



ARTS OF AFRICA

weaver and carver

Field photographs by K.-H. Krieg
Map by Robert Sakowski
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<u>WEAVER AND CARVER</u>	
an Exhibition of Heddle Pulleys and Textiles organized by Gallery 1.1.1., School of Art, University of Manitoba	
Catalogue and text by Daniel Mato	

Acknowledgement

Much of the history of African Arts remains to be written. That which has been written is subject to revision as field research provides new data to be integrated into the literature of the field. As the "truths and gospels" of the discipline are measured against the information provided through recent research we experience the delights and frustrations of necessarily reshaping our concepts to facts. We are fortunate in this exhibition to illustrate the interrelationship of two West African arts; weaving and carving. It provides the opportunity to experience the diversity and the relationships found in the art of traditional societies.

For the textiles and carvings, and for the documentation we express our most sincere appreciation to Karl-Heinz and Dorothy Krieg. They provided outstanding examples of heddle pulleys and cloths as well as other weaving equipment. Their generosity was equal to their patience in answering our questions.

We also extend our appreciation to Provost Richard A. Johnson for making funds available under the Outreach Program for support of this catalogue.

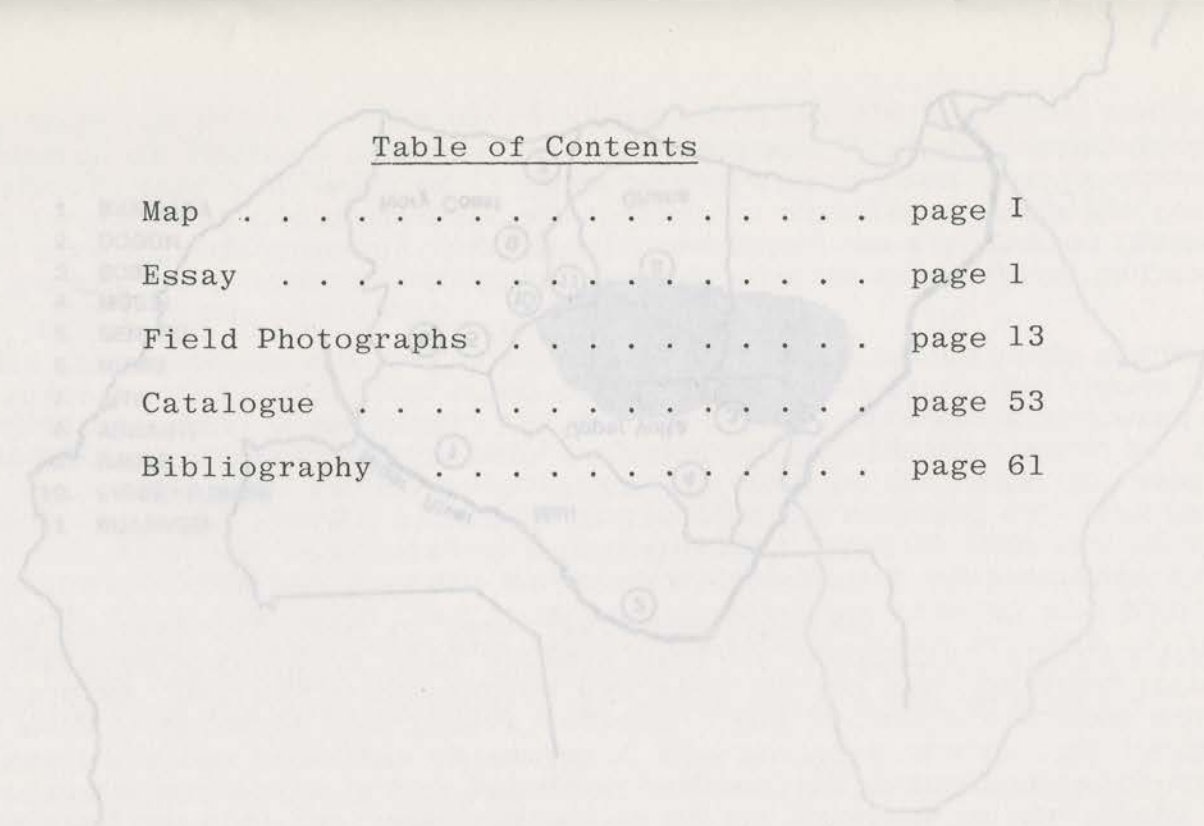


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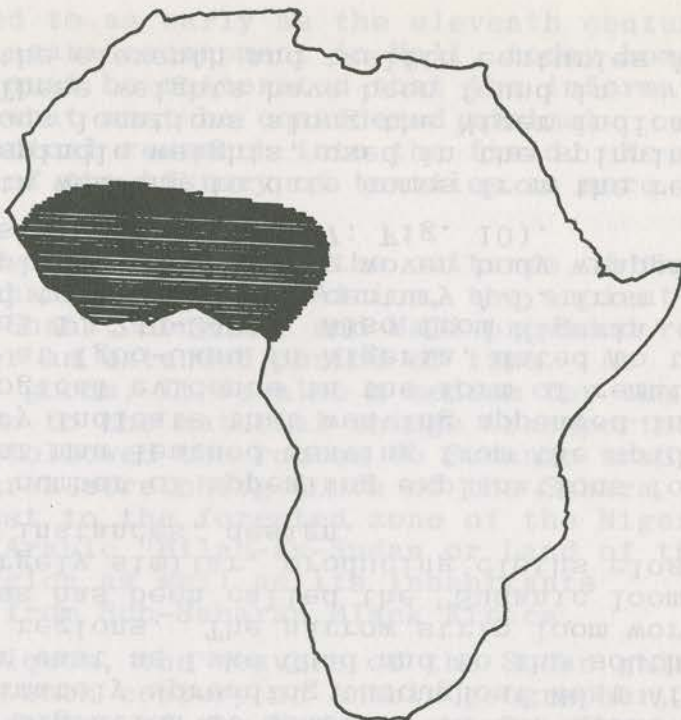
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Acknowledgment

Much of the history of African Arts remains to be written. That which has been written is subject to revision as field research provides new data to be integrated into the literature of the field. As the program has advanced, the disciplines are becoming more integrated and the information provided is becoming more comprehensive. The author wishes to thank the following individuals for their assistance in the field: ...



- 1. BAMBARA
- 2. DOGON
- 3. BOBO
- 4. MOSSI
- 5. SENUFO
- 6. NUMU
- 7. ANYI
- 8. ASHANTI
- 9. BAULE
- 10. LIGBE - DJIMINI
- 11. KULANGO



Weaving in Sub-Saharan "Black Africa" emerged relatively late in time when measured against the spread and use of the loom in the Near East. It is argued that the narrow strip or narrow band loom came to Sub-Saharan Africa via trade and migration at sometime in the first half of the first millenium A.D., ultimately spreading throughout West Africa from the Atlantic Coast to as far east as Lake Chad and to the south among many peoples of the forest regions. The narrow strip loom worked with heddles, pulleys and treadles has been called the "Sudanic loom". Its operating principles were largely similar, producing cloths closely related in technique and in many instances, design.

Myths and legends provide a number of appealing explanations for the origins of weaving, one being that man learned weaving from the spider. The less colorful facts of history indicate that weaving appeared in the first millenium A.D. as archaeological evidence in the form of remains of woven grass fibers identified at Igbo-Ukwu in Nigeria, dated to the ninth century A.D. (Shaw 1970: Vol 1, 240-242). Also from Nigeria, an impressive bronze sculpture dated to the twelfth century A.D. from ancient Ife, depicts a royal couple wearing finely woven body wrappings embellished with patterns and tassels (Willet 1967: Fig. 10).

The earliest remains of cloth weaving to date comes from the region of the upper Niger River. Clay spindle weights, used in the spinning of thread, have been found in numerous locations along the Niger indicating the local practice of weaving. These weights have been found in association to objects dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. (Barth 1977: 61).

Remains of cloth strips dated to as early as the eleventh century A.D. have been found on the Bandiagara escarpment in Mali, today home of the Dogon (Lamb 1975:77). It must be reiterated that the information available comes as the result of what must be considered minimal archaeological activity and historical research into the field. We can anticipate greater understanding of the history of textiles as more information becomes available.

Whether weaving was introduced by trade from the cultures of the Nile in the east or across the Sahara from North Africa, the ancient kindgoms of Sudanic West Africa; Ghana, Songhai, and Mali provided ready markets for finished products over an extended period of time. As trade is the means of exchange of goods, it is also a medium for the exchange of ideas, for in addition to the material things transported, crafts and their techniques soon followed the routes to Sudanic trade centres. The Sudan defines the area stretching south of the Sahara in a rough line from Lake Chad west to the forested zone of the Niger River watershed. Taken from the Arabic "Bilad-as-Sudan or Land of the Blacks", the Sudan describes a region as well as its inhabitants differentiating the Arabic north from Sub-Saharan Black Africa.

Once familiar with the techniques, the weavers of the Sudan gained skill and reputation. In the eleventh century an Arabic geographer, al-Bakri writes that the major industry of the Tucolar people along the Senegal River was the weaving of a cloth known as Chigguiya for export to other areas of the Sudan. This same weaving

is mentioned by a Portuguese writer in 1455 as Alchezeli cloth (Bovill 1970: 83-89). The popularity of this cloth over so long a period of time is impressive for it is also quoted as being used as currency in the eighteenth century along the Atlantic Coast. The use of cloth as currency was not so uncommon and as an item of trade with a standardized value travelled far and was accepted as a common means of exchange. Even today cloth strips may be used as currency in village markets removed from urban areas.

Cloth was a staple of West African trade being exchanged along the coast or as part of an extensive trade network inland. (Sieber 1973: 170) Often quality or specialty cloths travelled long distances, even by present standards. Turkundi cloth woven and dyed by Moslems in Kano, Nigeria was, in the sixteenth century, exported to trade centres in North Africa. From there it would be returned to other areas of the Sudan thus making two arduous crossings of the Sahara (Bovill 1970: 178). The trade and market system of West Africa was extensive as well as comprehensive.

Markets are regularly held in which cloth strips, cotton threads and a great variety of whole cloths are the primary goods sold and traded. Tailors willing to convert cloth strips into garments will also be at markets. Not only were the finished products exchanged but their methods of production, styles and even their craftsmen. Specialization of skills with the subsequent high quality of product allied to an extensive market system found craft items travelling long distances from the

locality of manufacture. This leads to an interchange of style or craft or tradition, it breaks the concept of tribal insularity with the idea of the openness of exchange or the "mobility of art" (Bravmann 1973: 10,13). This is true in West Africa today and one may assume it was equally true in the past.

Weaving in West Africa varies according to loom type, kinds of cloth woven and interestingly enough by the sex of the weaver. Women using a broad vertical loom produce cloths approximately one half meter in width and one to two meters in length primarily for their households or they may be bartered locally but are rarely sold. Men's cloths are woven upon the narrow loom producing a cloth strip approximately fifteen centimeters wide with an ongoing length which often exceeds twenty meters. Weaving as practiced by men is a craft specialization requiring a defined period of apprenticeship with expectations of earning a livelihood through their efforts. Cloth would be purchased either in strips or as whole cloths; a number of strips sewn together along their long side produced "standard" cloths measuring one meter in width by two or three in length, the size of the cloth varying according to need or use.

The production of cotton textiles in many cases was a family or "cottage" occupation, each family harvesting the raw cotton, preparing the threads and weaving the cloth. At the same time there are numerous instances in which weaving was a local industry. In the late nineteenth century in the region of Bamako there were more than six hundred weavers located in eight villages (Binger 1892: 107). The development of the textile industry at Kano reached such proportions that a substantial

network for the supply of cotton and thread was necessary for cloth production (Temple 1932).

The raw materials required for the weaving of textiles are available in many areas of West Africa. Fiber producing plants, primarily cotton, are locally grown and harvested. Color for the dyeing of thread is provided by natural materials, especially the indigo plant which supplied the blue so well appreciated throughout West Africa. When neither cloth, thread or indigo were to be found in the area they were acquired by trade. Loom woven textiles appear in various designs and modes of decoration. Cloth strips could be either white or blue indigo or a combination of white and blue threads in a single band and would be additionally embellished through some form of embroidery technique or with complex designs woven into the bands. Reflecting local stylistic traditions, allusions to one's state of being, social rank or religious attitude could be reflected in the design so that aesthetic enjoyment was allied to symbolically expressive statements.

This collection of textiles and heddle pulleys brings together objects which at first glance seem unrelated and disparate in form and material. However, under close examination relationships become evident; there is the obvious technical link found in the manufacturing process as the heddle pulley is used in the weaving of cloth. Less obvious, yet with as great a depth are the shared commonalities of culture defined symbolically, artistically, and aesthetically through the sculptured forms of the heddle pulleys and the patterns of the cloths.

The nature of the objects in this collection of carved heddle pulleys and woven textiles touches a tender aesthetic nerve in the West - the contrasts between arts and crafts. Distinctions drawn between arts and crafts are often simplistically made to place works in their "proper area" of definition and given function. This concept of the separation of art and craft and of their mutual exclusiveness says more about Western culture than of the people who produce them. We have in the West created a hierarchy of art based upon our biases rather than inherent claims to superiority within the arts themselves. We disdain to name as art those objects of utility; the work of the potter, weaver or woodcarver, as though the fact that these objects, because of their use, are necessarily relegated to a lower level on the art scale.

If a difficulty of resolving the identification of fine art as opposed to crafts exists in the West it is a problem of our own making. These attitudes were not always prevalent, for one has to only consider the art of Medieval Europe as a familiar example for the unity of art and craft. No critical lines were drawn as the Medieval craftsman did not distinguish in their activities the "highness of art" as opposed to the "lowness of craft". They were after all, working towards common ends of art in service to God and community. Perhaps in this Medieval and African artisans are much closer in their ideas and activities than has been generally acknowledged to date.

In traditional West African society this separation of art and craft does not exist; both emerge out of a common cultural nexus in

which aesthetic, utility and symbol were often joined. The principles which operate in the understanding and appreciation of a carved figure or mask apply equally to cloth and for the matter to the other arts of dance and music as well as gesture and speech.

Early descriptions of cloth and cloth making were extraordinarily accurate and complete. Measured against these reports it is remarkable to note the continuity of technique as presently seen throughout West Africa. An eighteenth century writer, John Barbot, quoting an earlier text describes the weaving process and the cloth produced:

"The weavers are the most numerous among the mechaniks, and would make very good cloth had they large looms; but they wholly apply themselves to weaving a narrow, thick, striped cotton-cloth, seven or eight fingers broad, and about two ells and a half long, in small portable looms, made for that purpose. They afterward stitch together six, seven, or eight of those narrow strips to make a cloth or Panho, as they have learned to call it from the Portuguese." (Barbot 1732: 40-41)

Other reports dating to as early as 1455 describe similar processes of weaving and types of cloths produced (Ca Da Mosto 1455: 80-81). Unfortunately, the concerns of the early descriptions of weaving did

not include heddle pulleys so no mention of them is found. However, exclusion of mention does not imply that they were not utilized, for the Sudanic narrow band loom is based upon some form of heddle pulley, in fact it is not until relatively late in our century that they are noted or described. What becomes interesting is the reversal of focus which has occurred in the appreciation of both cloth and heddle pulley. Early discussion was of the cloths, not as an art form, but chiefly as a trade good. However, when African Art was "discovered" in the early twentieth century it was sculpture that was esteemed as art and not the cloths, which were viewed as crafts. Thus measured against the weaving, which is motivated by a similar cultural and aesthetic impulse though serving different ends, we call the carvings art and the weavings crafts. This twist of perception allows acceptance of the carved wooden pulleys as art rather than a functional object embellished with carving.

Heddle pulleys are prime examples of utilitarian art, sculptural form joined to functional need. The function of the pulley is to lift the heddles which separate warp threads to form a triangular opening or "shed" through which the shuttle is passed with the weft threads. The heddles are controlled by cords which rise from a treadle up to and over the roller in the pulley down to the heddle so that by alternating treadle pressure the heddles are raised and even numbers requiring two heddles to alternate those threads which are raised to form the shed.

A pulley because of its function must be able to undergo constantly changing stresses and still operate smoothly. In fact when a weaver is

working at full speed it is often difficult to separate the motions of the loom and the rapid interchange of heddles, all of which involve the pulley in a continuing process of stress and relief. Therefore, a primary requirement of heddle pulleys is strength allied to ease of action.

Heddle pulleys are the property of the weaver, in fact they may remain within a family as prized heirlooms. As a personal object the form of the pulley is strongly determined by the weaver and the sculptural imagery would be directed towards symbolic or religious iconography, ritual display or the weaver's choice of secular subject matter. Whatever the theme, subject or symbol of the pulley, local tradition provides a rich visual pool for the sculptor to draw upon. Unlike the blacksmith, whose craft is bound by ritual and secrecy, the weaver works in the open, available for all to see. Pulleys are therefore "public sculpture" allowing carvers greater opportunity of expression and interpretation. Though consistent to traditional concepts pulley carving will not be so bound by social convention as ceremonial or ritualized cult objects such as masks or figural sculpture. However, they will often be construed as miniature masks or smaller versions of the larger ritual statuary. In keeping with their "public nature", pulleys frequently become carriers of symbols or proverbs commenting upon social mores and modes of behavior as well as being reminders of religious responsibilities.

The pulley as icon is acknowledgement of the spiritual forces integrally involved in the process of weaving simultaneously embracing

a number of equally valid symbols and meanings. The enlistment of spiritual forces were expected to add to his skills; to insure the quality and superiority of his weaving; in effect to provide an advantage in a competitive enterprise -- "enterprenurial religiosity"!

Sculpted pulleys can have symbolic references and yet not be thought of being a purely symbolic device. One must not make the pulley a single dimensional object defined simply through its symbolic representation for it is also aesthetically defined as a work of art as well as a tool used in weaving. Heddle pulleys, as they are used in the Sudanic loom, reflect an ideal balancing of the form-function relationship through their design.

The basic shape of the pulley, an inverted "Y" is determined by its function. The "legs" of the "Y" hold the roller over which the cords move to raise and lower the heddles. Pulleys so defined by the inverted "Y" form are easily generalized into anthropomorphic attributes. The pulley "body" surmounts "legs" which hold a roller between them. Cords supporting the pulley may pass through a hole bored into the "head", hooked under the chin of a face or, with some humour, be held in the beak of a bird. Pulleys are rarely painted, however most are blackened by scorching or darkened through the use of organic staining. Bits of string or beads may be tied around the "neck" both as a supplicative gesture and to enhance their attractiveness.

As an art form pulley carvings reflect the broadest sensibilities

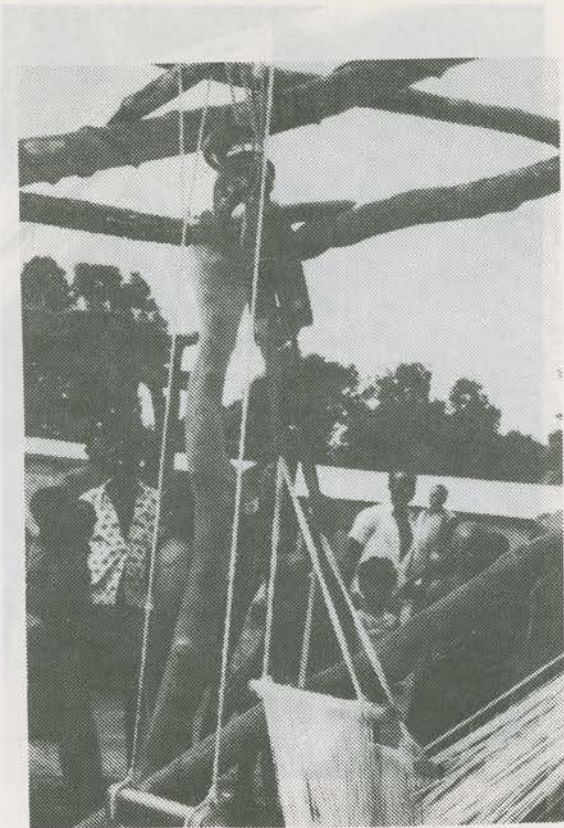
of West African culture. For as objects of applied function they are carriers of socio-religious symbolism as objects of aesthetic assertion they are defined in their role as simple mechanical devices. The weaving of textiles continues today, for traditional cloths are highly prized and in many instances preferred over manufactured cloths. They reflect a cultural link of identification in everyday use and for the prestige which they lend to the wearer on ceremonial occasions. As long as cloth is produced in the traditional fashion heddle pulleys will continue to be carved reflecting a heritage of culture which is ongoing and vigorously self-renewing.

Style and Tribality

There is common agreement that tribality can no longer be accepted as the sole criteria of definition for art forms or styles in traditional societies. Ethnographic definitions are important, however boundaries, whether political or tribal, are often labels of convenience rather than of identification. The use of the term "tribe", implies a static view of society, homogenous and closed to external influences. It ignores the humanistic interchange active between cultures. Recent studies indicate that "tribal" boundaries were far more open to influences and materials affecting culture and art forms than previously recognized (Bravmann 1973).

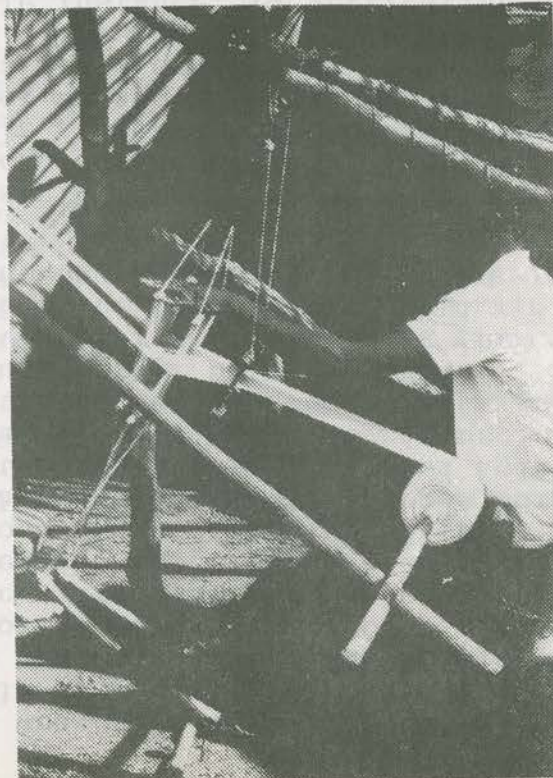
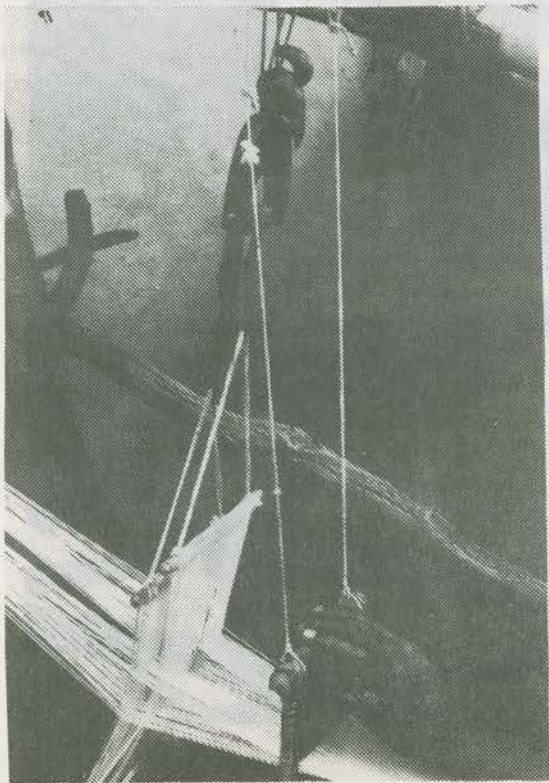
Each society is defined by its cultural ethos expressed through its art and carried by its language. We generalize this under the rubric "tribal style". Yet upon close examination "tribal style" will be seen to have stylistic variants and substyles and in instances cross or pan-tribal styles. Attempts to resolve this complexity of definition of style led to the concept of "style regions"; in which language, history and geography shared by neighboring cultures are recognized as common factors (Sieber and Rubin 1968). This acknowledges the uniqueness of a people yet places them in broader context of identification and relationship. The heddle pulleys shown here are drawn from two major and extended areas; the Western Sudan and the Guinea Coast. What is exhibited here is a small sample of typical heddle pulley types and forms found in these areas.

In the European tradition of Art History the specifics of a work of art are expected and normally given. Title, artist and date are used as much to 'personalize' a work as to place it in its historical or cultural context. The literature on African Art has rarely named the artist or given facts on the work of art other than general tribal attribution. Assumptions that the art works were the products of anonymous artists precluded inquiry as to name or place of manufacture. In many instances the name of the artist was not one of the facts of data being compiled by the researcher and thus the question was never asked. These attitudes, active as well as passive, ignore the facts of art; that it was made by an artist at a certain time and in a certain place. The too few in-depth studies of African artists and their works reveal an 'art tradition' that is both informative and historical if pursued. The 'art history' available in African art may be illustrated in detail through information collected by K.-H. Krieg in regards to a heddle pulley (number 13) collected in October, 1976, in the village of Blessegui, Ivory Coast.



"The weaver, a Numu, inherited the heddle from his father, who was also a Numu weaver. The heddle was approximately 40 years old. This was confirmed by the uncle of the weaver who said it has been carved by Noubonwon Coulibaly, of the village Kouto. Coulibaly was born about 1910 in the village of Kolia and as a boy lived with his uncle and trained as a wood carver. As a young carver he travelled a 'carving circuit' including the villages of Dougba, Blessegui, Oumon, Ouora, Kouto, Kolia and others.

His style of carving is distinct and can be identified. Two other heddle pulleys in the exhibition, number 23 and 25 collected in Kolia and Ouora may be by the same hand. This indicates, in this single instance, identification as well as the mobility of artists and their works.

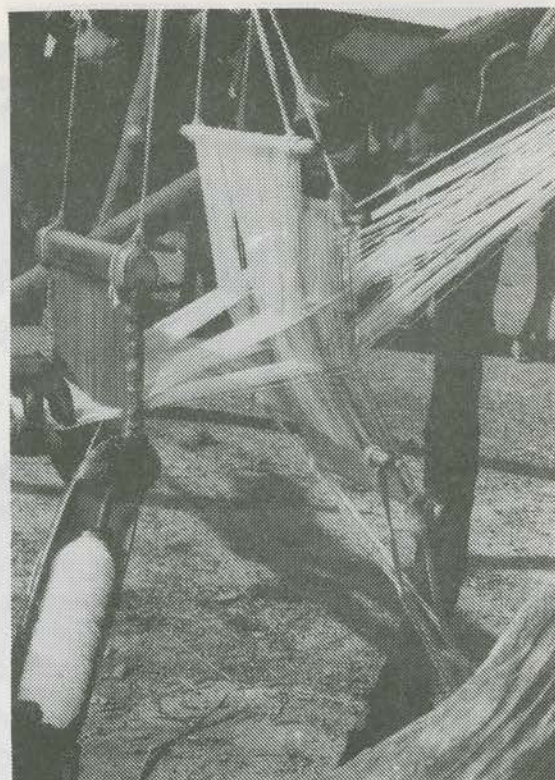


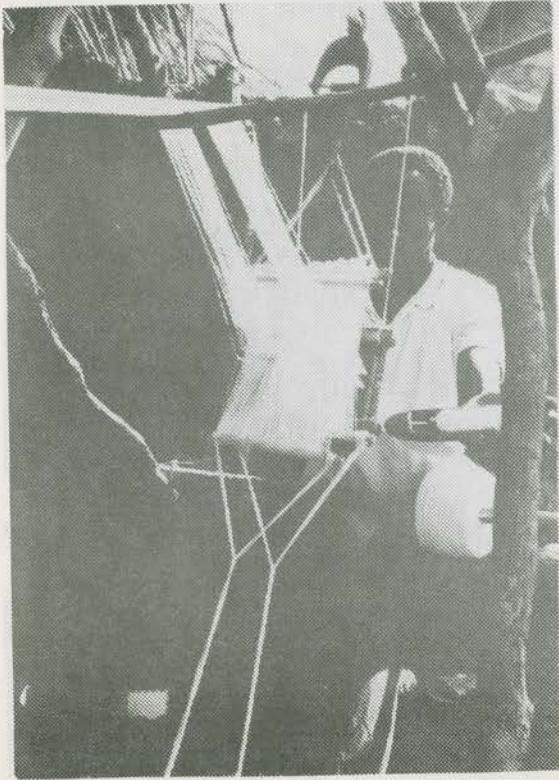
Weaving process in the Senufo village of Blessegui.

Upper left; heddles with pulley.

Upper right; the two warp thread heddles are alternated by foot pedals with the aid of the roller in the pulley.

Lower right; the shuttle is passed through the triangular 'shed' of the warp threads.

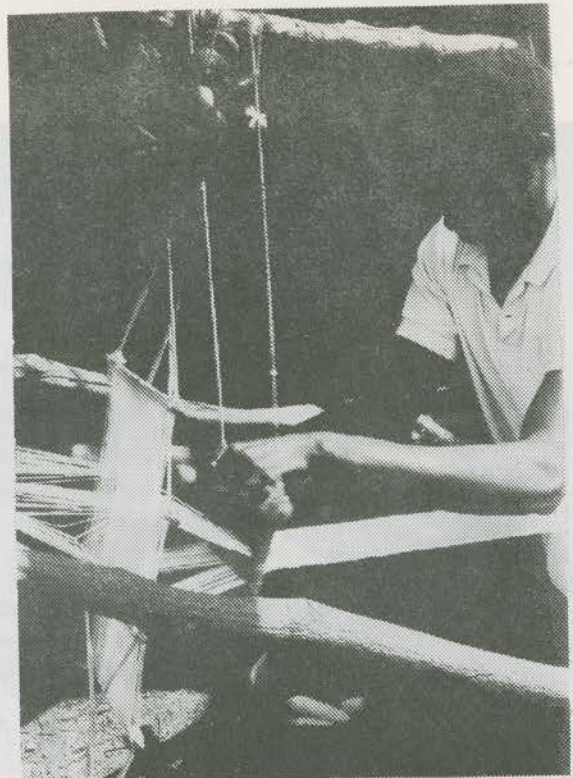




Upper left; Passing shuttle through 'shed', alternating sides as heddles are alternately raised.

Upper right; Shuttle passing through 'shed'.

Lower right; 'Beating warp threads after passage of shuttle. This battens warp and weft threads to create cloth strip.

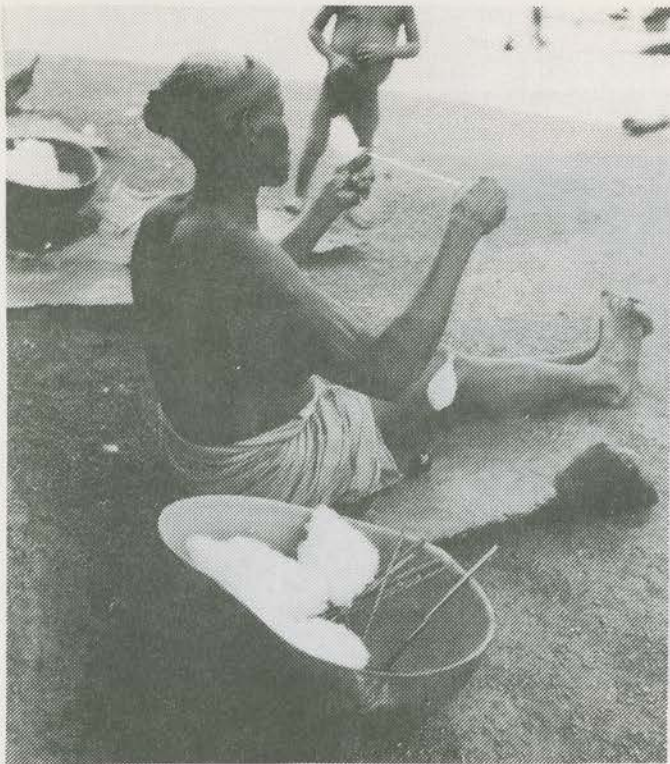




1. Rolling cotton (ginning) to remove seeds.

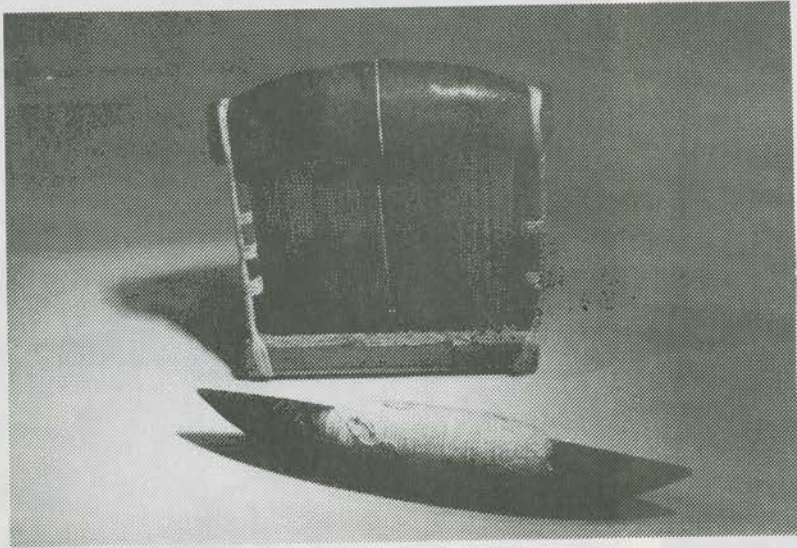


2. Spinning cotton into threads.

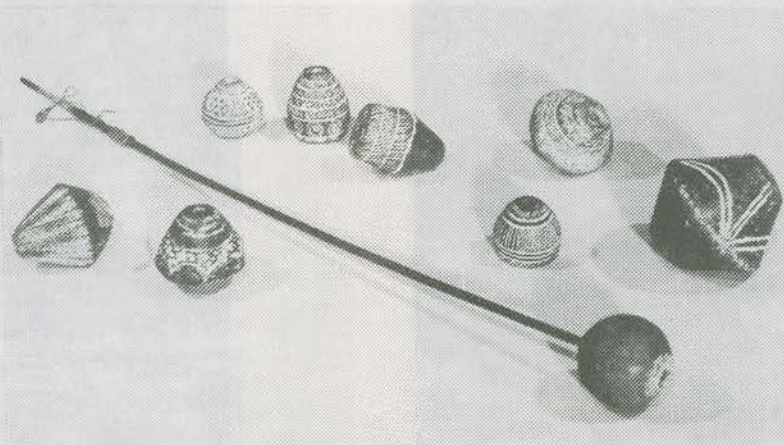


3. Spindle rolls freely onto the hide.

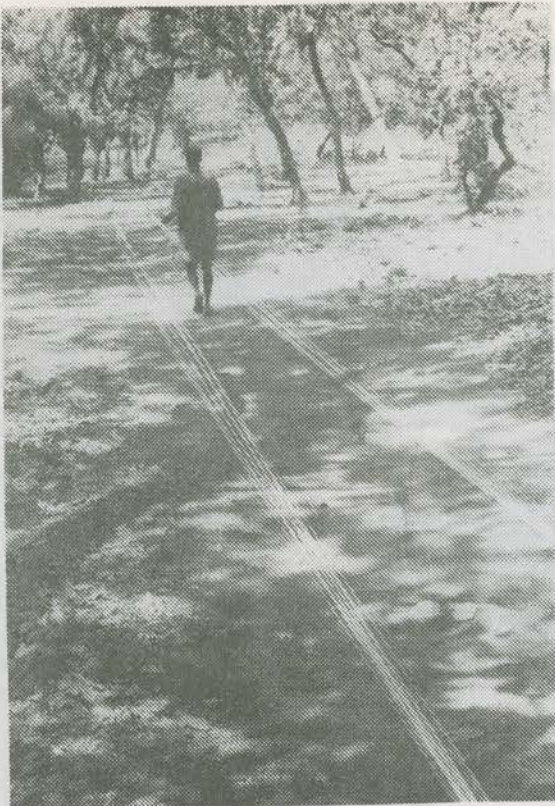
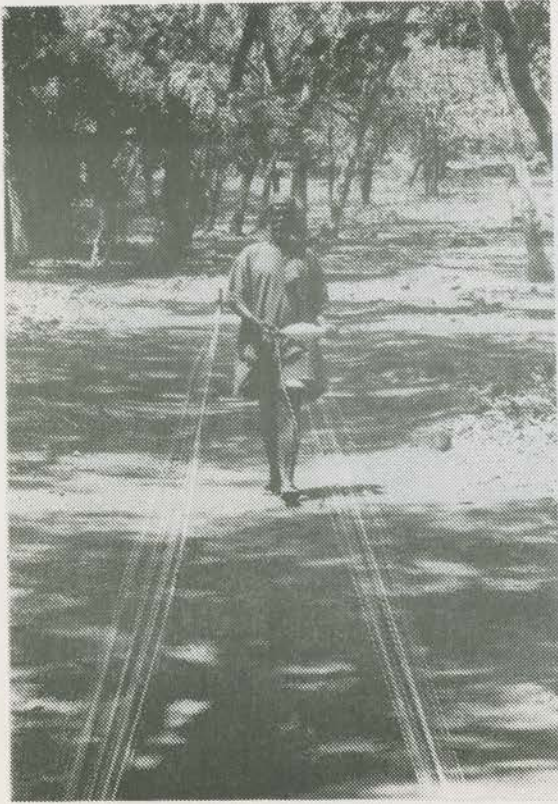
Senufo women from the village of Djegbe (Gbato-group) south of Boundiali. Photographed in 1974, the sequence of photos illustrates the preparation of cotton into the threads for weaving.

Weaving Equipment Illustration

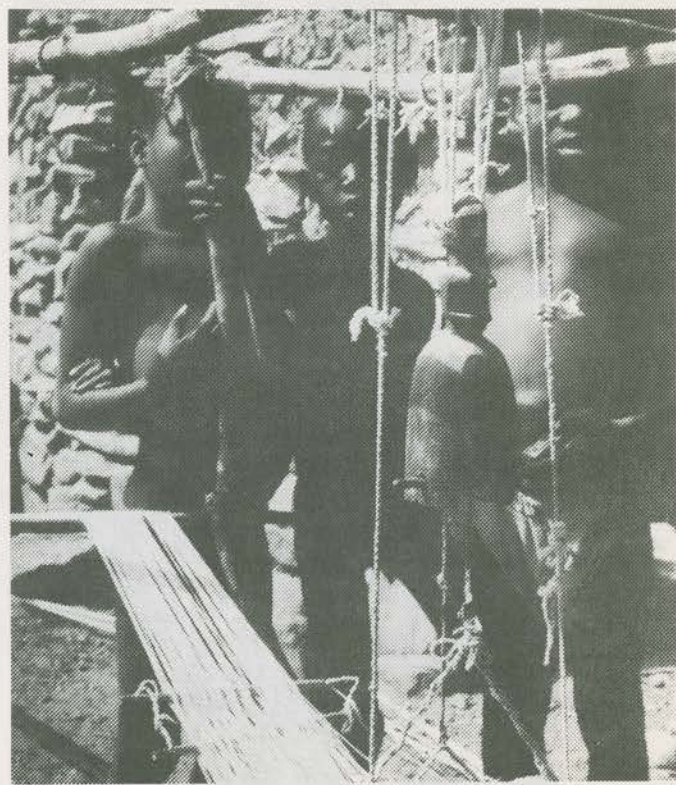
Beater, shuttle
and thread bobbin



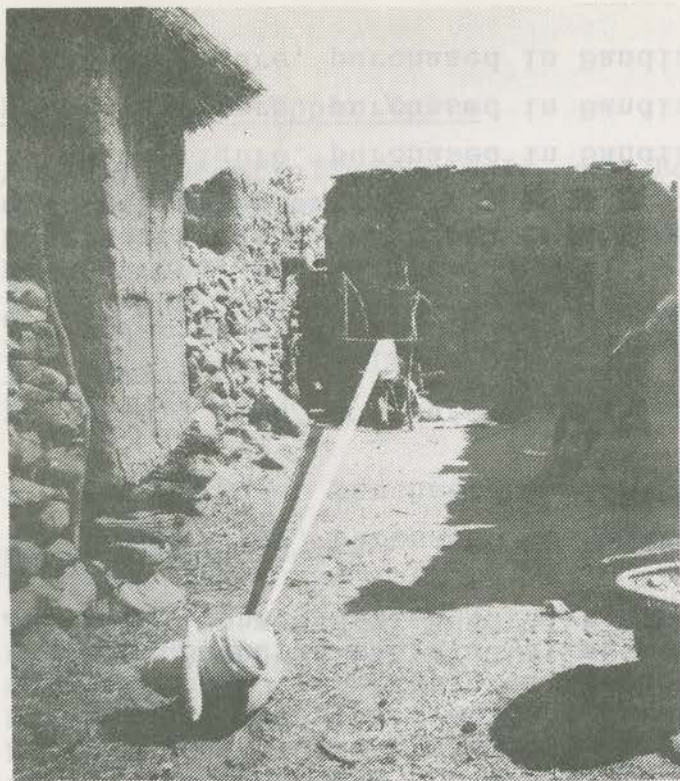
Contemporary spindle with clay weight and early clay weights, area of Mopti-Djenne, upper Niger River. Size 2.5 cm to 5 cm in diameter.



Senufo weaver stretching
out cotton threads for
the warp.



Dogon weavers at work, village of Ireli.



Dogon weavers, region of Bandiagara.

Bambara - Mali - Guinea

Located in the Western Sudan the Bambara are found in Mali, Guinea and Senegal. They are heirs to the culture of the Manding and have an historical tradition of statehood. Yet in the main the Mande speaking Bambara remain a village society sufficiently strong in cultural identification to withstand the ongoing presence of Islamization.

1. Male figure, purchased in Bamako, 19 cm.
2. Male figure, purchased in Bamako, 15 cm.

Dogon - Mali

The Dogon moved to the cliffs of the Bandiagara escarpment along the great bend of the Niger River under Islamic pressure and have subsequently maintained a relatively unified cultural tradition. The Dogon embellish many of their objects with figural representations of mythical ancestors.

3. Male figure, purchased in Bandiagara, 22 cm.
4. Male figure, purchased in Bandiagara, 14 cm.
5. Male figure, purchased in Bandiagara, 13 cm.

Bobo - Mali - Upper Volta

A small decentralized people, the Bobo have been subject to influences of their Mossi and Dyula neighbors. Bobo arts appear to share certain stylistic traits with other Gur language speakers of the Sudan; the Dogon, Mossi and Senufo.

6. Male figure, collected in Bobo-Dioulasso, 16 cm.
7. Male figure, collected in Bobo-Dioulasso, 15 cm.
8. Bird's head, collected in Bobo-Dioulasso, 11 cm.

Mossi - Upper Volta

The Mossi or Moshi of Upper Volta have a complex history as an immigrant peoples who have mixed with an indigenous population. Once organized into two great states and even today acknowledging their king, the Mogho-Naba, the art of the Mossi is to be found upon the village level reflecting local traditions and a multiplicity of styles. As the Bobo, Dogon and Senufo they speak a Gur language.

9. Male janus head, purchased in Ouagadougou, 22 cm.

Senufo - Ivory Coast - Mali

The Senufo are located primarily in southern Mali and northcentral Ivory Coast. There are a number of sub-groups which produce local stylistic variants of Senufo style and symbolism. The most prominent symbolic motif is the bird, the porpianong, representing the hornbill. According to Goldwater's perception of Senufo mythology the porpianong was one of the primordial creatures close to God and identified with the founding ancestors. Stylistic variance may be compounded even more by virtue of who carves the heddle pulley. It may be carved by the woodcarver of functional objects, the Kle, or by the local blacksmith, the Fono. The heddle may be also purchased from non-Senufo carvers to further compound the task of attribution.

10. Porpianong (bird) collected in Pourou, near Tingrela, 17 cm.
 11. Porpianong (bird) collected in Pourou, near Tingrela, 18 cm.
 12. Porpianong (bird) collected in Pourou, near Tingrela, 17 cm.
 13. Porpianong (bird) collected in Kouto, 16 cm.
 14. Porpianong (bird) collected in Kouto, 21 cm.
 15. Porpianong (bird) collected in Koro, 18 cm.
 16. Porpianong (bird) purchased in Korhogo, stylistically identified to Kle carving, 16 cm.
 17. Porpianong (bird) collected in Ouora, near Kouto, 18 cm.
-
18. Porpianong (bird) collected in Ouora, near Kouto, 20 cm.
 19. Porpianong (bird) collected area of Tyasso, 20 cm.
 20. Porpianong (bird) collected area of Tyasso, 20 cm.
 21. Porpianong (bird) collected in Womon, 16 cm.
 22. Porpianong (bird) collected in Morondo, south of Boundiali, 21 cm.
 23. Porpianong (bird with breasts) collected village of Morondo, south of Boundiali, 18 cm.
 24. Woman's head with two Kpelie (Gpeliehe) masks; collected in Tyasso, 19 cm.
 25. Human head, collected in Kouto, 18 cm.
 26. Woman's figure, wearing colonial soldier's hat, collected in Mirimiri near Gana (Ganoni), 16 cm.
 27. Head, collected in Kolia, 15 cm.
 28. Mask (the goat horns indicate a female mask, perhaps in association to No. 29) collected in Dagba, near (Solokaha), 20 cm.
 29. Mask (the bushcow horns indicate a male mask) collected in Dagba, near (Solokaha), 19 cm.
 30. Mask, collected in Ouazomon, 20 cm.

31. Mask, purchased in Korhogo, 19 cm.
32. Mask, collected in Kassere, 19 cm.
33. Janus heads, collected in Katoho, near M'benque, 17 cm.
34. Head with headdress, collected in Katoho, near M'benque, 18 cm.
35. Head, collected in Ouora, 21 cm.
36. Porpianong (bird with breasts) collected in Tinakaha, near Gbon, 17 cm.
37. Porpianong (standing bird), collected in Boundiali, 18 cm.
38. Porpianong (standing bird), collected in village of Dagba, 17 cm.
39. Bird representing a fishcatcher, collected in Kolia, 20 cm.
40. Porpianong (bird), collected in Kolia, 18 cm.

Gué (Gouin) Ivory Coast - Upper Volta

Located in the northern regions of the Ivory Coast, the Gué are often identified as a Senufo sub-group, they are as yet incompletely known.

41. Stylized head with horns, collected in the area of Banfora, Upper Volta, 14 cm.

Noumou or Numu

The following heddle pulleys, though having been collected in the Ivory Coast in a region most generally associated with the Senufo have been identified as being the product of Noumou carvers or carved in a "Noumou style". The Noumou are a Mande subgroup who migrated to Ghana and the Ivory Coast, perhaps as early as the fifteenth century, they are now thoroughly dispersed throughout the region. According to Bravmann the Noumou are the blacksmiths who today make iron objects for farmers. In a tradition recorded by K.-H. Krieg, they claim to have been the 'weapon makers' in the past to distinguish themselves from ordinary smiths. Their work is often identified to the Bambara.

42. Porpianong (bird), collected in Tingrela, 13 cm.
43. Porpianong (bird) with breasts, collected in Dougba near Tingrela, 16 cm.
44. Porpianong (bird) collected in Popo near Tingrela, 17 cm.
45. Porpianong (bird) collected in Kouto, 16 cm.
46. Porpianong (bird) collected in Tingrela, 16 cm.
47. Male figure, collected in Tingrela, 15 cm.
48. Male figure, collected in Tingrela, 16 cm.
49. Male figure, collected in Tingrela, 18 cm.

50. Porpianong (bird), collected in Dougba, near Tingrela, 22 cm.
 51. Porpianong (bird), collected in Dougba, near Tingrela, 22 cm.

Ashanti, Baule and Agni - Ivory Coast and Ghana

The Ashanti (Asante), Baule and Agni belong to a greater pan-tribal grouping known as the Akan. This includes participation in common factors of language (Kwa), culture and shared concepts of religion as well as similar useage of many art forms. Art among the Akan serves two distinct and ongoing clientele; the 'royal' arts of the court as well as the more widely based 'common' art. Both draw upon a great well of visual symbolism as aphroisms, parables, moral statements and law are made visible in their carvings and textiles in forms that are both sacred and secular.

Ashanti-Ghana

The Ashanti became the dominant power in Ghana at the end of the seventeenth century. Their influence and power extended well into the late nineteenth century under the direction of their king, (hene) the Asantehene in Kumasi. Though much of Ashanti art is oriented towards leadership, the carved heddle pulley is a prime example of their 'popular' art.

52. Bird, the bird looking backwards is a symbolic exhortation not to forget the past; collected in Kumasi, 15 cm.
 53. Aqua'Ba figure, the Aqua'Ba is a multisymbol form among the Ashanti. It is a symbol of fertility as well as of beauty; collected in Kumasi, 19 cm.
 54. Standing figure, collected in Kumasi, 19 cm.
 55. Head, collected in Kumasi, 14 cm.
 56. Figure with hand on chest, the symbol of the hand refers to the "hand or power of the chief or king"; collected in Kumasi, 16 cm.

Agni - Ivory Coast

The Agni share much in common with the Ashanti from whose area they migrated to their present location in the Ivory Coast in the early years of the eighteenth century. To a great extent they have retained much of their Akan art heritage in form and symbol.

57. Head, identified as Agni it was collected in Bouake, 15 cm.

Baule - Ivory Coast

The Baule, whose origins are placed among the Ashanti of Ghana came to their present home in the eighteenth century under Queen Opuko. Though showing many of the 'royal art' forms of the Ashanti, they have been influenced in their art through contact with 'non-royal' decentralized neighbors, the Senufo in the north and the Guro to the west.

58. 'Cooking pot', collected in Bouake, 22 cm.

59. Abstract form, collected in Bouake, 17 cm.

60. Phallus form, collected in Bouake, 16 cm.

61. Abstract form, collected in Bouake, 21 cm.

62. Head, collected in Bouake, 30 cm.

63. Head, collected in Bouake, 18 cm.

64. Head, (had horns at one time) collected in Bouake, 19 cm.

65. Head, collected in Beaume, 50 km west of Bouake, 21 cm.

66. Janus heads, collected in Bouake, 12 cm.

67. Mask with horns, collected in Bouake, 19 cm.

68. Mask (known as Kple-Kple), collected in Bouake, 24 cm.

69. Standing figure, collected in Bouake, 29 cm.

70. Mask (known as Goli) collected in Bouake, 17 cm.

71. Mask (known as Goli) collected in Bouake, 15 cm.

72. Standing figure, collected in Bouake, 18 cm.

73. Janus Goli masks (an unusual round form of heddle pulley), collected in Beaume, 14 cm.

74. Figure, collected in Bouake, 18 cm.

75. Bird, collected in Bouake, 16 cm.

76. Duck, collected in Bouake, 11 cm.

Guro - Ivory Coast

Linked culturally and historically to their western neighbors the Dan and Guerze, the Guro are said to be indigenous to their area. However the Baule have exercised a strong influence upon the art of the Guro after moving into their region.

77. Head, though having Guro stylistic traits it was collected in Bouake, a Baule center, 17 cm.
78. Head, also a Guro heddle collected in Bouake, 12 cm.
79. Head, collected in Boafle, 20 cm.

Ligbe-Djimini - Ivory Coast - Upper Volta

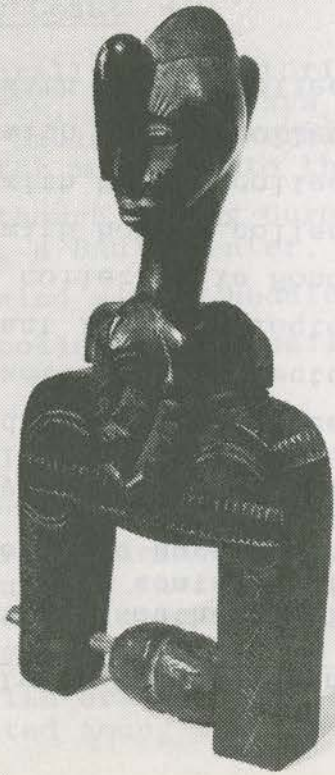
The Ligbe are described as an 'Akanized Manding' people. Having migrated south to their present location they have acquired Akan cultural and artistic traits. Many of the Ligbe or Djimini are now Islamized.

80. Mask with brass tacks, identified as Ligbe or Djimini, it was collected among the Senufo in Korhogo, 18 cm.

Kulango - Ivory Coast - Ghana - Upper Volta

Having migrated southwards in the late sixteenth century, the Kulango moved into close contact with the Ashanti. As a result their art forms and culture have become to a great extent a reflection of the Ashanti in style and application. The following heddle pulleys are tentatively identified as Kulango though collected among the Baule. Heddle pulleys carved by the Kulango are held in high esteem and are often found at some distance among non-Kulango peoples.

81. Abstract face, collected in Bouake, 18 cm.
82. Abstract face, collected in Bondougou, 13 cm.
83. Head, collected in Bondougou, 12 cm.
84. Form with horns, collected in Bondougou, 10 cm.
85. Head with horns, collected in Bouake, 17 cm.
86. Head with horns, collected in Bouake, 19 cm.
87. Head with horns, collected in Bondougou, 17 cm.



24. Senoufo - Ivory Coast
 Woman's head with two
 Kpelie (Gpeliehe) masks;
 collected in Tyasso, 19 cm.

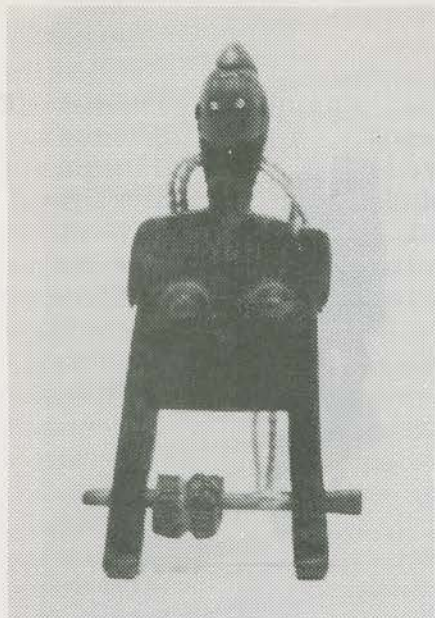
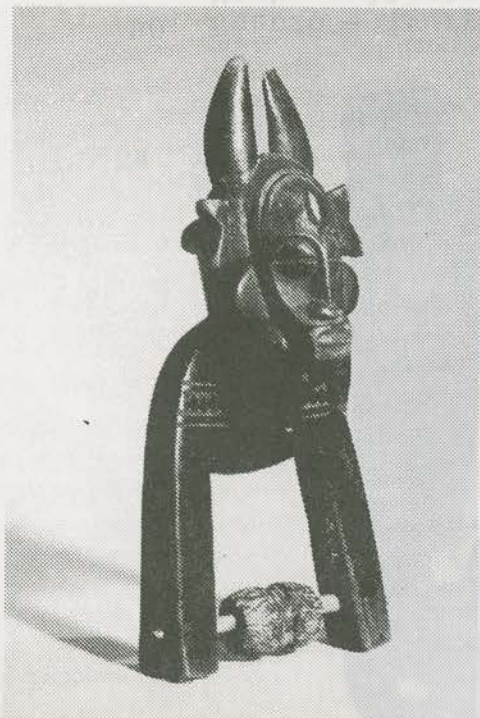


22. Senoufo - Ivory Coast
 Porpianong (bird) collected
 in Morondo, south of
 Boundiali, 21 cm.

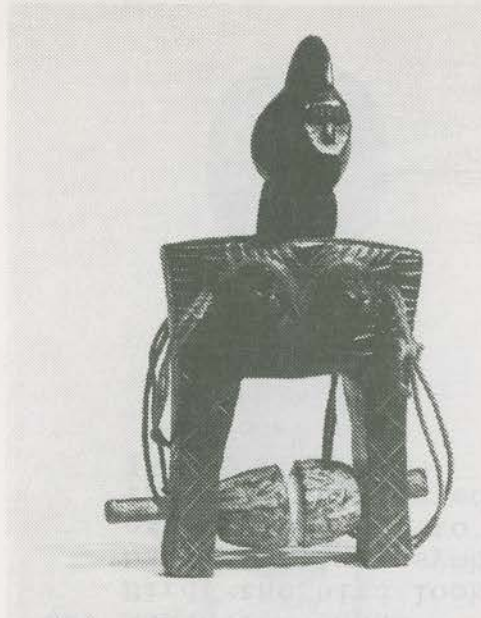


30. Senoufo - Ivory Coast
 Mask, collected in Ouazomon.

29. Senufo - Ivory Coast
Mask (the bushcow horns
indicate a male mask)
collected in Dagba, near
(Solokaha), 19 cm.



47. Noumou - Ivory Coast
Male figure, collected in
Tingrela, 15 cm.

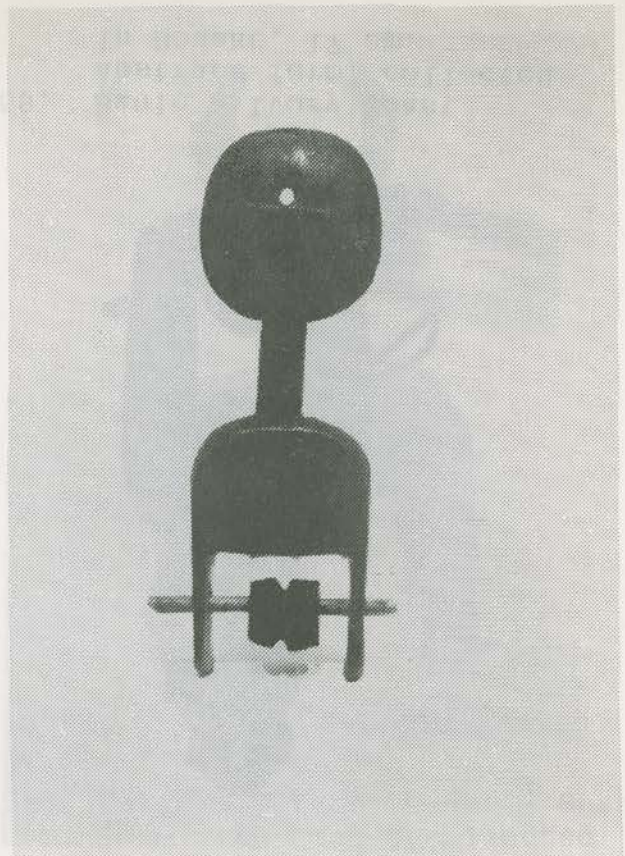


48. Noumou - Ivory Coast
Male figure, collected in
Tingrela, 16 cm.



52. Ashanti - Ghana
 Bird, the bird looking backwards is a symbolic exhortation not to forget the past; collected in Kumasi, 15 cm.

53. Ashanti - Ghana
 Aqua'Ba figure, the Aqua'Ba is a multisymbol form among the Ashanti. It is a symbol of fertility as well as of beauty; collected in Kumasi, 19 cm.

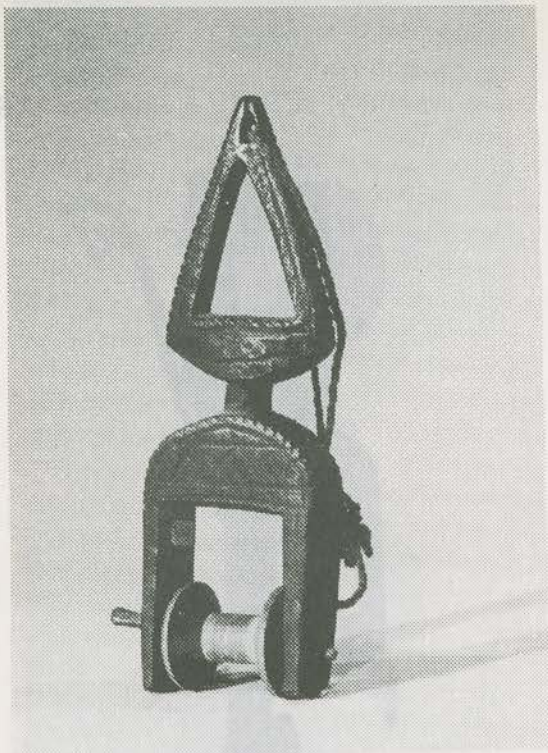




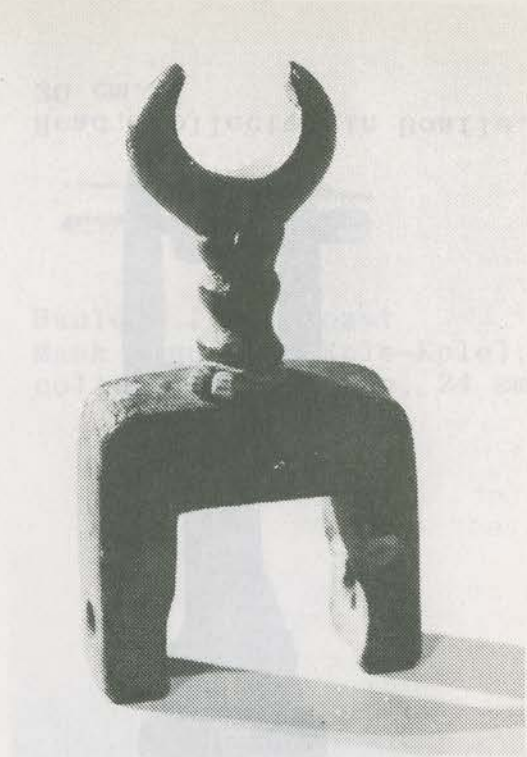
58. Baule - Ivory Coast
'Cooking pot', collected
in Bouake, 22 cm.



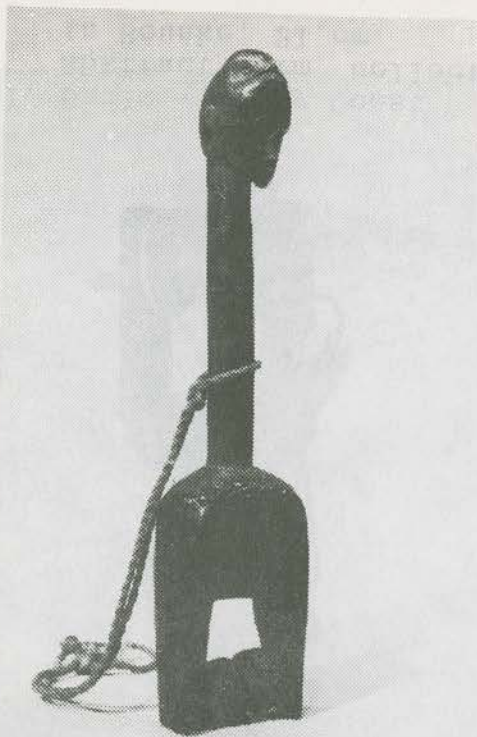
59. Baule - Ivory Coast
Abstract form, collected
in Bouake, 17 cm.



61. Baule - Ivory Coast
Abstract form, collected
in Bouake, 21 cm.



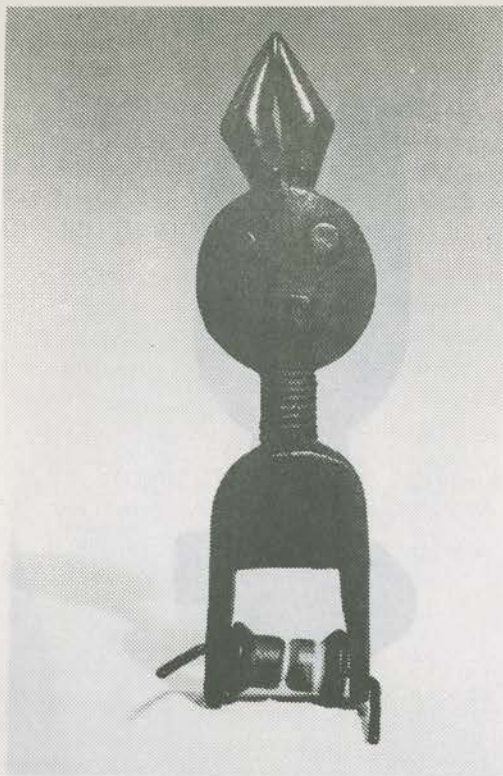
84. Kulango - Ivory Coast - Ghana
Form with horns, collected
in Bondougou, 10 cm.



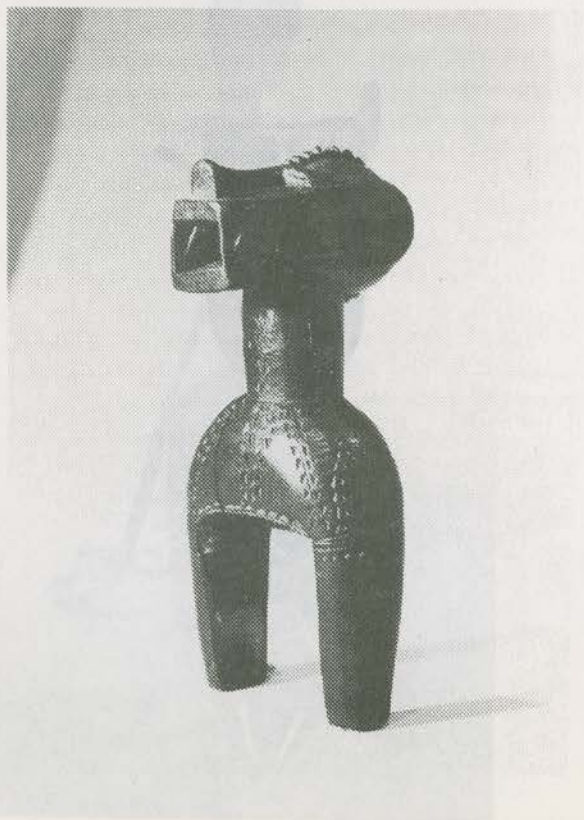
62. Baule - Ivory Coast
Head, collected in
Bouake, 30 cm.



79. Head, collected in Boafle,
20 cm.



68. Baule - Ivory Coast
Mask (known as Kple-Kple),
collected in Bouake, 24 cm.



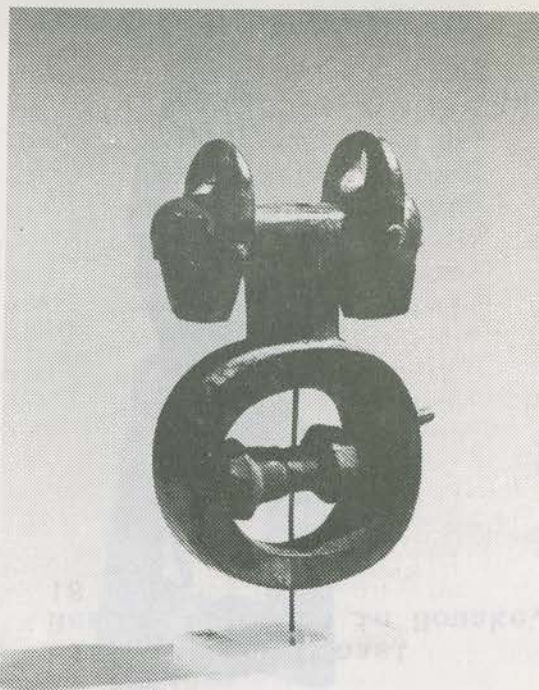
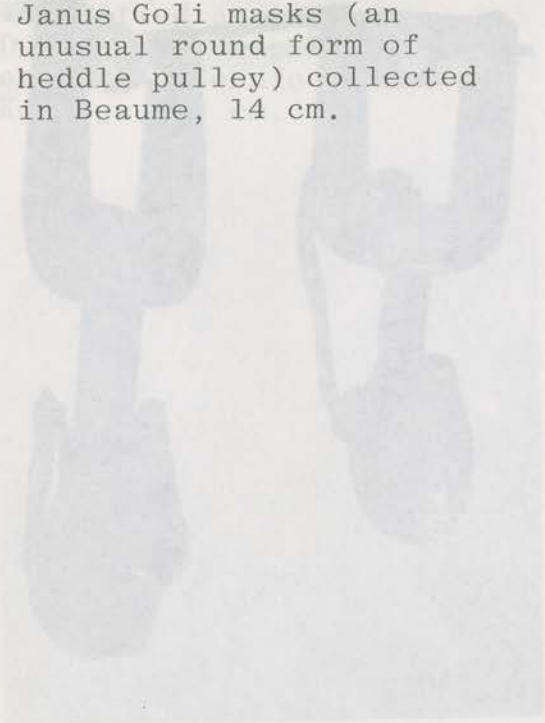
71. Baule - Ivory Coast
Mask (known as Goli)
collected in Bouake, 15 cm.

68. Baule - Ivory Coast
Mask (known as Goli)
collected in Bouake, 15 cm.

72. Baule - Ivory Coast
Mask (known as Goli)
collected in Bouake, 15 cm.

70. Baule - Ivory Coast

73. Baule - Ivory Coast
Janus Goli masks (an
unusual round form of
heddle pulley) collected
in Beauce, 14 cm.



74

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76



65. Baule - Ivory Coast
Head, collected in Beaume,
50 km west of Bouake, 21 cm.

63. Baule - Ivory Coast
Head, collected in Bouake,
18 cm.



80. Ligbe - Djimini - Ivory Coast
Mask with brass tacks,
identified as Ligbe or
Djimini, it was collected
among the Senufo in
Korhogo, 18 cm.



Catalogue

Catalogue illustrations are, with one exception, of heddle pulleys and weaving equipment. It was felt that much of the substance and subtlety of the textiles were lost through illustration. The closeness of design and color did not visually "carry" when reproduced. Rather than misinterpret the cloths we did not illustrate them. This is not to imply that the carved pulleys are more worthy of illustration - it was a problem of technology and finances. Textiles are measured by length and width, in meters.



19 - 20. Senoufo - Ivory Coast
Porpianong (bird) collected area of Tyasso, both 20 cm.

TEXTILES

Dafi-Upper Volta

The Dafi are an Upper Volta people. Though having local oral traditions of early migration into the region, they are now loosely identified to the Bobo through language and culture. Their indigo dyed cloths, made of a number of strips sewn together, are similar in kind to woven cloths found among other Sudanic peoples.

Measurements are given length by width, in meters.

1. 2.50 x 2.00
2. 2.35 x 2.15
3. 2.53 x 2.63
4. 2.60 x 1.65
5. 2.35 x 1.80
6. 2.60 x 1.65
7. 1.80 x 1.15
8. 1.60 x 1.08
9. 1.55 x 1.15
10. 1.70 x 1.33
11. 1.45 x 1.48

Mossi - Upper Volta

12. 1.65 x 1.78, the design reflects modern elements, purchased in Ouagadougou

Senufo - Ivory Coast

13. 2.60 x 1.80, Cover, collected in Ganoni

Dyula - Ivory Coast

Found in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, the Dyula are an Islamized people who are linguistically associated to the Sudanic Mande. They and the Numu migrated to the northern Ivory Coast area sometime in the late fifteenth century. It is an area of great cultural interchange; of loan and acceptance of forms and traditions. The Dyula are well-known for textiles and especially their indigo dyeing of cotton threads for other weavers.

14. 2.00 x 1.40 A death wrapping woven by a Dyula, collected among the Senufo at Tingrela.
15. 5.80 x .87 A death wrapping with Muslim motifs woven by a Dyula and collected also at Tingrela.
16. 1.20 x .85 A woman's wrapper woven by a Dyula for use by Senufo or Nafara. Purchased in Napieoledougou, 25 kms southwest of Korhogo.

Weaving Equipment

Reed or beater, Senufo

Weaving shuttle, Baule, collected in Bouake

Bobbin with thread, fits into weaving shuttle, Baule, collected in Bouake.

Stick spindle with clay weight, Senufo.

Iron spindle with wooden weight, Senufo

Iron rods used to remove seeds from cotton, Senufo

Spindle whorls (weights) clay, Upper Niger, river area of Mopti-Djenne, dated to as early as 1300 A.D.

CLOTH STRIPS

Senufo - Ivory Coast

1,2,3,4,5 Sewn together these strips would be used for skirts by the Senufo, Tagawana and Djimini. Though purchased in the market of Katiola, north of Boake, the cloth strips are said to have been woven in the region of Dabakala.

6, 7 Both strips are reported to be woven by a loko, a caster of 'yellow metal' (bronze, brass), among the Senufo and Nafara. Purchased in Napieoledougou south-west of Korhogo.

8, 9, 10 Woven by Dyula (Moslem) weavers for the Senufo and
11,12,13 Nafara. Purchased in Napieoledougou.

14 These strips have local and imported threads woven together; white - African and the black - imported. Made by Dyula and purchased in Napieoledougou.

15 Woven by a Dyula for the Senufo, purchased in Korhogo.

16,17,18 Woven with European threads by the Dyula.
19,20,21

22, 23 Purchased in Tingrela.

24,25,26 Purchased in Katélé, close to the border of Mali.

Bobo- Upper Volta

- 27, 28 Purchased in Bobo-Dioulasso
- 29 Mixed European and local threads, purchased in Bobo-Dioulasso
- 30,31 Possible imitation of imported cloth. Purchased in Diebougou, west of Bobo-Dioulasso, woven by Dyula.

Dafi - Upper Volta

- 32,33,34 Woven by Dafi and purchased in Bobo-Dioulasso.
- 35,36,37
- 38,39

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