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Description : Staff and finial, Kongo peoples, Mayombe region, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 19th century, Ivory, wood, metal, ceramic

This staff and finial convey numerous symbolic references to the ruler's political and spiritual powers and responsibilities. The kneeling woman holds a vessel as though formally offering the contents, perhaps palm wine or water, to a ruler or elder. The spheres on the staff correspond to the number of important events in the ruler's reign or the number of rulers in a community. The interlace patterns represent the unifying web of the community itself.

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Source : Musée national d'art africain