

ANA & ANTONIO CASANOVAS | BERNARD DE GRUNNE

IGBO

MONUMENTAL SCULPTURES FROM NIGERIA



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iGBO

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ANA & ANTONIO CASANOVAS | BERNARD DE GRUNNE
2010



Hommage d'Arnaud Baumann à Jacques Kerchache, 2000



Photo d'un groupe de statue Ibo, salon de lecture Jacques Kerchache Musée du quai Branly, Paris



Introduction

The last discovery

Ana and Antonio Casanovas

We are proud to present this landmark exhibition with the finest and largest selection ever done of Igbo figures from the most important European collections, which group we have kept intact for this event. We are glad to organize it together with Bernard de Grunne and to count with his vast knowledge on the subject due in part to the interest in this art of one of the finest collectors, his father Count Baudouin de Grunne who, with the famous expert Jacques Kerchache as well as other major sources of the early days, form the core of provenances of the presented art works. In the late 1960s these enlightened and advanced amateurs were the first to discover and appreciate this form of art unknown in those days. Struck by the diversity and the inventiveness of some of these sculptures, they were able to select those of outstanding artistic quality from the large corpus that became available. At that moment, it was considered one of the last major discoveries of African monumental sculpture.

In a conversation with Anne Kerchache, she explained to us the specific passion Jacques had for Igbo figures which took him to make an outstanding collection, part of which they later donated to the Quai Branly Museum and is permanently exhibited by the express will of the President Jacques Chirac in the "Salon de Lecture Jacques Kerchache".

This love for Igbo art led him to exhibit it side by side to exceptional Fang, Kongo or Dogon sculpture in important exhibitions - Die Kunst von Schwarz Afrika, Kunsthaus, Zurich 1970 - Scultura Africana, Villa Medici, Rome 1986- Africanische Skulptur Museum Ludwig, Cologne 1990-, to publish them in many well known books such as L'Art Africain (Citadelles & Mazenod), or to even dedicate it a TV program where he explained in detail the different qualities among several examples of his own collection.

This exhibition allows us to appreciate the creativity and the imposing presence found in these unusually large sculptures, half human, half divine. Most of them are hieratic and powerful, with sophisticated details such as scarifications, headdresses or ornaments, many are painted with subtle naturally dyed colours and some show cubistic features or disproportioned bodies beautifully balanced.

Once a year the display of these monumental guardian images in the villages of the eastern Nigerian plateau, was the summit of an important ceremony where people would gather to pay cultural homage to their protective ancestors. In the same way, the display of this show has the intention of recreating that lost past and reuniting the works of some Igbo masters as a tribute to this extraordinary culture.







3

Festival of images of the annual outing of tutelary deities in Oreri, outside of tall wall surrounding the compound of the major god *Eke*, Village of Oreri.
 Photo : Herbert Cole, 1966



4

Urhobo, Nigeria. Shrine of Owedjebor, founder of the town of Ogherhe and various family members. Photo : Perkins Foss, 1969



5

Commemorative Royal Ancestral Figures of the kings and queens of the Batoufan kingdom.
 Photo : Father F. Christol, 1925



6

Boyo Chief Kimano II seated behind the the statues of all his ancestors.
 Photo : Henri Goldstein, June 1956

On style and shrines in Igbo Monumental Sculpture

Bernard de Grunne

African art, like most art, was meant to be seen in the company of other works. In Europe, even the greatest paintings or sculptures were intended to be seen as part of a palace or church, surrounded by related works, and often in a sumptuous architectural setting. Only rarely is African art discussed in the context of the relationship of one sculpture to another.¹

Series of works of arts reveal something about the way artists work. Usually, sculptures in sets were made to join existing ones, providing the opportunity to see the influence of earlier styles upon those of succeeding generations. Occasionally, an entire artistic program was executed over a short period of time, when a new cult or ruler was established or after the destruction of a shrine or palace as illustrated by a photo of the Uke shrine taken in 1983 by Herbert Cole (*Illus. 13, p. 42*). These large commissions afforded an artist an opportunity to work through certain formal problems and sometimes required him to continually vary the elements. In contrast, separate works executed by an artist for different clients are likely to resemble each other closely. Objects in groups provide insights into style that single works cannot. Some ensembles are composed of works so different in aspect that we would attribute them to different artists or to "archaic" or "later" periods. Another field photo by Cole of an assembly of fourteen deities in the village of Oteri demonstrates the presence of sculptures by at least four different artists (*Illus. 3, p. 8*).

Igbo statuary, like that of the Urhobo, Proto-Bamana, Grassland Kingdoms and all the way east to the Hembra and Boyo groups has always been displayed in sets ranging from five to thirty sculptures. This exhibition presents the single largest concentration of Igbo monumental sculpture ever assembled and selected for their aesthetic merit. This sacred ensemble mirrors the ethnographic reality of their usage among the Igbo. As Herbert Cole described so well, especially in the North-central Onitsha/Awka Igbo region, one often found large groups of up to fifteen or more statues displayed in one location and representing either conceptual deities such as Earth, Rivers, War or more temporal gods such as remote founding ancestors and legendary heroes.

These representations, varying in size from 45 cm in height to over life size, are carved in a conventionalized, symmetrical pose and are housed together, as generic "families," often in the past in elaborate shrine buildings at the center of each village group.²

As Cole explains in detail, all these figures are only junior partners in the art of their cult ensembles, which is a living process whereby the priest of each deity washes, purifies, make sacrifices to, and dresses these sculptures in titled regalia, and transforms them over time by constant care, painting and polishing. The deities were usually kept in a large sacred walled compound containing one to three or more buildings: the deity's house with its principal shrine and the statues, the god's meeting house a third smaller house for the god's servant. The first two of these buildings in one community are lavishly decorated with carved and painted panels. During the annual ceremony of renewal, the elaborately dressed sculptures are danced by their guardians to the music of the god's own drums, then lined up, as in the Oteri photograph, to receive gifts from their worshippers.³

The canons of Igbo statuary are fairly stereotyped in what Cole describes as "an iconic convention from which there is little deviation."⁴ Firstly there seems to be a strong majority of male statues: we have here eighteen male figures for ten female ones in our group. All statues are represented standing in a frontal pose with legs slightly apart, the arms framing the torso, the hands extended forward with the palms turned upwards. Their arms and legs are decorated

{1} I want to acknowledge the crucial expertise of Professor Herbert "Skip" Cole for all his help in this research project. Not only was he very generous to share with me his crucial field photos of Igbo sculptures and give permission to publish them but he also made extremely valuable comments on my ideas in this essay.

{2} Herbert M. Cole and Chike C. Aniakor, *Igbo Arts Community and Cosmos*, Museum of Cultural History, Los Angeles, 1984, p. 89-94

{3} Herbert M. Cole, « Art as Verb in Iboland, » in *African Arts*, 1969, vol. III, n° 1, pp. 39-41

{4} *Idem*, p. 90

with carved-in ivory bracelets and anklets as well as brass leg coils that were documented on young Igbo brides by George Basden in his pioneering study published in 1921.⁵

One notices a formal contrast between the naturalistic modeling of their bodies with more stylized and blocky hands and feet. Female figures tend to display fairly elaborate hairstyles typical of Igbo female aesthetics at the time of carving. The majority of statues show both chest and stomach (*mbudu*) scarifications and facial scars called *ichi*.

The virtually omnipresent gesture of open palms, forearms thrust-forward, and the rich deep incrustated patina are two important iconographic features of this genre. Again Cole provides us with a detailed explanation of the meanings: "this gesture shows not only the open-handedness or generosity of the gods, but their willingness to receive sacrifices and presents. The open palms also mean(s) "I have nothing to hide" suggesting honesty and a good face".⁶

The images were always carved by men. As to surface colors, however, women normally painted the figures with celebratory beautifying pigments. These cosmetics were also affected by worshippers. Many statues are yellow, the color of peace, and parts of their faces are white, the color of purity. Other sculptures are repeatedly rubbed with a red camwood cosmetic pigment, giving them a rich smooth surface much admired both in their statuary and in Igbo human beautification practices.⁷

Igbo statuary is meant to be displayed and admired in groups ranging from five to thirty sculptures. According to Cole, these series are generally not carved by a single artist and one often notices more than one hand per shrine. I will attempt in this essay to identify different master carvers of Igbo statuary and group them according to individual hands or ateliers.

Since the 1940's African art history has followed methodologies similar to those used in Greek, Medieval to early Renaissance art history to identify the hand of an individual Master Carver and assemble an oeuvre based on stylistic and documentary evidence, identifying the artist by a name of convenience until a personal name comes up.

The first scholar who worked on this issue was a Belgian, Frans Olbrechts, who identified a Luba artist whom he named the Master of Buli in his pioneering exhibition of 1937 in Antwerpen. A spate of anthologies on the artist, tradition and individual creativity appeared in the 1960s and early 70s.⁸ Exhibitions organized by the Museum Rietberg in Zurich on the arts of the Dan, Lobi and Guro produced catalogues with quite a quantity of first hand information of great artists from those tribes. Alisa LaGamma curated, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the exhibition "Master Hand : Individuality and Creativity among Yoruba Sculptors" in 1997. My exhibition "Mains de Maîtres. La découverte des sculpteurs d'Afrique," in Brussels in 2001 was the first exhibition identifying artists and ateliers from fourteen different tribes covering the entire scope of sub-Saharan statuary.

Among the Igbo, Cole's field research, which clearly identified individual artists' hands, also revealed that Igbo villagers and (and sometimes even artists themselves) were not very conscious of or interested in personal styles, just as Christian worshippers in medieval and Renaissance times were, in all probability, not much aware that a votive image was created by Duccio, Fra Angelico, or Caravaggio, and that each artist had a very personal way of working.⁹

The first artist that stands out carved three statues: the well known couple n° 1 & 2 already considered by Jacques Kerchache as his favorite Ibos statues, and the monumental figure n° 3. Since we do not have ethnographic data on the identity of this carver or the precise geographical origin of these three pieces, I propose to name this artist the Awka Master, since the female figure n° 2 displays a crested coiffure very similar to one photographed by George Basden in the village of Awka, about 20 miles east of Onitsha.

The style of this Awka Master is the canonical and classical style of Igbo statuary in this quite large and very populous region. It can be defined as an elegant naturalism, a perfect flow of proportions between the various parts of the

{5} Arriving in the late autumn of 1900, George T. Basden, a young British man newly ordained as an Anglican priest, was sent to Nigeria by the Church Mission Society. His volume is the product of his two decades of observation and remains an important contribution to anthropological knowledge of the Igbo. Cfr. George T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, London, Seeley, Service & Co Limited, 1921, p. 96. See also George T. Basden, *Niger Ibos; A Description of Primitive Life, Customs and Animistic Beliefs of the Ibo People of Nigeria By One Who, for Thirty-Five Years, Enjoyed the Privilege of Their Intimate Confidence and Friendship*, London Seeley Service, 1938

{6} Cole & Aniakor, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

{7} Ibidem.

{8} D'Azevedo, Warren, ed., *The Traditional Artist in African Societies*, 1973, Bloomington; Marian Smith, ed., *The Artist in Tribal Societies: Proceedings of a Symposium held at the Royal Anthropological Institute*, London, 1961

{9} Herbert Cole, "Art as Verb in Iboland," in *African Arts*, 1969, Vol. III, 1, p. 36 and Herbert Cole, *Mbari: Art and Life among the Owerri Igbo*, Bloomington, 1982, p. 169-70

body and a great refinement in the treatment of the head with very delicately modeled facial features. The Akwa Master has carved at least two other statues that Kerchache sold to the Swiss collector Sandruddin Aga Khan in 1969. This second couple, published for the first time in 1970, is very close to the pair presented here but varies in minute details such as the representation of a stack of ivory bracelets on the right arm of the female figure and the loss of its right hand.¹⁰ A third couple in a French private collection is probably from the same atelier but is slightly less refined in the treatment of the facial features.¹¹

A second artist, who I call the Neni Master, carved two figures n° 6 & 7. This artist's work is characterized by an elongation of the body, a modeling of the shoulders in an elegant arc, a more geometric treatment of the facial features and often a unique coiffure that looks a quadri-lobed skull cap. Two other statues n° 8 & 10 are possibly from the same atelier. I label him the Neni Master since Herbert Cole photographed a statue with a similar skull cap in this village in 1966 (*Illus. 11, p. 32*).

A third artist, the Master of *Ichi* Scarification, covers almost the entire upper part of the face in *ichi* scarifications as in statues 13 & 14. Therefore, I propose to name him the Master of *Ichi* scarification. His modeling of the body is quite distinctive: it is less naturalistic and instead of indicating the flesh and bones of the human body as in manner the Awka Master works, the body is very smooth as if the skin was almost stretched like a tightly fitted costume. The arms are not bent in the classical Igbo pose with palms upturned and apart for the face, almost completely covered the scarifications, the artist has only indicated two small oval-shaped scarifications on the upper chest.

We are fortunate to have a name for a fourth artist thanks to Cole's research. The sculptor Ubah of Isafia carved four statues for a shrine from the village of Ifite Nanka which are very similar to the two statues n° 23, & 24. This artist drifts away from the canonical Igbo styles both in terms of the modeling of the body, the carving of the head and the surface treatment. The torso tends to be more compact and the limbs more stylized, the facial features are more rounded and spherical, the face shows sometimes a faint smile, and the statues are often covered with a glistening smooth patina made from rubbing red camwood powder. Ubah of Isafia was quite prolific: at least five other statues by this hand or from its workshop have been published and Herbert Cole knows at least fifty statues by him.¹²

Moving even further away from the classical styles of the Awka/Onitsha region, we have the Abiriba Master from the eastern part of Igboland who carved a very fine polychrome statue n° 25 that once belonged to a men's meeting house probably in the vicinity of Abiriba as photographed by Herbert Cole. Another statue by this Abiriba Master formerly in the Sadruddin Aga Khan collection became quite famous since it was the cover and the poster image of the remarkable exhibition *Die Kunst von Schwarz-Afrika* curated by Elsy Leuzinger at the Kunsthaus Museum in Zurich in 1970.¹³ A third statue presented here (n° 26) is certainly related in style, and perhaps earlier as it shows many signs of wear and is monochromatic, with a dark grey deep encrusted patina.

Finally, my last artist is the Mbaïse Master. Two statues n° 27 & 28 belong to a southern, Owerri region, figural style characterized "by a more geometric blocky and sharp-edged treatment of the human form, almost as if it is conceived as a series of stacked rectangles."¹⁴ The figures are left unpainted but show often a thick oily patina on the face. This southern style being centered around the towns Mbaïse and Mbieri. I propose to name this artist the Mbaïse Master. His style is closely related to and perhaps copied by lesser artists and an atelier that produced a large corpus of types and sizes with a more varied iconography. An early example of a work by a contemporary Master Carver is the mother-and-child image from the Tishman collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹⁵

I have attempted to define the personal styles of six artists in three large regional styles of Igbo sculpture. There are in addition three or four more hands represented in this ensemble of 28 images.

{10} Elsy Leuzinger, *Die Kunst von Schwarz-Afrika*, Kunsthaus, Zurich, 1970, M20. Claude Savary, *Sculptures africaines d'un collectionneur de Genève*, Musée d'Ethnographie, Genève, 1978, pp. 10-11, fig. 4-5 and Sotheby's London, *Prince Sandruddin Aga Khan Collection of African Art*, June 27, 1983, lot 29

{11} François de Perthuis, « Voyage au pays des arts premiers », in *Connaissance des Arts*, n° 619, Septembre 2004, p. 72. This pair of statues was purchased from the well-known Parisian dealer Pierre Robin around 1980.

{12} Herbert M. Cole and Chike C. Aniakor, *Igbo Arts Community and Cosmos*, Museum of Cultural History, Los Angeles, 1984, p. 91, fig. 166 & 168.

{13} Elsy Leuzinger, *Die Kunst von Schwarz-Afrika*, Kunsthaus, Zurich, 1970, Cover & M1

{14} Herbert M. Cole and Chike C. Aniakor, *Igbo Arts Community and Cosmos*, Museum of Cultural History, Los Angeles, 1984, p. 94

{15} Herbert Cole, Catalogue entry, in Susan Vogel, ed., *For Spirits and Kings. African Art from the Tishman Collection*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1981, fig. 85, pp. 146-8

In the wider scope of African art history, a formal principle applied to these Igbo styles concerns the size of statues within each shrine. According to Herbert Cole, "the concept is of an entire family unit, each member depicted as a separate image, with hierarchies reflected in the size of the figures and their surface elaboration".¹⁶ This principle according to which the height of each statue is directly proportional to the spiritual and genealogical importance of the figure represented is used among other groups in West and Central Africa. I have chosen the few and far between *in situ* field photos of ancestral commemorative statues of various ethnic groups to compare with the prolific displays of statues among the Igbo such as the annual outing of fourteen statues in the village-group of Oteri (where the 9th-10th century A.D Igbo Ukwu bronzes were excavated) and discussed by Cole as "shows of force" or "festivals of images." (*Illus. 3, p. 8*)¹⁷

In the field photo by Cole of a shrine in Umudioka (*Illus. 16, p. 58*), the statue of a "chief," a deity named Eze Imeke of Umudioka Neni, "founder" of Umudoka village is on the left side. His wife is next to him but not as tall and his son, who became a policeman is represented in full uniform but slightly shorter than his father, respecting the genealogical order of things (*Illus. 16, p. 64*).

Among the neighboring Urhobo, Perkins Foss photographed in the small village of Eghwerhe a remarkable shrine of at least seven monumental figures centering around Owedjebor the founding ancestor elevated a long time ago to the status of major deity of the village, flanked to his right by his wife and his half-brother and to his left by his *onotu*, leader of the warriors (*Illus. 4, p. 8*). At the extreme left of Owedjebor stood two women: first the wife of the half-brother and in the corner, the famous mother and child figure of their daughter -now displayed at the Pavillon des Sessions of the Musée du Louvre.¹⁸

Human figures of varying size, some of them near life-size in height are well-known manifestations of Grassfields art. These figures, displaying some of the regalia of kingship such as stools, prestige caps, drinking horns etc are commemorative and generic renderings of royal ancestors, testify to and record the dynastic successions. Such figures are carved during a king's reign or that of his successor and in theory there should be a memorial figure for each king of the dynasty since the inception of such sculptures. In the chiefdom of Batoufam of Cameroon, Father F. Christol photographed in 1925 a row of monumental statues representing six generations of kings and queens of Batoufam until the famous usurper Njiké who was the ruler at that time (*Illus. 5, p. 8*). Ancestor memorial statues are sheltered with the royal palace, and the frequency of their appearance varies between chiefdoms from the extreme exclusivity of the public funeral celebration for a king to a regular display for an annual celebration.¹⁹

Finally, among the Boyo, the five statues of Chief Kimano II represent five of his ancestors with the largest being the most remote of the five (*Illus. 6, p. 8*).²⁰ This principle was also applied to the Hemba ancestral statuary, where some villages kept up to twenty statues in the same shrine and where the size of each statue was directly proportional to its position in the genealogy of the clan.²¹

An Igbo shrine with its abundance of statues can be compared to the portal of a gothic cathedral. Such a complex form contains many traits which belong to different formal sequences, each representing successive solutions to visual problems.²² Therefore, the date of manufacture of an art object (its absolute age) is as important as its systematic age i.e. its position in various formal sequences of which it is made. Of course, each sequence evolves according to its own particular schedule: its time has a particular shape. In consequence, chronologically simultaneous artistic achievements can occupy different places within their own time frame, one appearing early in its own formal series, another appearing much later. They both fall in the same period but differ in age. The rose window at Chartres has a systematic age unlike that of the ogival vault. Panofsky distinguished the hands of younger and older masters in the statuary at Rheims Cathedral in the same decades of the thirteenth century.

{16} Herbert M. Cole and Chike C. Aniakor, *Igbo Arts Community and Cosmos*, Museum of Cultural History, Los Angeles, 1984, p. 91

{17} *Idem*, p. 90

{18} Perkins Foss, « Urhobo sculpture » in Jacques Kerchache, ed., *Sculptures. Africa. Asia. Oceania. Americas*, Paris, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2001, p. 133-136.

{19} Tamara Northern, *The Art of Cameroon*, National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C., 1984, pp. 35-38 and Pierre Harter, *Arts anciens du Cameroun*, Arts d'Afrique Noire, Arnouville, 1986, p. 54

{20} Daniel Biebuyck, *Statuary from Pre-Bembe Hunters*, Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, 1981, p. 35

{21} François Neyt, *La grande statuaria Hemba du Zaïre*, Louvain-La-Neuve, 1977, p. 481

{22} George Kubler, *The Shape of Time. Remarks on the History of Things*, New Haven 1962, p. 114

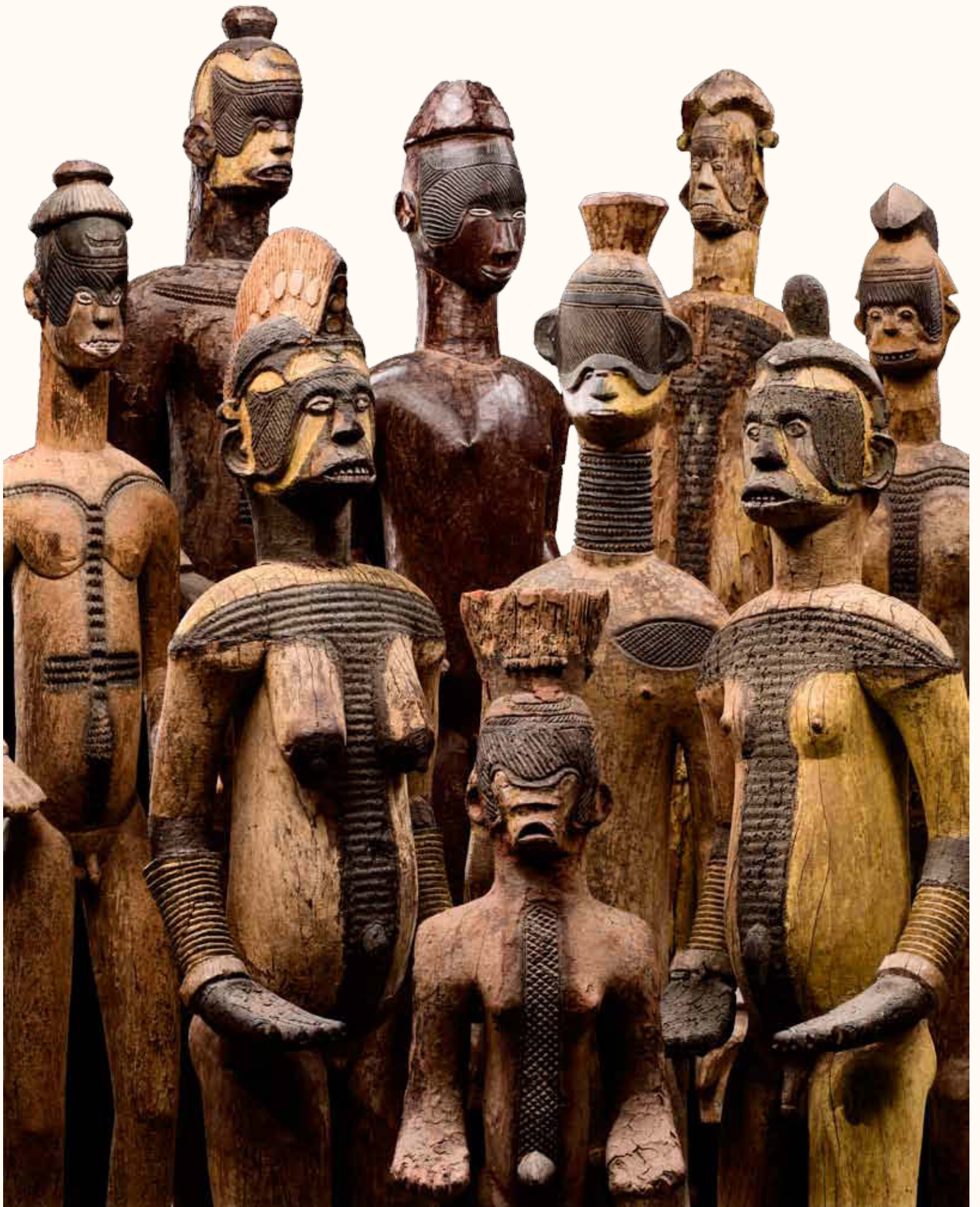
In terms of the art history of Igbo monumental sculptural styles, this distinction between systematic age and absolute age can be applied to a useful chronological indicator: the very frequent appearance of the formal trait of the *ichi* facial marking consisting of an unbroken series of deep diagonal incisions that covered the upper part of the face like a mask and going down as far as and including the upper eyelid, and often continued well down the cheeks.

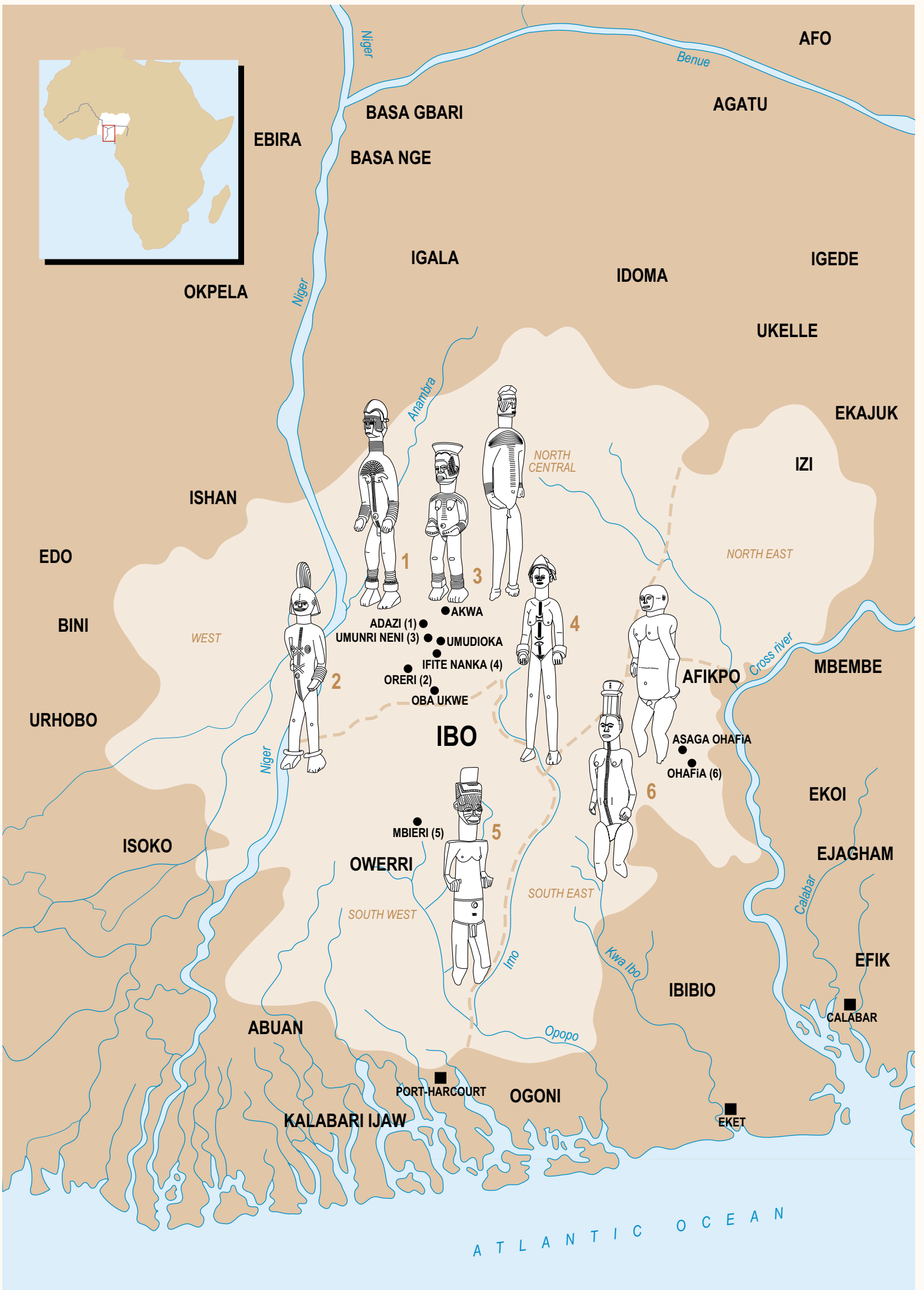
These marks are the prerogative of the *Ozo* title society, which almost certainly originated among the Nri peoples – the same ancient and seminal subgroup credited with the remarkable ninth and tenth century AD copper alloy sculptures called Igbo Ukwu, right at the center of production of this monumental sculptural style.²³ The *ichi* fashion of decorating the face goes back about one thousand years in Nri-influenced areas, being found in a slightly different manner on small bronze human heads and figures discovered at Igbo-Ukwu and dating to the 9th-10th century A.D.²⁴ We cannot postulate a continuity of a thousand years for the Igbo statuary style but some of its formal elements do go back a millennium.

The study of the geographical distribution of shrines and their contents could very well become a new approach to an art history of sculptural styles in African art.

{23} G.I. Jones, *The art of Eastern Nigeria*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984, p. 37.

{24} See Tom Phillips, *Africa. The Art of a Continent*, London, the Royal Academy, 1995, p. 383, Fig. 5.45a & 5.45b





Rivers: Niger, Benue, Anambra, Cross river, Calabar, Kwa Ibo, Opopo, Imo.

Ethnic Groups and Subgroups: BASA GBARI, BASA NGE, IGALA, IDOMA, IGEDE, UKELLE, EKAJUK, IZI, NORTH CENTRAL, NORTH EAST, WEST, SOUTH WEST, SOUTH EAST, MBEMBE, AFIKPO, ASAGA OHAFIA, OHAFIA (6), EKOI, EJAGHAM, EFIK, CALABAR, IBIBIO, OGORI, OGONI, ABUAN, KALABARI IJAW, ISOKO, URHOBO, BINI, EDO, ISHAN, OKPELA, EBIRA, AFO, AGATU.

Cultural Figures: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Locations: ADAZI (1), UMUNRI NENI (3), ORERI (2), OBA UKWE, AKWA, UMUDIOKA, IFITE NANKA (4), MBIERI (5).

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Male Statue by the Awka Master, h : 161 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69

Publication

Jacques Kerchache, Jean-Louis Paudrat et Lucien Stéphan, *L'art africain*, Editions Citadelles, Mazenod, Paris, 1988, page 176, planche 104



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Girls from the Eastern interior district preparing for marriage in gala dress. Photo George T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, London Seeley, Service & Co Limited, 1921, p. 48









Female Statue by the Awka Master, h : 166 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69

Publication

Jacques Kerchache, Jean-Louis Paudrat et Lucien Stéphan, *L'art africain*,
Editons Citadelles, Mazenod, Paris, 1988, page 176, planche 105



A young lady from Awka Photo George T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, London Seeley, Service & Co Limited, 1921, p . 288









Male Statue by the Awka Master, h : 200 cm

Provenance

Collection privée, 1968

Publication

Franco Monti, *Scultura monumentale della Nigeria, Le Figure degli Ibo*, Milano, Studio Carlo Grossetti, 1985, n° 5, page 30-31

Exhibition

Milano, Studio Carlo Grossetti, *Scultura monumentale della Nigeria, Le Figure degli Ibo*, November 1985 – February 1986



9

Deity (*Eke*) and priest at Adazi-Ani. Priest holds *ofo* (an ancestral bundle with blood and feathers). Both wear title (*ozu*) hats with eagle feathers. Both have *ichi* scarifications. Photo: Herbert Cole, 1966









Male Statue, h : 168 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69



10

Nkwo deity family owned communally by Umunri Neni but held by Ezeni family. This goddess, named for one of the 4 day of the week, oversees the market held on that day in addition to more general duties, i.e., warding off evil, repelling warfare from neighboring towns, providing fertility, etc. Figures left to right are : Agu (leopard), Udo, a son, Nkwo, *ikenga* Nkwo, Ogwugwu (daughter). Photo : Herbert Cole, 1966





Male statue, h : 156 cm

Provenance

Collection privée, 1968

Publication

Franco Monti, *Scultura monumentale della Nigeria, Le Figure degli Ibo*, Milano, Studio Carlo Grossetti, 1985, n° 4, page 28

Exhibition

Milano, Studio Carlo Grossetti, *Scultura monumentale della Nigeria, Le Figure degli Ibo*, November 1985 – February 1986





Male statue by the Neni Master, h : 180 cm

Provenance

Jean-Pierre Jernander, Brussels



Ezeiyi (tutelary god) and family. Far right carved circa 1910, a replacement for second from right perhaps mid 19th century, kept for the village of Umumri Neni by the Umuo Kaezeduku family. Smaller figures are Ezeiyi's son (smaller) and daughter, and of course *ikenga*. Photo : Herbert Cole, 1966





Male Statue by the Neni Master, h : 161 cm

Provenance

René and Odette Delenne, Galerie Antilope, Brussels, 1968
Collection Comte Baudouin de Grunne, Wezembeek-Oppem, 1969

Publication

René Briat, "Une grande collection belge," in *Plaisirs de France*,
February 1974, n° 416, p. 17, n° 10



Young Igbo men. Photo George T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, London Seeley, Service & Co Limited, 1921, p. 144





Male statue, h : 135 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, paris, 1968-69





Male Statue, h : 178 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69

Publication

Jacques Kerchache, Jean-Louis Paudrat et Lucien Stéphan, *L'art africain*,
Editons Citadelles, Mazenod, Paris, 1988, page 177, planche 106





Male Statue, h : 223 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69

Ana and Antonio Casanovas, Madrid

Robert T. Wall Family collection





Male Statue, h : 137 cm

Provenance
Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69



13 Deity figures of *Udo* and *Ogwuwgu* and family members with cult priest Okonko Eze N'Iru, Village of Oba Uke. Photo : Herbert Cole, 1983





Male statue, h : 190 cm

Provenance

Collection privée, 1968

Publication

Franco Monti, *Scultura monumentale della Nigeria, Le Figure degli Ibo*, Milano, Studio Carlo Grossetti, 1985, n° 1, pages 22-23

Exhibition

Milano, Studio Carlo Grossetti, *Scultura monumentale della Nigeria, Le Figure degli Ibo*, November 1985 – February 1986





Male statue by the Master of Ichi Scarification, h : 174 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69

Comte Baudouin de Grunne, Wezembeek-Oppem, 1970

Publications

Elsy Leuzinger, *Die Kunst von Schwarz-Afrika*, Kunsthaus, Zurich, 1970, p. 189, n° M15

Elsy Leuzinger, *Afrikanische Kunstwerke. Kulturen am Niger*, Essen, Villa Hügel, 1971, p. 193, n° M15

Adriaan Claerhout, *Arts primitifs*, Brussels, Théâtre national Centre Rogier, Bruxelles, 1971, n° 20

Exhibitions

Zurich, Kunsthaus, *Die Kunst von Schwarz-Afrika*, October 31, 1970- January 17, 1971

Brussels, Théâtre National, Centre Rogier, *Arts primitifs*, May 14 – June 5, 1971



14

Ichi or tribal marks Photo George T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, London Seeley, Service & Co Limited, 1921, p. 184





Male Statue by the Master of Ichi Scarification, h : 164 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69





Male statuette, h : 86 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69





Male statuette, h : 77 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69





Female Statue, h : 146 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69

Publication

Jacques Kerchache, Jean-Louis Paudrat et Lucien Stéphan, *L'art africain*, Editons Citadelles, Mazenod, Paris, 1988, page 544, figure 933

15 Prospective brides of chiefs. The staves and ivory bracelets are loans from their future husbands. Photo George T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, London Seeley, Service & Co Limited, 1921, p. 96





Male statuette, h : 97 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69

Publication

Jacques Kerchache, Jean-Louis Paudrat et Lucien Stéphan, *L'art africain*,
Editons Citadelles, Mazenod, Paris, 1988, page 178, figure 110





Female Statue, h : 118 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69

Publications

Ekpo Eyo, *Two Thousand years Nigerian Art*, Federal Department of Antiquities, Lagos, 1977, p. 201

Jacques Kerchache, *Scultura africana. Omaggio à André Malraux*, De Luca Editore, Roma, 1986, pp. 120-125

Exhibition

Rome , Villa Medici , , *Scultura africana. Omaggio à André Malraux*, May 5- June 15, 1986





Male Statuette, h : 75 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69

Publication

Jacques Kerchache, Jean-Louis Paudrat et Lucien Stéphan, *L'art africain*,
Editons Citadelles, Mazenod, Paris, 1988, page 178, figure 109





Male Statuette, h : 95 cm

Provenance

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69

Publication

Jacques Kerchache, Jean-Louis Paudrat et Lucien Stéphan, *L'art africain*,
Editions Citadelles, Mazenod, Paris, 1988, page 178, figure 108





Male statue, h : 165 cm

Provenance

Collection privée, 1968

Publications

Fiorella Minervino, « I misteri dell'arte nera », in *Bolaffi Arte*, March 1973, p. 11

Karen Blixen, *La mia Africa. Scultura dell'afrika nera*, Fotografie de Mario Carrieri, Ivrea Olivetti, Milano, 1981, p. 140



Five shrine figures including the "chief" (left), a deity named Eze Imeke of Umudioka Neni, called "founder" of Umudioka village but a general tutelary spirit. Figures are members of his family - his wife and "police" son. Both males have *ikenga*. Photo Herbert Cole, 1966





Female statue by Ubah of Isuofia, h : 157 cm

Provenance

Collection privée, 1968

Publication

Franco Monti, *Scultura monumentale della Nigeria, Le Figure degli Ibo*, Milano, Studio Carlo Grossetti, 1985, n° 5, page 32-33

Exhibition

Milano, Studio Carlo Grossetti, *Scultura monumentale della Nigeria, Le Figure degli Ibo*, November 1985 – February 1986



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Family group in the Eze-Uqwa compound in Ifite-Nanka. Carver: Ubah of Isuofia.
Photo : Herbert Cole, 1966





Male Statue by Ubah of Isuofia, h : 147 cm

Provenance

Collection privée, 1968

Publication

Franco Monti, *Scultura monumentale della Nigeria, Le Figure degli Ibo*, Milano, Studio Carlo Grossetti, 1985, n° 5, page 36-37

Exhibition

Milano, Studio Carlo Grossetti, *Scultura monumentale della Nigeria, Le Figure degli Ibo*, November 1985 – February 1986



18

Hairdressing as a work of art. Photo George T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, London Seeley, Service & Co Limited, 1921, frontispiece





Female Statue by the Abiriba Master, h : 132 cm

Provenance
Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1968-69





Male statue, h : 104 cm

Provenance
Collection privée, 1968





Female Statue by the Mbaise Master; h : 119 cm

Provenance

Collection privée, Angleterre, avant 1969





Male Figure by the Mbaise Master, h : 112 cm

Provenance

Collection privée, Angleterre, avant 1969



Family, genre figures and animals in Iyiafo shrine in Mbieri. Photo Herbert Cole, 1966









This catalog was published jointly by
Bernard de Grunne and **Ana & Antonio Casanovas**
for *The European Fine Art Fair Maastricht* from March 11. to March 21. 2010

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Graphic design, prepress,
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