Case 6-Afr-Congo DR- Luba-Hemba-Stool-male-and Female Caryatid-Wood-19th c

Note: The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) has been known as, in chronological order, the Congo Free State, Belgian Congo, the Republic of Congo-Léopoldville, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Zaire, before returning to its current name the DR Congo.

Note: The Kongo people (singular: Mukongo, pl. Bakongo) speak Kikongo, a Bantu language, who have lived along the Atlantic coast of Central Africa, in a region that, by the 15th century, was a centralized and well-organized Kongo Kingdom but is now a part of three countries: DR Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Angola.



Figs. 1-2. Congo DR-Luba-Hemba-Stool-male-and Female Caryatid-Wood-mid 19th c

Congo DR-Luba-Hemba-Stool-male-and Female Caryatid-Wood-19th c

**LC Classification: N1099.C6**

**Date or Time Horizon:**

**Geographical Area:**

**Map:**





Fig. 1. Map of Kongo Cultures, West Central Africa. After Walker Art Center 1967. 9 is Pende.

**GPS coordinates:** 7° 46' 19.3" (7.772°) S, 24° 17' 44.9" (24.2958°) E

**Cultural Affiliation:** Pende, Central Bantu

**Media:** wood, raffia, kaolin, ferruginous earth

**Dimensions:** H 20.866 in

**Weight:** 2.52 pounds

**Condition: original**

**Provenance:** Kitangwa

**Discussion:**

**References:**

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**The Luba, a Bantu-speaking people, are one of the oldest recorded tribes in central, Central Africa,** indigenous to the south-central DR Congo.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba_people#cite_note-Gates2010p14-2) They are widely distributed in this country, but are most concentrated in its [Katanga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katanga_Province), [Kasai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kasai_region), and [Maniema](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maniema) provinces. The Luba people consist of many sub-groups with distinct Luba language dialects. The three main dialects were: the [Luba-Kasai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba-Kasai), [Luba-Katanga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba-Katanga), and [Swahili](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swahili_language) languages.

The Luba people had founded an ancient culture by about the 5th century, and later a well-organized, pre-colonial [Kingdom of Luba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Luba) in the [Upemba Depression](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upemba_Depression) region of Central Africa.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba_people#cite_note-Falola285-3)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba_people#cite_note-Reefe1981p67-4) They could extract various metals from the rich mineral resources there, and had skills in wood carving, pottery, sophisticated metal objects, ivory artwork and jewelry.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba_people#cite_note-Appiah2010p88-5)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba_people#cite_note-bortolot-6)

**By the ninth century CE they had expanded their empire throughout the region. The Luba developed a governance network with a central ruler who succeeded through the mother's line. Since the Luba venerate women, their art reflects this. This Caryatid stool depicts a chieftain and and his mother commemorating the dual ancestral rule of these two individuals and would have been used by a chieftain. When not in use Luba stools were kept on ritual altars, wrapped in linen or cotton cloth and were only visible for ritual gatherings. This stool is very rare since the surfaces of the seat and the figures display a high patina indicating that it was in acive use for generations.**

Much more is known about the Luba than many of the other tribes on the African continent due to the way that they used intricate works of art called "lukasa" and other memory devices to record their history. The lukasa is a bead and shell-covered wooden "memory board" that embodies fundamental precepts about Luba kingship. This book recounts the history of the Luba and their culture to the present day and demonstrates the varying ways in which early Luban art is used to memorize the complex structure of sovereign rule within their empire. The book illustrates more than 100 important Luba works in museums and private collections around the world. These illustrations feature royal emblems, including thrones, sceptres and lukasa, dating from the 18th to the early 20th century and bearing patterns, figures and motifs which served, as they do now, as vehicles of historical thought and ideology for the Luba people. Photographs from the 1980s and early archival photographs from the turn of the century show the works in their contexts of royal investitures, divination rites, and secret association dances. Many of the works of art in this publication are accompanied by the narratives of contemporary Luban people, to show how the works help to illicit memory and how memory is a dynamic, creative process.

Their success and wealth grew in relative isolation, given their forested mountainous inland location, then attracted traders, raids and wars in second half of the 19th century.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba_people#cite_note-Reefe1981p159-7) The Luba people were victims of the slave and ivory trade, both the Atlantic coast's Portuguese slave traders, as well as to the east African coast by Swahili-Arab slave traders, particularly during the 19th century.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba_people#cite_note-Appiah2010p88-5)[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba_people#cite_note-Reefe1981p147-8)

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**M. N. Nooter and A. F. Roberts, *Memory, Luba Art and the Making of History*. Munich: Prestel, 1996**

Appendix:

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**A similar caryatid stool (depicted above) with a similar patina sold in 2004 for $18,000 by the Titus Gallery, 222 The Commons, Ithaca, NY, having the following data: “A rare Hemba/Luba double figure caryatid stool. The fine, varied, dark patina and wear is consistent with many years of use. Origin:  Zaire; Height:  16.75 inches; Provenance:  Stuart J. Warkow, SMA Fathers Missionary Museum, Titus Gallery. $18,000.” Ref.: M. N. Nooter and A. F. Roberts, *Memory, Luba Art and the Making of History*. Munich: Prestel, 1996; http://www.titusgallery.com/africanart.html.**