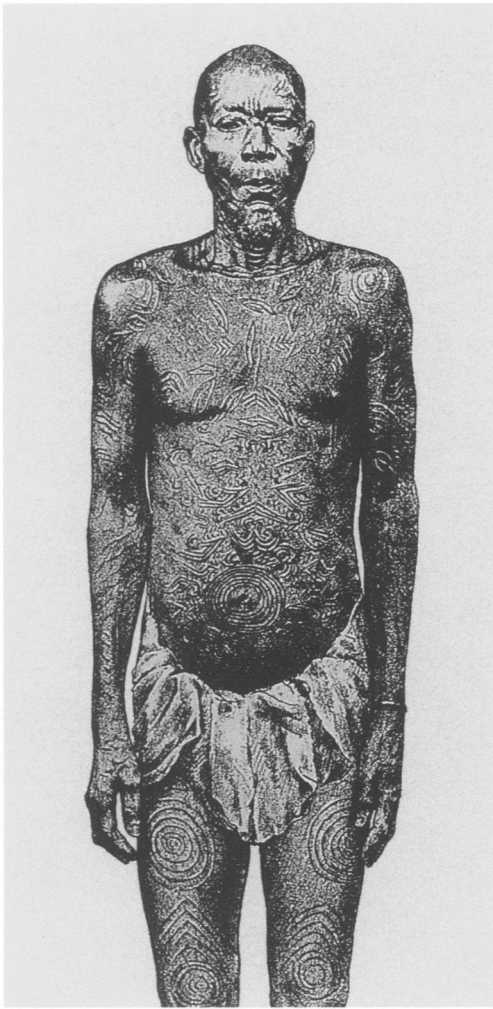


Figure 15. An elder, 1880s. Luluwa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Unknown photographer (after Hermann von Wissmann et al., *Im Innern Afrikas*, 3rd ed. [Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1891], p. 166)

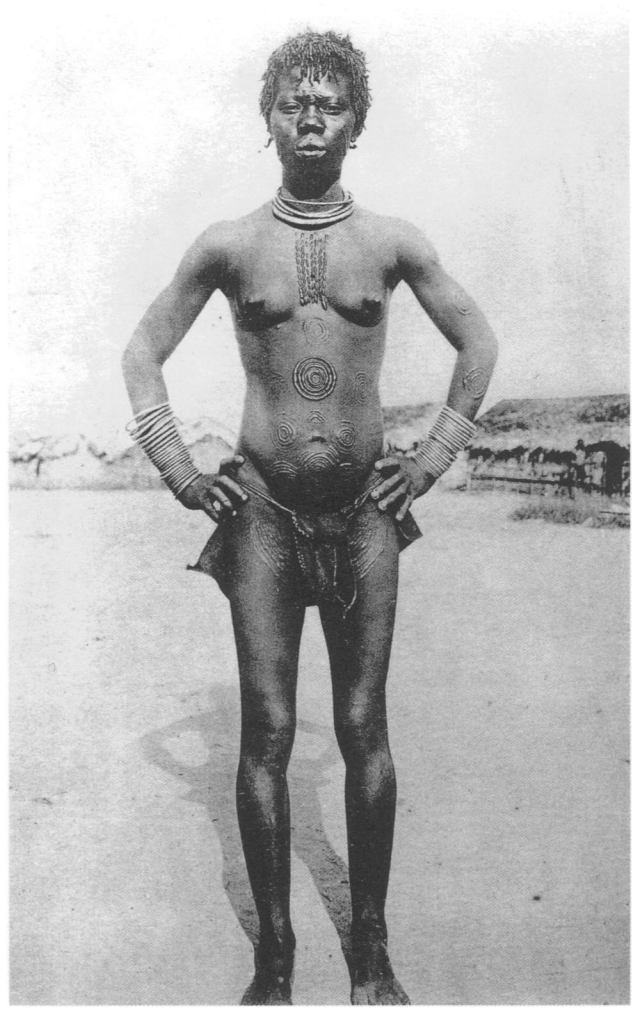


Figure 16. Scarifications on a woman's body, 1913–14. Bokala, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Postcard published by Ern. Thill, Brussels, after a photograph by Joseph Maes. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, Photograph Study Collection

figures is to seek out and disarm sorcerers. As mentioned earlier, the *Cibola* cult basically serves the same purpose. Other anatomical details also serve to obstruct sorcery. The Luluwa and neighboring Chiluba-speaking peoples in Kasai Province, for example, attribute special meaning to the anterior and posterior fontanels. Like the bichromy of the *Cibawu* discussed above, these body parts signify “double sight”—that is, clairvoyance and the ability to discern the invisible in the visible and the past and future in the present.³⁰ Often, as is the case with the Metropolitan Museum’s figure, the fontanels are visually marked in Luluwa figurative sculpture by means of a pointed hairstyle and usually harbor one or more cavities that are filled with magical substances.

In addition to the realistic depiction of scarification

designs, beauty was also expressed in the Luluwa figures’ long necks, large heads, and high foreheads. A woman’s strong calves were highly esteemed by men, since they indicate her capacity for hard labor in the fields and in the domestic environment. The same positive aesthetic values were expressed by elaborate coiffures and jewelry. Wealthy women wore several blue-and-white-beaded necklaces in parallel rows, as represented in relief in the Metropolitan Museum’s figure. Another important sign of beauty and perfection was the naturalistic imitation of an umbilical hernia, at once a symbol of the close relationship between the ancestors and their descendants and of the succession of the generations.

The idealized beauty embodied by female carvings was also meant to invite ancestral spirits to inhabit



Figure 17. Female figure (*Bwanga bwa Cibola*). Luluwa (Bakwa Ndoolo subgroup), Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood (*Crossopterix febrifuga*); H. 46.5 cm. Field-collected by Jules-Auguste “Tiarko” Fourche, M.D., between 1933 and 1936. Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, 1946, RG 43850 (photo: Hughes Dubois, Brussels–Paris)



Figure 18. Maternity figure (*Bwanga bwa Cibola*). Luluwa (Bakwa Mushilu subgroup), Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood (*Crossopterix febrifuga*), fiber; H. 41 cm. Field-collected by Father Constant De Deken ca. 1893. Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, 1914, RG 18805 (photo: Hughes Dubois, Brussels–Paris)

them. In this regard, Lucien Stéphan speaks of an “esthétique des esprits” in relation to these art forms, which have the realm of the spirits as their main audience and addressee.³¹ Judging from extensive research by Mary Nooter Roberts, a similar motivation seems to lie at the heart of the representation of beautiful women in the ritual art of the Luba of Katanga Province.³² Like carved female figures, Luluwa women themselves are seen as mediators between the natural world of humans and the supernatural world of the spirits. As among the Luba-Katanga, many Luluwa diviners and ritual healers are indeed women.

It is at this point that the parallels with the Mongo *Zebola* initiation become especially apparent. Upon an initial divination session, during which the woman goes into a trance, the *Zebola* healer transforms the

patient’s body into a kind of shrine for the spirit. With the aim to please and seduce the spirit, her body will be cared for and embellished day after day. Anointment with a red paste signals the bond between the woman and the spirit and advertises her special position. The beautiful dances for the *zebola* spirits, which demand great flexibility, serve the same purpose of spirit seduction. According to Ellen Corin, “the work done on the body during initiation may be interpreted as reshaping several corporal and sensory envelopes and as participating in the recreation of a sense of self; its reconstructive value should be enhanced by its symbolic reference to loving and protective spirits who are the real recipients of what is done to the body.”³³ In fact, judging from field photographs, the coiffure, makeup, clothes, and other

attributes of the Mongo *Zebola* initiate are strikingly similar to those of a woman undergoing initiation into the *Cibola* cult among the Luluwa.

LULUWA SCARIFICATION AND FIGURATIVE SCULPTURE IN REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Scarification, both on people and on figurative carvings in wood, shows a large variety of techniques, forms, and designs. Today, the practice of scarifying one's body is almost extinct. Elderly women occasionally bear traces of small, geometric blackened scars on their face, chest, or abdomen. But in general, these have little in common with the complex curvilinear motifs depicted on naturalistic Luluwa figures such as the Metropolitan's sculpture. Available sources, however, reveal that scarification practices were linked to local fashion trends and foreign influences and have never been equally distributed throughout the vast Luluwa region. Leo Frobenius, for example, writing about his visit in 1905, mentioned that some subgroups in the western part of Luluwa territory adopted scarification patterns from their Chokwe neighbors.³⁴ As we shall see, certain internal religious reformation movements also had an influence on scarification practices.

Historical field photographs of Luluwa people are scarce, and pictures showing men or women whose bodies are graced with scarification patterns are even more rare. One of the most notable exceptions is a photograph from the 1880s showing a man whose elaborately scarified body seems to indicate that he belonged to the conservative elders who opposed the religious reforms of chief Kalamba Mukenge and his followers (Figure 15). However, the scarified bodies of the male and female carvings in the naturalistic Luluwa style also show some similarity with those of people belonging to the Mongo complex in early field photographs (Figure 16).³⁵ The parallels are clear in the curvilinear motifs, with a predominance of concentric circles, but also in the fact that Mongo scarifications are usually raised in high relief. Thus, in addition to the affinity between the Luluwa *Cibola* and the Nkundo and other Mongo peoples' *Zebola*, there also seems to be a relationship between the two cultures in terms of their characteristic scarifications.³⁶

With the exception of a group of female figures collected in the 1930s by the colonial official and medical doctor Jules-Auguste "Tiarko" Fourche among the Bakwa Ndoolo subgroup near the southern town of Dibaya (Figure 17), naturalistic Luluwa figures appear mainly to have been collected and probably also produced in the northern area of Luluwa territory, close



Figure 19. Female figure holding a cup (*Bwanga bwa Bwimpe*). Luluwa (Bakwa Mbusha subgroup), Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 28 cm. Field-collected by Leo Frobenius in 1905. Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 5858:06 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, courtesy Museum für Völkerkunde)

to the lands inhabited by the peoples of the Kuba confederation. In fact, the naturalistic style encompasses a number of regional substyles, some of which have been identified with particular northern Luluwa subgroups. Along with a number of stylistically related figures at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, the figure at the Metropolitan Museum can be attributed to the Bakwa Mushilu subgroup of the area around the town of Ndemba (Figure 18).³⁷

Frobenius's data, however, indicate that naturalistic and schematic figures existed side by side in the same village among the same subgroup at the same time. Indeed, as shown in the accompanying illustrations, he collected stylistically distinct carvings among the

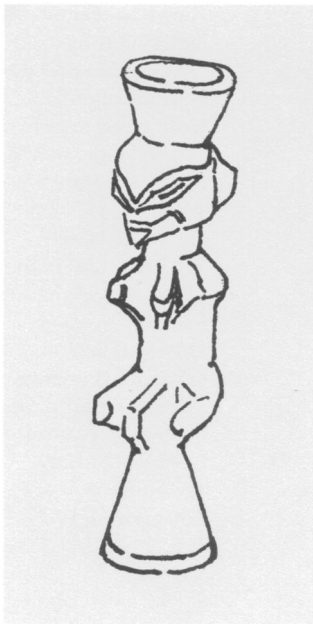


Figure 20. Half-figurine. Luluwa (Bakwa Mbusha subgroup), Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 13 cm. Field-collected by Leo Frobenius in 1905. Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 5921:06 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, courtesy Museum für Völkerkunde)



Figure 21. Female figure holding a cup (*Bwanga bwa Bwimpe*). Luluwa (Bakwa Mbusha subgroup), Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 31.5 cm. Field-collected by Leo Frobenius in 1905. Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 5870:06 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, courtesy Museum für Völkerkunde)

same Bakwa Mbusha (Baqua Mbuscha) subgroup (Figures 19–21).³⁸ This reinforces the hypothesis that the two Luluwa figure styles were linked to different classes of people. The fact that Frobenius collected far more figures in the schematic style than in the naturalistic style also reinforces the idea that the origin of the naturalistic style is related to the stratification of Luluwa society in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Frobenius also collected many refined figures in the naturalistic Luluwa style among neighbors of the Luluwa, such as the Northern Kete and Bakwa Mputu (Beena N'Putu) (Figures 22–27) and the Ngeende (Bangende), Pyaang (Pianga), and Byeeng (Bieng Ndumbi).³⁹ In this respect, attention should be drawn to the fact that, according to Jan Vansina, small figurines on a pointed end, called *nnoon*, were possibly introduced along with charms among the Pyaang by the neighboring Luluwa.⁴⁰ Moreover, the Kuba term for “statue,” *iping*, is borrowed from the Luluwa or the Kete, who, as we have seen, use the word *lupingu*. It is also significant that some northern Luluwa subgroups share the Kuba’s belief in nature spirits, which are unknown in the southern Luluwa region. Among these northern Luluwa they are referred to as *mingici*, a term that clearly derives from the Kuba word (*mi*)ngesh.⁴¹

The above-mentioned peoples—Northern Kete, (Bakwa) Mputu, Ngeende, Pyaang, and Byeeng—seem to have acted as mediators between the Luluwa and the Kuba. At the end of the nineteenth century, there existed numerous trade contacts between the Luluwa and the Luba in the south and the Kuba in the north. The Mongo peoples do not typically carve anthropomorphic figures, but the Ndengesh, who are generally viewed as “Kubaized” Mongo, have produced a special type of human statue that is intricately covered with imitations of Mongo-like scarification marks. As such, they show a stylistic kinship with certain Luluwa carvings.⁴²

At the beginning of the twentieth century, both the Luluwa and the Luba also intermingled with the Kuba in the area around Lwebo.⁴³ Frans Olbrechts, who applied Giovanni Morelli’s method of morphological analysis to the figure sculpture of Congo, believed that Luluwa art was related to the so-called court art of the neighboring Kuba.⁴⁴ And in fact certain scarification designs on Luluwa figurative carvings can also be seen on the remarkable drinking cups in buffalo horn or their wooden replicas that occur among several peoples in southern Congo but are mainly preserved under the name “Kuba” in Western collections (Figure 28).⁴⁵ Contrary to what Olbrechts seems to suggest, however, it is the Luluwa and the Kete who influenced Kuba art

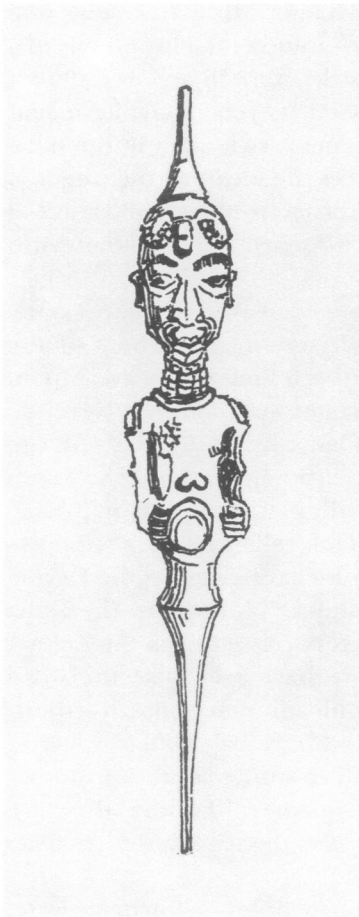


Figure 22. Half-figure (*Bwanga bwa Cibola*). Northern Kete, Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 30 cm. Field-collected by Leo Frobenius in the village of Kapungu Kalamba in 1905. Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 5141:07 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, courtesy Museum für Völkerkunde)

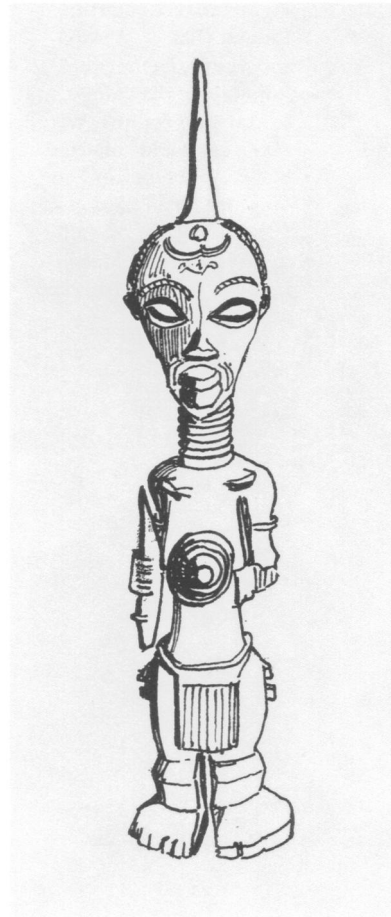


Figure 24. Female figure holding a cup (*Bwanga bwa Bwimpe*). Northern Kete, Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 23.8 cm. Field-collected by Leo Frobenius in the village of Kapungu Kalamba in 1905. Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 5138:07 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, courtesy Museum für Völkerkunde)

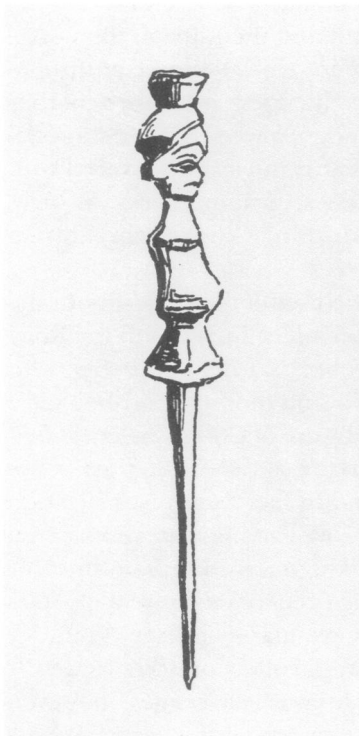


Figure 23. Half-figure (*Bwanga bwa Cibola*). Northern Kete, Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 24 cm. Field-collected by Leo Frobenius in the village of Kapungu Kalamba in 1905. Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 5150:07 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, courtesy Museum für Völkerkunde)

rather than the other way around. Indeed, freestanding anthropomorphic Kuba figures in wood are very rare and practically limited to the famous *ndop* king statues.⁴⁶ In the end, the naturalistic Luluwa style constitutes an autonomous entity and shows little if any relationship to the sculptural production of the Kuba and their neighbors.

THE HEMP CULT AND THE ALLEGED END OF LULUWA ART

In the literature, the decline of figurative sculpture among the Luluwa has often been linked to chief Kalamba Mukenge's propagation of a new *bwanga* known as the "hemp cult."⁴⁷ As a new *bwanga*, this cult, or religion, was initially aimed at establishing peace, happiness, and friendship. The followers of Kalamba Mukenge's new hemp religion, the *beena dyamba* or "people of the hemp," also expected their new *bwanga* to bring them longevity and even immortality.⁴⁸ At the end of the nineteenth century, the explorer Hermann von Wissmann reported how Ka-

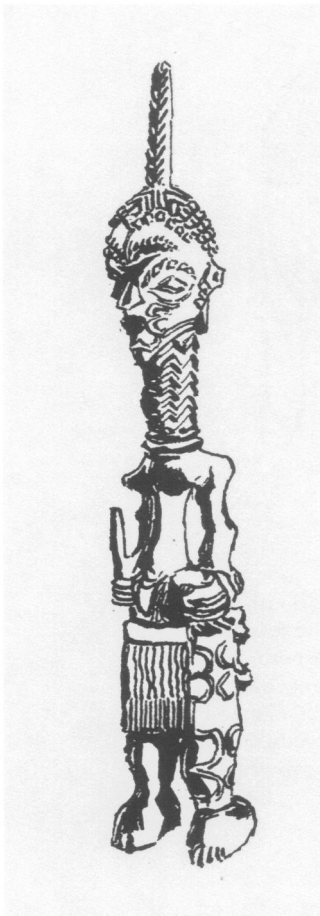


Figure 25. Female figure holding a cup (*Bwanga bwa Bwimpe*). Bakwa Mputu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 32.2 cm. Field-collected by Leo Frobenius in 1905. Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 5284:07 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, courtesy Museum für Völkerkunde)

lamba Mukenge seized power figures from subjected chiefs and destroyed them publicly in a bonfire.⁴⁹

Wissmann believed that figures covered with scarification patterns were produced by past generations as a result of the ban issued by Kalamba Mukenge on their application. At the time of the explorer's visit to the area, the younger generation had indeed abandoned elaborate marks in favor of simpler motifs, and the *beena dyamba* had copied the forehead scarification marks of the Imbangala.⁵⁰ As mentioned above, the scarification of body and face has always been strongly influenced by fashion and foreign influences. Frobenius points out that while certain southern Luluwa subgroups showed the influence of Chokwe scarifications, northern Luluwa subgroups such as the Bakwa Mputu continued to

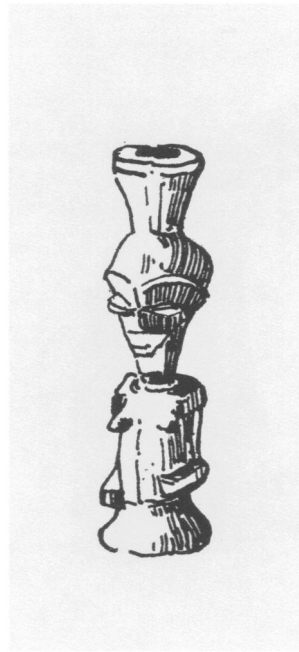


Figure 26. Half-figure. Bakwa Mputu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 11 cm. Field-collected by Leo Frobenius in 1905. Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 5314:07 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, courtesy Museum für Völkerkunde)

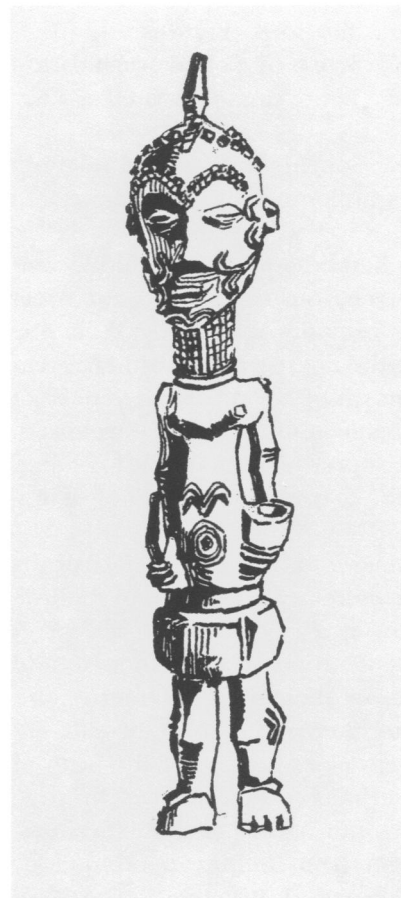


Figure 27. Female figure holding a cup (*Bwanga bwa Bwimpe*). Bakwa Mputu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Wood; H. 30 cm. Field-collected by Leo Frobenius in 1905. Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 5285:07 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, courtesy Museum für Völkerkunde)



Figure 28. Drinking horn. Kuba (?), Democratic Republic of the Congo, mid to late 19th century. Buffalo horn, metal wire; L. 50.8 cm. Ex coll. Jeanne Walschot, Brussels. Buffalo Museum of Science, 1938, C12696 (photo: Buffalo Museum)



Figure 29. A fourteen-year-old girl with a Chokwe-like cross-shaped scarification motif on her forehead, 1905. Bakwa Mputu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Frobenius-Institut an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, SkB X 4 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, in Frobenius, *Ethnographische Notizen*, vol. 3, p. 87, fig. 20)

apply “old” *nsalu* scarifications (Figures 29, 30).⁵¹ Consequently, the presence of carved scarification marks on the body of a figure cannot be used as a terminus ante quem.

Although Kalamba Mukenge’s privileged relationship with European travelers and explorers gave him wealth and prestige, as well as preeminence over his rivals, his power was limited both geographically and historically, and his religious reform did not affect the entire Luluwa region. Apparently, Kalamba Mukenge’s influence did not reach the northern areas of Luluwa country, north of Ndemba, where most of the naturalistic figures seem to have been produced. Nor do the primary sources indicate that his hemp cult actually led to the massive destruction of figurative *manga*.

One should not overlook the fact that basically Luluwa art had an ephemeral status and Luluwa practitioners did not as a rule preserve their cult accessories. They were supposed to relinquish and sometimes even destroy their *manga* statuettes and other cult objects after they retired from the cult—in the case of the *Bwanga bwa Cibola*, after the birth of their fifth child.⁵² Perhaps connotations of prestige and status associated with figures in the naturalistic style prevented them from being abandoned or destroyed by their owners, but many figures were

acquired by Westerners before they underwent this irreversible fate.

Kalamba Mukenge’s reform, one of many religious renewals, may have entailed the prohibition of existing beliefs and practices, including the use of *manga*, in a limited part of Luluwa territory, but it surely never affected the entire Luluwa region. Moreover, the carving of schematic, rudimentary figures as *manga* has been kept alive up to this day, at least in some villages. It therefore seems more likely that the end of the naturalistic figure style is related to the abolishment of the new stratification of Luluwa society by the colonial powers in the beginning of the twentieth century.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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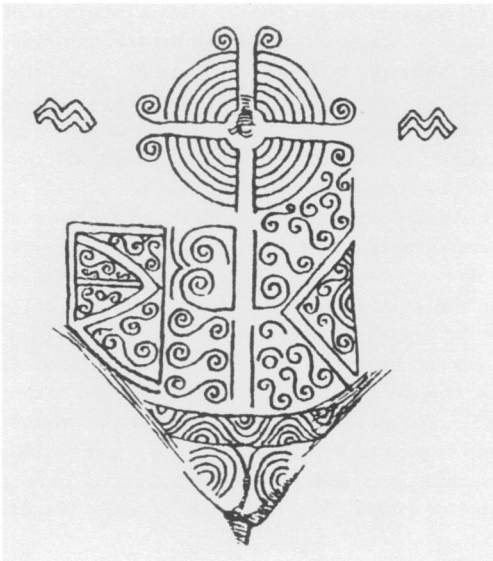


Figure 30. Scarified abdomen of an eighteen-year-old woman, 1905. Bakwa Mputu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Frobenius-Institut an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, SkB X 8 (after drawing by Hans Martin Lemme, in Frobenius, *Ethnographische Notizen*, vol. 3, p. 85, fig. 11)

sent article rest was carried out during two fellowship terms at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, from 1997 to 1999. I am grateful for the Metropolitan Museum's Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellowship, and to the Belgian American Educational Foundation (B.A.E.F.), and the Fund for Scientific Research—Flanders for their support. An earlier version of this article was read at the University Seminar on the Art of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at Columbia University, New York, on April 15, 1998. Finally, I owe special thanks to Rik Ceyssens for his invaluable suggestions and trenchant critiques of my research.

ABBREVIATIONS

Afrika

Afrika: Kunst und Kultur. Meisterwerke afrikanischer Kunst. Hans-Joachim Koloss, ed. Exh. cat. Munich: Prestel; Berlin: Museum für Völkerkunde—Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 1999.

Denolf, *Aan de rand*

Prosper Denolf. *Aan de rand van de Dibese.* Morele en Politieke Wetenschappen, Verhandelingen 34. Brussels: Koninklijk Belgisch Koloniaal Instituut, 1954.

Fourche and Morlighem, *Communications*

Jules-Auguste Fourche and Henri Morlighem. *Les Communications des indigènes du Kasai avec les âmes des morts.* Sciences Morales et Politiques, Mémoires 9, no. 2. Brussels: Institut Royal Colonial Belge, 1939.

LF 2, 3, 4

Leo Frobenius. *Ethnographische Notizen aus den Jahren 1905 und 1906.* Hildegard Klein, ed. Vol. 2, *Kuba, Leele, Nord-Kete.* Vol. 3, *Luluwa, Süd-Kete, Bena Mai, Pende, Cokwe.* Vol. 4, *Kanyok, Songye, Tetela, Songo Meno/Nkutu.* Studien zur Kulturkunde 84, 87, 97. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1987, 1988, 1990.

Maesen, "Statuaire et culte"

Albert Maesen. "Statuaire et culte de fécondité chez les Luluwa du Kasai (Zaire)." *Quaderni Poro* 3 (1982), pp. 49–58.

Maesen, *Umbangu*

Albert Maesen. *Umbangu: Kunst uit Kongo in het Museum van Belgisch-Kongo.* Kunst in België 3. Brussels: Cultura, 1960.

Petridis, "Of Mothers and Sorcerers"

Constantine Petridis. "Of Mothers and Sorcerers: A Luluwa Maternity Figure." In *African Art at the Art Institute of Chicago*, pp. 183–95, 198–200. Museum Studies 23, no. 2. Chicago: Art Institute, 1997.

RMCA

Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium

Samain, "Geestenbomen"

Alidoor Samain "Geestenbomen bij de Baluba's." *Congo* 1, no. 1 (1923), pp. 43–49; 1, no. 2 (1924), pp. 218–29.

Treasures

Treasures from the Africa-Museum, Tervuren. Gustaaf Verswijver et al., eds. Exh. cat. Tervuren: Royal Museum for Central Africa, 1995.

Wissmann et al., *Im Innern Afrikas*

Hermann von Wissmann et al. *Im Innern Afrikas: Die Erforschung des Kassai während der Jahre 1883, 1884, und 1885.* 3rd ed. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1891.

NOTES

1. In accordance with the phonetic African alphabet, the "c" in italicized vernacular terms like *Cibola* should be pronounced "ch" as in "cheese." Although I have used the common Anglicized spellings of Chokwe and Chiluba, in toponyms and proper names the sound is spelled "tsh."
2. Petridis, "Of Mothers and Sorcerers." The Art Institute of Chicago's maternity figure also featured in the Metropolitan Museum's recent exhibition "Art and Oracle: Spirit Voices of Africa"; see Alisa LaGamma, cat. no. 42, in LaGamma and John Pemberton III, *Art and Oracle: African Art and Rituals of Divination*, exh. cat. (New York: MMA, 2000), pp. 66–67.

3. In passing, I would like to draw attention to the many erroneous data provided in the German edition of a catalogue that was recently published in conjunction with a traveling exhibition organized by the RMCA; see Boris Wastiau, cat. nos. 62–68, in *Afrikanische Kunst: Verborgene Schätze aus dem Museum Tervuren*, Gustaaf Verswijver et al., eds., exh. cat., Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (Munich: Prestel; Tervuren: RMCA, 1999), pp. 166–69. The term *makishi* is common among the Luvale and related peoples of Zambia but is not used among the Luluwa (p. 167); *bakulu* merely points to seniority and eldership but cannot be used to refer to the ancestors or ancestral spirits (p. 167); *bijinga* is clearly a misspelling of the term *bishimba* and certainly not a synonym for *bwanga* (p. 168); there is no field-based proof that wood of the *Hymenocardia acida* is frequently used in connection with Luluwa fertility rituals and medicines (p. 169), and so forth.
4. Rik Ceyssens (personal communication, February 1, 1998) informed me that Luluwa people are also among the Congolese minorities who immigrated to northeastern Angola. It seems that some of these Luluwa immigrants in Angola are called Beena Maayi, or “People of the Water”; see José Redinha, *Os Bena-Mai da Lunda* (Luanda: Fundo de Turismo e Publicidade, 1974). However, according to Ceyssens, the pseudo-ethnonym Beena Maayi is very common in the Kasai region, and the Luluwa themselves use it to denote all their western neighbors.
5. Petridis, “Luluwa Masks,” *African Arts* 32, no. 3 (1998), pp. 32–47, 91–94; see also Frobenius, “Bena Lulua,” LF 3, pp. 5, 26. Rik Ceyssens (personal communication, September 30, 2000), however, points out that aside from the Chokwe many other influences must be taken into account in order to explain the diversity of Luluwa culture. These various influences have also given shape to Luluwa sociopolitical organization. Thus, it should not be overlooked that several central Luluwa subgroups, such as the Beena Kashiya, Bashila Kasanga, and Bakwa Mwanza, immigrated from the east. Some 18th-century sources also attest that contacts with other than Chokwe peoples living west of the Luluwa’s present habitat are much older than scholars generally assume. Moreover, Chokwe immigration occurred sporadically rather than in one monolithic movement.
6. Hermann von Wissmann recorded the terms *bwanga*, *bishimba*, and *lupingu* in the 1880s; Wissmann, *Unter deutscher Flagge quer durch Afrika von West nach Ost von 1880 bis 1883* (Berlin: Globus, 1889), p. 106; and Wissmann et al., *Im Innern Afrikas*, facing pp. 258, 265. According to Jules-Auguste “Tiarko” Fourche and Henri Morlighem, both makers and users of *manga* had an agreement with the ancestral spirits who lie at the basis of the powers of *manga* and their ingredients (*Communications*, p. 61). Leo Stappers rightfully questions the translation of the term *bwanga* as “fetish” because of its emphasis on aspects of form rather than content; Stappers, “Prières luba-kasaayi datant de 1912,” *Cahiers des Religions Africaines* 3, no. 5 (1969), p. 114. In referring to the *Bwanga bwa Cibola* as a “cult,” it should be emphasized that this translation cannot be equated with the narrow Christian meaning of the term derived from the Latin verb *colere* (see also note 47).
7. The ancestral spirits are ranked in a hierarchy and are seen as ambassadors of the Supreme Being *Mfidi Mukulu*, who is first addressed in prayers to the ancestors; see Jules-Auguste Fourche and Henri Morlighem, “Conceptions des indigènes du Kasai sur l’homme et la mort,” *Journal de la Société des africanistes* 7, no. 2 (1937), pp. 197–98; and David A. McLean, “The Sons of Muntu: An Ethnological Study of the Bena Lulua Tribe in South Central Congo,” M.A. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1962, pp. 156–58. Frobenius—who noted that the southern Luluwa subgroups also called their wooden figures *bashangi*—thought that the term *mukishi* was prevalent among the Luba-Lubilanji but that the neighboring Luluwa preferred the term *mushangi* instead (“Bena Lulua,” LF 3, p. 23).
8. According to Albert Maesen (*Umbangu*, pl. 27), an art historian who did some fieldwork among these peoples in 1954–55 during a collecting expedition in southern Congo for the RMCA, the Songye also knew this particular cult. However, other researchers have not been able to confirm this.
9. On spirit-trees and tree altars, see Samain, “Geestenbomen”; Jules-Auguste Fourche and Henri Morlighem, “Mitshi ya m’vidi: Les Arbres-à-esprits au Kasai,” *Bulletin des Séances de l’Institut Royal Colonial Belge* 8, no. 2 (1937), pp. 347–77; and Petridis, “Tree Altars, Spirit-Trees, and ‘Ghost-Posts’ among the Luluwa and Neighboring Peoples,” *Baessler-Archiv* 47, no. 1 (1999), pp. 115–50.
10. Petridis, “Of Mothers and Sorcerers,” p. 199, n. 7. However, whereas spirit possession used to occur quite frequently in various ritual contexts among the Luluwa, only Maesen and Tshisanda Ntabala-Mweny have mentioned it explicitly in relation to the *Cibola* cult: Maesen, *Umbangu*, pl. 27; and Tshisanda, “Le Thème de la maternité dans l’art luluwa du Kasai,” *mémoire de licence* (M.A. thesis), Université Nationale du Zaïre, Lubumbashi, 1973–74, pp. 64–65.
11. See Edmond Boelaert, “Yebola,” *Kongo-Overzee* 1, no. 1 (1934), pp. 16–19; Piet Korse, Mondjulu Lonkongo, and Bongondo Bonje wa Mpay, *Jebola: Textes, rites et signification. Thérapie traditionnelle mongo*, Études Aequatoria 6 (Bamanya and Mbandaka: Centre Aequatoria, 1990); and esp. Ellen Corin, “Refiguring the Person: The Dynamics of Affects and Symbols in an African Spirit Possession Cult,” in *Bodies and Persons: Comparative Perspectives from Africa and Melanesia*, Michael Lambek and Andrew Strathern, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 80–102. The Mongo complex comprises about forty peoples or groups, the Ekonda, Tetela, Nkutshu, and Mbole among them. Although they have their own languages and customs, the forty groups share certain linguistic and cultural traits. Among the Mongo-Ekonda, the *Zebola* healing ritual is known as *Njondo*; see Daniel Vangroenweghe, “Njondo: Thérapie voor geesteszieken door muziek en dans bij de Ekondastam,” in *De Mongo: Bewoners van het Evenaarswoud in Zaïre*, exh. cat., Stadszalen, Sint-Niklaas (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet van België, 1984), pp. 49–50. Considering the other affinities with Mongo culture, which are discussed later in this article, it seems reasonable to assume that possession by the *Cibola* force as a condition for initiation into the *Cibola* cult was especially prevalent in the northern part of Luluwa territory. For some general information on Mongo culture, see also Gustaaf Hulstaert, *Les Mongo: Aperçu général*, Archives d’Ethnographie 5 (Tervuren: RMCA, 1961); and Luc de Heusch, “La Beauté est ailleurs: Pour en finir avec les masques tetela. Notices d’histoire et d’ethnographie nkutshu,” in *Objets-signes d’Afrique*, de Heusch, ed. (Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1995), pp. 175–206.
12. See also Fourche and Morlighem, “Conceptions des indigènes,” p. 201; Maesen, “Statuaire et culte,” p. 57; and Clémentine M. Faïk-Nzuji, “Les Différentes catégories de noms propres des personnes dans la société luba,” *Zaire-Afrique* 24 (1984), pp. 562–63. Often, children who are born with a physical handicap are

- also considered special and are called *mapanga*. The birth of such children is usually accompanied by the planting of a *mumbu* tree; see also Samain, "Geestenbomen," p. 222; Henri Bogaerts, "Onomasticon van 't Luntuvolk," *Congo* 2, no. 2 (1937), pp. 176–81; and Muteba Nzambi Mushipula, "'Mukiya', 'Tshibau' et 'Tshibindi': Sanction sociale et morale chez les Luba du Kasai," *Zaire-Afrique* 27 (1987), pp. 277–79.
13. See also McLean, "The Sons of Muntu," pp. xxviii–xxxii; Faïk-Nzuji, "Les Différentes catégories," p. 562; and Diambila Luboya, "La Sage-femme et le couple mère-enfant chez les Beena Luluwà," *Journal de la Société des africanistes* 60, no. 2 (1990), p. 164. Some sources, however, firmly distinguish *mapanga* children from *manga* children; see Samain, "Geestenbomen," pp. 219–21; Bogaerts, "Onomasticon," pp. 176, 181–85; Rafael Van Caeneghem, "Godsgebeden bij de Baluba," *Aequatoria* 7, no. 1 (1944), p. 33; and Mukangala Dibwe Kalombo and Bangi Makombo, "Les Noms circonstanciels comme source diffuse des relations interpersonnelles chez les Luluwa du Kasai," *Le Mois en Afrique* 22, nos. 253–54 (1987), pp. 122–23. In "Of Mothers and Sorcerers" (p. 189, fig. 6), I published a photograph showing mothers dancing in honor of a son born after three girls or a daughter born after three boys, which Amaat Burssens, a professor of African languages and linguistics at Ghent University from 1926 to 1967, made during fieldwork among the Luluwa in 1937.
 14. See also Fourche and Morlighem, *Communications*, pp. 59–60; and Maesen, "Statuaire et culte," pp. 51–52. Frobenius already mentioned that a *tshiboo* is made for protection against sorcerers ("Baluba," LF 4, p. 59). Rafael Van Caeneghem discusses prayers to the Supreme Being near the *Bwanga bwa Cibawu* in case of emergency and distress, but also prior to traveling or embarking on a hunt; Van Caeneghem, "Godsgebeden," pp. 28–29; idem, "Gebeden der Baluba II," *Aequatoria* 10, no. 1 (1947), pp. 8, 13–14; and idem, "Het godsgebed bij de Baluba van Kasai," *Zaire* 3, no. 7 (1949), pp. 758–59.
 15. For information on sorcery among the Luluwa and the neighboring Luba-Lubilanji, see esp. August De Clercq, "Mupongo, Buloji," *Congo* 1, no. 1 (1936), pp. 1–10; Rafael Van Caeneghem, *Hekserij bij de Baluba van Kasai*, Morele en Politieke Wetenschappen, Verhandelingen 3, no. 1 (Brussels: Koninklijke Academie voor Koloniale Wetenschappen, 1955); and Mulonda Kadiebwé et al., "Le Mupongo," *Le Mois en Afrique* 21, nos. 239–40 (1985–86), pp. 106–9. For information on the association of "lightning senders" (*beena nkuba*), see Louis De Brandt, "Het heelal van den Muluba," *Congo* 2, no. 2 (1921), pp. 258–60; Amaat Burssens, *Wako—Moyo: Zuidoost-Kongo in de lens* (Antwerp: de Sikké, 1943), pp. 108–11; Marcel Peeters, "Secte des foudroyeurs: Bena Nkuba," typescript, [1946], Ethnographic file E.D. 1096, RMCA, Ethnography Section; and Kabulampuka Kanyinda, "La Secte Nkuba 1936–1958," in *Symbolique verbale et rituelle chez les Sakata, Lele, Wongo, Kuba, Luluwa, Mbole et Vira*, Publications du CEEBA 93 (Bandundu: Centre d'Études Ethnologiques, 1984), pp. 11–28. The *Cibawu* often is kept by a woman whose initiation into the cult is characterized by a possession-trance. These women usually become powerful diviners who specialize in the pursuit of lightning senders and sorcerers.
 16. See also Van Caeneghem, "Gebeden," p. 6; Albert Maesen, field notebook no. 30 [1954], RMCA, Ethnography Section, pp. 11–12; and David A. McLean and Ted J. Solomon, "Divination among the Bena Luluwa," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 4, no. 1 (1971), pp. 35–36, n. 11. For some general information on the symbolism of the colors red, black, and white among Bantu-speaking peoples, see esp. Anita Jacobson-Widding, *Red—White—Black as a Mode of Thought: A Study of Triadic Classification by Colours in the Ritual Thought of the Peoples of the Lower Congo*, Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology 1 (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1979); and Allen F. Roberts, "Insight, or Not Seeing is Believing," in *Secrecy: African Art that Conceals and Reveals*, Mary H. Nooter, ed., exh. cat. (New York: Museum for African Art and Prestel, 1993), pp. 65–79.
 17. For information on Janus-faced *Cibawu* figures, see Amaat Burssens, field notebook, 1937, University Library, Manuscript Room, Ghent University, nos. 16, 24, 25; Rafael Van Caeneghem, letter of September 13, 1938, Ethnographic file E.D. 678, RMCA, Ethnography Section; and Fourche, typescript, [1946], Ethnographic file E.D. 929, RMCA, Ethnography Section, no. 167. Bichromy is also typical of carved posts that are found among many peoples in Central Africa; see Petridis, "Tree Altars," pp. 138–44. It is not a coincidence that the face of the famous male figure at the Berlin Ethnologisches Museum is also divided into a red and a black half; see Petridis, no. 147, in *Afrika*, pp. 223–24.
 18. See Henri Morlighem, "Notes sur quelques fétiches," typescript, [1935], Ethnographic file E.D. 858, RMCA, Ethnography Section; August De Clercq, *Dictionnaire luba. Première partie: luba—français* (Léopoldville [Kinshasa]: Procure des Missions de Scheut, 1937), pp. 57 and 136; and Maesen, field notebook no. 30 (1954), pp. 52–53. The description Hermann von Wissmann (in Wissmann et al., *Im Innern Afrikas*, p. 209) gives of the *bimpulumba*, conservative elders who objected to Kalamba Mukenge's religious reforms, closely resembles the appearance of figures in the naturalistic style, including the beads and cowries woven into the hair; see also Frobenius, "Bena Luluwa," LF 3, pp. 13–14; and L. Liétard, "Étude sommaire sur la tribu des Luluwa (Kasai, Congo belge)," *Bulletin de la Société Royale Belge de Géographie* 53, 1 (1929), p. 40.
 19. Maesen, "Statuaire et culte," p. 56.
 20. See Petridis, cat. no. 111, in *Treasures*, pp. 331–33. Most Luluwa figures in the naturalistic style seem to have been carved from *mutoci* wood (*Crossopterix febrifuga*); see also Roger Dechamps, "L'Identification anatomique des bois utilisés pour les sculptures en Afrique. II: La Sculpture des 'Luluwa,'" *Africa-Tervuren* 17, no. 3 (1971), pp. 79–86. It is noteworthy that such figures are generally in much better condition than pieces made from other kinds of wood.
 21. Allen F. Roberts, "Social and Historical Contexts of Tabwa Art," in *The Rising of a New Moon: A Century of Tabwa Art*, Roberts and Evan M. Maurer, eds., exh. cat., University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), pp. 10–16, 23. However, contrary to what Annie Vandewiele-Lannoo, a student in art history at Ghent University in the early 1940s, suggested, there is no evidence to identify naturalistic figures as protective charms, on the one hand, and schematically carved pieces as "fetishes," on the other; Vandewiele-Lannoo, "De plastiek der Bena-Luluwa," *licentiaatsverhandeling* (M.A. thesis), Rijksuniversiteit te Gent, 1945–46, pp. 12, 36. For general information on the Luluwa's involvement in the long-distance trade, see esp. Ntambwe Luadia-Luadia, "Les Luluwa et le commerce luso-africain (1870–1895)," *Études d'Histoire africaine* 6 (1974), pp. 55–104.
 22. This distinction between large and carefully carved figures

- made by professional master sculptors for the benefit of the whole community versus small and often rough-hewn figures made by the ritual specialist or the client himself for private purposes, has also been recorded among the neighboring Songye, whose *mankishi* figures are very similar to the *mpingu* of the Luluwa and who also use the terms *bwanga* and *bishimba*; see Dunja Hersak, *Songye Masks and Figure Sculpture* (London: Ethnographica, 1986), pp. 118–22; see also Fourche and Morlighem, *Communications*, pp. 57–60.
23. It is notable, however, that a small elite was able to develop a carving tradition of such a high degree of refinement in a relatively short time span. Unlike the case of the Tabwa of south-eastern Congo, there is no indication whatsoever that the Luluwa imported their elite arts from one of their neighbors, nor that they relied on sculptors of foreign origin or that local sculptors imitated the work of others. Curiously enough, in the available sources there is also no mention in relation to the above-cited famous central Luluwa chiefs of their role as patrons of a state art or of the existence of a real court with a distinguished class of professional sculptors.
 24. On the *Lwendu lua Mucipu* ritual, see also Badibanga Kantshiana and Tshishimbi Katumumonyi, "Le Rôle de la femme dans la société luluwa," *Les Cahiers du CEREKA* 1, no. 1 (1988), pp. 93–94. Rik Ceyssens (personal communication, February 1, 1998) questions the social stratification of Luluwa society. Rather, he views the brief and local equation of the power of men and women at the end of the 19th century as resulting from the immigration of traders on traditional matrimonial exchanges. Furthermore, he confirms that some nouveaux riches benefited from the long-distance trade and indeed aggrandized their political status but suggests that the interest of the new bourgeoisie in baubles of foreign origin rather contributed to the degradation of "classical" Luluwa sculpture; see also Ceyssens, *Balungu: Constructeurs et destructeurs de l'état en Afrique centrale* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), pp. 58 n. 54, 155–57.
 25. These carvings not only attest to the political power certain women held by the end of the 19th century; they also shed light on a form of spirit-possession not entirely dissimilar to the one that sometimes leads to initiation into the *Bwanga bwa Cibola*. When the eldest daughter of an important chief fell ill and regular treatment brought no relief, a diviner would determine that the woman was being possessed by an illness-inflicting spirit. Initiation into a special cult would free her from possession and lead to her recovery, after which she received the honorary title of *inabanza* and was invested with the highest political power. See Samain, "Geestenbomen," pp. 223–25; and Marcel Lecomte, "Le Rituel de féminisation des sorciers dans la magie de l'accablement luluwa et basonge," typescript, n.d., Archives of Jean Willy Mestach, Brussels.
 26. Many African languages have a single word that means both beautiful and good. Among the Lega the term *busoga* is close to the classical Greek concept of *kalokagathia*: it denotes the inseparable combination of goodness and beauty that is the ultimate goal of initiation into the Bwami association; see Daniel Biebuyck, *Lega Culture: Art, Initiation, and Moral Philosophy among a Central African People* (Berkeley: Regents of the University of California, 1973), p. 129; and idem, *La Sculpture des Lega*, trans. Brunhilde Biebuyck and Mihaela Bacou, exh. cat. (Paris: Galerie Hélène et Philippe Leloup, 1994), p. 32. For general information on the moral basis of African aesthetics, see also Susan Mullin Vogel, *African Aesthetics: The Carlo Monzino Collection*, exh. cat. (New York: Center for African Art, 1986), pp. xiii–xiv; and Wilfried Van Damme, *A Comparative Analysis Concerning Beauty and Ugliness in Sub-Saharan Africa*, *Africana Gandensia* 4 (Ghent: Rijksuniversiteit, 1987), pp. 11–19, 53–57.
 27. The expression is borrowed from Susan Mullin Vogel, "Baule Scarification: The Mark of Civilization," in *Marks of Civilization: Artistic Transformations of the Human Body*, Arnold Rubin, ed. (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, University of California, 1988), pp. 97–105. The same ideas of body perfection and humanization through scarification are also reflected in the figure sculpture of the Luba-Katanga; see Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen F. Roberts, "Body Memory," in *Memory: Luba Art and the Making of History*, Roberts and Roberts, eds., exh. cat. (New York: Museum for African Art and Prestel, 1996), p. 98. Rubin, who rightfully remarks that even cicatrizations tend to flatten and are thus not really permanent, draws attention to the fact that the dark pigmentation of many sub-Saharan African peoples lends itself better to the sculptural quality of cicatrizations than to the graphic quality of tattoos; Rubin, "General Introduction," in *Marks of Civilization*, pp. 13 and 15.
 28. See also Wissmann et al., *Im Innern Afrikas*, p. 167; Denolf, *Aan de rand*, pp. 121–23; and Albert Maesen, field notebook no. 54 [1955], RMCA, Ethnography Section, pp. 11–12. The term *ndundu* is also used for a specific scarification motif; see Leo Stappers, "'Arbeidsvitaminen' der Bena Luluwa-vrouwen," *Africa-Tervuren* 10, no. 4 (1964), p. 98, n. 30; and Tshisanda, "Le Thème de la maternité," p. 60.
 29. Maesen, "Statuaire et culte," pp. 53–54. It seems very likely, however, that, as in the case of the Mongo *Zebola* healing ritual, scarifications were also applied for medical purposes in the context of the *Bwanga bwa Cibola* initiation; see also Diambila, "La Sage-femme," pp. 165, 169.
 30. When the anterior fontanel (*kapoba* or *kabankoshi*) of a newborn is sunken, the mother will smear a mixture of red camwood powder, palm oil, and other ingredients on the fontanel in order to prevent the baby's life-force from escaping through it; see Kathryn W. Nelson, "Child Rearing Patterns in a Lulua Village of South Central Congo," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1968, p. 258. On the symbolic significance of the posterior and anterior fontanels and their relationship to the navel, see also Fourche and Morlighem, *Communications*, pp. 62–63; Marcel Lecomte, "Le Thème de l'ésotérisme lulua," *Jeune Afrique* 10, no. 26 (1957), pp. 10–12; Clémentine M. Faik-Nzuji, *Symboles graphiques en Afrique noire* (Paris: Karthala and Ciltade, 1992), p. 46; and idem, *La Puissance du sacré: L'Homme, la nature et l'art en Afrique noire* (Brussels: La Renaissance du Livre, 1993), pp. 46, 57.
 31. Stéphan, "La Sculpture africaine: Essai d'esthétique comparée," in Jacques Kerchache et al., *L'Art africain, L'Art et les Grandes Civilisations* 18 (Paris: Mazenod, 1987), pp. 246–47.
 32. See Roberts and Roberts, "Body Memory," pp. 111–12. As among the Luba-Katanga, Luluwa scarifications also had erotic connotations and were meant to heighten a woman's appeal; see also Van Caeneghem, letter of September 13, 1938; and Tshisanda, "Le Thème de la maternité," p. 75. Thus, a lozenge motif on the breasts is called *tunkinda*, meaning "little rat traps," referring to the female genitals which seek to "devour" the male organ, metaphorically called *cya mutu bu mpuku*, "having the head of a rat"; see Clémentine M. Faik-Nzuji, "L'Art plastique africain comme extension de l'art corporel," in *De l'art nègre à*

l'art africain: L'Évolution de la connaissance de l'art africain des années trente à aujourd'hui (Arnouville: Arts d'Afrique Noire, 1990), pp. 61–62.

33. Corin, "Refiguring the Person," p. 92. The author also notes how the healer traces white marks around the woman's eyes "to represent the 'second look' she will acquire, while entranced, as to what really caused her disease and triggered the spirit's intervention"; *ibid.*, p. 93. Some Luluwa figures, especially those carved in the naturalistic style proper to the Bakwa Ndoolo subgroup, show the same white circles around the eyes (see Figure 17).
34. Frobenius, "Bena Lulua," LF 3, pp. 13–14. One of these Chokwe-inspired motifs is the crosslike mark on the forehead called *kartoza*; see also Tshisanda, "Le Thème de la maternité," p. 60; and compare with Marie-Louise Bastin, *Art décoratif tshokwe*, Subsídios para a História, Arqueologia e Etnografia dos Povos da Lunda Publicações Culturais 55 (Lisbon: Companhia de Diamantes de Angola and Museu do Dundo, 1961), vol. 1, pp. 137–39. Prosper Denolf (*Aan de rand*, p. 121) also recognizes the regional variations in patterns and designs and notes that certain Luluwa and Luba-Lubilanji subgroups shared the practice of raised scars with the Kuba.
35. The same body decorations can be seen in Norman Hardy's 1908 watercolors and sketches of women of the Tetela Sungu subgroup; see Emil Torday and Thomas A. Joyce, *Notes ethnographiques sur des populations habitant les bassins du Kasai et du Kwango oriental*, Ethnographie, Anthropologie, Annales 2, no. 2 (Tervuren: Musée du Congo Belge, 1922), chap. 2. Inspired by Jules-Auguste Fourche and Henri Morlighem's book *Une Bible noire* (Brussels: Max Arnold, 1973), Mubumbila Mfika reads one of Hardy's drawings of a Sungu woman in the light of Luba cosmogony; Mubumbila, *Sur le sentier mystérieux des nombres noirs* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988), p. 138, fig. 30. The field photograph by Joseph Maes, on which the postcard reproduced in this article is based, was made during a collecting expedition for the RMCA in 1913–14; see also Maes, *Notes sur les populations des bassins du Kasai, de la Lukenie, et du Lac Léopold II*, Miscellanées, Annales 1, no. 1 (Tervuren: Musée du Congo Belge, 1924), chap. 5.
36. Denolf (*Aan de rand*, pp. 321–23) discusses the political and cultural affinities between the Luluwa and neighboring Kasai peoples, on the one hand, and the Mongo, on the other. Jan Vansina also points to the mediating role that Luluwa and Luba-Lubilanji peoples played in the Mongo influence on cults and religious associations among the Kuba; Vansina, "Miko mi Yool, une association religieuse kuba," *Aequatoria* 22, no. 3 (1959), pp. 84–88; and *idem*, "Les Mouvements religieux kuba (Kasai) à l'époque coloniale," *Études d'Histoire africaine* 2 (1971), p. 170.
37. On the Bakwa Mushilu and Bakwa Ndoolo substyles, see Paul Timmermans, "Essai de typologie de la sculpture des Bena Luluwa du Kasai," *Africa-Tervuren* 12, no. 1 (1966), pp. 20–22. Although this author equates the substyle of the Bakwa Mushilu with that of the neighboring Beena Tshikulu, the only object collected among the latter, reproduced here as Figure 9, is stylistically quite distinct from the typical Bakwa Mushilu figures. Many of the well-known Luluwa figures collected by Wissmann and his traveling companions in the last quarter of the 19th century, which are now mainly at the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin, also originate from northern Luluwa subgroups such as the Bakwa Mpika and the Beena Mba(a)la; see Petridis, cat. nos. 147, 148, in *Afrika*, pp. 223–24. Rik Ceyssens (personal communication, February 1, 1998), however, wonders whether most naturalistic Luluwa figures originated in the northern part of the Luluwa region because until May 25, 1891, the first explorers did not travel south of the 6th parallel, being the southern border of the Congo Free State.
38. Frobenius also collected the above-mentioned (see note 25 and Figure 13) cup-bearing *Bwanga bwa Bwimpe* figure now at the Detroit Institute of Arts among the Bakwa Mbuscha (Baqua Mbuscha) in the area between Lwebo and the Luluwa River. Karel Timmermans (personal communication, October 17, 1996), a Belgian art collector and former resident of Kananga (formerly Luluabourg), acquired an almost identical piece in the same Luluwa region north of Ndemba; for illustrations, see *Réceptacles*, exh. cat., Musée Dapper (Paris: Éditions Dapper, 1997), pp. 100–101.
39. The Byeeng belong to the Southern Kuba; it was in one of their chiefdoms, Ndombe, which also encompassed a number of Northern Kete villages, that Starr made some interesting field photographs; see Frederick Starr, *Congo Natives: An Ethnographic Album* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1912), pp. 16–17, pls. 10–12; and Jan Vansina, *The Children of Woot: A History of the Kuba Peoples* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 358, n. 4. Frobenius refers to these Kete villages of the Byeeng chiefdom as "Bakete Ndumbis" ("Nord-Bakete," LF 2, pp. 39–45). Frobenius also writes that the Luluwa produced figures for neighboring peoples such as the Luba and the Songye, as well as for certain Tetela enclaves ("Bena Lulua," LF 3, p. 23).
40. Vansina, *The Children of Woot*, pp. 212, 359–60 n. 21; and *idem*, "Ndop: Royal Statues among the Kuba," in *African Art and Leadership*, Douglas Fraser and Herbert M. Cole, eds. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), pp. 47–48.
41. See Denolf, *Aan de rand*, pp. 197–98; and Vansina, "Les Mouvements religieux," p. 170.
42. See Maesen, *Umbangu*, pl. 20; Joseph Cornet, "À propos des statues ndengese," *Arts d'Afrique Noire* 17 (1976), pp. 6–16; and Faik-Nzuji, cat. no. 142, in *Treasures*, pp. 344–45. The ethnonyms Songo Meno, Yaelima, and Ohindo are believed to be synonyms for Ndengesh. For field-based data on other Mongo visual art forms, see Gustaaf Hulstaert, "Les Cercueils des Eleku," *Aequatoria* 22, no. 1 (1959), pp. 10–15; *idem*, "Les Cercueils anthropomorphes," *Aequatoria* 23, no. 4 (1960), pp. 121–29; and esp. de Heusch, "La Beauté est ailleurs," pp. 188–204.
43. See Jan Vansina, "Du Royaume kuba au 'territoire des Bakuba,'" *Études congolaises* 12, no. 2 (1969), pp. 26–27, 32–33, 39. It is interesting to note that the sculptures that Starr collected in the mixed ethnic area around the town of Lwebo for the American Museum of Natural History consist of a large number of rudimentary half- and full-figures but not a single refined and elaborately carved Luluwa figure. These figurative carvings are generally labeled as "Kete" and "Luba"—referring to Luba emigrants from along the Lubilanji River—but their style makes them indistinguishable from schematically carved Luluwa figures. It should be mentioned that many of the objects which Frederick Starr brought back from the Congo were field-collected by Reverend Samuel P. Verner; see Enid Schildkrout, "Personal Styles and Disciplinary Paradigms: Frederick Starr and Herbert Lang," in *The Scramble for Art in Central Africa*, Schildkrout and Curtis A. Keim, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 172.
44. Frans Olbrechts, *Plastiek van Kongo*, with assistance from Albert Maesen (Antwerp: Standaard-Boekhandel, 1946), pp. 52–63;

- see also Ivan Lermolieff [Giovanni Morelli], *Die Werke Italienischer Meister in den Galerien von München, Dresden und Berlin: Ein Kritischer Versuch*, trans. Johannes Schwarze (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1880). However, Vansina ("Ndop," p. 50) writes that "to speak of a court style obliterates the major stylistic distinctions observable in Kuba art: those between the various geographical areas and, even more important, that separating masks and other ritual objects . . . from purely secular work"; see also idem, "Kuba Arts and Its Cultural Context," *African Forum* 3, no. 4, and 4, no. 1 (1968), p. 22. Elsewhere, the author emphasizes the important cultural, sociopolitical, and religious differences between the Luba and the Luluwa peoples, on the one hand, and the Kuba, on the other; Jan Vansina, "L'État kuba dans le cadre des institutions politiques africaines," *Zaire* 11, no. 5 (1957), p. 488; and idem, "Miko mi Yool," p. 92. Not only was there little contact between these peoples until relatively recently, the Kuba even disdained the Luba and the Luluwa, who in turn feared the Kuba.
45. Such drinking horns are also depicted hanging from the shoulder on Luluwa figures that represent high-ranking chiefs; see Petridis, cat. no. 108, in *Treasures*, pp. 330–31; and idem, cat. no. 147, in *Afrika*, pp. 223–24. It remains uncertain whether these objects were made by the Luluwa themselves or were imported from the neighboring Kuba. Among the Kuba, they also serve as status symbols and are used for the consumption of palm wine; see Jan Vansina, cat. nos. 146, 147, in *Kings of Africa: Art and Authority in Central Africa. Collection Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin*, Erna Beumers and Hans-Joachim Koloss, eds., exh. cat., MECC, Maastricht (Maastricht: Foundation Kings of Africa, 1992), pp. 319–20; and David A. Binkley, cat. no. 132, in *Treasures*, p. 341. Curiously, Albert Maesen was told that the piece he collected in the Luluwa village of Muteфу, now at the RMCA (inv. no. RG 53.74.4445), had been carved by a Chokwe sculptor from Tshikapa; Maesen, field notebook no. 30 (1954), p. 57. This drinking horn, which was used for palm wine, was the property of a so-called leopard chief (*mukalenga wa nkashaama*), the highest rank of chieftainship.
 46. For a discussion of a well-known Kuba *ndop* figure at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, see David A. Binkley, cat. no. 54, in *Africa: The Art of a Continent. 100 Works of Power and Beauty*, exh. cat., Guggenheim Museum, New York (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1996), p. 113. Following Olbrechts, scholars have grouped Luluwa art with the Luba-Katanga rather than the Kuba; see esp. Herman Burssens, "Congo Belga," in *Enciclopedia universale dell'arte*, vol. 3 (Venice and Rome: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1958), pp. 777–78; and Albert Maesen, "Styles et expérience esthétique dans la plastique congolaise," *Problèmes d'Afrique Centrale* 44 (1959), p. 84. However, although Luluwa and Luba-Katanga peoples show a predilection for the depiction of female figures, on a purely stylistic level Luluwa art has very little in common with that of the Luba-Katanga.
 47. August De Clercq rightfully points out Wissmann's ethnocentric usage of terms such as "cult," "priestess," and "sacred symbol" in relation to the smoking of hemp by Kalamba Mukenge and his followers and underlines the political dimension of the newly established *bwanga*; De Clercq, "Practische wenken over de ethnographische waarnemingen in Kongo," *Onze Kongo* 3 (1912–13), pp. 233–35; and idem, "Le Chanvre chez les Bena Lulua: Origine, signification et influence de l'usage du chanvre," *Congo* 1, no. 4 (1928), pp. 504–5. For an in-depth discussion of hemp use and its various political implications, see Ceyssens, *Balungu*, pp. 152–59, 166–67.
 48. Until the 1960s, hemp was related to chieftainship and ancestor worship, which was often accompanied by the smoking of hemp; see Nelson, "Child Rearing Patterns," p. 175. Early sources clearly indicate that, at the end of the 19th century, excessive hemp consumption led to serious health problems. These developments, together with famine and widespread pneumonia, not only led to an antihemp campaign by missionaries and colonials, but also provoked significant internal opposition to the newly established *bwanga*. In a letter of June 12, 1894, published in the journal *Missions en Chine et au Congo* 74 (1895), p. 31, August De Clercq gives a telling, though surely not neutral, account of the state of affairs at the time: "L'usage du chanvre fumé comme du tabac, provoque ici les effets de l'opium dans l'Orient, l'affaiblissement rapide du corps et l'abrutissement de l'intelligence. . . . Des hommes de trente ans ont le visage décrépit d'un vieillard et la physionomie d'un idiot. . . . À ce compte, on comprend aisément que nos fumeurs soient d'une paresse sans égal" (Here, hemp smoking has the same effects as opium in the East, rapid weakening of the body and stupefying of the mind. . . . Thirty-year old men have the decrepit face of an elder and the physiognomy of an idiot. . . . It is therefore easy to understand the unequaled laziness of our hemp smokers); see also Wissmann, *Unter deutscher Flagge*, p. 98; Constant De Deken, *Deux ans au Congo* (Antwerp: Clément Thibaut, 1900), pp. 218, 240; and Leo Frobenius, *Im Schatten des Kongostaates: Bericht der Verlauf der Ersten Reisen der D.I.A.F.E. von 1904–1906* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1907), p. 238.
 49. Wissmann et al., *Im Innern Afrikas*, pp. 266–67. When Ludwig Wolf, one of Wissmann's traveling companions, acquired the famous chief figure now at the Berlin Ethnologisches Museum from a rival of Kalamba Mukenge, he threatened to hand the rival over to Kalamba Mukenge if he refused to give Wolf the figure; see *ibid.*, pp. 265–66. Nevertheless, according to Wissmann, the Bakwa Mpika, among whom he collected a fine *Bwanga bwa Bwimpe* figure holding a walking cane in one hand, also at the Berlin Ethnologisches Museum, were loyal to Kalamba Mukenge and belonged to the *beena dyamba*; *ibid.*, p. 215.
 50. See Wissmann et al., *Im Innern Afrikas*, p. 166. Wolf states that both chief Kalamba Mukenge and his ally chief Tshinkenke prohibited scarification as part of their religious reform; Ludwig Wolf, "Anthropologischen Untersuchungen in Central-Afrika," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 16 (1884), p. 424.
 51. Frobenius, "Bena Lulua," *LF* 3, pp. 13–14. Curiously, what is purported to be a portrait of Kalamba Mukenge shows a man who is literally bedecked with complex curvilinear scarifications; see Wissmann et al., *Im Innern Afrikas*, p. 165 (see also Figure 15). But it should be mentioned that according to Prosper Denolf (*Aan de rand*, p. 336), Kalamba Mukenge was not an autochthonous Luluwa chief but a Luba-Lubilanji immigrant of the Bakwa Diishi subgroup who had crossed the Lubi River to overtake the local chief of the Luluwa Bakwa Mushilu subgroup, Mwamba Mputu. Rik Ceyssens (personal communication, September 30, 2000), however, draws attention to the fact that the hemp cult was a very short-lived movement and that scarifications could not simply be erased.
 52. See Fourche and Morlighem, *Communications*, p. 55. Henri Morlighem ("Notes sur quelques fétiches," see note 18 above) writes that the half-figure of the Beena Tshikulu subgroup, which is reproduced here as Figure 9, was placed on a grave.