

AFRICAN IVORIES



A F R I C A N
I V O R I E S

KATE EZRA

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

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FOREWORD

With the installation of The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing at the Metropolitan, visitors can experience the broad range and diversity of art and artifacts from the peoples of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas. This rich panoply—masks, sculptures, ritual objects, and other works, often fashioned as symbols of power and spiritual force—is awesome. But the Museum’s collections are, of course, not exhaustive; they do not always permit a complete view into individual cultures. Therefore an area within the center of the permanent installation was set aside for special exhibitions. Presenting works from private and institutional collections and from the Museum’s own holdings, these exhibitions permit us to focus on a particular area or art form in greater depth.

The exhibition of African ivories that accompanies this publication is admirably suited to this special gallery. This assemblage of more than seventy works constitutes a selection of ivories from sub-Saharan Africa that, in craftsmanship and invention, are of an especially high level. We cannot help but marvel at the skill with which African artists have exploited ivory for maximum expressive and luxuriant effect.

Because of its durability, ivory is one of the media in African art that has best survived the ravages of time and climate. A number of pieces in this exhibition date as far back as the late fifteenth century and testify to the courtly and structured societies that flourished in Africa. This evocation of the past is underscored by the wonderful tonal range in the

patinas—those tawny, russet, or aureate surfaces often created through contact with human hands.

The exhibition also pays tribute to the outstanding collections of African art in the New York area, and we are greatly indebted to those institutions and individuals who agreed to part with these works for several months. There are certain objects that hold an exceptional power for those who own them, and ivory, with its enormous sensuous appeal, is one of these; it has always been prized as a medium for objects of personal adornment and valued for its lustrous, smooth beauty. I have found that the owners of ivory works have an extraordinarily deep attachment to them. Without the handsome generosity of these collectors there would have been no exhibition.

The funding provided by The Real Estate Council was essential to the installation at the Metropolitan; I wish to express our gratitude to this crucial body of support for the Museum. In the name of the Trustees and the chairman of the Department of Primitive Art, Douglas Newton, I would also like to thank all who participated in the realization of this exhibition; deserving of special thanks are Kate Ezra, assistant curator in the Department of Primitive Art, who organized the exhibition and wrote the catalogue, and David Harvey, who designed the installation.

Philippe de Montebello
Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

African Ivories is in many ways a collective effort. Without the generosity, goodwill, and enthusiasm of the collectors of African art in the New York area this exhibition could not have been realized. The cooperation and assistance of my colleagues Diana Fane at The Brooklyn Museum, Anne Spencer at The Newark Museum, and Enid Schildkrout and Evelyn Feld at The American Museum of Natural History are greatly appreciated, as are the many helpful suggestions offered by Suzanne Preston Blier, Francesca Fleming, Clifford LaFontaine, Holly Ross, and Virginia-Lee Webb. I am especially grateful to Susan Vogel, who shared her knowledge of African art with me. Finally, I owe many thanks to Julie Jones and Douglas Newton for their advice and trust.

Kate Ezra

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AFRICAN IVORIES

The materials of African art are often as meaningful as the forms the artist gives them. Bronze, for example, connotes the power, wealth, and primacy of rulers, as do gold, leopard skins, and beads. Iron embodies the forces of earth and fire, spiritually strengthening the sculptures and tools into which it is forged. Ivory too possesses qualities and associations that enhance the meaning of objects carved from it. The value of ivory as an article of trade, its identification with an animal as powerful as the elephant, and its physical properties such as color and hardness contribute to the significance of ivory in African art.

Most African ivory comes from elephant tusks, although animal bone and the smaller teeth of warthogs and hippopotamuses are also used for carving. Each type of ivory has its own distinctive characteristics. Elephant ivory can be recognized by its great size, as well as by the pattern of intersecting arc-shaped lines, actually minute tubes, revealed in a transverse cut. Hippopotamus teeth are harder and more resistant to staining than elephant tusks, and the canines are roughly triangular in cross section, as are the lower canines of warthogs. The warthog's strongly curved upper canine teeth, often chosen for small sculptures, have a pinched oval shape in cross section. Transverse cuts of both warthog and hip-

popotamus teeth are characterized by a pattern of fine, densely spaced concentric rings. Bone can be distinguished from ivory by its spongy center and its many narrow channels, which appear as tiny holes or straight, dark lines.

African elephant ivory naturally varies in color from pale warm blond to lustrous white, unlike the more opaque matte white typical of Indian ivory. Age alone does not significantly alter the color of ivory. Treatment with a number of different substances does, however, and African ivory objects consequently present an astounding variety of colors. Carved tusks placed on royal ancestor shrines in Benin are bleached with citrus juice or coated with chalk to enhance their whiteness, and Baule women rub their ivory bracelets with sand to achieve a bright white surface (Blackmun 1983:60; Vogel 1978:97). Ivories that are handled frequently or worn against the body take on a yellowish-brown hue, often seen on the inner surfaces of bracelets or the backs of pendants (fig. 1). Dark brown, deep red, and orange, which are not uncommon colors for African ivory, result from coating with palm oil and camwood powder, exposure to smoke, or contact with iron-rich earth.

Because ivory is extremely dense and hard, it is a



MOROCCO

TUNISIA

ALGERIA

LIBYA

EGYPT

WESTERN SAHARA

MAURITANIA

MALI

NIGER

CHAD

SUDAN

SENEGAL

THE GAMBIA

GUINEA

NIGERIA

ETHIOPIA

GUINEA-BISSAU

IVORY COAST

BENIN

YORUBA

Dwima

DJIBOUTI

GUINEA

UPPER VOLTA

IGBO

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

BULLOM

BAULE

LOBI

IBIBIO

MANGBETH

TEMNE

DAN

GHANA

EDO

ZAIRE

UGANDA

KENYA

SOMALIA

SIERRA LEONE

AKAN

ATTIE

Benin

Iqbo

RWANDA

DOROBO

Njoro River

Cave

LIBERIA

TOGO

IKWU

IKWU

IKWU

DENGESSE LEGA

BIRUNDI

TANZANIA

ZANZIBAR

KEY

● = Cities

▲ = Archaeological sites

CHAD = Names of countries

FANG = Names of ethnic groups

Mi. 0 100 200 400 600 800

Km. 0 200 400 600 800

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

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ZAIRE</



1. Pende ivory amulets, worn as pendants, are most often carved in the form of Pende wooden masks, whose powers they represent. Pendant figures such as this one are much less common but also reproduce the broad curved forehead, narrow chin, downcast eyes, and severe expressions of the masks (cat. 49).

2. Luba ivory pendants are strung on cords with beads and other amulets. They most often represent women supporting their breasts in a gesture that may connote greeting, respect, and generosity in African art. Though small in scale, these figures show a concern for elegant, soigné appearances, which is typical of larger Luba wood sculptures and which is seen here in the gently rippling coiffure (cat. 55).



frequent choice, especially in some parts of East and Central Africa, for utilitarian objects such as pestles, bark-cloth pounders, and containers. These qualities, and the fine uniform grain that results from ivory's distinctive structure, also allow it to be carved into objects of great delicacy. The surfaces of African ivory sculptures are often crisply carved with fine details and rich textures and patterns. The ivory carver in Africa is often the same person who is skilled in carving wood, and the tools used are essentially the same—adzes and knives for cutting and rough-textured leaves or other abrasive substances for sanding.

African artists generally work within the limits imposed by the size and shape of the tusk. Sculptures are usually carved from a single piece of ivory, although there are a few notable examples made of several sections joined together, such as the well-known pair of ivory leopards from Benin in the collection of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II. Sometimes, as in Benin, Kongo, and the Cameroon Grasslands, the form of the tusk is left unchanged except for the carving of relief designs. The tapering curved shape of the tusk is also evident in many African ivory figures, such as the small amulet figures worn as pendants by the Luba of Zaire (fig. 2). These figures are often made of warthog teeth, which are shorter and have a more pronounced curve than elephant tusks, giving the figures their characteristically hunched posture.

Ivory is a costly and relatively rare material even in Africa, where much of the world's supply originates. As a result, most African sculpture in ivory is small and is shaped to make maximum use of the available material. Some forms, however, seem to have been deliberately chosen so that much of the tusk is destroyed in carving, thereby increasing the worth of such works. Examples of these objects, which are sometimes oddly shaped, are the slender, foot-long hairpins with flared ends worn by the Mang-

betu and the bracelets made by the Kassena from rectangular longitudinal sections of tusk rather than more common ring-like transverse sections.

Ivory is also used to imitate forms originally intended to be executed in other, usually less costly, materials. Ivory versions of implements and weapons normally made of iron or wood are meant to be used ceremonially as, for example, the ivory spoons, ax heads, and billhooks used in Bwami initiation rituals among the Lega. They may also function as emblems of office. A Kongo scepter in the form of a knife closely resembles a real one in its construction—the blade and handle are carved separately and hafted together with ivory pins (fig. 3). The king and high-ranking chiefs of Owo, a Yoruba city-state, also carry ceremonial ivory swords as insignia of office. Far from functional, an Owo ivory sword has an openwork blade, in the center of which a silhouetted figure brandishes a tiny sword of his own (fig. 4). Shona knives with ivory handles and sheaths and iron blades may be no sharper than the wooden ones they imitate, but they are much more prestigious (fig. 5).

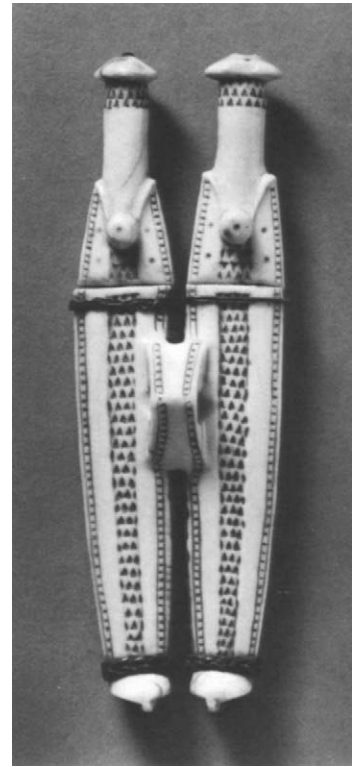
Until recently, elephants roamed over most of sub-Saharan Africa, and ivory was carved over an equally vast portion of the continent. Ivory was used for horns and personal ornaments such as combs and bracelets in almost all parts of Africa. However, several areas stand out as important centers for ivory carving, notably the coast of Sierra Leone, Benin and the Yoruba kingdoms of Nigeria, and the Kongo and Lega regions of Zaire. These areas were not necessarily those in which ivory was most plentiful, but those in which a greater part of the local supply and that obtained through trade was made available to carvers.

Ivory was an important commodity in the trade that connected distant parts of the continent with each other and linked Africa with the rest of the world. Because it made ivory all the more valuable and desirable, trade often, in fact, stimulated a demand for ivory objects at the highest levels of Afri-



3. Kongo chiefs use several different types of swords, as well as ivory-topped staffs and ivory-handled fly whisks, as emblems of their authority. The lozenge inscribed in a pierced circle on the blade of this Kongo chief's sword resembles the Kongo ideogram for spiritual continuity and rebirth, a sign based on the movement of the sun in the cosmos (Thompson and Cornet 1981:28, 43) (cat. 42).

4. This figure from Owo originally formed the center of a ceremonial sword with a curved openwork blade. The figure holds an ada sword, a symbol of the chief's power over life and death; this sword, like other features of Owo court ritual and art, reflects the influence of Benin (cat. 28).



5. The sheath of this double knife is made in two sections, an ivory front and a wooden back, which are bound together with plaited reed strips. Repetitive rows of geometric motifs, like the incised triangles seen here, are characteristic of much southern African art. Similar designs decorate small ivory objects found at Khami, a site west of Great Zimbabwe, which was a chiefly residence in the seventeenth century (cat. 70).

can society. The African ivory trade was substantial and long-lasting, beginning at least as early as the second millennium B.C., when ivory from Nubia was exported to Egypt. The East African coast was a rich source of ivory, gold, and other luxury materials for merchants of many nationalities—Greek, Roman, Arab, and Persian—who brought African ivory as far away as India and China. Caravans laden with ivory and gold crossed the Sahara to the Mediterranean Sea, providing an important source of wealth for the kingdoms of Ghana and Mali, which reigned successively in the western Sudan from the middle of the first millennium A.D. through the middle of the second. The European navigators who first arrived on Africa's shores in the fifteenth century created new markets for ivory, until the slave trade proved more lucrative. With the abolition of the slave trade in the nineteenth century, ivory again became a prime commodity, and Arab, Swahili, European, and American merchants competed, often violently, for a share of the trade.

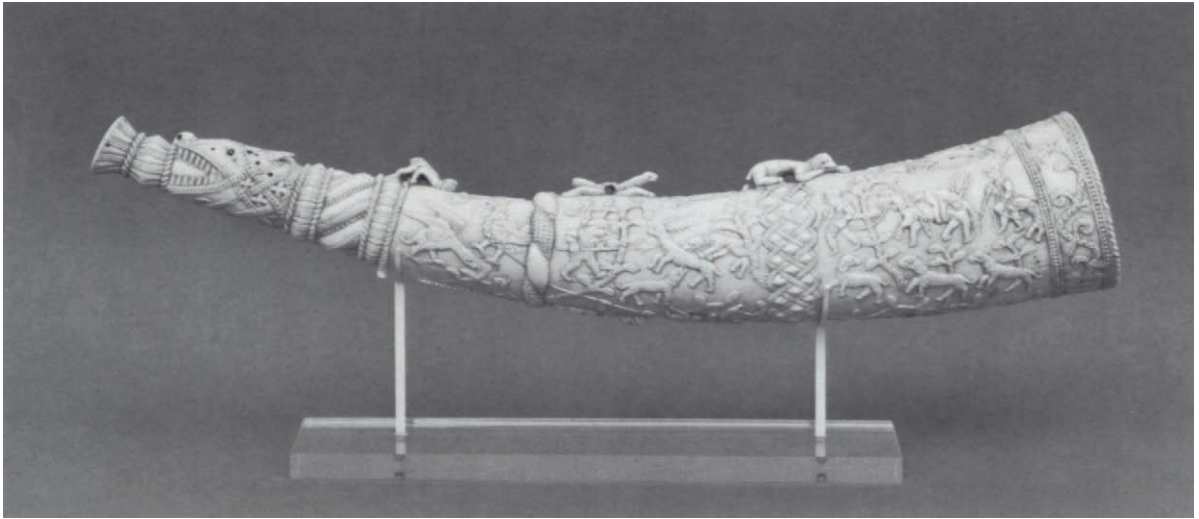
Despite the considerable quantities of ivory that left Africa, much was kept. More durable than wood or other organic materials, many ivory objects have withstood the assault of time, climate, and insects long enough to be recovered by archaeologists. Incised and decorated bone pendants found at Njoro River Cave in East Africa are thought to have been made in the tenth century B.C. (Cole 1963:286, 291–92). Carefully worked bone tools were excavated at Daima, a site near Lake Chad, which was occupied almost three thousand years ago; a bone pendant found nearby at Yau was probably made in the first half of the present millennium (Connah 1981:62, 81, 128–34). A royal or priestly burial chamber at Igbo Ukwu in southern Nigeria, thought to date from the ninth or tenth century A.D., contained ivory tusks as well as a small piece of carved ivory (Shaw 1970, I:249). Small carved ornaments and figures as well as whole tusks have been found at

several sites in central and southeastern Africa, such as Sanga, Ingombe Ilede, Inyanga, Mapungubwe, Khami, and Dhlo Dhlo (Maret 1977:325–26; Fagan 1969:138, 143; Summers 1958:151; Gardner 1963, II:31; Robinson 1959:109, 155–56). The majority of these early sites were the residences or graves of rulers and other wealthy, powerful persons, suggesting that the use of ivory to denote prestige is not a recent phenomenon. It is likely that one of the factors that allowed many of these past cultures to flourish was their access to ivory and participation in its trade.

One of the largest groups of early African ivory carvings to survive was, in fact, created for export. The saltcellars, horns, spoons, and forks first identified as "Afro-Portuguese" by William Fagg were made by African carvers for Portuguese sailors exploring and trading off the coast of Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Fagg 1959). They were brought back to Europe as souvenirs and placed in the "curiosity cabinets" then becoming popular among the European aristocracy.

For centuries after their arrival in Europe the Afro-Portuguese ivories were thought to have been made in India, Turkey, or Europe. Today, however, their African origin is undisputed. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century documents allow their provenance to be localized to two areas—the Temne and the Bullom people living along the coast of Sierra Leone and the Edo carvers at the Court of Benin in Nigeria. The Portuguese arrived on the Sierra Leone coast in 1462 and in Benin in 1486, and in each area the ivories were probably first made soon after their arrival. The production of these ivories may have ceased around the middle of the sixteenth century, because of internal political upheaval along the coast of Sierra Leone and because of a decline in Portuguese trade relations with Benin.

The Afro-Portuguese horns, most of which were made by the Temne and Bullom people of Sierra Leone, closely resemble the Islamic-inspired ivory



6. Valentim Fernandes, who visited the coast of Sierra Leone in the early sixteenth century, noted that the ivory workers of this area were highly skilled and "can also carve any work one draws for them" (Fernandes 1951:104–105). European two-dimensional images, such as drawings or woodcuts, presumably served as models for the hunting scenes and heraldic motifs on this ivory horn (cat. 3).



7. The figure perched at the top of this horn, bearing a crocodile on his back, resembles stone figures made in Sierra Leone in the sixteenth century. Crocodiles and other water creatures are depicted on ivory horns made by many West African peoples, such as the Temne or Bullom example seen here, and on those made by the Mende, Akan, Edo, Yoruba, Igbo, Ibibio, and Ijo (cat. 7).



8. Afro-Portuguese saltcellars from Sierra Leone, unlike those from Benin, frequently depict Africans and informally dressed Europeans. This is perhaps due to the fact that many Portuguese settled in this area and had closer ties with the local communities than did their countrymen in Benin (cat. 5).

9. The artists of Benin were keen observers of the Portuguese traders and missionaries who frequented the Court of Benin after 1486, often recording details of appearance and behavior with a precision seldom found in European descriptions of Africa of the same date. This saltcellar, whose lid has been lost, represents the ornate costumes of sixteenth-century Europe (cat. 12).



horns or oliphants that European nobility had previously obtained from carving centers in southern Italy, Sicily, and Spain (Curnow 1983:115). Unlike the side-blown horns used by Africans themselves, the embouchure of the Afro-Portuguese horns is placed at the narrow end of the horn, usually in the form of an animal head and finial, and suspension loops are carved along the concave side (fig. 6). Like their European models, the Afro-Portuguese horns are divided into sections by bands of interlace or other decorative patterns. These sections are carved in low relief with hunting scenes and motifs derived from European heraldry. The Portuguese royal arms appear frequently, as does the equal-armed Beja Cross, the emblem of the Military Order of Christ, a crusader group that was granted jurisdiction over Portuguese territories in the fifteenth century (Curnow 1983:140). Unicorns, centaurs, griffins, lions, eagles, and other real and fantastic creatures of European rather than African origin can also be seen on the horns.

The hunting scenes may have been inspired by illustrated books or woodcuts carried on board the Portuguese vessels, or by drawings made by the seamen themselves (Curnow 1983:145; Bassani 1979:196–99). They depict hunters armed with clubs, lances, and bows and arrows, setting forth on foot or mounted on horseback through a landscape sketchily defined by leafy branches. Accompanied by their dogs, the hunters pursue their prey—European animals such as stags and boars—and return with the animals slung over their shoulders or across their horses' backs. The figures seem to float against the ivory ground and are not bound by European pictorial rules of perspective and proportion.

While the Temne and Bullom ivory carvers may have been unfamiliar with the subjects their Portuguese patrons asked them to carve, they were certainly experienced in carving ivory horns for their own use. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Portuguese

travelers along the coast of present-day Sierra Leone mentioned ivory horns in their accounts of people living there and even brought several examples back to Europe (Mota 1975:586–87; Bassani 1981). Their compatriots who visited the kingdom of Kongo did the same (Bassani 1975a, 1975b, 1982). Early Portuguese visitors to Akan areas also noted ivory horns, examples of which have been found in an archaeological site at Begho, dated to the fifteenth or sixteenth century (Anquandah 1982:92, 96, 102).

Ivory horns continue to be made by people in some of these areas. Mende paramount chiefs have horns carved with human figures, crocodiles, and other designs in relief (Henggeler 1981). The horns of the Dan and other peoples of the Ivory Coast and Liberia are less elaborately carved but are also associated with chiefs (Zemp 1971:62–66; Bassani 1981:166). The motifs carved in relief on ivory chiefs' horns of the Akan refer to proverbs that express various ideas concerning leadership. These horns were sounded in war, during negotiations for peace, and to announce the presence of a chief.

The ivory horns made by African carvers for their own use are side-blown, with the embouchure located on the concave or, much less frequently, convex side of the tusk. Several side-blown horns have imagery similar to that on the end-blown Afro-Portuguese examples, suggesting that at least some of the Temne and Bullom carvers worked for both foreign and local patrons. The hunting scenes on these side-blown horns are usually less elaborate and are surrounded by more empty space than those on the horns made for the Portuguese. These horns also incorporate African motifs such as crocodiles and figures in African dress. One such side-blown horn omits the hunting scenes entirely but retains the beaded and twisted relief lines seen on some Afro-Portuguese works (fig. 7).

While the horns commissioned by the Portuguese conform to a type of object already familiar to Afri-

can ivory carvers, other objects they requested did not. Saltcellars, often quite elaborate, were a common feature of the tables set by European nobility during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, when salt was still a rare and costly condiment. The Afro-Portuguese ivory saltcellars, which may have been modeled on European metal prototypes, varied considerably depending on whether they were made by the Temne or Bullom of Sierra Leone or the Edo carvers of the Court of Benin. In both cases, the form of the saltcellars is essentially European, but features of their decoration can be traced to the African carvers who made them.

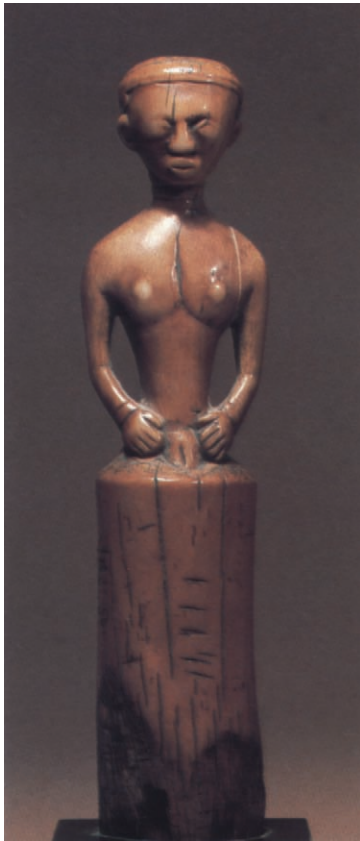
The saltcellars made by the Temne and Bullom carvers of Sierra Leone follow two standard patterns. In one, a conical base supports a spherical lidded bowl with a handle at the top (fig. 8). Between bowl and base are cushion-shaped gadrooned knobs, carved to imitate the fluted, lathe-turned surfaces of European metalwork. Snakes often swirl gracefully around the knobs above the base and hang their heads down, as if suspended in space. Carved in relief around the base are several standing figures who represent the variety of characters seen on the Sierra Leone coast in the sixteenth century—European men in shirts and breeches, African men carrying shields and weapons, and African women wearing wrapped cloth skirts. The other type of Afro-Portuguese saltcellar made by the Temne and Bullom has a spherical bowl supported by figures seated on a ring-like base, their upper bodies forming a delicate openwork cage beneath the solid weight of the bowl. Both types exhibit a daring use of open space and juxtapose finely executed textured patterns and genre-like details with smooth unadorned surfaces.

The saltcellars commissioned by the Portuguese from carvers at the Court of Benin followed a different pattern, again with two variations. They are made in three sections that form two spherical lidded chambers, the lower one usually obscured by the

figures that surround it. In one type, four bearded Portuguese men are shown standing with their heads supporting the upper bowl of the saltcellar (fig. 9). Two of the men are portrayed frontally; elaborately attired in richly textured garments, each wears a cross around his neck. The two other figures are only slightly less elegantly dressed and are shown diagonally, as if striding toward their superiors. In the second type of Afro-Portuguese saltcellar from Benin two beardless Portuguese soldiers confront each other while mounted on horseback. A nude angel stands, or floats, behind their horses, his outspread wings carved in relief on the upper bowl.

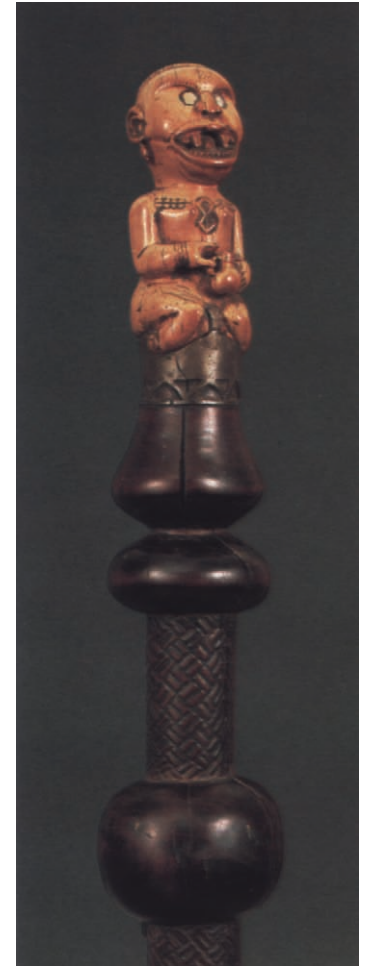
Although the Afro-Portuguese saltcellars are essentially European in form and function, they employ a visual vocabulary that developed in response to purely African beliefs and values. The figures carved on saltcellars made by the Temne and Bullom have the same bulging eyes, broad curved noses, and variety and informality of dress and pose seen on *nomoli*, the small stone sculptures made by people living along the coast of Sierra Leone. In contrast, the saltcellars from Benin exhibit the same concern for portraying relative rank through details of dress and frontality of pose that characterizes works depicting the Oba of Benin with his retainers. Many of the decorative patterns seen on the Benin saltcellars, and the way in which these patterns fill all the available space, can also be seen on objects made for the Oba's own use, just as the figures, crocodiles, and snakes that appear on the Afro-Portuguese ivories from Sierra Leone also occur on objects that the Temne and Bullom carved for themselves.

The increase in the ivory trade that followed the arrival of Europeans on the coast of Africa enhanced the value Africans already placed on ivory. Ivory came more and more to be equated with wealth, and tusks were stockpiled in treasuries and exchanged as gifts, bride price, and tribute. Objects made of ivory still serve to indicate their owners' status. Among the



10. According to oral tradition, the split between the Bushoong, a Kuba group, and the Dengese, their northern neighbors, occurred long ago because the Bushoong refused to offer an elephant tusk in tribute to the Dengese ruler (Vansina 1978:98). Although ivory was abundant in this part of Central Africa, it was used primarily for trade and for filling royal treasuries and rarely for sculpture (cat. 47).

11. The stretch of West African shoreline known as the "Ivory Coast" was so named by European traders in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because of the quantities of tusks that were found there. Ivory sculpture from this area is, however, relatively rare. This figure from an Attie chief's staff seems to be wearing the high-collared, double-breasted jacket and long trousers of a colonial officer (cat. 10).



12. The female figure that surmounts this Kongo chief's staff kneels and offers a vessel of palm wine, signs of respect for her superiors and of acceptance of the social order. Her earrings, bracelets, scarification marks, and painstakingly filed teeth indicate that she is a woman of high rank (cat. 38, detail).

Kwanyama, a subgroup of the Ambo in southern Angola and Namibia, women wear leather belts studded with engraved ivory medallions whose geometric designs graphically indicate the number of cattle in their husbands' herds (Lehuard 1982:24). Similarly, among the Igbo of Onitsha, industrious and accomplished women receive massive ivory bracelets and anklets in a title-taking ceremony in which their elevated position in the community is publicly recognized (Nzekwu 1963). In African society great wealth is often considered a sign that a person possesses the moral, social, political, and spiritual qualities necessary for its acquisition, and ivory may be used to denote these virtues.

In many traditional African states the supremacy of the ruler was expressed through his monopoly on ivory. In Benin one tusk from every elephant slain had to be presented to the Oba, and the other had to be offered to him for sale, enabling the Oba to amass great numbers of tusks and thus to effectively control the ivory trade. Similarly, among the Kuba, tusks were passed in a chain of tribute from local chiefs to the king (fig. 10). Ivory was likewise a royal prerogative in the kingdoms of the Cameroon Grasslands where whole tusks carved with royal symbols served as the king's footrest and indicated his proprietary rights. Wooden staffs surmounted by carved ivory figures were the insignia of rulers among the Attie of the Ivory Coast and the Kongo of Zaire (figs. 11, 12). Such staffs signified the chiefs' right to rule and to settle disputes and also served to identify their messengers. Kongo staff tops often depict figures kneeling, a sign of the respect and submission owed to the ruler.

The choice of ivory for works of art that express prestige and leadership is not solely dependent on its costliness or importance in trade. Other factors, such as color, also contribute to its symbolic value. To the Lega people of Zaire, the whiteness and glossiness of ivory are what make it beautiful. Since beauty and

goodness are equated in Lega aesthetics, ivory is an appropriate material for objects intended for initiates of the highest levels of the Bwami association, who have achieved positions of respect as a result of their moral excellence (Biebuyck 1972:18).

The Kongo people of Zaire associate the color white with Mpemba, the world of the ancestors, which has many positive connotations—among them righteousness, social order, understanding, good fortune, and generosity (Jacobson-Widding 1979:216). Perhaps because of their color, ivory tusks are buried with Kongo chiefs, and others are laid upon the grave (Laman 1953, 1:97). The Kuba have a similar custom, as do the Bamum and Bamileke peoples of Cameroon (Vansina 1979:69; Northern 1984:46).

Some Kongo ivory objects are not white but have acquired a deep red color. While this type of patination may have been caused solely by contact with the mixture of palm oil and red pigment that the Kongo frequently use as a cosmetic for the whole body, it is also possible that it was achieved intentionally to strengthen the objects. Red pigment is applied especially to sick or weak persons to make them stronger and to hunters and warriors to proclaim their force. At the death of a sacred Kongo chief, his insignia of office—possibly his ivories—were rubbed with red pigment in order to refortify them (Jacobson-Widding 1979:163–64, 167).

Color is also an important factor in the proliferation of ivory objects surrounding the Oba of Benin. Ivory is likened to the color of white chalk, a symbol of ritual purity that is associated with Olokun, the Edo god of the sea (Ben-Amos 1973:28–31; 1980:86). The source of extraordinary wealth and fertility, Olokun is the Oba's equal in the spirit world. Ivory fits easily into the constellation of symbols surrounding Olokun. Not only is it white, but it is itself a form of wealth, and it helped attract the Portuguese traders who also brought wealth to Benin. Having come

13. This figure resembles the women depicted on brass shrines dedicated to the Iye Oba (the queen mother of Benin) and may represent one of her attendants. She wears multiple strands of beads around her neck, waist, wrists, and ankles; some of them are apparently of coral, which could be worn only by royalty in Benin (cat. 16).





14. This ivory gong, used by the Oba of Benin, closely resembles more sonorous examples cast in brass, even imitating the crotals that project along the edges of the brass instrument. A second sounding chamber on the front of the gong, now damaged, depicted a human face similar in style to sixteenth-century Benin ivory masks (cat. 15).

from across the seas, the Portuguese were considered denizens of Olokun's realm.

Ivory objects from Benin are intended for use primarily by the Oba himself, to be worn or manipulated in state rituals. Whole tusks carved entirely in relief with figures and motifs referring to the achievements of past kings and the concepts underlying their right to rule are placed atop bronze commemorative heads on royal ancestral altars. Ivory figures representing attendants of the Oba or other members of the royal family were probably also placed in royal shrines (fig. 13). Oba Ewuare, who reigned in the mid-fifteenth century before the arrival of Europeans at Benin, is credited with encouraging the elaboration of ivory carving in Benin and with developing much of the visual code that conveyed concepts of divine kingship in Benin art for the next five hundred years (Egharevba 1968:17). The imagery of Benin ivory carvings underscores the message of royal divinity and supremacy already conveyed by the material itself.

An ivory gong, made probably in the sixteenth century, illustrates some of these ideas (fig. 14). The front of the gong depicts the Oba supported by two retainers, a representation both of the Oba's central position in the hierarchy of power in Benin and of his need for the support of his people. The Oba and his supporters are portrayed identically, except for the large bead the Oba wears on his chest and the snakes that issue from his waist. These snakes, the circled crosses that flank the Oba's head, and the crocodile that rises at his feet grasping a human hand in its jaws indicate the Oba's divine nature, particularly his association with Olokun, god of the sea.

The other side of this gong, now damaged, originally depicted the Oba grasping crocodiles, the messengers of Olokun, in his outstretched arms, and bending his legs in the form of mudfish. The mudfish-legged figure is a frequent motif in Benin royal art and is used to express the Oba's divine nature.



15. The motif of the mudfish-legged figure, grasping additional mudfish that issue from his nostrils, is repeated four times around the circumference of this bracelet, which was probably worn by the Oba of Benin. In the background stylized leopards alternate with copper-inlaid swords, both symbols of the Oba's strength and aggressiveness (cat. 21).

16. The beaten copper that sets off the low-relief carving of this bracelet was used only for objects commissioned by the Oba of Benin. Ivory was also a restricted material in Benin and could only be worked inside the palace by members of Igbesanmwan, the royal guild of ivory and wood carvers (cat. 20).





17. This pendant mask is thought to represent a queen mother of Benin, a respected adviser of the Oba who ruled at her own court outside Benin City. The Oba may have worn such a mask at rites commemorating his mother, although today similar pendants are worn at annual ceremonies to rid Benin of harmful spirits (cat. 14).

Mudfish, which are often found along the banks of streams, can exist on land as well as in the water. Like the mudfish, the Oba also bridges two worlds, that of man and that of the spirits.

Sometimes mudfish emanate from the figure's nostrils, as on an ivory bracelet (fig. 15). Pairs of intertwined mudfish appear in more stylized fashion on another Benin ivory bracelet, where they alternate with the heads of Portuguese soldiers, identified by their long hair, drooping mustaches, and domed-shaped hats (fig. 16). These two motifs, associated both with the Oba and with Olokun, often occur together in Benin art, as in the flange of an ivory hip mask that probably represents an Oba's mother (fig. 17). The mask, which is carved so thin as to appear translucent, exemplifies the technical command of Benin ivory workers and illustrates the sensitivity and solemnity of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Benin art.

Today the Oba wears ivory bracelets and hip masks and strikes an ivory gong at *emobo*, the annual ceremony in which he purifies Benin of harmful spirits, although these types of objects may have been used in other contexts in centuries past. Whatever their precise function, the use of ivory, with its connotations of royal power, wealth, and purity, and the choice of motifs that elaborate on those same concepts combine to create objects uniquely suited to the divine king of Benin. Carved ivory objects are one of the ways the Oba reinforces his preeminent position in Benin. In the words of an Edo man describing Igbesanmwan, the guild of ivory and wood carvers in Benin, "The Oba comes to Igbesanmwan with problems, and they solve them with carvings. Igbesanmwan has never failed him" (Ben-Amos 1975: 181; see also Akpata 1937).

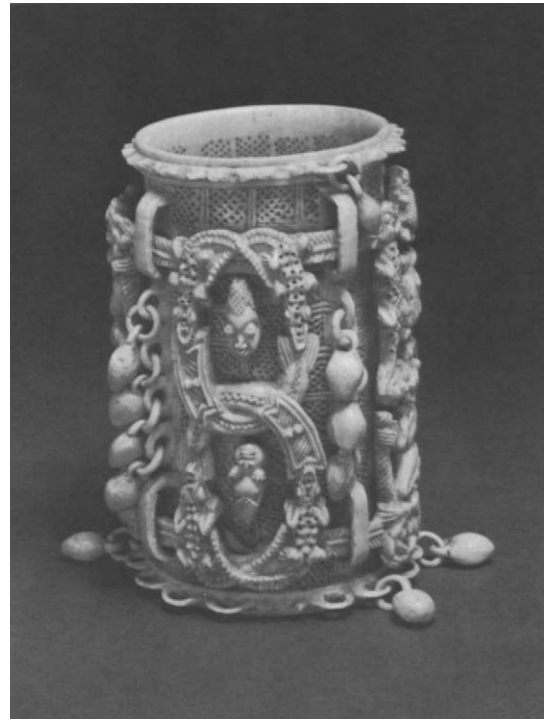
Many of the ivories found in Benin are similar in style, form, and iconography to objects made by Yoruba people living to the north and west. Benin obtained raw, uncarved tusks from the Yoruba king-

doms, and it has been suggested that the Oba recruited Yoruba ivory carvers, particularly those from the nearby town of Owo, to work in Benin (Fagg 1951:75). Features typical of Yoruba carving style, such as heavy-lidded eyes and lips that do not meet at the corners of the mouth, are found on some Benin ivories, but not on the bronzes, which would have been made by a different guild of artists. The types of objects made by Yoruba and Edo carvers are often quite similar and include carved tusks, figures, divination tappers, boxes, and bracelets. Both groups of artists create virtuoso works, such as bracelets in the form of two interlocking openwork cylinders, which are carved, complete with dangling rattles, from a single piece of ivory (figs. 18, 19). Motifs that occur frequently on ivory objects from Benin—mudfish-legged figures with snakes issuing from the nostrils, birds, crocodiles, snakes, leopards, and other beasts—are found on Yoruba works as well (figs. 20, 21). The Yoruba versions of these motifs are more varied and exaggerated than those from Benin; the outlines of images on Yoruba ivories tend to be more nervous and energetic, and the compositions less standardized, than those of Benin works.

Like those of Benin, Yoruba ivories are associated with persons of high rank. The Olowo—the king of Owo, a Yoruba city-state with close ties to Benin—wears ivory bracelets, carries an ivory sword, and wears a special costume from which are suspended small human and animal heads carved in ivory (Poynor 1978:149–50). In their proverbs and praise-names the Yoruba, like other African peoples, compare chiefs and kings to elephants because of this animal's great size, strength, majesty, and longevity. This analogy also extends to objects made of ivory. One of the praise-names for Orunmila, the Yoruba god of divination, is "Gbolajokoo, the offspring of the two tusks that make the elephant's trumpet." In this phrase, the deity is likened to the powerful animal whose praise is literally and figura-



18, 19. The meaning of the crocodiles and horn-wielding hunchbacked figures that creep across one side of this Yoruba double-cylinder bracelet (above) is not clear, but these figures may refer to events associated with the reign of the ruler for whom it was carved. Pairs of crossed crocodiles biting mudfish encircle disembodied heads on the other side of the bracelet (right) (cat. 24).





20. The central figure on this Yoruba bracelet has curved legs that form a continuous line with the crossed baldrics and high-peaked cap he wears as signs of rank. The other highly animated figures on the bracelet include a hunter or warrior with bow, arrow, and quiver, a snake devouring a human head, two walking figures, a horseman, a flute-player, and a leopard attacking an antelope (cat. 25).

21. Each of this pair of bracelets is divided into six sections in which the same two motifs alternate. The first motif is a female figure whose curved legs terminate in a reptile and an animal head; the second is a head with a small mammal and another reptile, issuing from the nostrils. According to the old label inside each bracelet, they were collected around 1850 (cat. 23).





22. Although covering her genitals with a fan, the female figure on this divination tapper is nude, a state the Yoruba consider appropriate for momentous occasions, such as when one is communicating with the creator god or taking an important oath (Abiodun 1975:446). Her kneeling posture also conveys reverence for Orunmila, the god of fate (cat. 32).

tively sung by its trumpet-like ivory tusks (Abiodun 1975:426, 444).

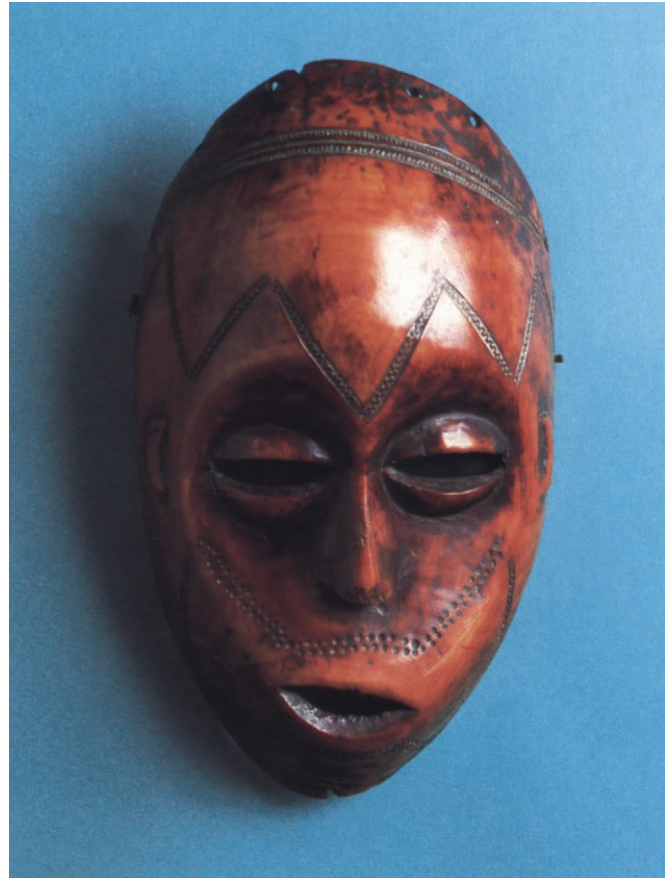
Among the Yoruba the use of ivory is not restricted to secular rulers. Elders of the Ogboni society, dedicated to the earth goddess Onile, may have objects carved of ivory, as do priests of Ifa, the Yoruba god of fate. Ifa divination priests are especially important to the Yoruba, not only because they must be consulted in conjunction with the worship of all other deities, but also because their ability to clarify the causes of problems and to determine solutions makes them crucial to the success of any endeavor. Particularly competent and knowledgeable Ifa priests amass enormous power and wealth as a result of their skill. Divination paraphernalia made of precious materials such as ivory may be offered to them by satisfied clients as a sign of gratitude. Tiny heads of Eshu, the Yoruba god of uncertainty who must be appeased if divination is to be successful, are made of ivory, as are the tappers used to gain the attention of Ifa at the beginning of a divination session (fig. 22). Ifa tappers usually depict a nude woman kneeling, a position that here expresses reverence for the deity and is considered appropriate for someone with a request as important as clarification of his or her fate (Abiodun 1975:438–46).

Ifa divination is not the only context in which African ivory sculptures are employed as a means of communicating with the spirit world. During masquerades among the Kalabari Ijo, priests entice harmful spirits into ivory horns so that they will not disturb the performers (Horton 1960:39). Some Ijo ivory horns are decorated with low-relief designs representing masks and the crocodiles, snakes, and other animals the Ijo consider to be messengers of the spirits, particularly those nonancestral spirits that originated in the water and brought wealth, power, and aspects of culture to the community (Horton 1965:31–32, pls. 51–53). In Benin, the spirits are



23. This massive ivory head was anointed with oil to emphasize its smooth, shiny surface, which was considered a sign of beauty and goodness by the Lega. The knotted fiber cap represents the hats worn by high-ranking initiates of the Bwami society, whose heightened vision may be indicated by white cowrie-shell eyes (cat. 63).

24. A Lega ivory mask such as this one is generally called lukungu (skull) and is used to convey ideas concerning death. It is not worn on the face but rather is held in the hand, hung on a fence, or displayed on the ground during initiations into the highest levels of the Bwami association (cat. 59).



called by blowing upon ivory horns (Blackmun 1983:64), some of which depict crocodiles, the messengers of Olokun.

Ivory objects are also used as a means of communication with the ancestors. The carved ivory tusks that surmount bronze commemorative heads on royal ancestor shrines in Benin are said to have been offered blood sacrifices, thereby acting as a link between the living and the dead. The tusks laid on kings' graves in Bamum served a similar role (Northern 1984:46). The small ivory figures the Luba wear suspended at the neck, shoulder, or waist are said to commemorate dead relatives and may invoke their protection (Cornet 1971:220).

Among the Lega of eastern Zaire ivory objects constitute a vital link between present and past generations. Lega ivories are the insignia of the two highest levels of the Bwami association, whose members have earned the highest honors for their morality, peacefulness, strength, and generosity. Lega ivory masks, heads, figures, and other carvings represent the proverbs through which Bwami ideals are taught (figs. 23, 24). Because ivory is equated with the hard, indestructible essence of the body, ivory sculptures are used in Bwami initiation rituals to illustrate the concepts of permanence and continuity. When an initiate of high rank dies, his emblems are placed on the grave until the end of the mourning

period. They will eventually be given to the new initiate who is to take his place in Bwami. Perhaps because of their proximity to the deceased and their repeated appearance in initiations, these ivory objects are also believed to possess extraordinary healing powers. Although the dead person cannot return to the living, the Lega believe that the ideals he lived for will be perpetuated through the Bwami association and the ivory sculptures that represent it (Biebuyck 1973:104, 136-37, 174-75).

The Lega elders who are high-ranking members of Bwami are not of noble or divine descent; they may not have vast wealth at their disposal nor does their power extend over great numbers of subjects. Yet their status in their community is as real and profoundly based as that of kings, chiefs, and titleholders in other parts of Africa. It is often difficult to isolate the basis of power in Africa, since economic, political, religious, and intellectual skills and accomplishments reinforce each other. Similarly, the factors that contribute to the value placed on ivory are multilayered, based on its costliness, rarity, and demand as an item of trade no more or no less than on its color, hardness, animal origin, and relationship to other constellations of symbols. This range of meanings and associations make ivory an ideal material for sculptures and ornaments that express power and prestige, whatever their source may be.

EXHIBITION LIST

1. Bracelet
Upper Volta, Kassena
19th–20th century
Ivory, metal; length 9¼ in. (23.5 cm.)
Lent by Thomas G. B. Wheelock
2. Pendant
Upper Volta, Lobi
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 7½ in. (19.1 cm.)
Lent by Gustave and Franyo Schindler
- *3. Horn
Sierra Leone, Afro-Portuguese
Late 15th–mid-16th century
Ivory; length 20¾ in. (52.7 cm.)
Private collection
4. Horn
Sierra Leone, Afro-Portuguese
Late 15th–mid-16th century
Ivory; length 21¼ in. (54 cm.)
Private collection
- *5. Saltcellar
Sierra Leone, Afro-Portuguese
Late 15th–mid-16th century
Ivory; height 11¾ in. (29.8 cm.)
Lent by Paul and Ruth Tishman
6. Spoon
Sierra Leone, Afro-Portuguese
Late 15th–mid-16th century
Ivory; length 8⅞ in. (22.5 cm.)
The Michael C. Rockefeller
Memorial Collection. Bequest of
Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979
1979.206.116
- *7. Horn
Sierra Leone, Temne or Bullom
16th century
Ivory; length 12⅝ in. (32.1 cm.)
Lent by Ernst Anspach
8. Horn
Sierra Leone, Mende
19th–20th century
Ivory; length 23¾ in. (60.3 cm.)
Lent by Marc and Denyse Ginzberg
9. Staff
Ivory Coast, Attie
19th–20th century
Ivory, wood; length 57 in. (144.8 cm.)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs.
Brian Stephen Leyden
- *10. Staff Top: Seated Figure
Ivory Coast, Attie
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 5¾ in. (14.6 cm.)
Lent by Marc and Denyse Ginzberg
11. Two Combs
Ghana or Ivory Coast, Akan
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 4⅝ in. (11.7 cm.) and
3⅞ in. (9.8 cm.)
Lent by Dorothy Brill Robbins
- *12. Saltcellar
Nigeria, Afro-Portuguese
Late 15th–mid-16th century
Ivory; height 7⅞ in. (18.1 cm.)
Louis V. Bell and Rogers Funds, 1972
1972.63ab
13. Saltcellar
Nigeria, Afro-Portuguese
Late 15th–mid-16th century
Ivory; height 3¼ in. (8.3 cm.)
Lent by Yulla Lipchitz
- *14. Pendant Mask
Nigeria, Court of Benin
Early 16th century
Ivory, copper, iron; height 9⅜ in.
(23.8 cm.)
The Michael C. Rockefeller
Memorial Collection. Gift of
Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1972
1978.412.323
- *15. Gong
Nigeria, Court of Benin
16th century
Ivory; height 15⅞ in. (38.4 cm.)
The Brooklyn Museum
A. A. Healy and F. L. Babbott Funds
58.160
[This work is not included in the
exhibition.]
- *16. Female Figure
Nigeria, Court of Benin
18th century (?)
Ivory; height 13 in. (33 cm.)
The Michael C. Rockefeller
Memorial Collection. Gift of
Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1972
1978.412.302
17. Cup
Nigeria, Court of Benin
or Yoruba, Owo
18th–19th century (?)
Ivory; width 4½ in. (11.4 cm.)
Lent by Drs. Daniel and
Marion Malcolm
18. Tusk
Nigeria, Court of Benin
18th century (?)
Ivory; length 68 in. (172.7 cm.)
Lent by Paul and Ruth Tishman
19. Tapper
Nigeria, Court of Benin
or Yoruba, Owo
18th century (?)
Ivory; length 11½ in. (29.2 cm.)
Lent by Ernst Anspach
- *20. Bracelet
Nigeria, Court of Benin
16th century (?)
Ivory, copper; length 5¼ in. (13.3 cm.)
The Michael C. Rockefeller
Memorial Collection. Gift of
Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1964
1978.412.340
- *21. Bracelet
Nigeria, Court of Benin
16th century
Ivory, copper; length 5⅞ in. (13 cm.)
Lent by Faith-dorian and Martin Wright
22. Bracelet
Nigeria, Court of Benin
17th century (?)
Ivory; height 5 in. (12.7 cm.)
Lent by Frieda and Milton F. Rosenthal
- *23. Pair of Bracelets
Nigeria, Yoruba
16th–19th century
Ivory; height 5 in. (12.7 cm.) and
4¾ in. (12.1 cm.)
Lent by Paul and Ruth Tishman
- *24. Bracelet
Nigeria, Yoruba
16th–19th century
Ivory; length 5½ in. (14 cm.)
Lent by Paul and Ruth Tishman

- *25. Bracelet
Nigeria, Yoruba
16th–19th century
Ivory; height 2½ in. (6.4 cm.)
Lent by Faith-dorian and Martin Wright
26. Box and Lid
Nigeria, Yoruba
16th–19th century
Ivory; length 6⅞ in. (17.5 cm.)
Lent by Fred and Rita Richman
27. Tusk
Nigeria, Yoruba
16th–19th century
Ivory; length 61 in. (154.9 cm.)
Private collection
- *28. Figure from Ceremonial Sword
Nigeria, Yoruba, Owo
19th century
Ivory; height 8⅝ in. (21.9 cm.)
Lent by Paul and Ruth Tishman
29. Double Ram Head
Nigeria, Yoruba, Owo
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 2⅞ in. (7.3 cm.)
Lent by Max and Rose Granick
30. Head
Nigeria, Yoruba
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 2⅜ in. (6 cm.)
Lent by Max and Rose Granick
31. Head
Nigeria, Yoruba
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 3⅛ in. (7.9 cm.)
The Michael C. Rockefeller
Memorial Collection. Purchase,
Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1960
1978.412.395
- *32. Tapper
Nigeria, Yoruba
19th century (?)
Ivory; length 12¼ in. (31.1 cm.)
Private collection
33. Horn
Nigeria, Ijo
19th–20th century
Ivory; length 29 in. (73.7 cm.)
Private collection
34. Figure
Cameroon, Kom
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 2⅝ in. (6.7 cm.)
Fletcher Fund, 1972
1972.4.61
35. Footrest
Cameroon
19th–20th century
Ivory; length 25 in. (63.5 cm.)
Lent by Ernst Anspach
36. Horn
Gabon
19th–20th century
Ivory; length 10¼ in. (26 cm.)
Lent by Ernst Anspach
37. Staff Top: Kneeling Figure
Zaire, Kongo
19th–20th century
Ivory, iron; height 7¾ in. (19.7 cm.)
Lent by Paul and Ruth Tishman
- *38. Staff
Zaire, Kongo
19th–20th century
Ivory, wood, metal, glass;
height 31 in. (78.7 cm.)
Lent by Paul and Ruth Tishman
39. Staff Top: Kneeling Woman
Zaire, Kongo
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 3 in. (7.6 cm.)
Lent by Drs. Daniel and
Marion Malcolm
40. Staff Top: Seated Mother and Child
Zaire, Kongo
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 5 in. (12.7 cm.)
Lent by Max and Rose Granick
41. Staff Top: Seated Man
Zaire, Kongo
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 8⅜ in. (21.3 cm.)
Private collection
- *42. Ceremonial Sword
Zaire, Kongo
19th–20th century
Ivory; length 19⅜ in. (49.2 cm.)
Private collection
43. Fly Whisk
Zaire, Kongo
19th–20th century
Ivory, wood, lead, animal hair;
length 17¼ in. (48.3 cm.)
Lent by Drs. Daniel and
Marion Malcolm
44. Fly-Whisk Handle
Zaire, Kongo
19th–20th century
Ivory; length 15¼ in. (38.7 cm.)
Lent by Paul and Ruth Tishman
45. Standing Male Figure
Zaire, Kongo
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 5 in. (12.7 cm.)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Smiley
46. Tusk
Zaire, Kongo
19th–early 20th century
Ivory; length 31 in. (78.7 cm.)
Lent by Drs. Daniel and
Marion Malcolm
- *47. Half-Figure
Zaire, Dengese (?)
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 7¼ in. (18.4 cm.)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. John A. Friede
48. Snuffbox
Zaire, Pende
19th–20th century
Ivory, leather, calabash; height 2½ in.
(6.4 cm.)
The Michael C. Rockefeller
Memorial Collection. Purchase,
Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1972
1978.412.660
- *49. Pendant: Figure
Zaire, Pende
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 2⅝ in. (6.7 cm.)
The Michael C. Rockefeller
Memorial Collection. Bequest of
Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979
1979.206.259
50. Pendant: Mask
Zaire, Pende
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 2½ in. (6.4 cm.)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Rome

51. Pendant: Mask
Zaire, Pende
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 2³/₈ in. (6 cm.)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Rome
52. Pendant: Mask
Zaire, Pende
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 2¹/₄ in. (5.7 cm.)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Rome
53. Pendant: Mask
Zaire, Pende
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 2¹/₂ in. (6.4 cm.)
Lent by Marc and Denyse Ginzberg
54. Pendant: Mask
Zaire, Pende
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 2¹/₄ in. (5.7 cm.)
Lent by Norman and Shelly Dinhofer
- *55. Pendant: Figure
Zaire, Luba
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 3 in. (7.6 cm.)
Lent by Max and Rose Granick
56. Pendant: Figure
Zaire, Luba
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 3¹/₄ in. (8.3 cm.)
Lent by Renee and Chaim Gross
57. Pendant: Figure
Zaire, Luba
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 3⁷/₈ in. (9.8 cm.)
Lent by Marc and Denyse Ginzberg
58. Pendant: Figure
Zaire, Luba
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 4¹/₂ in. (11.4 cm.)
Private collection
- *59. Mask
Zaire, Lega
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 8¹/₂ in. (21.6 cm.)
The Michael C. Rockefeller
Memorial Collection. Bequest of
Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979
1979.206.277
60. Mask
Zaire, Lega
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 4³/₄ in. (12.1 cm.)
Private collection
61. Figure
Zaire, Lega
19th–20th century
Ivory, fiber, feathers; height 5⁷/₈ in.
(14.9 cm.)
Lent by Marc and Denyse Ginzberg
62. Figure
Zaire, Lega
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 4³/₄ in. (12.1 cm.)
The Michael C. Rockefeller
Memorial Collection. Bequest of
Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979
1979.206.283
- *63. Head
Zaire, Lega
19th–20th century
Ivory, fiber, shell; height 5⁵/₈ in.
(14.3 cm.)
Lent by Lawrence Gussman
64. Ax Head
Zaire, Lega
19th–20th century
Bone; height 5¹/₈ in. (13 cm.)
Lent by Lawrence Gussman
65. Spoon
Zaire, Lega
19th–20th century
Ivory; height 7⁷/₈ in. (20 cm.)
Lent by Frieda and Milton F. Rosenthal
66. Four Hairpins
Zaire, Mangbetu
19th–early 20th century
Ivory; length 8¹/₂ in. (21.6 cm.), 10 in.
(25.4 cm.), 11¹/₂ in. (29.2 cm.), and
11¹/₂ in. (29.2 cm.)
Lent by the Department of
Anthropology, The American
Museum of Natural History, Herbert
Lang Expedition
1915–29
67. Two Hairpins
Zaire, Mangbetu
19th–early 20th century
Ivory; length 5³/₄ in. (14.6 cm.) and
6 in. (15.2 cm.)
Lent by the Department of
Anthropology, The American
Museum of Natural History
1965–20
68. Two Hairpins
Zambia, Lozi
19th–early 20th century
Ivory; length 4¹/₄ in. (10.8 cm.)
and 4³/₄ in. (12.1 cm.)
Lent by the Department of
Anthropology, The American
Museum of Natural History
1907–11
69. Container
Kenya, Dorobo
19th–20th century
Ivory, leather; height 8¹/₄ in. (21 cm.)
The Newark Museum
Delia J. Akeley Collection
27.874
- *70. Double Knife and Sheath
Zimbabwe, Shona (?)
19th century
Ivory, iron, wood, reed; height 4¹/₂ in.
(11.4 cm.)
The Newark Museum
38.2
71. Three Snuff Spoons
South Africa, Zulu
19th century
Bone, pigment; length 5¹/₂ in. (14 cm.),
5¹/₂ in. (14 cm.), and 6¹/₄ in.
(15.9 cm.)
Lent by the Department of
Anthropology, The American
Museum of Natural History
1869–90–147
72. Comb
South Africa, Zulu (?)
19th–20th century
Bone, pigment; length 5¹/₄ in.
(13.3 cm.)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. William W. Brill

Works illustrated in this publication are indicated by an asterisk.

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