

EMBODYING THE SACRED IN YORUBA ART

SELECTIONS FROM
THE NEWARK MUSEUM COLLECTION



KEAN UNIVERSITY

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Map of Yorubaland, showing major towns (e.g. Ilé Ifè) and subgroups (e.g. Ifè)

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January 31 - April 18, 2012

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Staff of Authority (Ipawó Àse), Nigeria.

Introduction

The region of West Africa that today includes the countries of Nigeria, Benin, and Togo is the land of the Yoruba people, whose art is an essential and integral element in their way of life. This exhibition, *Embodying the Sacred in Yoruba Art*, on view from January 31 through April 18, 2012, at Kean University's Karl and Helen Burger Gallery, comprises twenty-eight works from the collection of the Newark Museum. The pieces in the show, which were produced from the late nineteenth through the twentieth century, highlight the relationship between art and the spiritual world.

The Yoruba are among the oldest and most influential of all African cultures and today make up one of Africa's largest ethnic groups. More than 30 million Yoruba live in Africa, and large vibrant communities of Yoruba immigrants live in the United States and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, for centuries countless people of Yoruba descent have been living in the Americas. The broad influence of Yoruba culture today ranges from religious blends of Santeria to the complex rhythmic beats of Afro-Latin and Caribbean music and even to the art of Picasso and Cubism.

We are privileged to be able to study these wonderful works, removed from their original context, from many points of interest. Clearly, the makers of the objects never intended to show them in the static environment of a Western art gallery; art in the Yoruba culture is created for ceremony and ritual, a means of engaging the daily yet sacred relationship to the Earth and the spirits of the greater universe. Yoruba art gives visual form to the divine and, in turn, inspires religious devotion. It is our intention that this exhibition will help illuminate our understanding of and appreciation for the Yoruba people and their art.

On behalf of Kean University, I wish to thank Mary Sue Sweeney Price, Director of the Newark Museum, who made it possible for us to bring this wonderful collection of Yoruba artworks to Kean University. Our gratitude also goes to Dr. Bernard and Patricia Wagner, who generously donated the majority of works in the exhibition. We appreciate the scholarship and academic efforts of Dr. Christa Clarke and her keen selection of the works on display here. I thank Dr. Babatunde Lawal for his insightful essay. For coordinating the show and the catalogue project, we thank Zette Emmons and Michael Schumacher at the Newark Museum, and for their work in planning and coordinating, we are grateful to graduate assistants Diana Palermo and Joshua Green. We wish to thank Danny Aviram from the Facilities Department and gallery assistants Afieya Kipp and Tazwell Salter for installing the show. A special note of thanks also goes to Dr. Dawood Farahi, President of Kean University, and Holly Logue, Acting Dean of the School of Visual and Performing Arts. We appreciate their support for Kean's growing exhibition program and for this opportunity to investigate the art and culture of the Yoruba people.

Neil Tetkowski

Director of University Galleries



Yoruba Art in the Newark Museum

An Introduction by the Director

The African art collection in the Newark Museum was established in the first decades of the twentieth century and is thus one of the oldest collections in the United States. Indeed, art of the Yoruba is prominent among the museum's earliest acquisitions; in 1924 the museum purchased the collection of Walter Dormitzer, a New Jersey businessman who worked in West Africa during the late nineteenth century. Noting at the time that "not very much attention has been paid to primitive Africa by museums, [sic]" the Newark Museum signified its serious commitment to developing an African art collection with this acquisition. Also in 1924, the museum's founder, John Cotton Dana, acquired one of the collection's outstanding sculptural works, a masterful divination cup in the form of a mounted warrior. These and other examples of Yoruba art were highlighted in the Newark Museum's first exhibition of African art, which was held to inaugurate its new building in 1926 and acknowledged as one of the first museum exhibitions devoted to the subject.

Over the decades, the Newark Museum's representation of Yoruba art has expanded considerably to include fine examples of textiles and beadwork along with sculpture in wood, clay, and metal. Most recently, our representation of Yoruba artistic creation has embraced the Diaspora, particularly those contemporary traditions found in New Jersey. In 2000 the Newark Museum commissioned and subsequently acquired an altar dedicated to Chango (known as Sàngó among the Yoruba) created by Eric Rucker, a practitioner based in Newark. This acquisition was followed in 2004 by the purchase of two appliquéd and beaded pañelos dedicated to Chango and Yemeya (called Yemoja by Yoruba) created by Cuban artist Alberto Morgan, a New Jersey resident and Santeria practitioner. Most recently, the important gifts from Bernard and Patricia Wagner featured in this exhibition established the Newark Museum as one of the nation's leading repositories of Yoruba art, a collection distinguished by its depth and breadth of representation.

In 2008 the museum celebrated this major donation in the exhibition *Embodying the Sacred in Yoruba Art: Featuring the Bernard and Patricia Wagner Collection*, co-organized with the High Museum in Atlanta, also a



Sangó Shrine, Idofin, Igbana, Nigeria, 1959

recipient of the Wagners' generosity. Because "embodying the sacred in Yoruba art" is the conceptual basis for this new exhibition, the Newark Museum acknowledges the many contributions of the staff of the High Museum. In particular, we thank Carol Thompson, Fred and Rita Richman Curator of African Art at the High Museum, who organized the exhibition along with Newark Museum curator Christa Clarke and graphic designer Angela Jaeger, who produced the original catalogue. We are also grateful to Dr. Babatunde Lawal, Professor of Art History at Virginia Commonwealth University, who developed the conceptual framework of the 2008 exhibition and wrote the catalogue essay, a version of which is published here. At the Newark Museum, I thank Christa Clarke, Curator, Arts of Africa, and Senior Curator, Arts of Africa and the Americas; Zette Emmons, Manager of Traveling Exhibitions; and U. Michael Schumacher, Marketing Communications Manager, for guiding this exhibition. Special thanks also go to Kean University President Dawood Farahi; Holly Logue, Acting Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts; and Neil Tetkowski, Director of University Galleries, for bringing this exhibition to their campus and making this catalogue possible.

Mary Sue Sweeney Price

Director, The Newark Museum

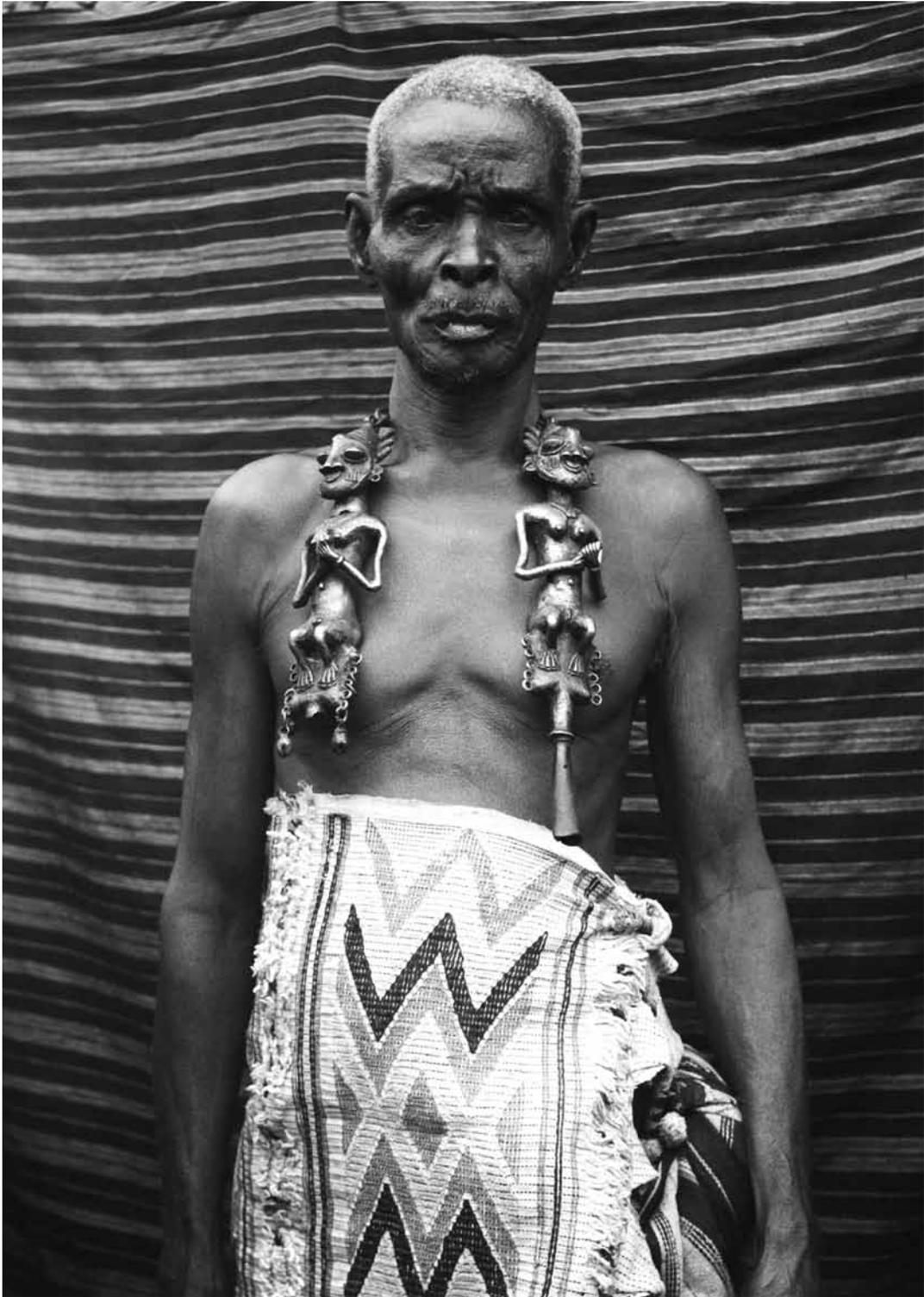


Fig. 1 Ògbóni Member wearing edan Ògbóni, Nigeria

Embodying the Sacred in Yoruba Art

By Dr. Babatunde Lawal

The interconnectedness of art and life in Africa is evident in many African cosmologies that not only trace the origin of art to a High God or Supreme Divinity or supernatural beings but also identify the human body as a piece of sculpture animated by a vital force or soul. Little wonder that the Ewe of Togo and Ghana, for instance, call a human being *amegbeto* (living molded clay).¹ In other words, an individual is alive as long as the soul dwells in his or her body, and death results when the soul leaves that body. However, in many African cultures, death is not the end of life but rather a transition from physical to metaphysical existence, where, according to popular belief, a dematerialized soul lives on and may reincarnate as a newborn baby. In effect, the body mediates and recycles life on earth; hence it is frequently stylized in African art to signify different phases of the existential process, to make the intangible tangible, and to engender cherished social, spiritual, and aesthetic values.² This exhibition focuses on the manifestation of kindred notions in examples of Yoruba art from the Newark Museum.

THE YORUBA

The Yoruba, one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, number more than twenty-five million people today and live mainly in Nigeria and the republics of Benin and Togo (pg. 2). They divide themselves into several kingdoms, each headed by a king (fig. 2), and abundant natural resources have enabled them to develop one of the most complex cultures in sub-Saharan Africa. By the beginning of the second millennium CE, Ilé-Ifè, their most sacred city, had become a major urban center with highly sophisticated religious, social, and political institutions. The ancient arts of Ilé-Ifè include extremely naturalistic terra-cotta and bronze sculptures dating from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, hinting at an era of economic prosperity and intense cultural activity.³ Although Yoruba culture appears to be homogeneous, there are significant regional variations, which suggests that what we have today is a synthesis of previously diverse, if related, elements.⁴



Fig. 2 Second burial effigy (*àkò*) representing the chief of a village near Òwò (Nigeria) partially dressed, 1949

Ontological Significance of Art

In order to fully understand the centrality of art (*onà*) in Yoruba thought, one must be aware of their cosmology, which traces the origin of existence (*iwà*) to a Supreme Divinity called Olódùmarè, the generator of *àse*, the enabling power that sustains and transforms the universe. It abides in all things—animate or inanimate, visible or invisible. *Àse* is the vital force that enables the sun to shine, the fire to burn, the wind to blow, the rain to fall, the river to flow and so on. Assisting Olódùmarè in administering the universe are a number of deities called *òrìsà*, each personifying the *àse* immanent in a natural or cultural phenomenon. For example, Yemoja personifies water and motherhood; Obàtálá creativity; Orúnmilà wisdom and clairvoyance; Èsù/Elégba mediation⁵; Odùduwà divine kingship; Òsányìn curative medicine; Ògún tools, weapons, and warfare; Òrìsà Oko agriculture; Sàngó thunderstorms and social justice; Oya tornados; Òsun fertility and beauty, to name only a few. As a result, Yoruba religion focuses on the veneration of the *òrìsà* because they administer the cosmos on behalf of Olódùmarè. It is to the *òrìsà* that shrines are built and sacrifices offered.⁶

Creation and the Origin of Artistic Creativity

According to Yoruba cosmology, only the heavens existed in the beginning. On deciding to create land below the sky, Olódùmarè gave Odùduwà (the *òrìsà* of divine kingship) a bag of sand and a bird with which to perform the task. Odùduwà then descended from the sky by a chain, poured the sand on the primordial waters, and placed the bird on it. The latter spread the sand in different directions, eventually creating the earth. This explains why Odùduwà is sometimes venerated as the divine ancestor of Yoruba kings or as an Earth goddess (Ilè).

To the Yoruba, art began when Olódùmarè commissioned the creativity deity Obàtálá to mold the first human image from clay. Upon receiving a soul (*èmí*) from Olódùmarè, the image turned into a living fetus and was then placed inside the womb of a pregnant woman to develop into a baby. So the soul is a kind of *àse* empowering the body in the physical world. In fact, some Yoruba oral traditions trace the origin of humanity to the Supreme Divinity's desire to transform the primeval wilderness below the sky into an orderly state. This desire reverberates in the Yoruba word for human being, *èniyàn*, which translates as “those specially selected” to convey goodness (*ire*) to the earth.⁷ In fact, Obàtálá himself and some *òrìsà* allegedly assumed the same human form in order to accompany the first mortals to the earth. The myth not only relates art to life, but it also identifies the capacity to create and appreciate art an integral part of humanity, transforming what was once a primordial jungle into its present advanced stage of development.

Naturalism and Abstraction in Yoruba Art

So it is that the artist (*onís'onà*) plays an important role in Yoruba culture, serving as an agent for translating time-honored values into visual metaphors

aimed at sustaining humanity in body and spirit. An apprentice begins by observing a master artist at work and practicing under close supervision (fig. 3). He or she is allowed to turn professional after demonstrating enough technical mastery of forms and sufficient knowledge of their cultural and ritual contexts.³ Although there are individual and regional variations in Yoruba art, two main idioms are discernible—the naturalistic and the stylized. In naturalistic images (*àyàjora*, meaning similitude), the artist attempts to capture a recognizable (though idealized) likeness of the subject. A good example is the memorial effigy (*àkó*, *àjèjé*) that vivifies the presence of a recently dead person whose corpse has been buried. The effigy is used in a second burial ceremony to enable friends and relations pay their final respects to the deceased and to wish him or her a happy retirement in *Èhin Ìwà*, the Afterlife. Since the effigy is normally costumed, the carver pays most attention to the head, forearms, and legs and leaves other parts of the body relatively unfinished (fig. 2). Dressed in fine clothes, the effigy is first displayed in the former residence of the deceased and treated as if it were alive—greeted and eulogized. After the ceremony, the effigy is buried like a corpse or abandoned in the forest.⁸

By contrast, stylized or conceptual representations (*àròyá*, meaning abstraction) are not so much concerned with physical resemblance as with realities beyond the visible. This is especially true of altar figures and other images intended to signify supernatural beings and disembodied souls. *Ère ìbeji*, memorials (pl. 18) dedicated to deceased twins, belong in this category. Underlying their creation is the ancient Yoruba belief that even though twins (*ìbeji*) are physically two individuals, metaphysically they are one. If one twin should die prematurely, tradition requires that a memorial be made to localize the soul of the deceased. A memorial reflecting the sex of the deceased is usually kept on an altar or in a safe place in the house and sometimes given to the surviving twin to play with like a doll. One of its ritual functions is to maintain a spiritual bond between the living twin and the deceased partner. If the second twin should die, the parents would commission another memorial and continue to treat both as living children in the hope that their souls will continue to bless and protect them. Tradition requires a carver to give identical facial features to memorials for twins in order to reflect and celebrate the oneness in their twoness.⁹

Accordinging the Head Its Due

The prominence given to the head (*orí*) in Yoruba sculpture (pls. 7, 13, 16, 18, 19) can be traced to a number of factors. First, it is the location of the brain (the seat of wisdom and reason), the eyes (the lamps that guide a person through the dark jungle of life), the nose (the source of ventilation for the soul), the mouth (the source of nourishment for the body), and the ears (the detectors of sound). Second, the head is a site of identity, perception, and communication. Third, and most important, the Yoruba regard the head as the point through which the soul, the life-giving *àse* from the Supreme



Fig. 3 Yoruba master carver George Bamidele Arowogun supervising an apprentice, Òsì-Ìlorin, Nigeria, 1989.

Divinity (Olódúmarè), enters the body. Hence the head is to an individual what Olódúmarè is to the cosmos—a source of power—a metaphor reinforced by the Yoruba word *Oríladé* (The Head is a crown). Note the crownlike coiffures and headgears of many Yoruba figure sculptures.

Adé Oba: The Monarch's Beaded Crown

As the king (*oba*) is metaphorically the head of a town, he wears an elaborate costume and a beaded crown with a veil (*adé*), which transforms him into a masked figure (fig 6). The bird motif on most crowns (pl. 1) has layers of meaning. It recalls how Odùduwà, assisted by a mythical bird, created habitable land on the primordial waters at Ilé-Ifè, where he eventually became the first king. It also emblemizes the role of the king as an intermediary between his subjects and the *òrìsà*, in the same way that a bird mediates between heaven and earth. And, further, it alludes to a mystical power (*àse*) that Olódúmarè reportedly gave to the first female (in the form of a bird enclosed in a calabash), thus allowing her to counter-balance the muscular advantage of men. This mystical power is said to be responsible not only for her ability to procreate but also for her ability to turn into a bird at night to do good or evil. Thus, by having a symbol of archetypal female power on his crown, a king is expected to manipulate that power for the good of all. This explains why the *Ìyá Oba* (Official Mother of the King) crowns a new monarch in some towns—to underscore the fact that he has the support of the women.

A typical crown has a stylized face designed in order to identify the king in public. Some have more than one face (fig. 6, pl. 1). Frequently associated with Odùduwà, the face—or a similar one, should the crown be replaced—identified his predecessors and will do the same for his successors. It is this face that signifies the continuity of the office, regardless of who may hold it at a particular point in time. Faces may also be depicted on other forms of royal regalia, such as the king's robe, beaded slippers, and foot cushion (pl. 4a-c), to hint at the all-seeing power of the monarch and his mental and spiritual capacity to provide good leadership.

Some crowns (called *oríkògbófo*) may reflect the personal taste of a king. These vary from the “dog-eared-one” (*abetíajá*), which is worn in such a way that the faces are oriented sideways, (pl. 2) to caps shaped like pillboxes, European crowns, and coronets. The example in figure 4 has been influenced by a lawyer's wig, which reflects the radical changes that occurred in Yorubaland between the late nineteenth century and 1960, when the kings lost much of their political power to French and British colonial administrations. Although their position is largely ceremonial today, kings are still consulted by the state government before certain decisions are taken, so that the wig-like crown presents the king as an effective advocate for his subjects in the modern era.

Emblems of Authority

To mark his coronation, a new king may be presented with a brass or iron scepter called *idà àse* (scepter of authority; pl. 8), indicating that his appointment has been sanctioned by Odùduwà, the divine ancestor. The scepter also identifies him as a judge who has the capacity to resolve or cut through difficult problems. Some kings are known to proffer identical or smaller swords to high-ranking chiefs on the day of their investiture, either as emblems of leadership or to authorize them to act on behalf of the monarch. The example in plate 3 is from the Òwò kingdom. Called *udàmalore*, it is often worn on the hip during important public ceremonies. Although the designs on the sheath have aesthetic implications, they are expected to increase the ritual potency of the sword as well.¹⁰ In the past, the façade, verandahs, courtyards, and halls of the palace were adorned with carved posts and freestanding sculptures to stress a monarch's position as the head of the body politic. The carved staff in plate 7 has five figures; the female on top (with waist beads) wears a crownlike head-dress surmounted by a bird.



Fig. 4 Crown (*orikògbòfò*), early to mid-20th century, Nigeria, Nigeria

SIGNIFYING THE POWER AND PRESENCE OF DEITIES

Since a number of deities allegedly assumed human form in order to accompany the first mortals to the newly created earth, it is not surprising that some of them are anthropomorphized in art. Nevertheless, the most sacred altar symbol of an *òrisà* is usually a natural object or nonfigurative signifier (*àmi*) empowered with rituals and charms. For example, the altar pictured on page 8 is dedicated to the thunderstorm deity Sàngo, and Neolithic stones (*edùn àrà*) signifying the deity's power are concealed inside the bowl borne by the kneeling female figure (*arugbá*). The stylized face on the bowl offers an insight into why the Yoruba call an altar the “face of the spirit” (*ojúbo*). Simply put, the face alludes to the human essence of a deity, in addition to facilitating a “face-to-face” dialogue and the use of the visual and performing arts for communicating with that deity.¹¹

Èsù/Elégba: the Divine Messenger

Èsù/Elégba, the divine messenger, plays a prominent role in Yoruba religion for two main reasons. First, he is the custodian of *àse* and the intermediary between Olódùmarè and all the *òrisà*, and between the *òrisà* and humanity. Second, Èsù/Elégba liaises with all the forces of the cosmos, which the Yoruba perceive as a delicate balance of the benevolent and malevolent. The *òrisà* belong in the benevolent category, whereas the negative elements, called *ajogun* (warriors against humanity) refer to such phenomena as hardship, suffering, loss, disease, and death. Because Èsù/Elégba is perceived as combining aspects of both forces in his nature, some of his symbols may have two faces, looking in opposite directions. Yet, being an *òrisà*, he

is expected to side with humanity. The dance vest in plate 9 comprises four figures, alternately male and female, alluding to Èsù/Elégba's association with the crossroads and to the sky/north (male), earth/south (female), west/right side or sunset (male), and east/left or sunrise (female). His devotees wear or carry this vest over the left shoulder during public celebrations in honor of the deity. In short, since he connects opposing forces, Èsù/Elégba embodies the principle of the unpredictable in the Yoruba cosmos. Like the trickster motifs in other cultures, Èsù/Elégba signifies what Lewis Hyde calls the "paradoxical category of sacred amorality" by which societies articulate and regulate their social life and behavior. Thus one must live life with care and take necessary precautions by seeking spiritual guidance.

Òrúnmìlà: the Divination Deity

Òrúnmìlà (also called *Ifá*) plays a prominent role in Yoruba religion, because he is regarded as a confidant of Olódùmarè and the only òrìsà present at creation. As the originator of the *Ifá* divination system, he is thought to have the clairvoyance with which to detect the cause of any event (including illnesses), to relate the past to the present and to predict the future. The ability to "detect" is thus crucial to the practice of divination in Yoruba culture. In order to become a professional diviner, an individual must undergo years of training, learning about ritual procedures and memorizing the *Odù-Ifá*, a collection of sacred verses on cosmic secrets and events. The most popular means of prying into these secrets is to throw sixteen sacred palm nuts (*ikin*) from one hand to the other four times and record each throw with one or two dots on a divining tray (*opón ifá*) covered with sacred wood dust (*iyèròsùn*). After that, the diviner interprets the signs for the client.

The circular shape of the divination tray in plate 12 recalls the Yoruba visualization of the cosmos as a closed calabash whose top half represents the heavens (*òrun*) and the bottom half represents the earth (*ayé*). Human desires are self-evident in the motifs on the rim: the nursing mothers (survival); the drummer (desire for a pleasurable life); the gift-bearer (gratitude); and the priest holding a staff (communication between the human and the divine). The principal face on most divination trays is said to represent Èsù/Elégba, the divine messenger who acts as a scout for the divination deity.¹³

Given its ritual and aesthetic functions, the container for storing sacred palm nuts for divination (*àgéré Ifá*) provides the Yoruba carver with a unique opportunity to display his artistic talents. Usually carved from wood, measuring between five and sixteen inches in height, a typical container is in the form of an animal or human figure surmounted by a small bowl. In some cases, the metaphysical attribute of a given animal motif (such as a snake or mudfish) may be used to further empower the sacred palm nuts inside the bowl. But when the motif assumes a human form, it frequently has a votive significance, especially since some *àgéré Ifá* are donated by former clients. Thus, the female weaver motif in plate 13 may very well have

been presented to a diviner to thank Òrúnmìlà for a blessing or to implore the deity to bestow more favors on the donor.

The big bowls for enshrining palm nuts rarely used for divination is called *opón igèdè*. The interior of a typical bowl usually has three or more compartments, but among the Ègbá and Ègbádò Yoruba, the *opón igèdè* may be more elaborate. The big rooster motif in plate 14 is significant, given the Yoruba association of the bird with time and vigilance, hence the popular saying: “The rooster never forgets to crow at dawn.”¹⁴ Needless to say, Òrúnmìlà, as a personification of Olódùmaré’s intelligence, is ever ready to help diagnose human problems. Note the pedestal for the bowl: the figures facing the four cardinal points are reminiscent of Èsù/Elégbá, the master of the crossroads and a close associate of Òrúnmìlà.

Diviners are recognized in public by their dress, which usually comprises a white robe (*agbádá*), an under vest (*bùbá or dànsíkí*), a pair of long trousers (*sòkòtò*), and a cap (*filà*) to match. A string of yellow and green beads (*otùtù opón*) may be worn on the left wrist. Colorful beaded necklaces called *òdigbà Ifá* are added on ceremonial occasions or during annual festivals when priests from different villages congregate in large towns to celebrate together.

Òsanyìn: the Deity of Herbal Medicine

Òsanyìn is the *òrisà* associated with the esoteric powers of plants and their use to generate *àse* for praying, cursing, healing, or compelling others to obey one’s command. As a result, Òsanyìn is the patron deity of herbalists (*onísègùn*) and is believed to have the capacity to change into a bird in order to commute between heaven and earth. Although the deity’s most sacred symbol is a bundle of charms buried in the ground or enclosed in a calabash, his power can also be localized in wrought-iron staffs called *òpá* Òsanyìn (pl.15a). Measuring between eighteen and fifty inches in height, a typical staff features a circle of small birds and a shaft in the middle that elevates a large bird above the smaller ones, as though relaying metaphysical powers from the celestial to the terrestrial realm. The position of the top bird echoes in the frequent reference to Òsanyìn as “the one who sees everything like Olódùmarè,” thus placing this *òrisà* in a position to protect humanity from negative forces, especially diseases. The apical bird in plate 15b has been transformed into a mounted figure who holds what looks like a fan and wears crownlike headgear. The fan (*abèbè*) connotes “coolness” in Yoruba thought. Surrounding the principal figure are smaller ones, and below them is a flock of birds, all seemingly engaged in cosmic surveillance.

Òrisà Oko: the Agriculture Deity

The sheaths in plates 16 and 17 are used to adorn or “dress” the wrought-iron staffs for Òrisà Oko, the agriculture deity.¹⁵ Some sheaths have beaded or cowrie-embroidered caps¹⁶ to adorn the phalluslike end of the staff, not



Fig. 5 *Egungun-alábala/pàràkà*, Òyó, Nigeria.1986

only to allude to the wealth that farming can generate but also to support the legend that he was one of the ancient kings of the town of Iràwò.

Sàngó: the Thunderstorm Deity

The altar bowl (*igbá Sàngó*) in plate 11 is for holding Neolithic stones (*edùn àrà*) that are believed to have been hurled down from the sky by Sàngó during thunderstorms. The stylized face (*ojú*), as noted above, enables a worshiper to have direct communion with the deity. Carved on the lid is a mounted warrior who seems to be firing a gun jubilantly into the air during what looks like a victory parade. The two musicians behind and below the warrior are playing conical drums called *bàtá*, whose rhythm is sacred to Sàngó. The figure in plate 18 holds an identical drum. The emphasis on *bàtá* drummers in this composition suggests that they are performing in a public ceremony dedicated to Sàngó, apparently in gratitude for his spiritual support during a recent battle. Located in front of the horse (above the stylized face on the bowl's lid) is a palm-wine tapper with a gourd tied to his waist—an indication that there will be plenty to drink on this important occasion.

Since it signifies Sàngó's firepower, the Neolithic stone (also called a thunderbolt) is often stylized sculpturally into a double-axe ritual staff (*osé-Sàngó*) borne by a devotee. The double axe atop the kneeling female in plate 19 hints at the ability of the deity to punish wrong-doers and reward the righteous. In addition, it alludes to the interaction of the male Sky and female Earth during thunderstorms, which results in agricultural fecundity, among other things. The female figure is flanked by two rams apparently intended as offerings to Sàngó for his benevolence or in gratitude for a recent blessing.

Onílé: Duality in the Imagery of Mother Earth

As mentioned earlier, the Yoruba conceptualize the cosmos as a delicate balance of benevolent and malevolent forces, both complementing one another. This phenomenon is also apparent in the *edan Ògbóni*, a pair of male and female brass figures joined at the top by an iron chain (pl. 19). It is usually worn round the neck as an insignia of membership of the Ògbóni society (fig. 1), also known as Òsùgbó. In the past, (especially, among the *lẹ̀bù* and *Ègbá* Yoruba), the society wielded considerable political powers (and still does, to some extent, today), functioning as a town council, civic court and Electoral College for approving the nomination of a new king or dethroning an unpopular one. It imposed curfews in times of crisis and ordered the execution of dangerous criminals. Much of the society's authority derives from its role as the vital link between the community and Mother Earth (*Ilẹ̀*), who sustains life in the physical world.

Bigger, free-standing versions of the *edan* pair represent the goddess on special altars inside the Ògbóni lodge (*ilẹ̀dì*). That the male and female altarpieces signify much more than meets the eye is evident in the fact both



Fig. 6 Oba Ademuwagun II, the *Dèjì* [King] of Àkúré in the courtyard of palace, Àkúré (Nigeria), 1959.

are treated as one unit and addressed as Ìyá [Mother] and Onílé [Owner of the House]. Moreover, society members frequently call themselves Omo Ìyá; that is, “the Children of the Mother Earth.” Space limitations will not allow an examination of all the implications of this symbolism here. It suffices to say that the edan Ògbóni/Onílé pair reflects not only the interdependence of gender in the perpetuation of life, but the ambivalent nature of Mother Earth as well. For the same goddess who nurtures humanity with water and agriculture takes life at will through different environmental hazards. And since the Yoruba associate femaleness (*abo*) with softness and maleness (*ako*) with harshness, the female aspect of the pair evidently refers to the motherly disposition of the goddess, and the male, to her punitive tendencies—a phenomenon that explains the frequency of figures with hermaphroditic features in Ògbóni/Òsùgbó iconography. Hence the edan pair may be detached and used as a semiotic device to convey important decisions of the Ògbóni society to members and non-members alike. A male figure often has negative connotations such as indicating that an individual has been found guilty of a serious offence or will soon be tried for one by the Ògbóni. A female figure, on the other hand, implies good news such as being appointed a chief, exonerated from false accusations,



Fig. 7 Egúngún masquerade with hunter's hairdo (*ààso olúode*), Àbèòkúta, Nigeria, 1970s.

or granted special favors by the Ògbóni society. Yet, in other contexts, especially when worn on the body, the male figure is expected to bring strength and vigor to a sick members, and the female, to ease pain or relieve tension.

Normally held and shaken by senior members of the Ògbóni to acknowledge greetings from friends and relatives, the rattle on page 4 is known as *agogo* (bell) or *saworo* (jingle) in many Yoruba towns. It is sometimes called *ìpawó àse* (staff of authority among the Ìjèbú Yoruba, where similar designs constitute an important part of a king's regalia. This one has two Janus-faced heads at the top and bottom. The head on top is bigger and adorned with decorative braids and crotals that jingle when shaken. Note the interconnectedness of Sky, Earth and Water on the rattle, signified by the bird, human face and the mudfish motif projecting from the cheeks. In short, the bell evokes the myth that *Odùduwà* descended from the sky with a bird to create habitable land out of the primeval waters, thus linking the present to the beginning of time and reinforcing the ritual power of the sound it produces when shaken.

METAPHYSICS OF THE MASQUERADE IN AFRICA

The tendency in many African cosmologies to identify the body as a vehicle incarnating the soul on earth has encouraged the metaphoric use of the masquerade for a similar purpose. The carved headpiece of a given masquerade is often stylized, therefore, to reflect its otherworldly significance. It should be emphasized, however, that not all African masquerades represent supernatural forces. Some embody concepts, and as a result, many of the carved headpieces have semiotic implications, conveying messages with social or political import; others are meant to entertain and educate.¹⁷ The same is true of Yoruba masquerades, which perform various functions ranging from the religious, judicial, and military to the satirical.

Egúngún Masquerade: Reincarnating Disembodied Souls

The Yoruba belief in life after death finds its most eloquent artistic expression in the Egúngún masquerade (fig. 7). Found mainly among the Òyó Yoruba (although other subgroups have different versions of it), the Egúngún often represents the spirit of a deceased ancestor returning from the Afterlife (*Èhin-Ìwà*) to interact briefly with living descendants. Lasting between seven and twenty-one days, the annual Egúngún festival offers an opportunity for the living to renew old ties with long-departed ancestors who are now back (as masked figures) among the living, by praying for their well-being and participating in rituals aimed at cleansing the community of disease and other harmful elements. The costumes vary considerably. Some have carved headpieces on top (fig. 7), but others—called Egúngún-àgbà, Egúngún-alábala, or Pàràkà—conceal (pl. 5) or eliminate them altogether (fig. 5), showcasing their elaborate appliqué costumes whose panels flare out during the dance. Certain Egúngún serve as judges and

help to settle outstanding disputes in the community. The primary function of another category of masquerades is to entertain the public with magical performances and intricate dances. The characters represented in this group may range from a bride or a nursing mother to farmers, hawkers, culture heroes, strangers, thieves, and animals, among others.

A variation of the example in figure 7, the headpiece in plate 21 has a hairstyle known as *ààso olúóde* (hunter's knot), which identifies the deceased portrayed as a hunter. The carved gourds (*àdó*) on the forehead refer to those used by hunters for keeping magical powder that is intended to make them invisible to the naked eye and thus allow them to stalk ferocious animals. The three vertical marks on the cheeks and forehead (*pélé*) beautify the face, and the beard signifies wisdom. In addition to adorning the image, the necklace of cowrie shells (*owó eyo*), which were formerly used as currency, has a votive significance, imploring the ancestor to let living descendants prosper in their business endeavors. The headpiece in plate 20 is unusual because of the pattern on its face, which is apparently intended to command attention. At the same time, the pattern appears to simulate the net normally attached to the base of a typical headdress and through which a masker observes the public without being seen or recognized.

Although some Egúngún may be identified with or named after specific ancestors or culture heroes, their carved headdresses do not attempt to recapture individual likeness. Here the stylization of the human face is evocative of a translocation from the here-and-now to the hereafter. The voluminous costume of a typical Egúngún conceals the unknowable, at the same time revealing the human potential for metaphysical transformation and regeneration. In short, the Egúngún performance celebrates the triumph of the human spirit over death.

Gèlèdé: Honoring Women and Using Satire to Educate the Public

Unlike the Egúngún masquerade society, whose activities are closely guarded and kept away from the generality of women (although there are female members), the Gèlèdé is much more open in its practices. For example, the veil on the rim of the carved headpiece is sometimes so transparent that the masquerader is easily identifiable. The masquerade is found mainly among the Kétu, Ègbádò, Òhòrí, and Àwóri Yoruba of southwestern Yorubaland. One of the goals of the Gèlèdé society is to cultivate good gender relations by advocating respect for women within a patriarchal culture, such as that of the Yoruba, where men dominate the institution of kingship. There are two reasons for this pro-female stance. The first is that the preservation of humanity depends on the role of the female as mother, and the second has to do with the popular belief that certain Yoruba women called *àjé* (Our Mothers) have access to the mystical power that Olódùmarè gave to the first woman, venerated by the Gèlèdé society as *Ìyá Nlá* (the Great Mother). By mediating between a



Fig. 8 Gèlèdè headpieces

given community and *Ìyá Nlá* as well as the *àjé*, the Gèlèdè society attempts to appease and predispose the latter to use their special endowment for the benefit, rather than the destruction, of humankind.¹⁸ One important aspect of a Gèlèdè masquerade

is its use of satire to entertain the general public and, in the process, sensitize it to the virtues of social living and good citizenship.¹⁹ Thus, the motifs on most Gèlèdè headpieces convey much more than what meets the eye. The example in figure 8 is a good example. Formerly associated with Christian missionaries and European District Officers, the wide-brimmed hat (perching precariously on the figure's head) may very well have been used to satirize their excesses in Yorubaland during the colonial period. Yet the holes on the hat's rim and the lineage marks on the face, the beard, and the sheathed knives may indicate otherwise, given the fact that some Yoruba chiefs have since adopted the hat as a status symbol.²⁰ As noted earlier, the Yoruba associate the beard with wisdom, so chances are that this headpiece might have once been used to either praise or satirize an individual.²¹

Epa Masquerade: Using Performance to Activate Metaphysical Powers

The Epa masquerade is found mainly in eastern and northeastern Yorubaland, especially among the Èkitì, Ìjèsà and Ìgbómìnà Yoruba. It is popular for its massive headpieces and acrobatic dances. A typical headpiece consists of a potlike base surmounted by a tray featuring human and animal figures. The potlike base is often stylized and has a janus-face with protruding eyes, a short nose and an open mouth. The figures on the superstructure are usually more realistic. When worn, the base completely encloses the head of the masquerader who sees through the open mouth below the eyes (fig. 9). Usually representing deities (*òrisà*), ancestors, culture heroes, prayers, aphorisms (among others), the motifs on the superstructure usually determine the name of a given masquerade. In short, the ritual efficacy of a given masquerade depends, for the most part, on how well the masquerader is able to manipulate the massive headpiece in dances culminating in a series of leaps over a mound of earth. It is a bad omen should a masquerader lose control in the process and break the headpiece. A flawless performance, on the other hand, is thought to charge the carved motifs on the headpiece with metaphysical powers. Thus a "Mother-and-Child" (*abiyamo*) motif (fig. 9) not only honors women for their procreative powers, but is also expected to generate fertility and thereby increase the chances of pregnancy for those women who have problems bearing children. The equestrian warrior (*jagunjagun*) motif (pg. 6) is very popular because of its association with physical and spiritual protection. It is expected to empower a given community and its military, especially in times of crisis.

By and large, the nexus between art and ritual in Yoruba masking traditions is such as to make it difficult, if not impossible, to separate the

one from the other. The artistic aspect provides an outlet for creativity in the visual and performing arts. The ritual aspect, on the other hand, enables the Yoruba to metaphorically embody and interact more closely with the numinous in the quest for individual and collective empowerment, both physically and spiritually.

Admittedly, Yoruba culture has been undergoing unprecedented transformations since the turn of the twentieth century owing to the impact of mass conversion to Islam and Christianity, Western education, modern technology, and increasing urbanization. Yet many Yoruba have not totally abandoned their ancient customs, synthesizing the old with the new in the attempt to cope with the dynamics of change.

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NOTES

- 1 Ansah 1989: 245.
- 2 For a general survey, see D'Azevedo 1973: 101–127, 282–340, Hackett 1996: 24–34, 40–42 and Visona, Poynor, and Cole 2008.
- 3 For more on Yoruba history and archaeology, see Smith 1988 and Willett 1967.
- 4 See Ojo 1966, Willett 1967, and Drewal, Pemberton, and Abiodun 1989.
- 5 This deity is popularly called Èsù or Elégba and sometimes ÈsùElégba; hence my use of Èsù/Elégba, while retaining Èsù and Elégba in citations.
- 6 For more details, see Lawal 2007.
- 7 Akiworo 1983:11 and Lawal 2001: 515.
- 8 For details, see Abiodun 1976: 4–20 and Lawal 2001: 498–526. However, if the family of the deceased cannot afford a naturalistic portrait, a symbolic one will suffice. This may consist of two sticks shaped like a cross and draped with the garment of the deceased.
- 9 For details, see Lawal 2011.
- 10 For more on udàmálore, see Drewal, Pemberton, and Abiodun 1989: 109.
- 11 For details, see Lawal 1985: 91–103 and Lawal 2000: 93–109.
- 12 For details, see Lawal 2008: 24–39.
- 13 For more on Ifá divination and iconography, see Bascom 1969, Abimbola 1976, and Drewal, Pemberton, and Abiodun, 1989.
- 14 Lawal 2007: 46.
- 15 For an illustration, see Lawal 2007, pl. 30.
- 16 For illustration, see Drewal, Pemberton, and Abiodun 1989: 169 and Lawal 2007: 53.
- 17 For more on African masquerades, see Huet 1978, Cole 1985, and Hahmer-Herzog, Kecskesi, and Vajda 1998.
- 18 For details, see Lawal 1996.
- 19 For details, see Lawal 1996: 126–29.
- 20 See, for instance, Slogar 2002: 24–26.
- 21 At Ilaro, the headpiece of the Efe mask is worn like a wide-brimmed hat but has a human head in the middle (for illustration, see Drewal and Drewal 1983, *Gelede*, pl. 13). It is uncertain, however, whether the hat on this headpiece has anything to do with the Ilaro tradition.



Fig. 9 Epa Masquerades with female motifs associated with fertility and motherhood. Èkiti region, Nigeria. 1960s.



Pl.1 **Crown** (*adénlá*), 20th century, Nigeria, Glass beads, fiber, cloth, thread 54 1/2 x 8 x 8 in.



Pl.2 **Crown** (*adé abetijá*), 1970s, Nigeria, Glass beads, cloth, thread 34 x 11 3/4 x 9 1/2 in.



Pl.3 Leadership Sword and Sheath (*udamaloro*), 20th century, Òwò Region, Nigeria, Glass beads, cloth, leather, metal
14 x 21 x 4 in.



Pl.4a-c Slippers and Foot Cushion, 20th century, Efon-Alaye, Èkìtì Region, Nigeria, Glass beads, leather, thread 2 1/2 x 4 1/8 x 10 in. (each slipper); 7 1/2 x 19 1/4 x 19 1/4 in. (cushion)



Pl.5 *Egúngún Masquerade Costume*, 20th century, Republic of Benin, Cloth, wood, cowries, 79 x 37 x 37 in.



Pl.6 *Male Twin Figure (ère ibeji)*, 20th century, Nigeria, Wood, cowries, leather, beads, 12 x 4 1/2 x 2 1/2 in.



Pl.7 *Staff or Post* (*òpò*), 20th century, Èkìtì Region, Nigeria, Wood, 56 1/8 x 3 1/2 x 4 in.



Pl.8 *Sword of Authority* (*idà àse*), 19th–20th century, Nigeria, Brass, length 22 x w. 5 1/4 x d. 1 3/4 in.



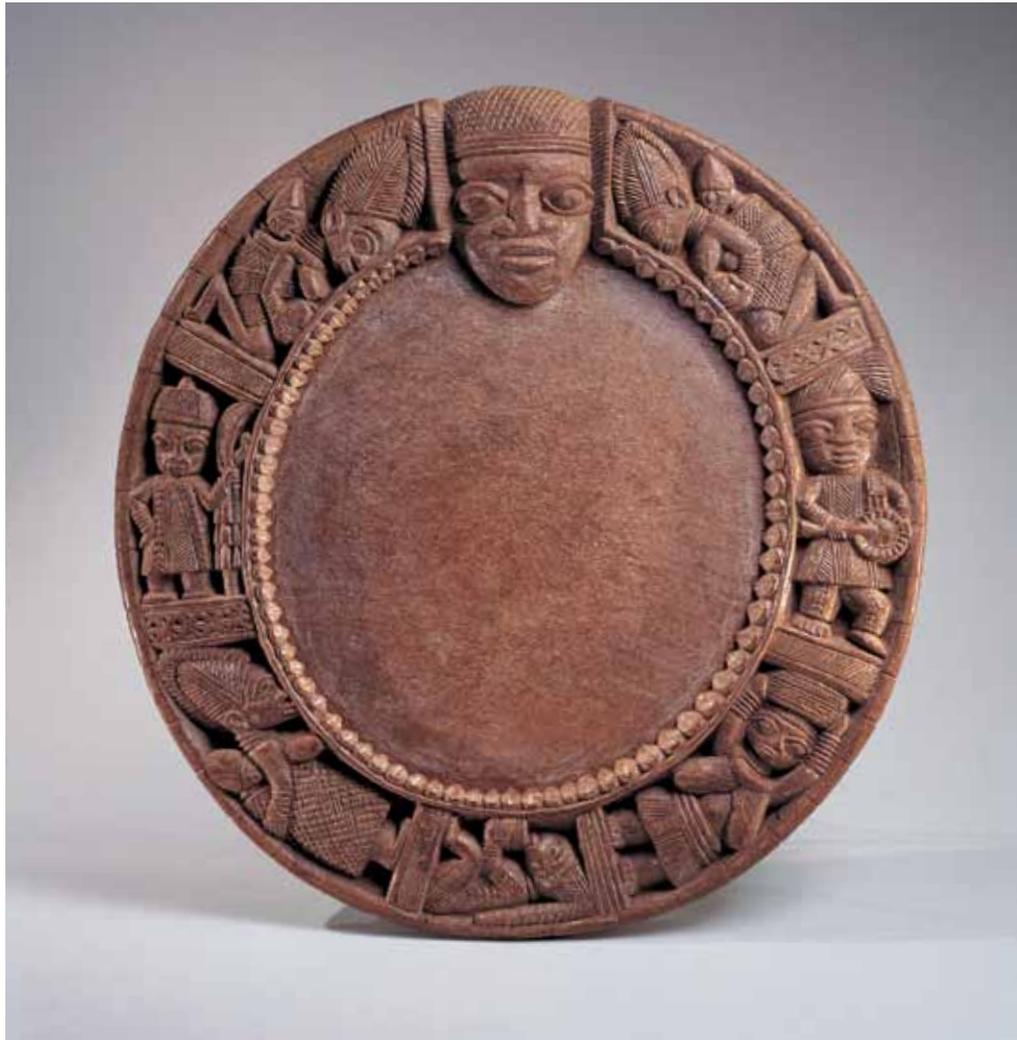
PI.9 *Dance Vest with Èsù Figures*, 19th–20th century, Igbóminà Region, Nigeria
Wood, cowrie shells, leather, pigment, 20 3/4 x 10 x 5 1/2 in.



Pl. 10 *Pair of Figures* (*edan Ôgbón*), 20th century, Nigeria, Brass, iron, 17 x 3 1/2 x 2 1/8 in. (left figure)
17 x 3 1/2 x 2 5/16 in. (right figure)



PI.11 *Container for Sàngó Altar*, 20th century, Nigeria, Wood, 8 x 19 x 19 in.



Pl.12 *Divination Tray* (*opón Ifá ribítí*) Attributed to the artist Areogun (ca. 1880–1954) or his atelier Ifá first half 20th century Òsì-Ìlorin, Èkìtì Region, Nigeria, Wood, 21 x 20 x 1 3/4 in.



Pl.13 Ifá Divination Container (*agéré Ifá*), 20th century, Nigeria, Wood, 10 1/2 x 7 3/4 x 7 3/4 in.



Pl. 14 *Container for a Shrine*, late 19th century, Nigeria, Wood, pigment, metal, mirror, 36 5/8 x 14 x 14 in. (overall)



PI.15a. (left) Staff for Òsanyin (òpá Òsanyin), 20th century, Nigeria, Iron, 25 x 11 x 11 in.

PI.15b. (right) Staff for Òsanyin (òpá Òsanyin), 20th century, Nigeria, Iron, 40 x 7 x 7 in.



Pl.16 *Sheath for òpá Òrisà Oko*, mid-20th century, Nigeria
Cowrie shells, cloth, leather, metal coins, 49 1/4 x 11 1/2 x 3 1/4 in.



Pl.17 *Sheath òpá Òrisà Oko*, 20th century, Nigeria
Glass beads, cloth, leather, 54 x 11 1/4 x 1 1/2 in.



Pl.18 *Figure of a Bata Drummer (alubata)*, 20th century, Nigeria, Wood, pigment 13 3/4 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/4 in.



PI.19 *Dance Staff for Sàngó (osé Sàngó)*, 20th century, Nigeria, Wood, 17 1/2 x 5 x 3 in.



PI.20 *Egúngún Mask*, 20th century, Nigeria, Wood, wool, metal, pigment, 12 x 8 x 6 1/2 in



Pl.21 *Egúngún Mask*, 20th century, Nigeria, Wood, wool, metal, pigment, 12 x 8 x 6 1/2 in.

Exhibition Checklist

Note: Unless otherwise noted, dimensions are given as height, weight, and depth.



1. *Crown (adénlá)*, 20th century
Nigeria
Glass beads, fiber, cloth, thread
54 1/2 x 8 x 8 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2007 2007.43.4



2. *Crown (adé abetíajá)*, 1970s
Nigeria
Glass beads, cloth, thread
34 x 11 3/4 x 9 1/2 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2007 2007.43.5



3. *Leadership Sword and Sheath (udàmalore)*,
20th century
Òwò Region, Nigeria
Glass beads, cloth, leather, metal
14 x 21 x 4 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2007 2007.43.3



4a–c. *Slippers and Foot Cushion*, 20th century
Efon-Alaye, Èkìtì Region, Nigeria
Glass beads, leather, thread
2 1/2 x 4 1/8 x 10 in. (each slipper);
7 1/2 x 19 1/4 x 19 1/4 in. (cushion)
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2007
2007.43.6-7



5. *Egúngún Masquerade Costume*, 20th century
Republic of Benin
Cloth, wood, cowries
79 x 37 x 37 in.
The Newark Museum
Purchase 1991 Sophronia Anderson Bequest Fund
91.36



6. *Male Twin Figure (èrè ibejì)*, 20th century
Nigeria
Wood, cowries, leather, beads
12 x 4 1/2 x 2 1/2 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2008 2008.44



7. *Staff or Post (òpò)*, 20th century
Èkìtì Region, Nigeria
Wood
56 1/8 x 3 1/2 x 4 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2006 2006.39.2



8. *Sword of Authority (idà àse)*, 19th–20th century
Nigeria
Brass
length 22 x w. 5 1/4 x d. 1 3/4 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2008 2008.44



9. *Dance Vest with Èsù Figures*, 19th–20th century
Ìgbómìnà Region, Nigeria
Wood, cowrie shells, leather, pigment
20 3/4 x 10 x 5 1/2 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2006 2006.39.3



10. *Pair of Figures (edan Ògbón)*, 20th century
Nigeria
Brass, iron
17 x 3 1/2 x 2 1/8 in. (left figure)
17 x 3 1/2 x 2 5/16 in. (right figure)
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2008 2008.44



11. *Container for Sàngó Altar*, 20th century
Nigeria
Wood
8 x 19 x 19 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2010 2010.38



12. Attributed to the artist Areogun (ca. 1880–1954) or
his atelier
Ifá Divination Tray (opón Ifá ribiti), first half 20th
century
Òsì-Ìlorin, Èkìtì Region, Nigeria
Wood
21 x 20 x 1 3/4 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2007 2007.43.1



13. *Ifá Divination Container (agéré Ifá)*, 20th century
Nigeria
Wood
10 1/2 x 7 3/4 x 7 3/4 in.
The Newark Museum
Purchase 1981 The Members' Fund 81.492



19. *Figure of a Bata Drummer (alubata)*, 20th century
Nigeria
Wood, pigment
13 3/4 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/4 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2006 2006.39.1



14. *Container for a Shrine*, late 19th century
Nigeria
Wood, pigment, metal, mirror
36 5/8 x 14 x 14 in. (overall)
The Newark Museum
Museum Purchase, 1924 24.495



20. *Dance Staff for Sangó (osé Sangó)*, 20th century
Nigeria
Wood
17 1/2 x 5 x 3 in.
The Newark Museum,
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2006 2006.39.5



15. *Staff for Osanyin (opá Osanyin)*, 20th century
Nigeria
Iron
25 x 11 x 11 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2010 2010.38



21. *Egúngún Mask*, 20th century
Nigeria
Wood, wool, metal, pigment
12 x 8 x 6 1/2 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Paul E. Schneck, 1979 79.210



16. *Staff for Osanyin (opá Osanyin)*, 20th century
Nigeria
Iron
40 x 7 x 7 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2010 2010.38



22. *Egúngún Headdress Representing a Hunter*, 20th century
Nigeria
Wood, pigment, cowries
10 1/2 x 8 1/4 x 7 1/4 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2008 2008.44



17. *Sheath for opá Orisà Oka*, mid-20th century
Nigeria
Cowrie shells, cloth, leather, metal coins
49 1/4 x 11 1/2 x 3 1/4 in.
The Newark Museum
Purchase 1980 John J. O'Neill Bequest Fund 80.424



23a–b. *Pair of Twin Figures (ere ibeji)*, 20th century
Nigeria
Wood, cloth, leather, beads, pigment
10 x 5 1/2 x 4 in. (each figure)
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2008 2008.44



18. *Sheath opá Orisà Oka*, 20th century
Nigeria
Glass beads, cloth, leather
54 x 11 1/4 x 1 1/2 in.
The Newark Museum
Purchase 1980 John J. O'Neill Bequest Fund 80.425



24a–b. *Pair of Twin Figures (ere ibeji)*, mid to late 19th century
Nigeria
Wood, beads, cowries
h. 9 3/4 in.
The Newark Museum
Museum Purchase, 1924 24.538, 24.539



25. *Gèlédé Headdress*, 20th century
Nigeria
Wood
13 1/2 x 9 x 10 1/2 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2010
2010.38



26. *Iyawo Masquerade Costume*, 2005
Erin Ile, Kwara State, Nigeria
Mixed media
(A, bag) l. 35 in., w. 19 1/2 in.; (B, necklace) l. 11 in., w. 7 in.; (C, doll) l. 35 in., w. 19 in., h. 6 3/4 in.; (D, mask) l. 31 in., w. 7 in.; (E, shirt) l. 33 in., w. 72 in.; (F, pants) l. 42 1/2 in., w. 26 in.; (G, jacket) l. 19 in., w. 51 in.; (H, wrap) l. 66 in., w. 29 1/2 in.; (I, wrap) l. 63 in., w. 51 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Katy Hanans and Patterson Sims, 2006, in honor of Christa Clarke 2006.48.2



27. *Crown (orikògbòfó)*, early to mid-20th century
Nigeria
Glass beads, fiber, cloth, thread
27 x 7 x 9 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2008
2008.44



28. *Diviner's Necklace (òdigbà Ifá)*, 20th century
Nigeria
Glass beads, cloth, leather
47 1/2 x 11 x 1 3/4 in.
The Newark Museum
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Wagner, 2008
2008.44

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