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BABUNGO

TREASURES OF THE SCULPTOR KINGS IN CAMEROON

Jean-Paul Notué and Bianca Triaca

This book interprets and valorizes a range of significant objects from the rich cultural and artistic heritage of Babungo, formerly the most important iron-working centre in Cameroon. Comprising thousands of pieces, the treasure of the talented sculptor kings of Babungo is still the most impressive of the Grasslands (North-Western Cameroon). It is an invitation to visit this kingdom—with its artistic and cultural wealth—and the places that preserve its memory. This volume offers the visitor works, photographs, primary sources of information, inspiration and knowledge regarding this remarkable cultural heritage of Cameroon.

Here, sculptor kings and artists have used a sculptural language that is carefully coded in multiple motifs, allowing them to express ideas, beliefs, mythical scenes and historic events surrounded by legend. Beyond the beauty of the forms, we find all the essential concerns of man in the majority of the plastic productions: the struggle for survival, the fascination and fear of death, the aspiration for happiness and love, the thirst for power, the strength of friendship, the need to preserve an ancestral heritage, fear of the future, the relations between peoples and the problems of war and peace.

Jean-Paul Notué received his doctorate from the Université de Paris I, and is a Maître de recherche, a professor in the history of art, anthropology and museology, and head of the Section Arts Plastiques et Histoire de l'Art at the Université de Yaoundé I, as well as being a research associate at IRD (ex ORSTOM) and a member of ICOM.

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