

a realistic and spiritual product of an original culture. This in itself is a heartening result.

Of course, the Commission's interests and endeavors are not limited to the promotion of Negro art, which is studied in this volume by Leon Kochmitzky. It has taken a very lively interest in the recent discovery of rupestrial engravings and mural drawings of real value, pointing to the almost spontaneous birth and sudden advent of the art of painting. A group of self-trained painters has unexpectedly come to the fore, and we have already witnessed the first efforts of Belgian artists to support them. The book published by the Commission contains an article by Mr. A. Scohy on the problems facing Congolese painting today.

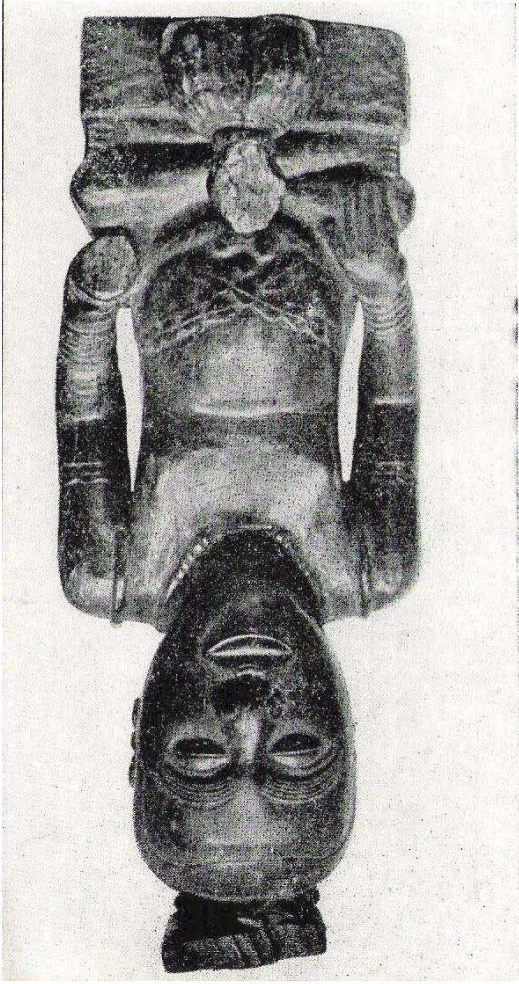
The Commission also takes an interest in native literature. As there was no written language, this has been purely oral in the past. For centuries it has inspired the African clans, tribes and kingdoms. The Commission has supported the first native efforts in written literature, which inevitably entail the participation of the Congolese in the movement of ideas of the 20th century, in which all human beings are brought more closely together by the modern means of communication and mass media.

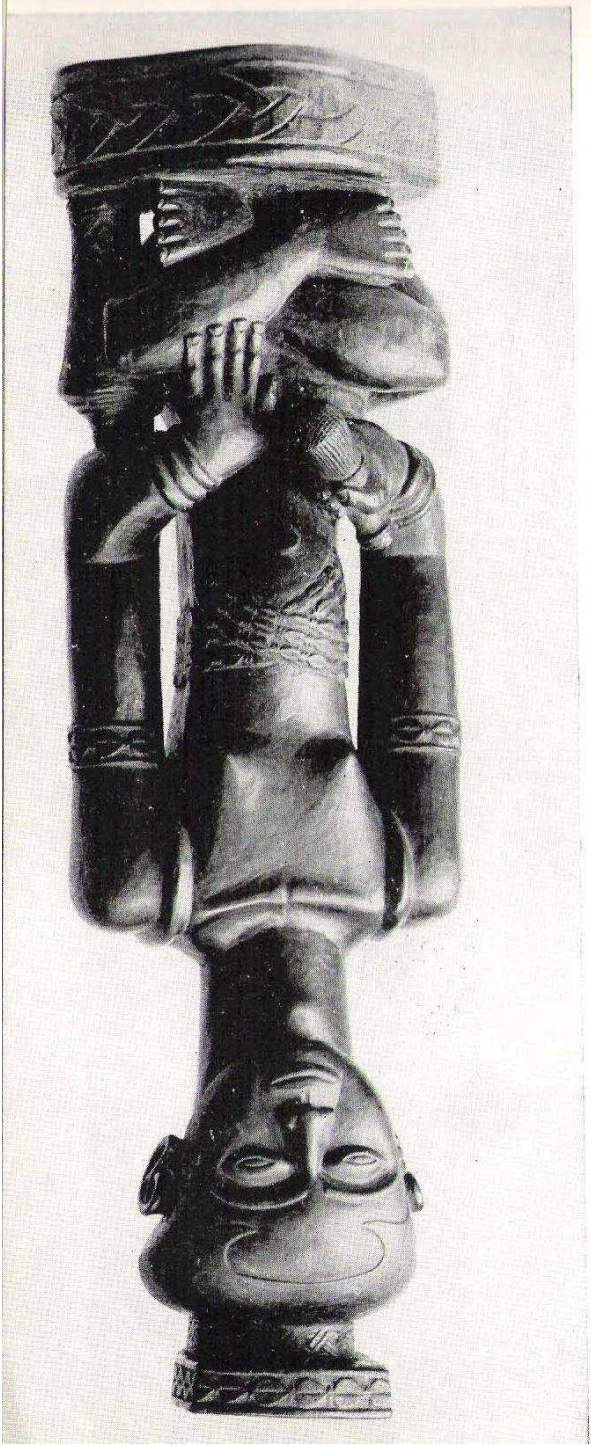
Without giving up the idea of achieving a harmonious combination of their ancestral culture and the Western culture to which we have introduced them, the more advanced of the young African writers want to recapture the spirit of the former, as a means of increasing their self-confidence in their exchanges with us. Also in this respect, the Congo Free State and the Belgian Administration have done their best to save the Sudanese, Nilotic, Hamitic and Bantu arts from oblivion.

We could fill a booklet of this size solely with the bibliography of the numerous masterpieces of Congolese oral art recorded by the Christian missionaries, by ethnographers, linguists, folklore specialists, and even by fiction writers, and which were published in a large number of papers, reviews, magazines, reports to various academies and books.

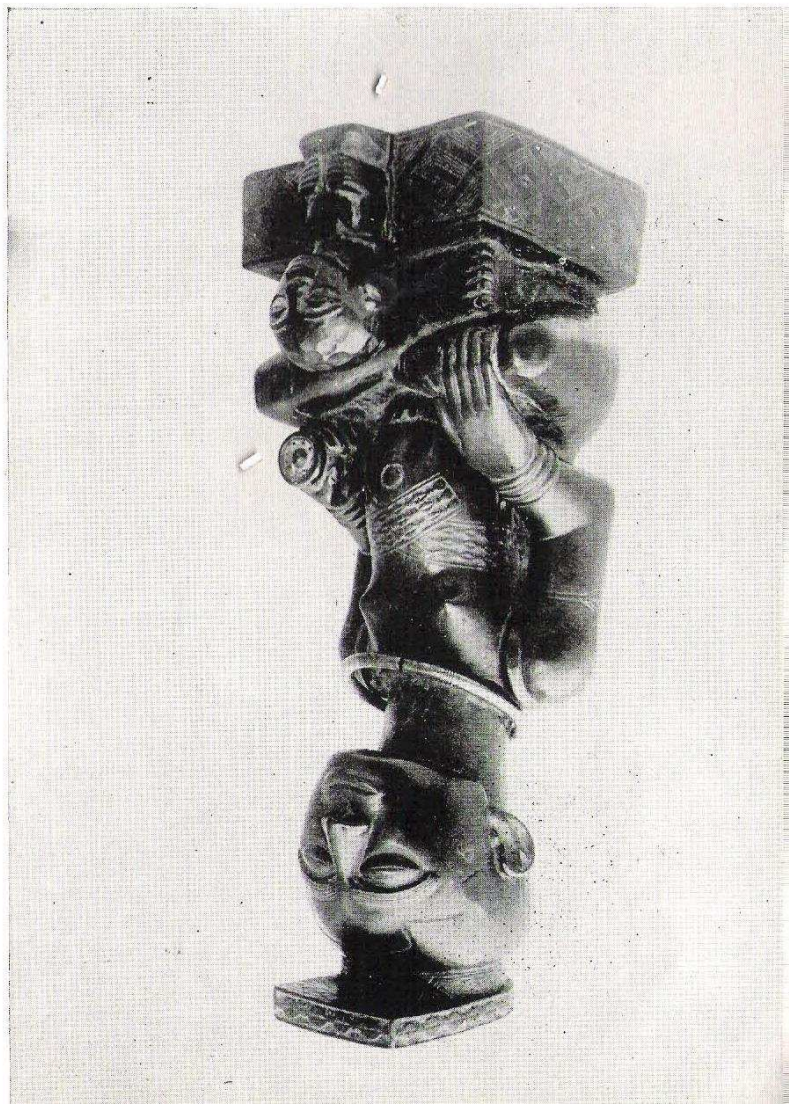
Unfortunately, the men who took an interest in the spoken literature of Equatorial Africa were not in a position to record them in full, with all the shades in tonology of the various dialects, whose importance was first pointed out by the Commission in 1935. In those days the necessary equipment was not available, and there were very few specialists in tonology, this unusual branch of native linguistic studies.

BAKUBA KING BOPE PELENGE — British Museum, LONDON. The emblem of this reign (c. 1800) was the anvil and bellows. This statue of Shamba Bolongongo (c. 1620).



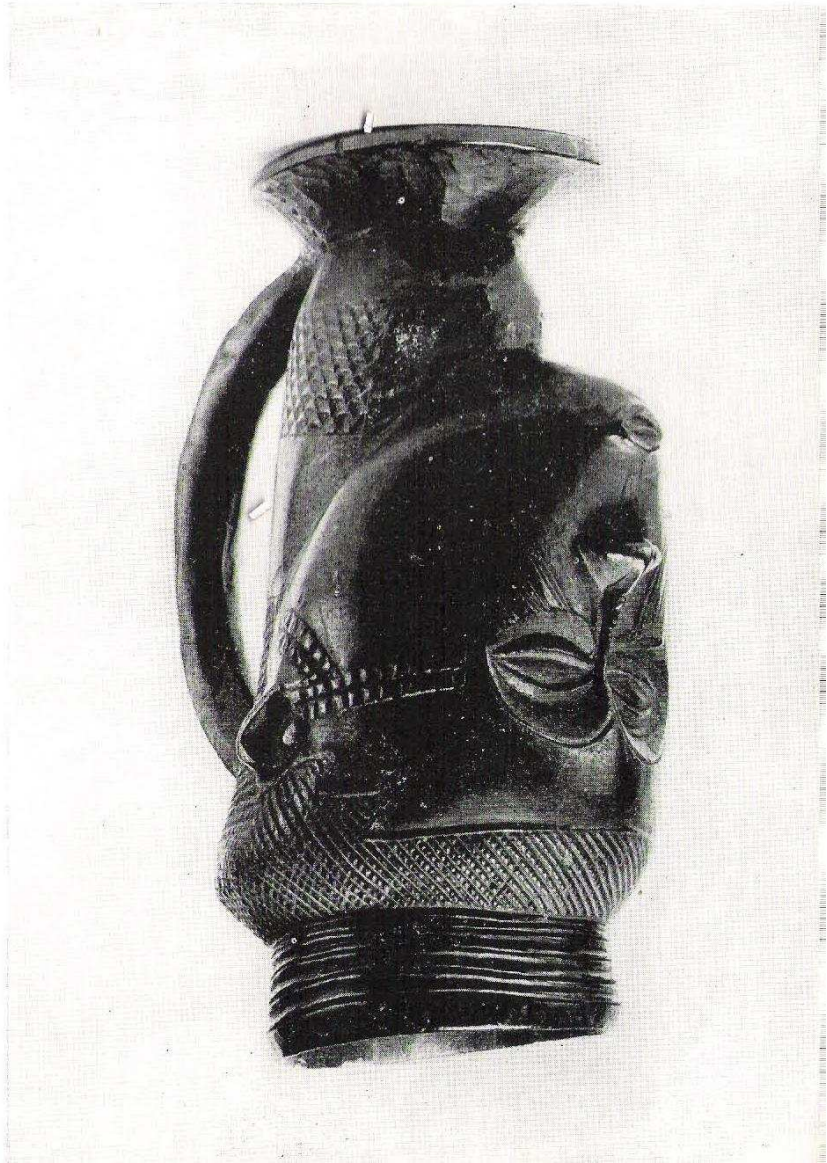


BAKUPA KING KWETE
PESHANGA (c. 1907) —
National Museum, COPEN-
HAGEN. The modern carver
has yielded to a naturalistic
trend.



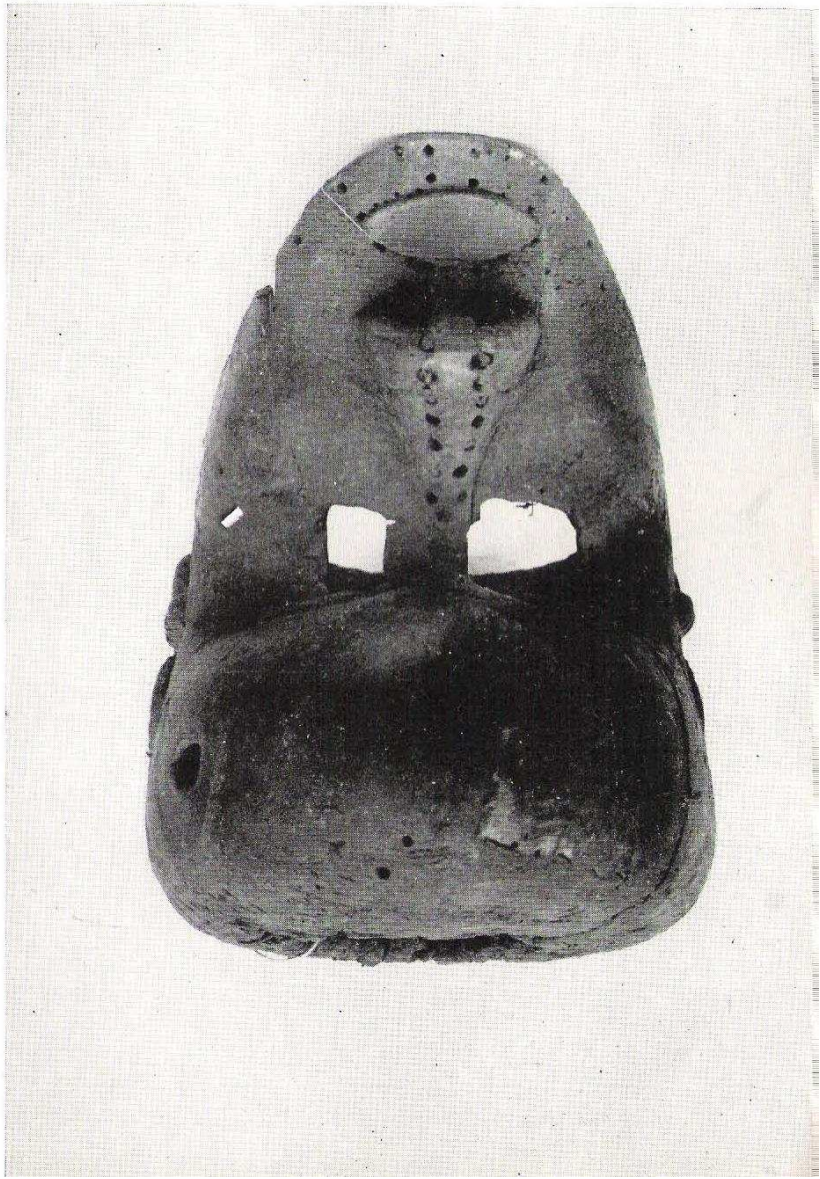
BAKUBA KING MIKOPÉ MBULA (c. 1820) — Belgian Congo Royal
Museum TERVUREN-BRUSSELS. The small feminine figure at the foot
of the statue represents the slave that, contrary to established laws, Mikopé
married.

BAKUBA HEADCUP — Property of Dr. J. P. Chapin, NEW YORK. Cups and goblets in the form of a human head are sometimes executed in a conventional style which almost excludes any likeness to a living being, as in the specimen shown above, and sometimes in a dramatically realistic way, as illustrated by the goblet on the following page (lower right).

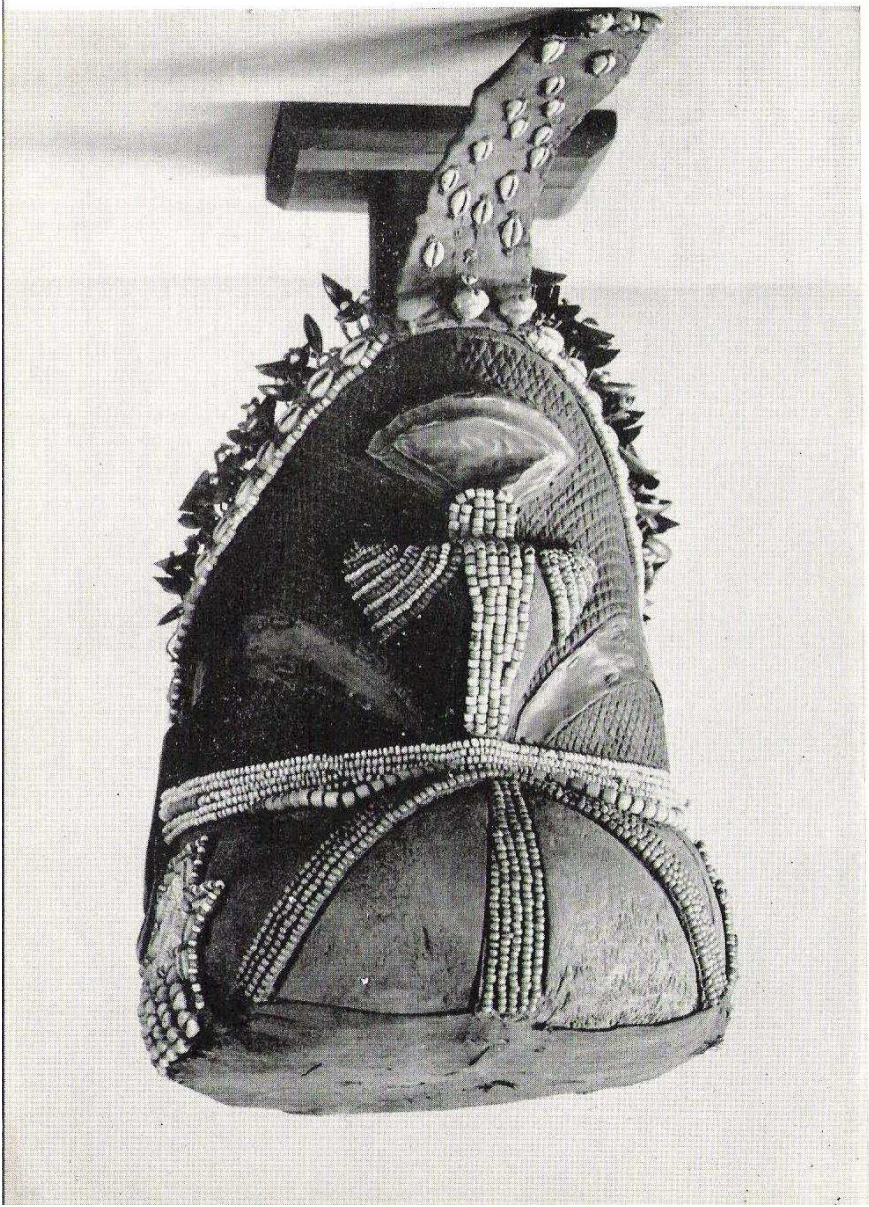


BAKUBA CUP, JANUS CUP and HEADCUP — Belgian Congo Royal Museum, TERVUREN-BRUSSELS. The BAKUBA decorative patterns have been established for many generations. Some are geometrically set in triangle and lozenge mosaics. Others, such as the headress represented on the Janus cup, are an imitation of basketwork.

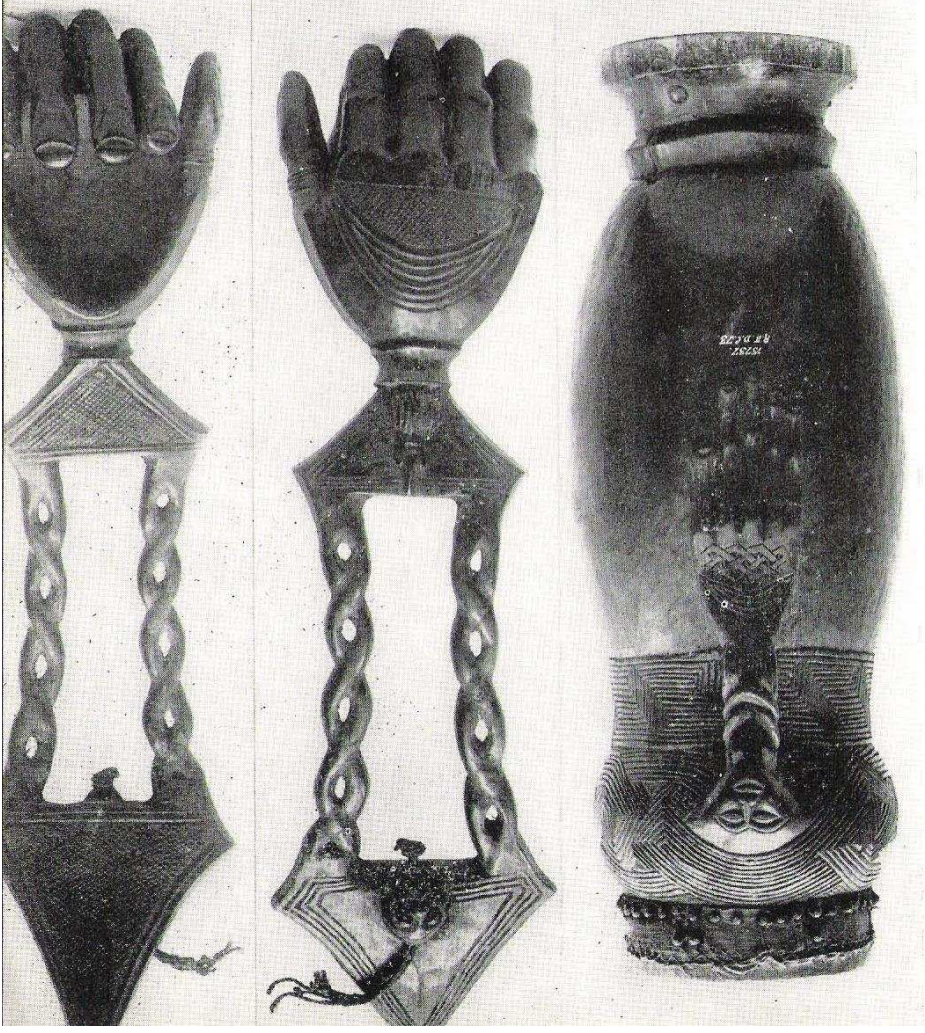




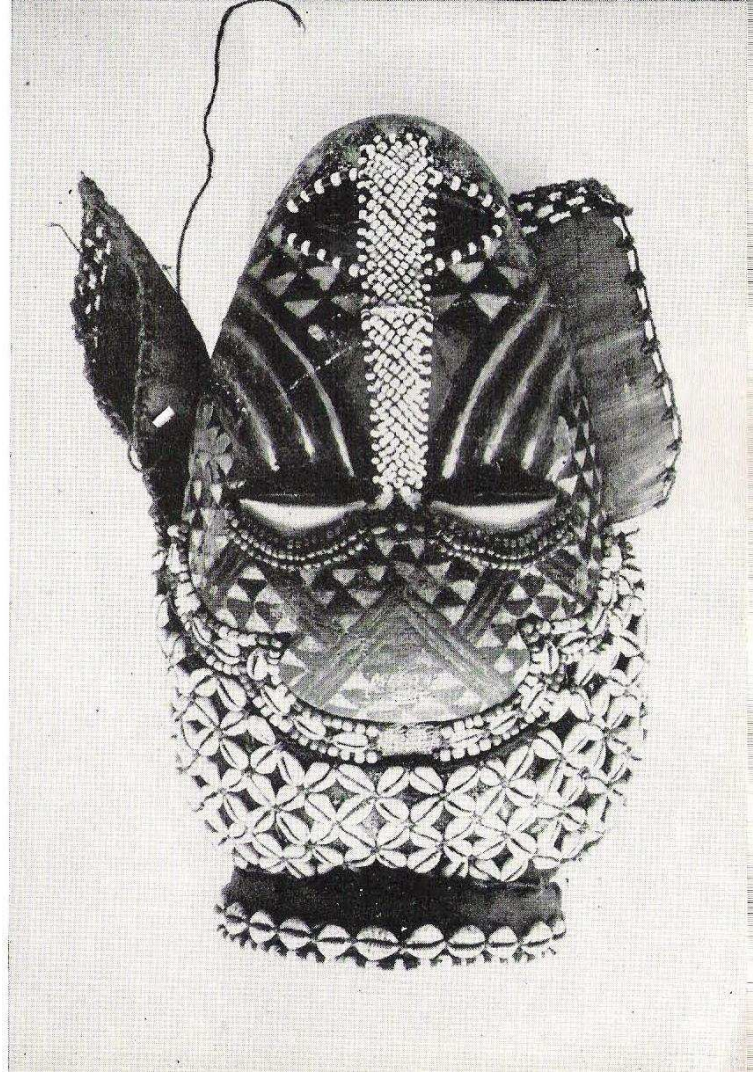
BOMBO MASK — BAKUBA — Belgian Congo Royal Museum, TERVUREN-BRUSSELS. This mask, with its characteristic bulging forehead, is the stylization of Pygmy heads.



BOMBO MASK — BAKUBA — Newark Museum, NEWARK, N. J. A more elaborate and probably more recent version of the Bombo mask. This specimen is adorned with white and colored beads, also with cauries.



BAKUBA DRUM and SYMBOLIC HANDS—Belgian Congo Royal Museum, TERVUREN-BRUSSELS. Hands carved on goblets, drums and other objects are supposed to be the emblem of the YOLO caste, a secret military organization of the BAKUBA tribe.



BAKUBA MASK — Belgian Congo Royal Museum, TERVUREN-BRUSSELS. The geometrical pattern with triangles of alternate colors and the decorative headdress contribute to the peaceful expression of this mask.