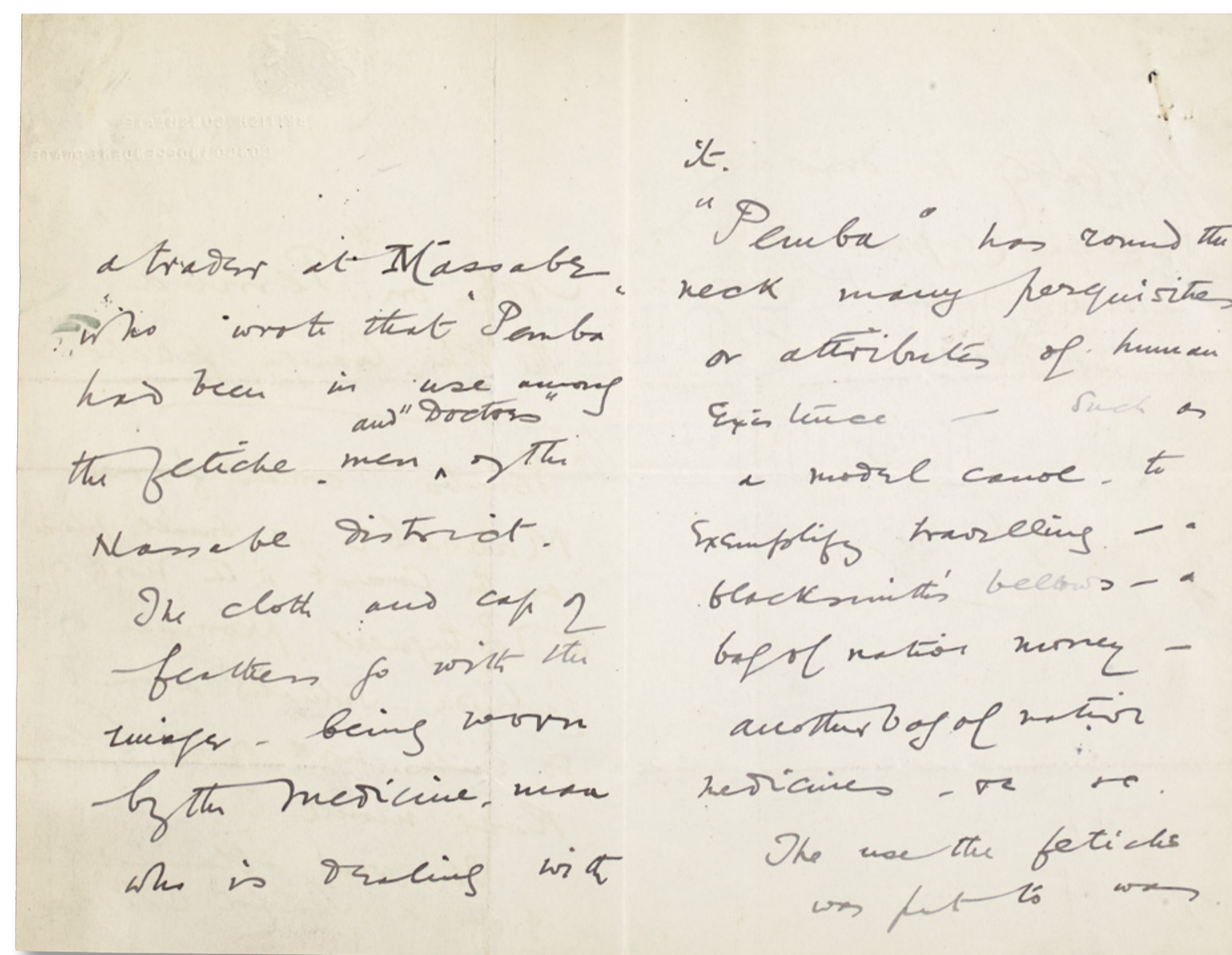
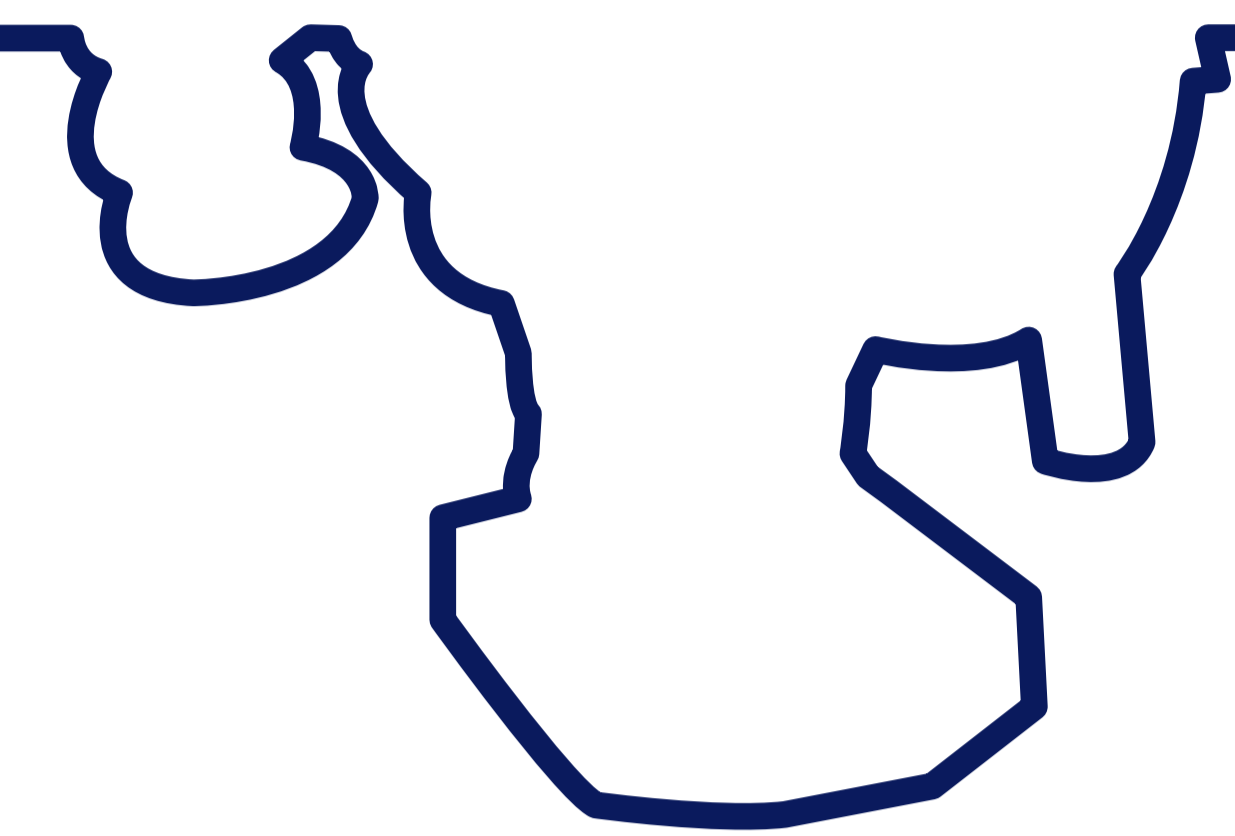


# Nkisi nó fíor chumhachta

Massabe, Cabinda, Angóla

## Nkisi or power figure

Massabe, Cabinda, Angola



Nóta le Ruairí Mac Easmainn ar an bhfíor Nkisi a ghlaoonn sé fíor Pemba uirthi go mícheart (iomhá le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann)

A note by Roger Casement on the Nkisi figure in which he incorrectly calls it a Pemba figure (image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

Fuair Mac Easmainn an fhíor fhireann Nkisi seo i 1902 ó fhear darbh ainm dó Senhor Oliviera. Sheol Oliviera í ó Massabe i gcúige La Congo na Portaingéile (anois Cabinda, Angóla). Bhain na *nganga* (speisialtóirí deasghnácha) úsáid as na fíoracha Nkisi chun cumhacht spioradálta a fhócasú. Thug na *nganga* cumhacht don fhíor gníomhú ar son cliaint trí ábhar draíochtach faoi leith a chur leis an raca sa bhog de réir an tsainriachtanais. Gan an cógas seo ní raibh aon chumhacht ag an bhfíor. Bhí an cliaint in ann an chumhacht a ghníomhú ansin i slite éagsúla, amhail trí deatach a shéideadh os cionn na fíorach.

This male Nkisi figure was obtained by Casement in 1902 from a man called Senhor Oliviera. Oliviera had sent it from Massabe in the Portuguese province of La Congo (now Cabinda, Angola). Nkisi figures were used by the *nganga* (ritual specialists) to focus spiritual power. The *nganga* gave the figure power to act on behalf of a client by adding particular magical material to the compartment in the belly depending on the specific need. Without this medicine, the figure was powerless. The client could then activate the power in various ways such as blowing smoke over the figure.



Nkisi nó fíor chumhachta Massabe, Cabinda, Angóla (© Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann)

Nkisi or power figure, Massabe, Cabinda, Angola (© National Museum of Ireland)

Bhí an scáthán os cionn raca an bhoilg mar shiombail na teorann idir domhain na mbeo is na marbh agus idir is nádúrtha agus is osnádúrtha ann. Tá siombailí eile ar crochadh timpeall ar mhúineál an Nkisi seo, mar shampla síolta, fíoracha adhmaid, canú agus bearta éagsúla. Tugann stíl gruaige pointeach na fíorach le tuiscint go ndearna an pobal Vili é a bhí ina gcónaí le taobh an chósta Atlantaigh ó thuaidh ó bhéal an Chongó.

The mirror over the belly compartment was symbolic of the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead and between the natural and supernatural. Other symbols hang around the neck of this Nkisi, for example seeds, wooden figures, a canoe and various bundles. The pointed hairstyle of the figure suggests that it was made by the Vili people who lived along the Atlantic coast north of the mouth of the Congo River.