

Divination

Obi abata - oracle with split Kolanuts

- 2 „female“, 2 „male“ inner sides
- simple usage: yes/no-questions, 5 figures
- more complex usage with respect to the „sex“ (9 figures) and distribution (16 figures)

Communication with Òrun

Divination

Obi abata

All up (inner side):

Alafia

All down (outer side)

Oyeku

2 up / 2 down

Ejife

3 / 1

Etawa

1 / 3

Okana

Im Ifá-Orakel:

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Oyeku

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Okanran

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Communication with Òrun

Divination

Obi abata

All up (= 2M/2F):

All down (= 0M/0F)

3 down / 1M

3 down / 1F

2 down / 1M & 1F

2 down / 2M

2 down / 2F

1 down / 2M/1F

1 down / 2F/1M

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Use within Rituals of Initiation

Ikose w'aye: step into the world
Imori: knowing the „head“



M/F

Itefa: establishing the self



Only M

Isode / Itude : to tie / untie the bond



Only F

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Ikose w'aye: step into the
world

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Imori : knowing the head

- Emi from the father's or mother's side?
- Ori = knowing the fate
- 5 objects for good and bad direction

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Imori : knowing the ori

- Stone
- Seed
- Bone
- Cowrie
- Sea-Shell

Thompson Drewal

- Stone
- Cowrie
- Snails house
- Bone
- Porcellaine

Bascom

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Symbols according to Thompson-Drewal

- Stone: long life / untimely death
- Seed: fertility/barrenness
- Bone: victory over enemies/suppression
- Kauriemuschel: wealth/poverty
- Große Muschel: overall success/loss

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Symbols according to Bascom

• Stone	positive	negative
• Cowrie	long life	fight
• Snails house	money	need of money
• Bone	marriage	sickness
• Porcellaine	children	death
	Victory of enemies	loss

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

- Stone = Longevity, because the stone does not die
- Cowrie = Wealth (served as money)
- Snails = Marriage because of gifts
- Bone = Children are „from the bones“ of parents
- Porzellaine = Victory: when broken, useless

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

- Stone = fight (?)
- Cowrie = Need of money (served as money)
- House of snail = sickness; dirty on the inner side
- Bone = Death, the skeleton remains
- Porcellaine = Loss: when broken, not repairable

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Ebo & Adimu

Bone: egungun

House of snail: òrìṣà funfun

Cowries: Ifá

Stone: forehead/ori (old man)

Porzellaine: back of the head like a pot

Other òrìṣà receive sacrifice, when indicated by the Odù

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Itefa

Day one: Symbolic journey to grove

Reason: Education

- appr. 20 m of journey
- ritual activities with ikin
- symbolic entrance in the grove
- Jump over fire, sacrifice to death
- Start of seclusion

Communication with Òrun

Divination: Ifá-Oracle

Itefa

Day 3 & 7 Divination, Dancing, Singing

Other days: Invocation of the òrìṣà

Day 14: Reintegration

- Ritual clothes are taken off
- Symbolic work is done

Communication with Òrun

Cult of the ancestors

EGUNGUN-SOCIETY

- Masked Dancers
- Exclusively Men
- The whole body is covered
- In former times women were not allowed to watch



Communication with Òrun

Cult of the Ancestors

EGUNGUN-SOCIETY

- Bringing down the ancestors
- Special tasks during funeral rites (e.g. Oro-night)
- Appearances in public rituals



Communication with Òrun

Cult of the ancestors

Gèlèdè

Ojú o ba ri Gèlèdè ti
de opin iron

The eyes, that have seen
Gèlèdè, have seen the
ultimate spectacle



Gèlèdé

- Masking festival, esp. among the western Yorùbá
- Since the end of the 18th century
- In the context of the cult of the ancestors
- Normally, it is held once a year
- Central Protagonists: the Gèlèdé-society
- More or less an affair of the whole community

Gèlèdé

- Central Deities:
 - female ancestors or founders
 - (earth or water-deity)
 - male ancestors or founders
- Other deities: Eṣu, Ogún
- Offerings to the ancestors of lineages
- Main aspect:
 - Mystical power „of our mothers“

Gèlèdé

The Gods of Gelede are so called “the great ancestral mothers”. The Power of the Great Mother is manifold. The ancestors, when they had a problem, would assemble to determine the cause and the remedy..... and, if it is found, that Gelede should be done, to bring about rain or the birth of children, it should be done and it will be so. The Great Mother has power in many things she is the owner of everything in the world, She owns you. We must not say how the whole thing works.

Gèlèdé

Òrìṣà egbé: Òrìṣà of society

- of the whole society
- of egbé Gèlèdé
- Elders, Ancestors, Goddesses
- Women, that turn into birds at night

Gèlèdé

No orisha can do good without the mothers. The mothers could spoil any good action if they wanted to. Therefore Sango himself cannot help his worshippers without permission of the mothers. The prophecies of the babalawo will come to naught if he has not appeased the mothers.

Gèlèdé

- In the beginning, Olódùmarè gave the power to Òdu (woman)
- After abusing it, it was taken from her and given to Òriṣánlá
- He should exercise it, but woman would retain control over it
- According to a diviner from south-eastern Yorùbáland, Òdu gave the wisdom to Orúnmilà

Gèlèdé

It is believed, that from the beginning, the creator-God put women in charge of all good things on earth. Without their sanction, no healing can take place, rain cannot fall, plants cannot bear fruits and children cannot come into the world.

Gèlèdé

- àjé: the mystical power of women (the term is used with caution)
- it will not only do harm, but also work positive wonders
- awon iyá wa – our mothers
- iyámi – my mother
- iyá àgbá – old and wise one

Communication with Òrun

Gèlèdè

Efe: At night
Gèlèdè: In the
 afternoon

At the market

Gèlèdé

Symbolism of the market

- Metaphor for the world: ayé l'ojà, òrun n'ilé
- Otherworldliness: liminal place
- Women govern the market
- Gèlèdé = within the female area
- „The mothers“ also have access to the otherworld

Gèlèdé: Efe

Symbolism of the night

- àìsùn: without sleep
- Gèlèdé, Egúngún, Rituals for òrìṣà, funeral rites
- Cooler, more enjoyable
- Staying awake is also a sign of commitment
- Funerals: ensuring the transfer of the soul
- Spirits are most attentive at night
- At night, the power of „the mothers“ is active

Gèlèdé

- Market as a place of transition, of intermingling of the two worlds
- Nighttime as the time of transition, of intermingling of the two worlds

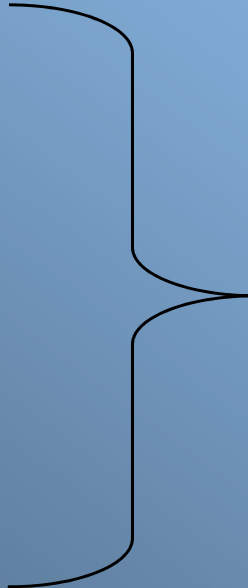
Pairing: Day/Night; Pairs of masks

Gèlèdé

Verse from Ifá:

When Orunmila enters the town of the owners of birds (eleiye) he has to be cautious

- Masking of the face
- Women's head-ties
- Leg rattles



Basic elements
of all Gèlèdé-
Masks

Communication with Òrun

Gèlèdè



Communication with Òrun

Gèlèdé



Communication with Òrun

Gèlèdè



Communication with Òrun

Gèlèdé

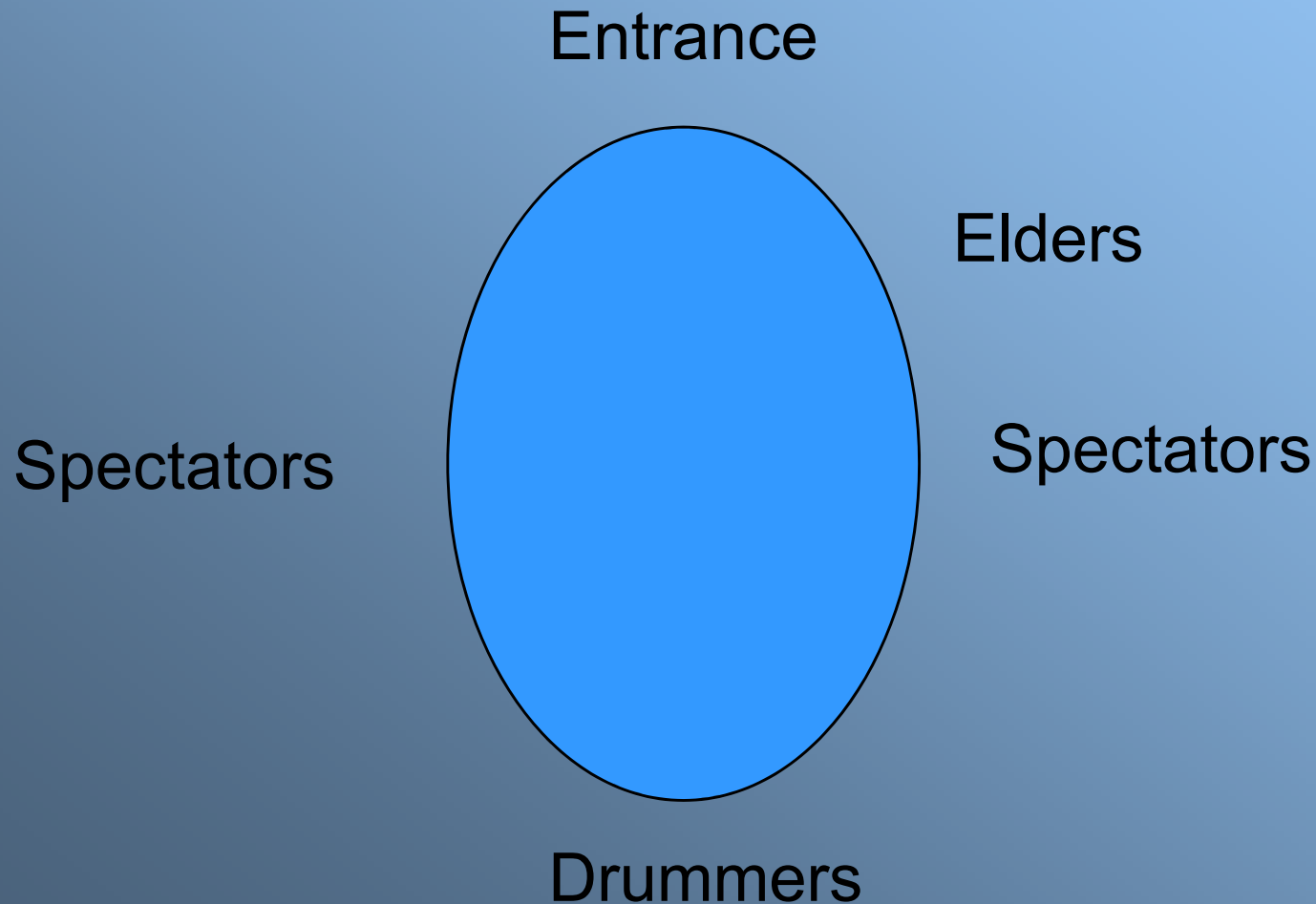
Gèlèdé-rituals are re-enactments of the mythical journey of Orunmila into realm of the eleiye (owners of birds)

Efe: the night of songs

- Around 21h to 22h gathering at the market
- From all parts of the society
- Members of Gèlèdé-society are a small part
- Gathering in a circle
- Place of entrance (made of palm-fronds)

Communication with Òrun

Efe: the night of songs



Efe: the night of songs

Drums

Oméle ako: the male oméle
Oméle abo: the female oméle
lyalu: the mother drum

Efe: the night of songs

- The singers arrive first SängeriInnen
- Puppenspiel
- Masken (immer Männer, a. i. weibl. M.)

EFE: THE NIGHT OF SONGS

Inroductory Masquerades : first pair

- Ogbagba : represents Eshu/Elegba
 - First as a young boy (Cap & Raffia-fiber)
 - Than as an adult (Banana-leaves)
- Arabi Ajigbálè: The one who sweeps every morning
 - Clears the place
 - Represents Ogún (the one who clears, makes way)
 - In a costume of shredded palm-leaves

Accompanied by songs commenting on their activities

EFE: THE NIGHT OF SONGS

Inroductory Masquerades : second pair

Masks handling fire

Agbéná: The fire carrier

- Blazing grasses or Pot of fire
- Moves quickly, so that sparks fly
- Forces crowd to step back

„The fire in the bush starts without warning
Farmers with fields near the bush, beware“

EFE: THE NIGHT OF SONGS

Introductory Masquerades : second pair

Masks handling fire

Apana: The fire extinguisher

„Owner of fire, kill your fire!
The hoopoe (a bird) is coming
Put down your load
Because one does not light fires
To regard the bird of the night

EFE: THE NIGHT OF SONGS

Inroductory Masquerades

Apana closes ritual preparation of the market-place

Actions resembling those when establishing a house or settlement, which are presided over by Esu and Ogun

Entry – Clearing – Burning of the Remains

EFE: THE NIGHT OF SONGS

Ìyánlá : The Great Mother

All lights are extinguished, she comes in darkness She
does not speak or sing

She comes as bearded woman (Ìyánlá)
Or as Spirit Bird/Night Bird (Eye Oro/Oru)

- Her mask is worn nearly horizontally
- Wears a white garment
- The elders of the cult shield her from the views of the on-lookers

EFE: THE NIGHT OF SONGS

Ìyánlá : The Great Mother

Eye Oro/Oru (Spirit Bird/ Night Bird

Spirit Bird is coming

The one who brings the festival today

Tomorrow the devotees of the orisha will worship

You brought us to this place

It is your influence that we are using

EFE: THE NIGHT OF SONGS

Ìyánlá : The Great Mother

Ìyánlá come into the world, our mother
Kind one will not die like the evil one
Ososomu come into the world
Our mother the kind one will not die like the evil one

EFE: THE NIGHT OF SONGS

The singing Masks

- **Tetede** (The one who comes in good time) or **Ayé Tútú** (cool world): prepares the way for **Oro Efe**
- Assistants of **Oro Efe** with special medicines to protect **Oro Efe** throughout his performance
- Female cult-head and her assistant dressed in white (òrìṣà funfun) with bells, calling **Oro Efe** to the world
- A flute player appears
- **Oro Efe** appears at the entrance („mouth of authority“)

EFE: THE NIGHT OF SONGS

Oro Efe

- With whisks of horse-tail
- Replies to the first singing masquerader
- Pays homage to the Gods, Ancestors, Mothers and Elders
- Song of self-assertion
- Parades the place singing
- Drummers contribute praise poems, proverbs and jokes
- The end is marked by the appearance of a stilted mask, „hyena“

THE SONGS OF ORO EFE

- Opening Songs of Honor (Ijuba)
 - Gods, Ancestors, Mothers
 - Ogun & Eshu
 - Mothers (Owners of Birds)
- Invocations
 - Self-assertion (ikase)
 - Prayers
 - Curses (èpè)

The Forces are called upon to both positive aims
and to counter enemies.

THE SONGS OF ORO EFE

- Social Commentary
 - Gender Roles, Morality
 - Politics: Internally, externally
 - Religion
 - Respect towards the Elders
- History
- Remembrance of Deceased

GÈLÈDÉ: AFTERNOON OF DANCES

- After rest in the morning, slowly gathering
- Masquerader's dances follow each other according to age-groups
- Masqueraders have to be perfect in time with the rhythm of the drums
- As the festival proceeds, the more experienced dancers appear and the more complex rhythms and dances are performed.

Gèlèdè: Drums



Gèlèdè: Masks





universität
wien

Gèlèdè: Masks



Gèlèdé : Masks

Amukoko



Gèlèdè : the Masks of Efé-Night

Arabi Ajigbale



Gèlèdè : the Masks of Efé-Night

Eye Oro



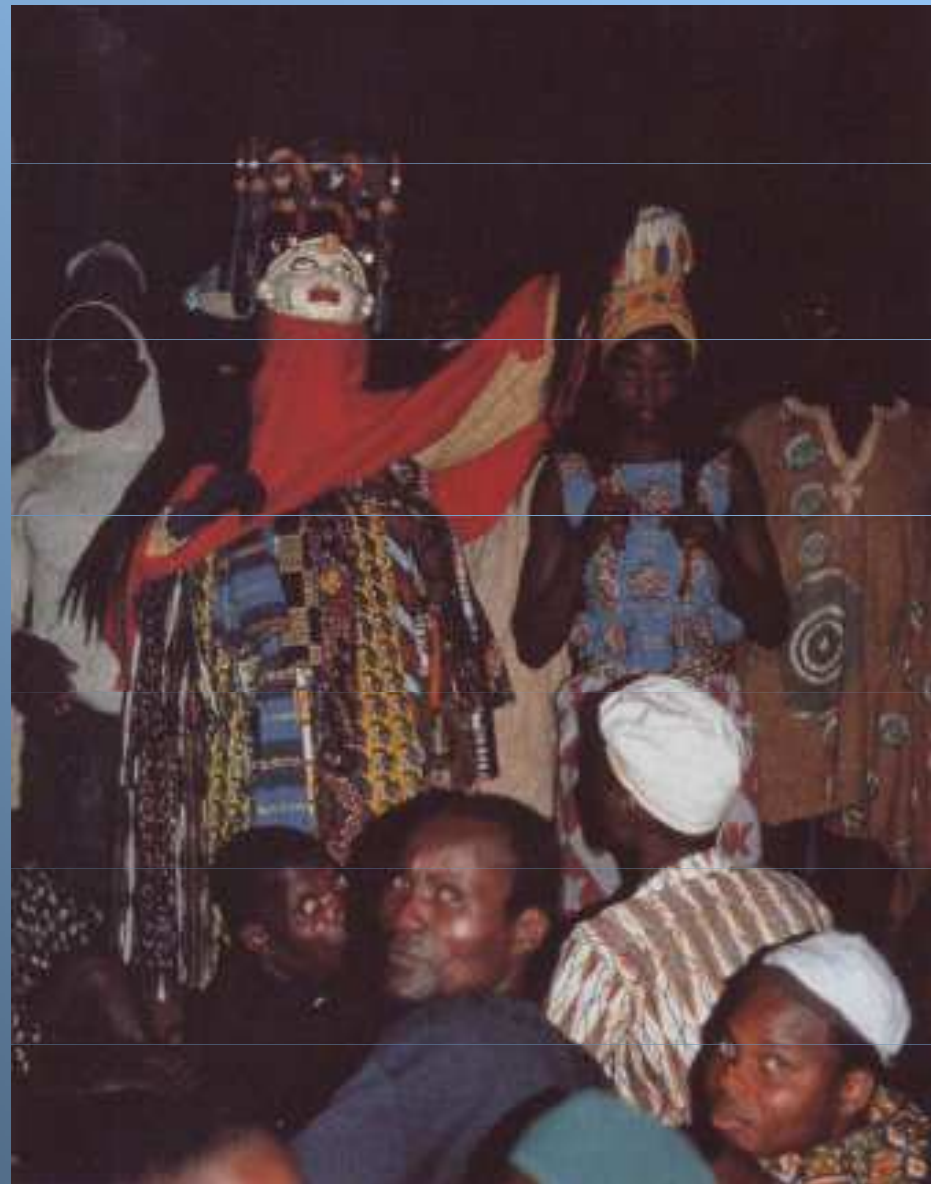
Gèlèdè : the Masks of Efé-Night

Iyanla



Gèlèdè : the Masks of Efé-Night

Oro Efe



Gèlèdé : the Masks of Efé-Night

Oro Efe



Gèlèdé : the Masks of Efé-Night

Kòrikò (Hyena)



Gèlèdé : the Masks of Efé-Night

Kòrikò (Hyena)



Gèlèdé : Masks



A priestess of
Òsùmàrè, arched
by two pythons

Gèlèdè : Masks



An adept of Ògun,
with a snake
coiled around her
neck

Gèlèdé : Masks



A priest of Şàngó,
with a ram
(sacrificial animal)
at each side and
the thunderbolts
(neolithic celts) of
the God

Gèlèdé : Masks



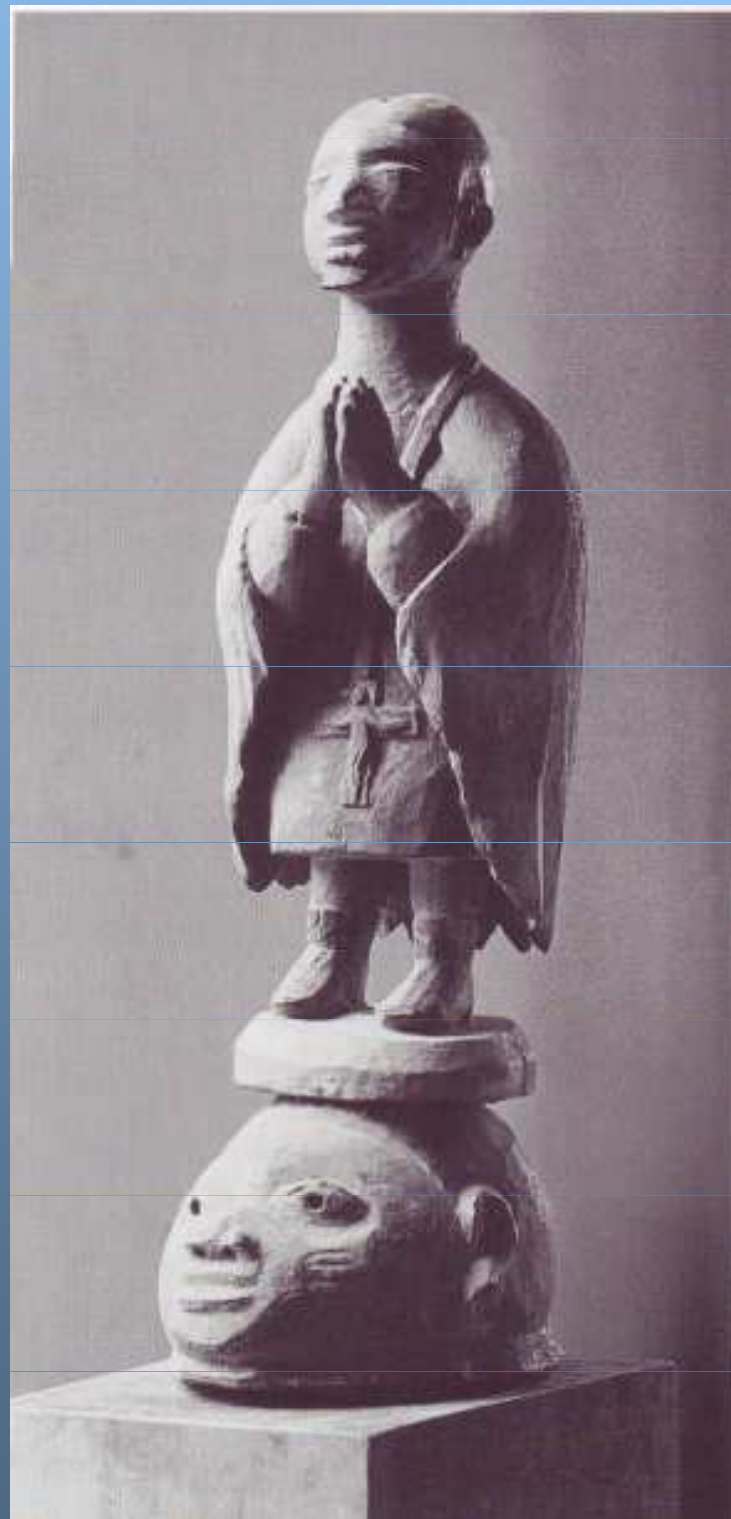
An egungun
masquerader

Gèlèdé : Masks



A babaláwo

Gèlèdè : Masks



A catholic priest



Gèlèdé : Masks

A muslim priest



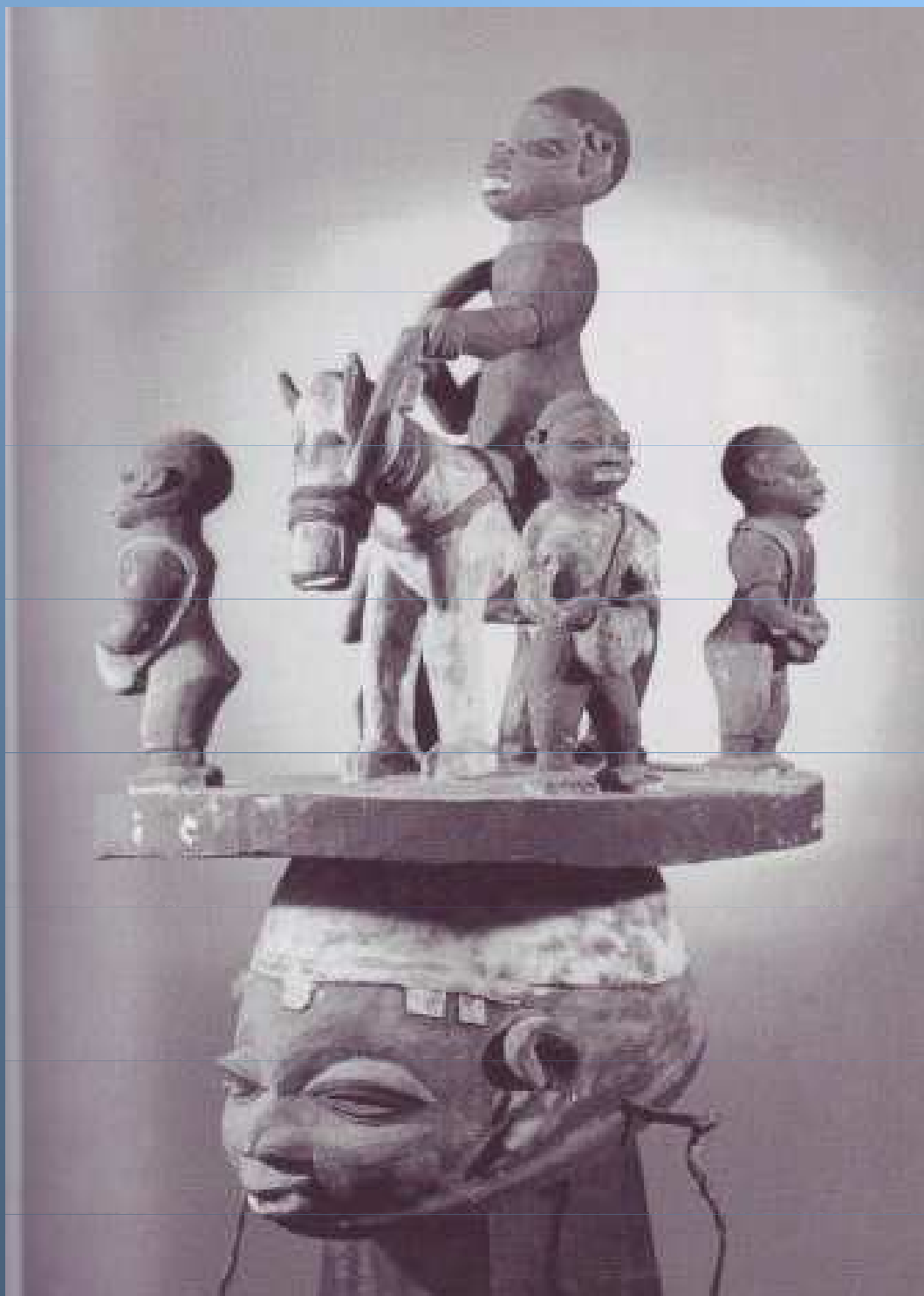
Gèlèdè : Masks

A depiction of sexual
intercourse
satirical commentary
or expression of
desire for fertility



Gèlèdé : Masks

Four parrots on a
ladder



Gèlèdè : Masks

An equestrian
surrounded by
drummers



Gèlèdé : Masks

A fowl picking at a snake that bites the fowl's foot; relates to a proverb about unnecessary acts of aggression, that will result in a situation of loss for both parties