



**TRADITIONAL ART
OF THE IVORY COAST,
THE UPPER VOLTA, AND MALI**

from The Sylvia and Michael Horowitz Collection



University Art Gallery

State University of New York at Binghamton

March 23-April 22, 1979



Acknowledgements

The University Art Gallery is indebted to those individuals whose familiarity with the Horowitz Collection and whose interest in the Gallery's commitment to the community have made this memorable exhibition possible: Jim Stark, Assistant Professor of Sculpture at SUNY-Binghamton, who first brought the collection to our attention; Katie Busing, Exhibition Designer Intern, whose able hands and intuitive vision shaped the physical and conceptual presentation of the objects; Barbara J. Perkins and Jim Spano, Gallery Interns, whose familiarity with museum installation techniques greatly facilitated this task; Charles Citron, Gallery Intern, whose good will, enthusiasm and curiosity about the story behind the objects reminded us all of the role inherent in the operation of a University art gallery; Walter Luckert, whose technical skill and imagination successfully overcame the complications of displaying these objects; Katherine Gleason, Gallery secretary, whose abiding patience and reliability we could not have done without; Audrey Smedley, for her Foreword to the catalogue and her gracious offer of support; Chris Focht and Judy Williman for the consistently high quality of their photography and their sensitivity to problems of arrangement; Carol Ryer, Gallery Intern, whose concentration and ability to absorb new information quickly enabled us to produce this catalogue.

It is thanks to the discriminating eye of Michael Horowitz, his suggestions, generosity with his time, and his professionalism, that *Traditional Art of the Ivory Coast, the Upper Volta, and Mali* is now in our Gallery after many months of preparation. The exhibition attests to the tremendous richness of sculptural form developed over generations of tribal artists working in West Africa; it reflects the powerful statement of the individual artist both functionally and aesthetically.

The visually compelling aspects of the Horowitz Collection revitalize and dramatize the space of our Gallery; it brings together a group of objects whose honesty and structural integrity constitute its remarkable beauty, its impact on our often impoverished eyes.

Jill Elyse Grossvogel
Curator



Foreword

It has been only within the past three decades that large numbers of persons in the Western world have become directly acquainted with the arts of Africa. Yet interest in African art dates back at least 400 years. During the seventeenth century, Europeans began to develop collections of African art, attracted by their distinctive forms and aesthetically pleasing qualities. In more modern times, the influence of African abstract forms began to permeate the works of such great masters as Picasso, Brancusi, Vlaminck, Modigliani, and Derain. Art historians today acknowledge the catalytic role played by African art in the artistic revolution that took place in Paris early in this century.

The arts of the peoples of Africa are manifest in a multitude of forms: wood, metal, and terra cotta sculptures, weaving, painting, etching, carving, beadwork, leatherwork, embroidery, architecture, pottery, and dance, music, dress and decoration. But it has been via the carved and decorated wood sculptures that most Westerners relate to African art; we recognize these forms as most decisively African. It is unfortunate that there are relatively few good collections of these materials. Outside of museum assemblages in a few urban centers, most are not readily available to the public. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that with modernization and the growth of industrial production, there has been a decline in the creation of traditional art. Many feel that it is in danger of losing its grandeur, its force, its meaning. Thus, an important vehicle through which some of this creativity is being preserved is the maintenance and promotion of what are rapidly becoming priceless collections.

One of the finest assemblages of African sculpture in this area is that of Drs. Sylvia and Michael Horowitz, respectively Instructor in English and Professor of Anthropology, State University of New York at Binghamton. For this exhibit, they have placed at our disposal a generous portion of their extensive collection, by selecting items which reflect much of the variety of the traditional art of Mali, the Upper Volta, and the Ivory Coast. Indefatigable students of Africa, Sylvia and Michael Horowitz exemplify, with this gesture, an important but often overlooked anthropological ideal: the ultimate goal of understanding other cultures. Though we are not able to comprehend totally the meaning of each item outside its cultural context, what this exhibit does is to reveal some of the flavor, the richness, and vitality of African traditional art.

The University and the community are indeed fortunate to have such an exhibit.

*Audrey Smedley, Chairperson
Department of Afro-American and African Studies*

Introduction

It has been my privilege to spend a good deal of the past sixteen years in West and Equatorial Africa, as an anthropologist undertaking scientific studies of rural populations, and as an official, applying those studies to assist in the process of economic development and technological change. Prior to living on the continent I shared, with many anthropologists, a general interest in and appreciation of ethnographic art. But it wasn't until my first visit to the Ivory Coast, when I had an opportunity to witness masks being danced in ceremony, that my interest and appreciation became a passion, and though my prime concerns remain the analysis of pastoral and agricultural ecology, the opportunity to see a mask in action will move me hundreds of unanticipated kilometers.

An exhibit of 150 pieces—all but one of which were obtained in Africa—cannot pretend to comprehensiveness. Not a single one of the sixteen ethnic groups displayed here enjoys an exhaustive showing; far less any of the three modern states. Yet the display should lead the viewer to a sense of the tremendous diversity of achievement both within and among ethnic groups. Looking within a group, i.e., in studying the Senufo *kpelie* masks (Nos. 66–71), we see both the force of tradition, as all the pieces conform to an explicit set of canons, and the creativity of the individual artist, who translates those canons into a personal statement. Similarly, the Lobi figures (Nos. 78–87) illustrate how the sculptor carves his own presence on pieces which at first viewing seem very much alike. Even within a tradition, very different kinds of statements can be made. Compare the flat abstract and geometric Baule *kplekple* mask (No. 17) with the portrait-like presentation (No. 20) from the same group.

The notions of “unity and diversity” are by now clichés, but they are nonetheless descriptive of these traditions. The other notion, also often employed and yet perfectly appropriate, is dualism. Within these masks and figures, the carvers have tried to state problems—if not solutions—in terms of polarities, of opposites. The most obvious duality is sexual. A number of objects are shown in male-female pairs (Nos. 1 and 2, 32, 54 and 55, 57 and 58, 78 and 79, 116, 141 and 142); in some, the sex of the figure is deliberately ambiguous or androgynous (Nos. 11, 90, 115). A more subtle duality is the opposition between self and others, rendered in a number of these pieces as Africans with European attributes (Nos. 10–14, 35, 36, 54). Other polarities exposed in these objects are living/dead, human/animal, adult/infant, spiritual/mundane.

In the last exhibition of African art held at State University of New York at Binghamton (1972), the catalogue introduction shared with the reader the regret of having to display pieces on walls and in glass cases, out of the vital context in which they were created to function. A recent national display, African Art in Motion, developed that theme, and asked the viewer to try to think of the mask as one element of a complex, moving ceremonial. The regret in this present introduction is that it is now almost too late to see them in settings other than galleries and private collections. While a few areas of West Africa continue the creation of these objects for local use, art and its accompanying ritual have not been able to withstand unaffected the

changes sweeping the newly independent states. More and more the African sculptor finds an alternative market in lucrative production for export. The loss is not merely that of patination (which may be skillfully applied prior to sale). As the consumer ceases to be a knowledgeable, critical member of the ethnic group, the sculptor is deprived of the sense of community and mutual respect. Carving for local ceremonial use, the sculptor knew that his creation became an object of supernatural power. Carving for export, it becomes, no matter how technically proficient the work, an object for sale. The tradition itself which encouraged individuality within prescribed canons is in danger of stagnating to support mass production. The less authentic the object, the shoddier it is, the more readily it seems to sell in the hotels, airports, and downtown markets of African cities.

It is unlikely therefore that many fine collections will ever again be assembled in West Africa. Even those African dealers who tried to specialize in genuine pieces, and who paid and received astronomic prices for them, are less and less able to supply their clients. Those of us who did most of our collecting in the field also testify to a rapid decline. Like European mediaeval or renaissance art, most of the objects are well-known and circulate among collectors. We can anticipate the time when, to satisfy a demand for authenticity, mass-produced masks will be loaned briefly to folklore troupes for tourist performances, and then sold as genuine, having been "danced."

Thus the context changes. For the anthropologist interested in meaning and function as well as aesthetic value, the changed context results in new problems. But it is a tribute to their creators — most of whom will be forever anonymous — that even wrenched from that context, the artistic power of many of these pieces transcends the original scene, and continues to impress and elevate the viewer.

Michael M. Horowitz

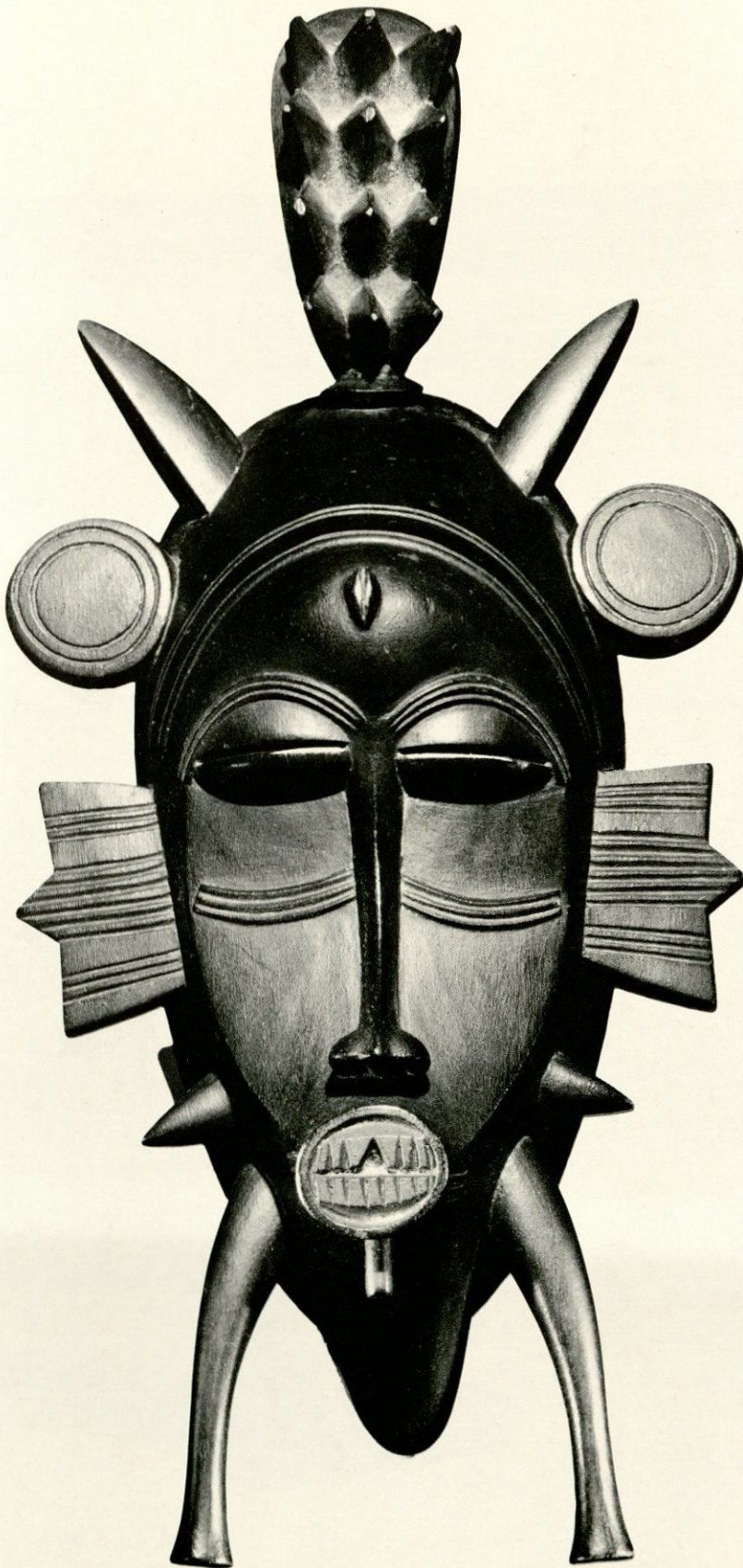
*This exhibition is dedicated to my teachers
who first shared with me the joys of Africa and of African art:*

George Eaton Simpson

Joseph H. Greenberg

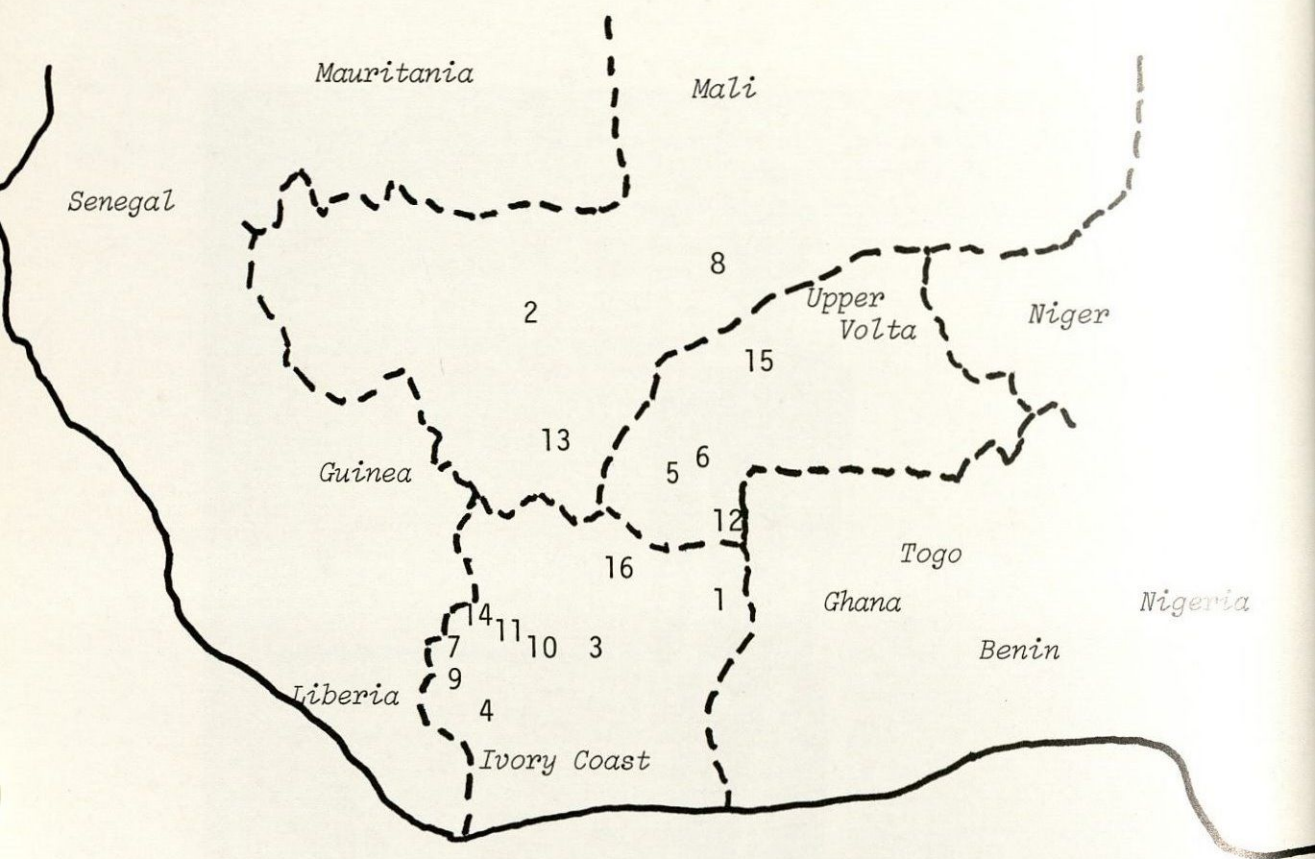
Elliott P. Skinner

and to the memory of Melville J. Herskovits.





Catalogue of the Exhibition



LOCATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS EXHIBITED

1. Abron
2. Bambara
3. Baule
4. Bete
5. Bobo-Fing
6. Bwa
7. Dan
8. Dogon
9. Gere
10. Guro
11. Kran
12. Lobi
13. Malinke
14. Maou-Diemande
15. Mossi
16. Senufo



Ivory Coast

BAULE. Peasant farmers of the central Ivory Coast, the Baule are one of the Akan-speaking peoples, which includes the Abron, Fanti, Anyi, and Ashanti. Migrating westward from their Ghanaian Ashanti roots, the Baule retained the craft of *cire perdue* bronze casting, while developing wood carving into forms of portraiture. Some critics accuse them of sentimentality, of pandering to European tastes, and indeed Baule "ancestor figures" have been readily appreciated by foreign collectors. Yet despite the avidity with which Baule pieces have been collected, less is known about their art and society than about many other African peoples whose artistic production is less numerous. Among the problems which intrigue historians is the impact which the Baule and their Ivorian neighbors have had on each other. Although their cultural origins are distinct, geographic proximity has led to a remarkable stylistic convergence between the Baule and the Guro.

1. Baule.

Female figure (*waka soma*), standing.

Wood.

Ht. 37.5 cm.

Acc. No. 75027.

2. Baule.

Male figure, standing.

Wood.

Ht. 39.5 cm.

Acc. No. 75026.

This is the female member of the pair which includes No. 2.



1.

2.

3. Baule.
Female figure, standing.

Wood.
Ht. 40.5 cm.
Acc. No. 63001.

Exhibited: *Traditional Art of West Africa*, No. 33.
State University of New York at
Binghamton, March 12-April 16, 1972
[illustrated].

4. Baule.
Female figure, standing.

Wood, cord, cowrie shells.
Ht. 28.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74120.

The figure is unusual in its starkly unsophisticated treatment.

5. Baule.
Female figure, standing.

Wood.
Ht. 26.5 cm.
Acc. No. 72001.

6. Baule.
Female figure, standing.

Wood.
Ht. 19.5 cm.
Acc. No. 67008.

Exhibited: *Traditional Art of West Africa*, No. 34.

7. Baule.
Female figure, standing.

Wood, white beads.
Ht. 28.5 cm.
Acc. No. 67009.

Exhibited: *Traditional Art of West Africa*, No. 35.

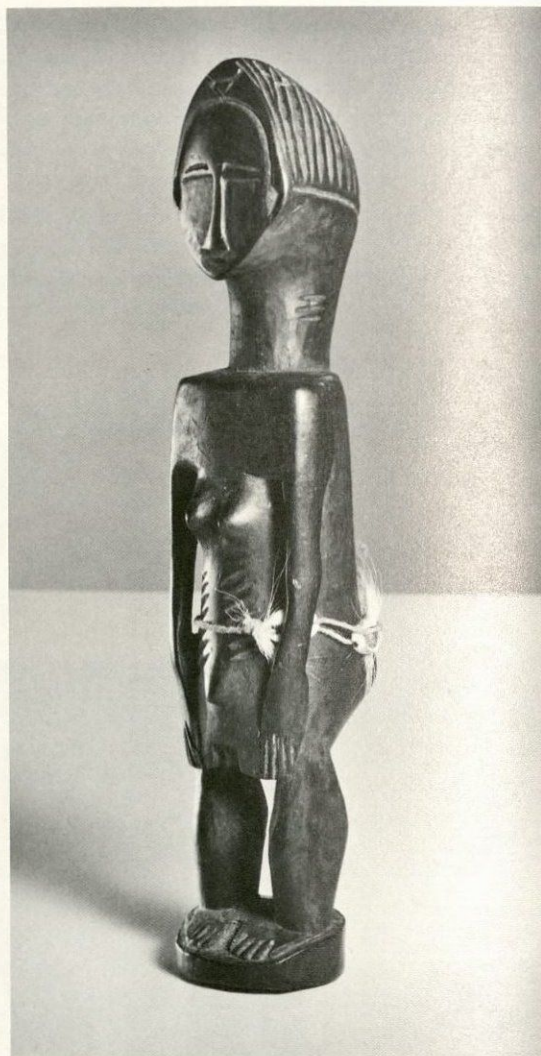
8. Baule.
Male figure, standing.

Wood.
Ht. 35 cm.
Acc. No. 74086.

9. Baule (or Yaure).
Female figure, standing.

Wood, dye.
Ht. 24 cm.
Acc. No. 74049.

V. Guerry quotes a Baule describing his relationship with one of these figures: "My genie protects me perfectly at this moment, but I have made no agreement with him, so if one day I am not satisfied with him, I will throw his statuette away" (*Life with the Baule*, 1975, p. 158).



10. Baule.
Male figure, "colonial," standing.

Wood, paint.
Ht. 17 cm.
Acc. No. 74078.

"Colonial" figures imitate, by color, dress, and posture, Europeans (who are called "red men" by the Baule). Characteristically, these figures wear short pants or knee length dresses, and hold their hands in their pockets. The figures are considered identical to those more traditionally presented, except that they have access to both African and European power.



13. 14. 12. 10. 11.

11. Baule.
Male figure, "colonial," in seated posture.
 Wood, paint.
 Ht. 21.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74079.

Although presented as a "male," the figure has incipient breasts. Sexual duality is a recurrent theme in West Africa, and figures are often portrayed in pairs or in a single androgynous person.

12. Baule.
Male figure, "colonial," standing.
 Wood.
 Ht. 26 cm.
 Acc. No. 74041.

13. Baule.
Male figure, "colonial," standing.
 Wood, paint.
 Ht. 31 cm.
 Acc. No. 72007.

Dressed as a European with short pants, belt, and a sleeveless undershirt, the figure also wears a Muslim amulet.

14. Baule.
Male figure, "colonial," standing.
 Wood, paint.
 Ht. 29 cm.
 Acc. No. 74070.

15. Baule.
Male equestrian figure on horse.
 Brass (*cire perdue* casting).
 Ht. 9 cm.
 Acc. No. 75014.

16. Baule.
Male equestrian figure on horse.
 Bronze (*cire perdue* casting).
 Ht. 8.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 75013.

17. Baule.
Mask, in form of disc with horns (*kplekple*).
 Wood, paint.
 Ht. 43 cm.
 Acc. No. 74067.

18. Baule.

Mask, in the form of a goat's head.

Wood, paint.

Ht. 33 cm.

Acc. No. 74047.

The mask is worn on top of the head rather than over the face.

19. Baule.

Mask, human face surmounted with horns.

Wood, paint.

Ht. 42 cm.

Acc. No. 74121.

This mask is from the village of Sarasow, near Djimkaro.

20. Baule.

Portrait mask.

Wood.

Ht. 32 cm.

Acc. No. 74095.

This mask is from the region of Dimbokro, on road to Bocanda.

21. Baule.

Container.

Wood, metal, ceramic, leather, cord, cloth.

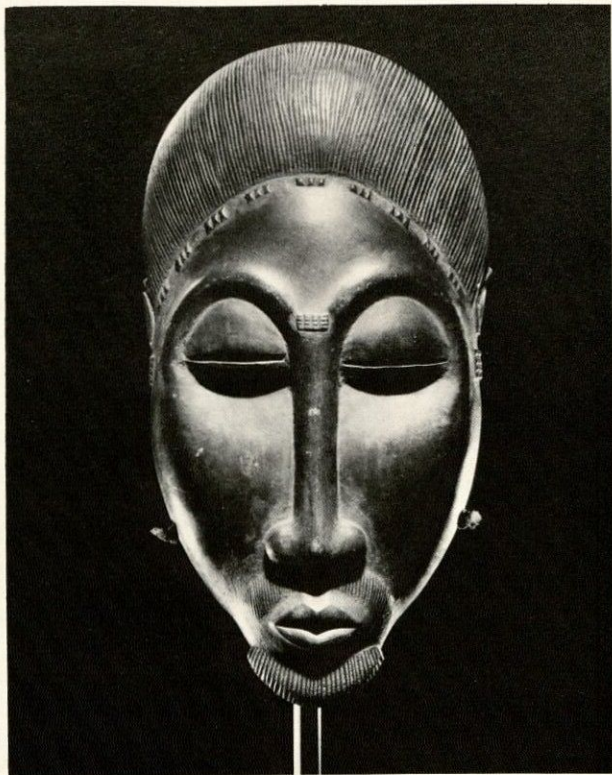
Ht. 19 cm.

Acc. No. 74066.

These boxes are used by diviners who interpret placement of strips of metal moved about by



22. Baule.
"Hammer" (drum mallet), surmounted by carved human face and wild pig.
 Wood, cloth.
 Lg. 35.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74099.
23. Baule.
***Chasse-mouche*, decorated with alternating human masks and crickets.**
 Blonde wood.
 Lg. 30 cm.
 Acc. No. 74101.
24. Baule.
Sling-shot, with janus-type horned figures.
 Wood, rubber.
 Ht. 21 cm.
 Acc. No. 74062.
- The carved figure represents a *dye* mask, probably a borrowing from the Guro.
25. Baule.
Sling-shot.
 Wood, rubber.
 Ht. 16.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 75001.
26. Baule.
Sling-shot, with bird handle.
 Wood, rubber.
 Ht. 23 cm.
 Acc. No. 75002.
27. Baule.
Weaving pulley in form of female face; with bobbin.
 Wood.
 Ht. 18 cm.
 Acc. No. 74116.
28. Baule.
Weaving pulley in form of bird; with bobbin.
 Wood, metal, cord.
 Ht. 18 cm.
 Acc. No. 74043.



29. Baule.
Weaving pulley, janus-headed.
 Wood, cord.
 Ht. 21 cm.
 Acc. No. 74003.
30. Baule.
Weaving pulley in form of female head.
 Wood, cord.
 Ht. 19.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74042.
31. Baule.
Weaving pulley in form of horned anthropomorphic head.
 Wood.
 Ht. 14 cm.
 Acc. No. 74015.

32. Baule.

Stool, supported by two male and two female caryatid figures.

Wood.

Ht. 37 cm.; wd. 42 cm.

Acc. No. 74026.

33. Abron.

Female figure, standing.

Wood, white and yellow beads, string.

Ht. 27.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74039.

32.



GURO. Inhabiting the savannah region of the central Ivory Coast, in close proximity to the Baule, the Mande-speaking Guro are linguistically related to Dan, Mende, Toma, and Vai who live further west in forested areas of the Ivory Coast and in Liberia and Sierra Leone. While occasional statues are found, the Guro are best known for their masks, especially their delicate representation of the female face.

34. Guro.

Female figure, standing.

Wood, traces of polychrome paint, white beads, thread.

Ht. 39.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74141.

35. Guro.

Mask in form of female face, surmounted by two female figures, one male figure, and a ram.

Wood, paint.

Ht. 51 cm.

Acc. No. 74027.

The male and one of the female figures are European; the other female is African. The scene may depict a marriage feast.

36. Guro.

Mask in form of female face, surmounted by large female figure, small male figure, and snakes.

Wood, paint.

Ht. 44 cm.

Acc. No. 74059.

This mask seems to be influenced by the Mammy Wata cult, best known from eastern Nigeria. "Nearly all the spirits ... [are] very beautiful, fair skinned, and with long soft hair of European or Indian type. Sometimes they are wreathed in snakes" (Jill Salmons, "Mammy Wata," *African Arts* X(3):8, 1977).

37. Guro.

Mask (zamble).

Wood, traces of paint.

Ht. 51 cm.

Acc. No. 74024.

38. Guro.

Mask (zamble).

Wood, paint.

Ht. 40.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74028.



DAN. The Dan and Gere, Mande-speaking peoples, live in the wooded highland regions of the western Ivory Coast and northeastern Liberia. Although they have a broad repertoire of sculptural forms, they are best known for their masks, which range from delicate symmetrical forms of intense understatement to complex assemblages of bells, fur, cartridges, metal, hair, cloth, wood, and paint. A classification of Dan masks may be found in E. Fischer: "all Dan faces masks can be divided into two groups. There are the feminine mask types, *gle mu*, with beautiful face, oval outlines and narrow slit-eyes, which act in a gentle and mild manner. In contrast are the masculine masks, *gle gon*, with pentagonal outlines and tube-like eyes, which act in a vigorous, aggressive and fearsome way" ("Dan Forest Spirits: Masks in Dan Villages," *African Arts* XI(2), 1978:19).

39. Dan.

Representation of a forest spirit, comprised of two female figures back-to-back on a base of a human mask, a primate mask, and two serpents. Wood, shell, feathers, rubber.

Ht. 86.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74089.

The top of the structure is a receptacle for sacrificial offerings.

40. Dan.

Mask.

Wood, hide, fur fragments.

Ht. 23.5 cm.

Acc. No. 67013.

Exhibited: *Traditional Art of West Africa*, No. 40 [illustrated].

41. Dan.

Mask.

Wood, paint, fiber, metal, cloth.

Ht. 25.5 cm.

Acc. No. 67012.

Exhibited: *Traditional Art of West Africa*, No. 38 [illustrated].

42. Dan.

Mask.

Wood, fur, cloth.

Ht. 31 cm.

Acc. No. 67014.

Exhibited: *Traditional Art of West Africa*, No. 39 [illustrated].

43. Dan.

Mask.

Wood, metal, fur, wool.

Ht. 28 cm.

Acc. No. 72002.



44. Dan.

Mask.

Wood.

Ht. 8.5 cm.

Acc. No. 72004.

Because of their small size and because they are carried rather than worn, these objects are often referred to as "passport" masks.

45. Dan.

Slit drum (gule).

Wood.

Ht. 42 cm.

Acc. No. 74072.

Surmounted by janus heads, the drum has a male body on one side, and a female body on the other. It is played by *zangler* dancers.



41.

46. Dan
Container for shea nut butter.

Wood.
Ht. 28 cm.
Acc. No. 74033.

The container is in the form of a European kettle, a coiled serpent forming the body and a series of masks forming the handle. Shea nut butter is used as an unguent and cosmetic.

47. Dan-Gere.
Mask with fringe of bells.

Wood, metal, cloth, paint.
Ht. 27.5 cm.
Acc. No. 75016.

This mask, from the region of Logouale in the Prefecture of Man, is worn by praise-singers, and, unlike the dance masks, does not have spiritual power.

48. Gere.

Mask.

Wood, paint, metal, raffia fringe, cloth, fur remnants.
Ht. 34.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74115.

49. Gere.

Mask.

Wood, paint, metal tacks, metal, hair, cloth, fur.
Ht. 35.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74090.

50. Gere.

Mask.

Wood, polychrome paint, cloth, grass, horsehair, feathers, fur, metal, nails.
Ht. 43 cm.
Acc. No. 74052.

"The face of this mask appears funny, but one must not misinterpret it: it belongs ... to the class of dangerous monsters" (translated from B. Holas, *Sculptures Ivoiriennes*, Paris: Geuthner, 2nd ed., 1973, p. 126).

51. Kran.

Mask.

Wood, traces of paint, cord.
Ht. 31.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74051.

Mask has an articulated mandible.

52. Bete.

Mask.

Wood, hide fragments.
Ht. 29 cm.
Acc. No. 63002.

Exhibited: *Traditional Art of West Africa*, No. 42.

53. Maou-Diomande.

Mask (koma).

Wood.
Ht. 39.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74071.

The Maou, north of the Dan, live in a heavily Muslim region and have few masks. Each mask may be danced by a number of persons, and must be ritually cleansed each time it is passed on. The interior of the mask shows an accumulation of the grease used to remove the dangerous residues of previous wearers.



55. 54.

SENUFO. An agricultural people living in the northern Ivory Coast, and in neighboring regions of the Upper Volta and Mali, Senofo sculpture forms part of the agro-religious secret society structure into whose ranks men are progressively initiated. Certain masks and figures are specific to particular societies and guilds. A comprehensive exhibition of their work was organized by the Museum of Primitive Art, *Senofo Sculpture from West Africa*, 1963.

Dr. Dolores Richter, who carried out research among Senofo Kulebele in Korhogo, 1973-1975, was particularly helpful in identifying the origins of a number of the pieces listed below.

54. Senofo.

Male figure, standing.

Wood.

Ht. 47 cm.

Acc. No. 74128.

The heart-shaped face line identifies this piece as made by the Fonobele, blacksmiths, west of Korhogo, perhaps in Boundiali. This is the male member of a pair which includes No. 55.

55. Senofo.

Female figure, standing.

Wood.

Ht. 52 cm.

Acc. No. 74129.

"Standing figures may be ancestor figures, especially when they appear in pairs; the family or the village pays its respect to them under the ritual guidance of its head. Certain figures are also used for divination by a women's society called 'Sandogo.' The equestrian figures and couples are representations of protective spirits which also have divinatory functions" (*Senofo Sculpture from West Africa*, Museum of Primitive Art, 1963).

56. Senofo.

Male equestrian figure (*bandeguele*).

Wood.

Ht. 35 cm.

Acc. No. 74061.

From Boundiali.

57. Senofo.

Male equestrian figure.

Wood, paint.

Ht. 40 cm.

Acc. No. 74139.

Male member of a pair which includes No. 58. These bush spirits, *mandebele*, are always made in pairs, male and female. They are rarely seen that way in collections, perhaps because the collectors' preferences for the mounted figure breaks up the set. These figures were carved by Nafra, farmers.

58. Senufo.

Female figure, standing.

Wood, paint.

Ht. 32.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74140.

59. Senufo.

Female figure, standing.

Wood.

Ht. 54 cm.

Acc. No. 67005.

Exhibited: *Traditional Art of West Africa*, No. 24
[illustrated].

60. Senufo.

Masked figure, standing.

Wood, cloth, feathers, sacrificial patination.

Ht. 39.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74037.

61. Senufo.

Male figure, standing.

Wood.

Ht. 18 cm.

Acc. No. 74060.

Made by the Senufo group Minenga, in the region
of Mbengue (ca. 75 km. north of Korhogo).

62. Senufo.

Mask (*kagba*).

Wood, paint.

Ht. 98 cm.

Acc. No. 74136.

Made by Kulebele, the mask is danced by the
Nafra as part of a tent costume. "It appears only at
the burials of Lo-society dignitaries, and its sight
brings death to the uninitiated" (*Senufo Art of West
Africa*, Museum of Primitive Art, 1963).



57. 58.



59.

63. Senufo.

Mask (*kpelegue*).

Wood, traces of paint.

Lg. 53.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74132.

From the village of Mbengue, worn by members of
the Djelebele (or leather-workers) *poro*.

64. Senufo.

Mask (*wanugu*)

Wood, traces of paint.

Lg. 81.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74131.

From village of Napieoledougou, ca. 17 km. south
of Korhogo, danced by the Wambele *poro* society.

65. Senufo.

Mask (*korobla*).

Wood, horn, bone, cloth, paint, sacrificial patination.

Lg. 58.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74135.

From village of Woro, between Boundiali and Tingrela.

66. Senufo.

Mask (*kpelie*)

Wood.

Ht. 28 cm.

Acc. No. 74125.

Identified by the carver Ngolo Kone as having been carved by Tchepezie, who came to Korhogo from Mbengue. Date unknown.

67. Senufo.

Mask (*kpelie*).

Wood.

Ht. 37 cm.

Acc. No. 74124.

From Mbengue. "The face mask, or 'kpelie,' with adornments and 'legs' is not a portrait, but the embodiment of an idea: the precariousness of the human condition. The 'kpelie' appears in rituals of the Lo-society to reveal this concept to the initiates" (*Senufo Art from West Africa*, Museum of Primitive Art, 1963).

68. Senufo

Double mask surmounted by seated female figure (*kpelie*).

Wood, beads.

Ht. 35.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74127.

Carved by Ngolo Kone for the Kpatobele in Gbemou, shortly after his arrival in Korhogo in 1966.

69. Senufo.

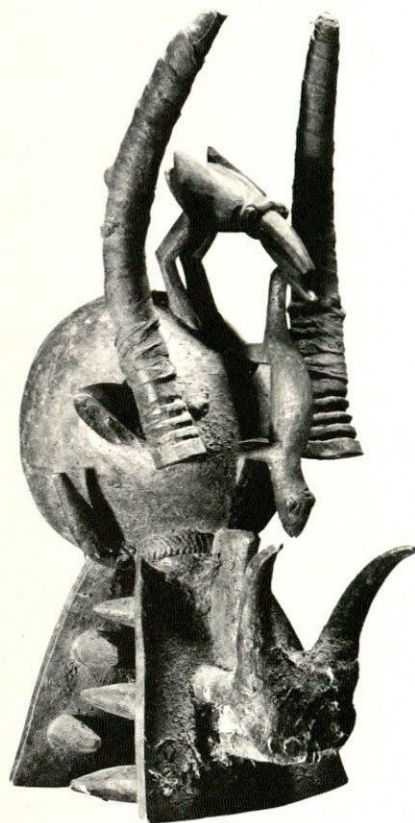
Mask (*kpelie*).

Wood.

Ht. 38 cm.

Acc. No. 74126.

Carved either by the Guleo (singular of Kulebele) Klana Kone or by his father, during the time when Klana lived in Kolia (ca. 30 km. north of Boundiali), prior to 1954. It was danced by the farmers' *poro* in Ouezomon (ca. 10 km. south of Boundiali), and retired in 1974 in exchange for a new mask.



65.

70. Senufo.

Mask (*kpelie*).

Wood.

Ht. 32 cm.

Acc. No. 72003.

71. Senufo.

Mask, (*kpelie*), zoomorphic shape.

Wood, raffia fringe.

Ht. 35.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74137.

Danced by both Senambele and Kulebele.

According to Ngolo Kone, mask may have been carved by Tenena from the village of Sumo.

72. Senufo.

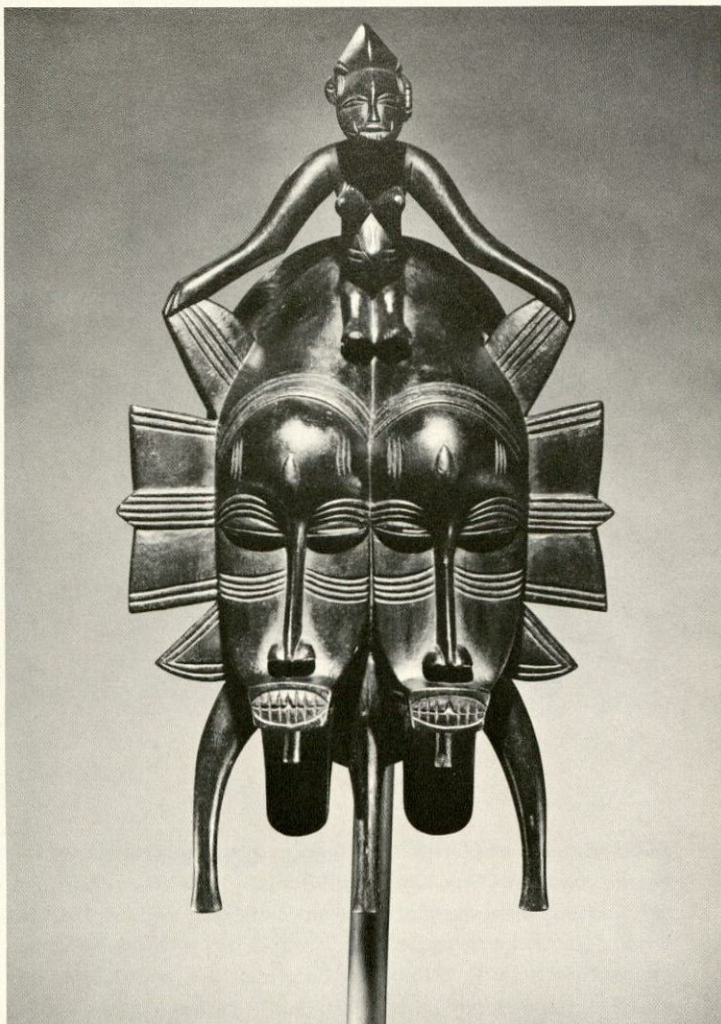
Staff, surmounted by seated female figure (*daleu*).

Wood, thread.

Ht. 132 cm.

Acc. No. 74138.

Emblems of achievement carried by young farmers who have won an agricultural competition. Made by the Kulebele.



73. Senufo.

Sabre.

Wood.

Lg. 84 cm.

Acc. No. 74130.

Made by Kulebele for the use of Nafra farmers who live east of Korhogo.

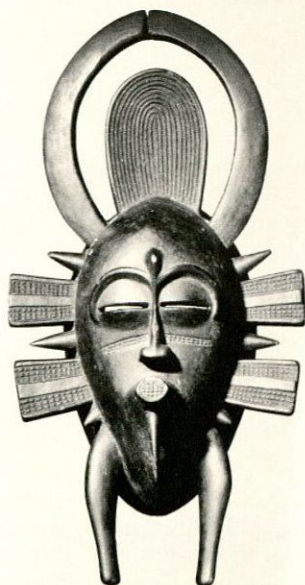
74. Senufo.

Weaving pulley in the form of bird's beak.

Wood.

Ht. 15 cm.

Acc. No. 74045.



75. Senufo.

Weaving pulley in the form of bird's beak.

Wood.

Ht. 18 cm.

Acc. No. 74044.

76. Unidentified ethnic group from Ivory Coast, Mali, or Ghana.

Hunter's Shirt.

Burlap, cowrie shells, leather, hide, copper, bird parts, monkey skull.

Ht. 73.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74087.

Each rectangle of hide and leather represents a kill.

77. Unidentified ethnic group from Ivory Coast or Liberia.

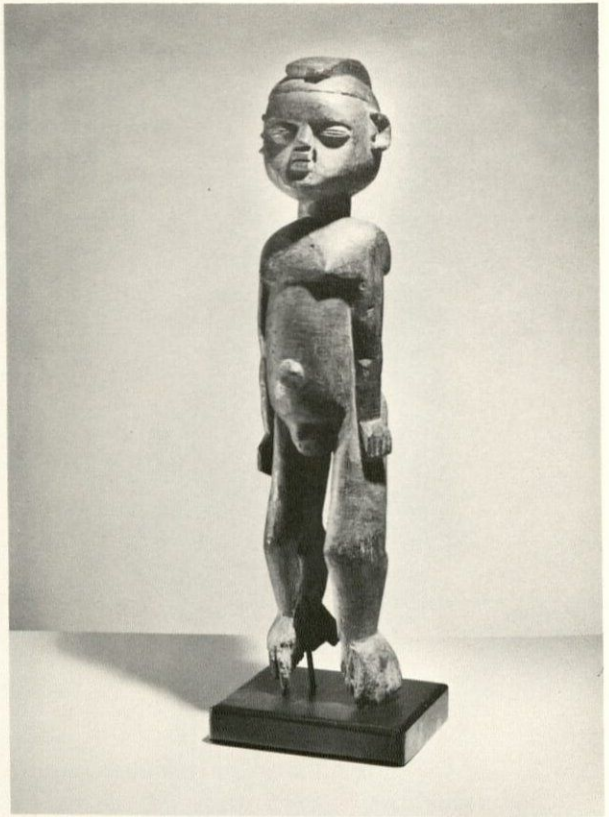
Game board (wari).

Wood, resin repairs.

Lg. 61 cm.

Acc. No. 74123.

Upper Volta



LOBI. Hunters and farmers, the Lobi occupy the area defined by the towns of Gaoua (in the Upper Volta), Wa (in Ghana), and Bouna (in the Ivory Coast). Until recently, they received only passing, often disdainful reference in books and exhibitions. J. Delange dismisses their work: "The sculpture of the Lobi is said to be rather coarse" (*The Art and Peoples of Black Africa*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1974, p. 20). Only two Lobi pieces are illustrated in the monumental study by M. Leiris and J. Delange, *Afrique noire: La Création plastique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967). Yet the tremendous force and integrity of Lobi figures — they make almost no masks — is now being appreciated, and in 1974 a full showing of Lobi sculpture was held at the Kerchache Gallery in Paris. A wonderful Lobi female figure adorns the poster of the University of Texas 1976 exhibition on The Art of the Upper Volta.

78. Lobi.

Male figure, standing.

Wood.

Ht. 48.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74054.

This figure appears carved by the same artist as No. 79.

79. Lobi.

Female figure, standing.

Wood.

Ht. 43 cm.

Acc. No. 74055.

Many Lobi figures may have been used as grave markers; hence the deterioration in the lower extremities. These two pieces are made of a less dense wood than customarily employed.

80. Lobi.

Female figure, standing.

Wood.

Ht. 81 cm.

Acc. No. 74057.

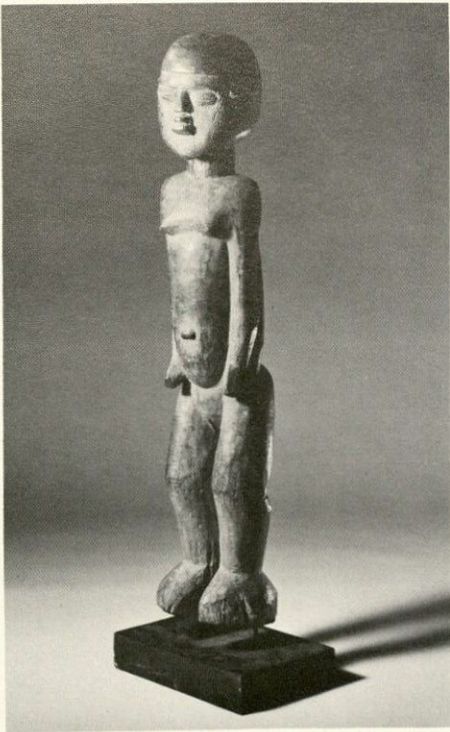


83.

81. Lobi.
Female figure, standing.
Wood.
Ht. 56 cm.
Acc. No. 74053.

82. Lobi.
Female figure, standing.
Wood.
Ht. 65 cm.
Acc. No. 74098.

83. Lobi.
Pregnant figure, standing.
Wood, traces of sacrificial patina.
Ht. 19 cm.
Acc. No. 74048.



82.

84. Lobi.
Male figure, standing.
Wood.
Ht. 67.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74097.

85. Lobi.
Female figure, standing.
Wood.
Ht. 33.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74105.

86. Lobi.
Male figure, standing.
Wood.
Ht. 19 cm.
Acc. No. 74102.

87. Lobi.
Female figure, standing.
Wood.
Ht. 60.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74010.

88. Lobi.
Head.
Wood.
Ht. 34.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74056.

89. Lobi.
Bird, in anthropomorphic posture.
Wood.
Ht. 26.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74122.

90. Lobi.
Hermaphroditic figure, standing.
Bronze.
Ht. 12.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74103.

91. Lobi.
Stool, surmounted with antelope head.
Wood.
Lg. 71 cm.
Acc. No. 74142.

92. Lobi.
Weaving pulley, surmounted by two female figures back-to-back.
Wood.
Ht. 21.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74013.





BOBO. Two distinct groups comprise the Bobo: the Bobo-Fing, centered about the city of Bobo-Dioulasso, and the Bwa (also known as Bobo-Ule and Bobo-Nyenyegue, the latter mainly around the town of Hounde), widely dispersed in small villages in western Upper Volta and the adjacent areas of Mali. The Bwa, who have been splendidly described by Jean Capron (*Communautés villageoises Bwa*. Paris: Institut d' Ethnologie, 1973), lived in autonomous farming villages, in which the members constituted the limits of the political group, the kin group, and the congregation. Both ethnic units are celebrated for their magnificent, often extremely large and elaborate, masks by which the spirits or *do* are portrayed.

93. Bwa.

Male figure, standing (*hembene*).

Wood.

Ht. 61 cm.

Acc. No. 74145.

Hembene ("second twin") represents the spirit of a deceased twin, and stands in for the deceased at ceremonies. This figure was carved in the village of Pe, by the blacksmith Karafa, probably prior to the mid-1940s. Karafa has long been blind and retired from carving.

94. Bwa.

Mask, in form of antelope head (*kan*).

Wood, polychrome.

Lg. 45.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74147.

The dancer sees through the open mouth of the mask. From town of Boni, worn by hunters for whom killing the animal is taboo.

95. Bwa.

Mask, in form of a toucan.

Wood.

Ht. 99 cm.

Acc. No. 74008.

96. Bwa.

Mask, in form of antelope's head with long horns.

Wood.

Ht. 127 cm.

Acc. No. 74022.

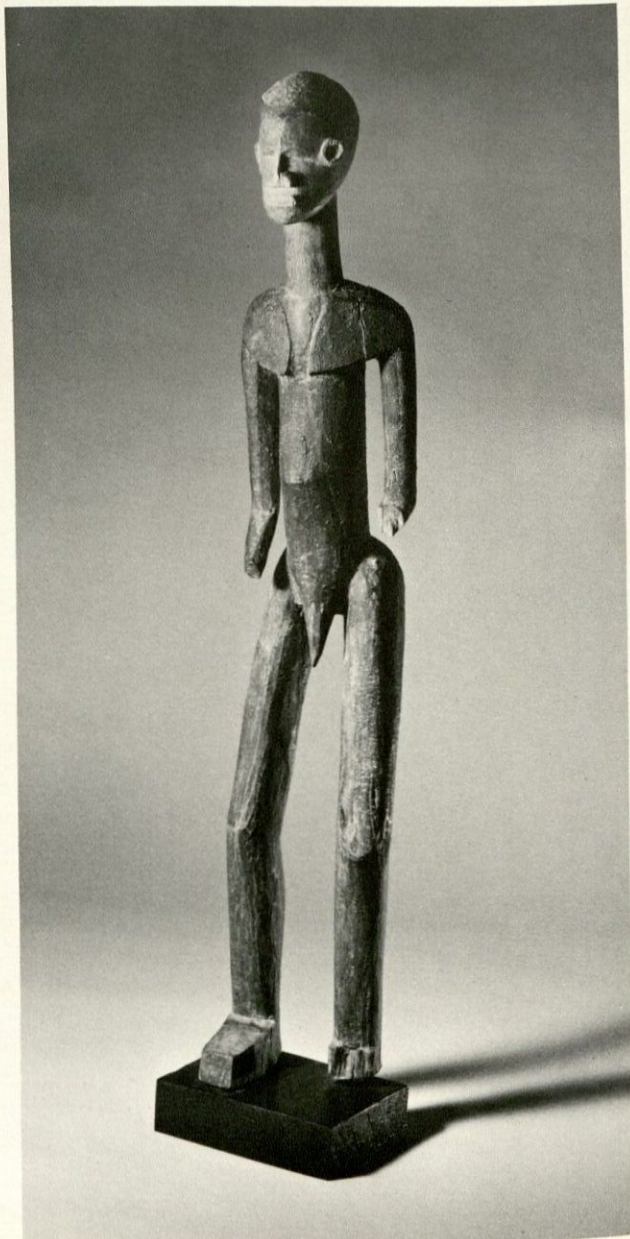
97. Bwa.

Bracelet, of twisted metal surmounted by seated male and female figures.

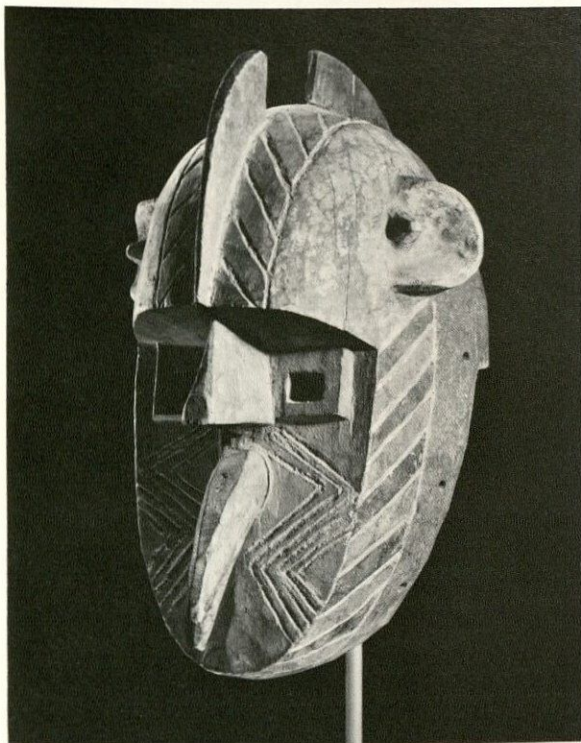
Bronze and iron.

Diam. 9 cm.

Acc. No. 77002.



100.



98. Bobo-Fing.
Male figure, standing.
Wood.
Ht. 82.5 cm.
Acc. No. 74149.

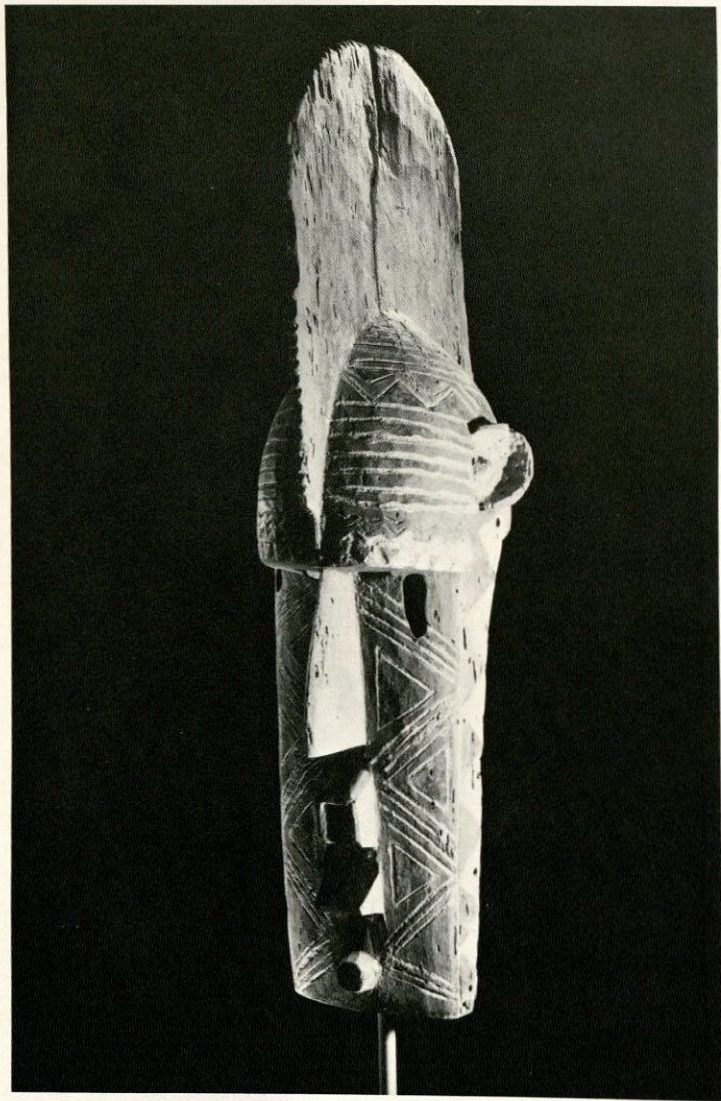
99. Bobo-Fing.
Female figure, standing.
Wood, beads, cowrie shells, cord, sacrificial
encrustation.
Ht. 61 cm.
Acc. No. 74092.

100. Bobo-Fing.
Helmet mask.
Wood, traces of polychrome.
Ht. 50 cm.
Acc. No. 74011.

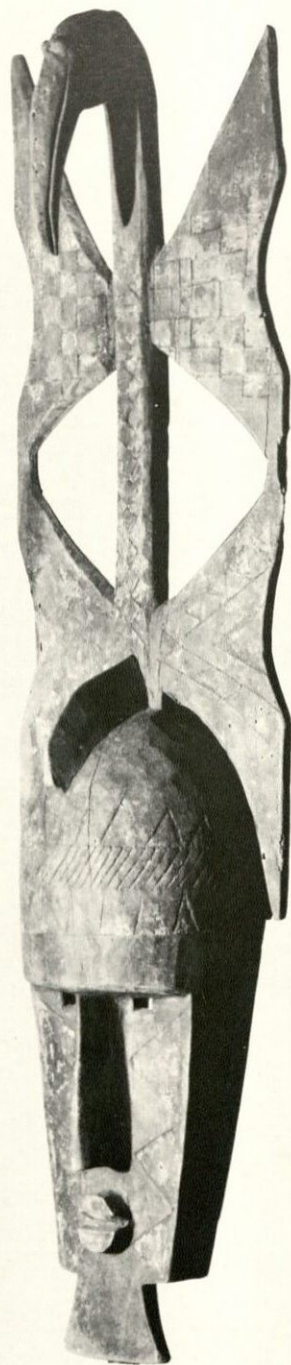


95.

101.



101. Bobo-Fing.
Long helmet mask.
 Wood, polychrome.
 Ht. 89 cm.
 Acc. No. 74012.



102. Bobo-Fing.
Helmet mask, surmounted by bird figure (kelle).
 Wood, traces of paint.
 Ht. 123 cm.
 Acc. No. 75023.

MOSSI. In contrast to the egalitarian autonomous Bwa, the Mossi were hierarchically organized, stratified between common people and nobles, culminating in the Mogho Naba, the ruler at Ouagadougou. For generations they resisted the penetration of Islam, while similarly organized Sudanic states fell under its sway. Today, the Mossi farm millet and sorghum on a densely peopled plateau in the central Upper Volta, and export their surplus labor to the West African coast. Their art, while distinctively Mossi, shows many points of commonality with that of neighboring peoples, including Bobo, Bambara, Dogon, and Gurunsi.

103. Mossi.

Female figure, standing.

Wood, cowrie shells, beads, cloth.

Ht. 40.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74151.

From village of Yacou.

104. Mossi.

Female figure (*raogo biga*).

Wood, leather.

Ht. 16 cm.

Acc. No. 74009.

These highly stylized, abstract figures, invariably with female characteristics, are at the same time toy or little girl's play baby, fertility symbol, and ritual object.

108. Mossi.

Female figure (*raogo biga*).

Wood.

Ht. 19.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74154b.

105. Mossi.

Female figure (*raogo biga*).

Wood, leather.

Ht. 14 cm.

Acc. No. 74021b.

109. Mossi.

Female figure (*raogo biga*).

Wood.

Ht. 26.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74154c.

106. Mossi.

Female figure (*raogo biga*).

Wood, leather.

Ht. 17 cm.

Acc. No. 74021c.

110. Mossi.

Female figure (*raogo biga*).

Wood.

Ht. 13.5 cm.

Acc. No. 76001.

107. Mossi.

Female figure (*raogo biga*).

Wood.

Ht. 22 cm.

Acc. No. 74154a.

Ex-collection L. Segy, No. 3267. Segy has written a study of these figures, based on the collection in the National Museum in Ouagadougou: "The Mossi Doll. An Archetypal Fertility Figure," *Tribus* 21:35-68, 1972. Segy notes the phallic structure of the pieces in addition to their female features.

111. Mossi.

Female figure (*raogo biga*).

Wood, leather.

Ht. 28.5 cm.

Acc. No. 76005a.

112. Mossi.

Female figure (*raogo biga*).

Wood, leather.

Ht. 28 cm.

Acc. No. 76005b.

113. Mossi.

Mask, in form of long-horned cow's head.

Wood.

Ht. 76 cm.

Acc. No. 74023.

114. Mossi.

Harness ornament.

Bronze.

Ht. 8 cm.

Acc. No. 76008.

104. — 112.



DOGON. The traditional homeland of the Dogon is the arid Bandiagara Plateau and Falaise, where the people were protected from the expansionist Fulbe and Mossi to the south by vertical cliffs descending some 600 meters from the Plateau to the Seno Plain. Since pacification the Dogon have descended onto that Plain and many villages there boast men's meeting places, *toguna*, in which the roof is supported by wooden posts carved with great figures and masks. For hundreds of years the Dogon were in close proximity to the Muslim Fulbe at Mopti (whose mosque may have influenced the architecture of their masks) and Songhai along the Niger River. Yet their complex cosmology developed independent of Islam, and from that cosmology the elaborate iconography of their sculpture is explicable. We are fortunate that this cosmology has been presented in considerable detail by the French anthropologists Marcel Griaule, Germaine Dieterlein and their students, and that the great Dogon ceremonial which occurs only once in sixty years has been filmed by Jean Rouch.

115.

115. Dogon.

Male (possibly androgynous) figure, seated on "imago mundi" stool.

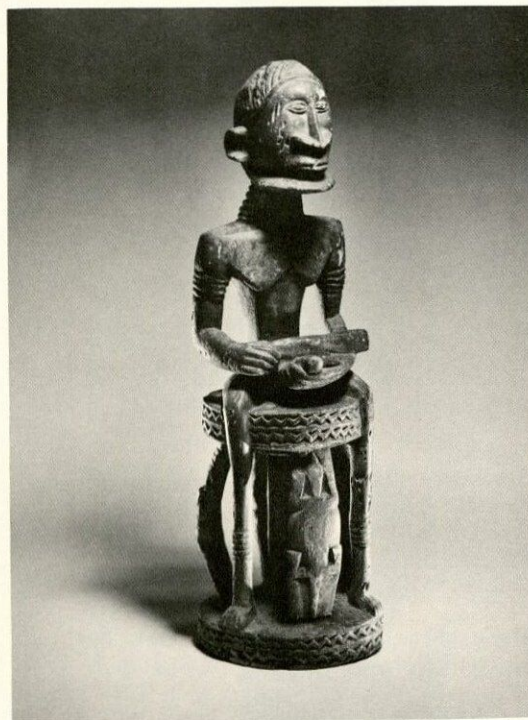
Wood.

Ht. 86.5 cm.

Acc. No. 74119.

The iconography of the stool, with four caryatid crocodiles between two discs, represents the ancestral *nommo* who articulate the celestial and terrestrial worlds.

116.



116. Dogon.

Male and female figures, seated on "imago mundi" stool.

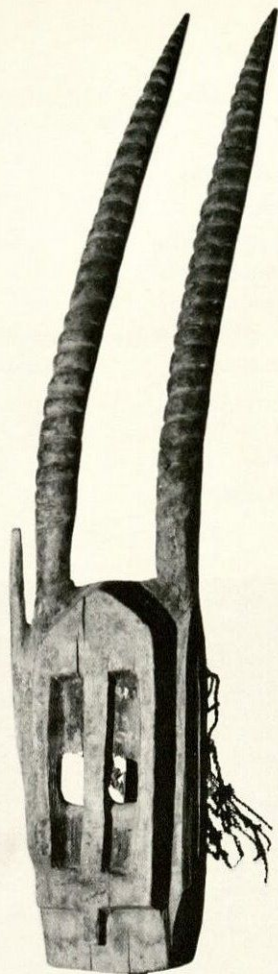
Wood, metal.

Ht. 58 cm.

Acc. No. 74002.

The figures represent the primordial couple, first of the five *nommo* pairs, born of a double act of incest: the rape of Earth by God; and the rape of Mother Earth by the child born of the first violation. *Nommo* are sometimes represented as a single androgynous figure, rather than as a male-female pair.





117. Dogon.
Maternity figure with child, seated on "imago mundi" stool.
 Wood.
 Ht. 47 cm.
 Collection: Ed Wilson

The stool has five posts, representing the five *nommo* couples.

118. Dogon.
Female equestrian figure on horseback.
 Wood.
 Ht. 43 cm.
 Acc. No. 74113.

From the village of Ningari, northeast of Bandiagara.

119. Dogon.
Male figure standing on the head of female figure.
 Wood.
 Ht. 32 cm.
 Acc. No. 74153.

120. Dogon.
Male figure, standing.
 Iron.
 Ht. 16 cm.
 Acc. No. 74111.

121. Dogon.
Female *nommo*, with raised arms.
 Wood, sacrificial patination.
 Ht. 44.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74112.

From village of Kenndie, north northeast of Bandiagara.

122. Dogon.
Female figure, standing.
 Wood.
 Ht. 29 cm.
 Acc. No. 75011

123. Dogon.
Female figure, standing.
 Wood.
 Ht. 43 cm.
 Acc. No. 74152.

124. Dogon.
Male figure, standing.
 Wood, red stone.
 Ht. 51 cm.
 Acc. No. 67002.

Exhibited: *Traditional Art of West Africa*, No. 4.

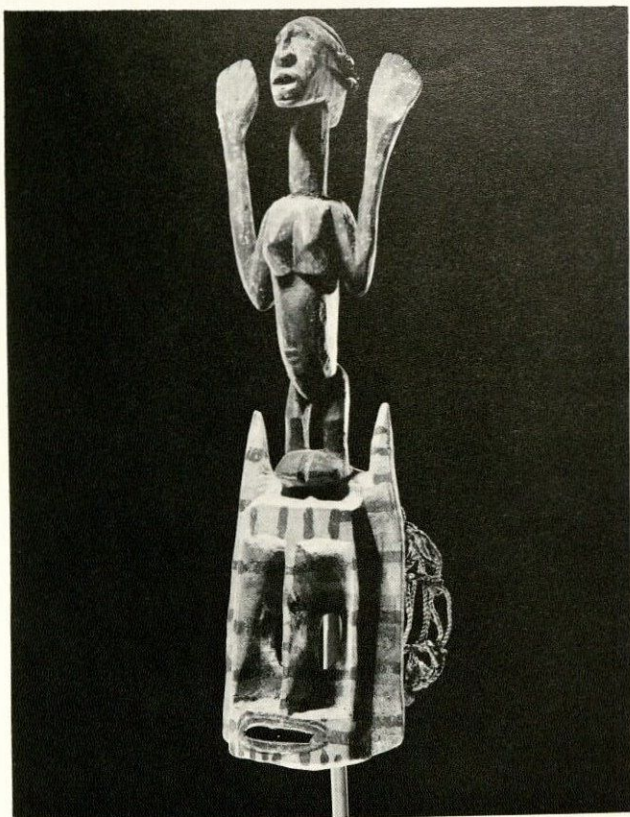
125. Dogon.
Male figure, seated.
 Bronze.
 Ht. 13.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74109.

From the village of Bankas on the Seno Plain.

126. Dogon.
Male equestrian figure on horseback.
 Bronze.
 Ht. 11 cm.
 Acc. No. 74076.

127. Dogon.
Mask, in form of antelope head (*walu*).
 Wood, cord, traces of paint.
 Ht. 94 cm.
 Acc. No. 74031.

129.



128. Dogon.
Mask, surmounted by female figure (*satimbe*).
 Wood, metal, polychrome, rope.
 Ht. 76 cm.
 Acc. No. 74108.

From village of Dourou at the edge of the Plateau overlooking the Plain.

129. Dogon.
Mask, surmounted by female figure (*satimbe*).
 Wood, polychrome, sacrificial encrustation.
 Ht. 77 cm.
 Acc. No. 74006.

130. Dogon.
Mask, surmounted by female figure (*satimbe*).
 Wood.
 Ht. 71 cm.
 Acc. No. 67001.

Exhibited: *Traditional Art of West Africa*, No. 3 [illustrated].

131. Dogon.
Mask, surmounted by long-legged bird.
 Wood, paint.
 Ht. 73 cm.
 Acc. No. 74030.

132. Dogon.
Mask (*kanaga*).
 Wood, paint, leather.
 Ht. 96.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 75021.

133. Dogon.
Mask, (*kanaga*).
 Wood, paint, leather.
 Ht. 75 cm.
 Acc. No. 75022.

134. Dogon.
Mask (*kanaga*), without superstructure.
 Wood, traces of black paint, nail.
 Ht. 45.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74107.

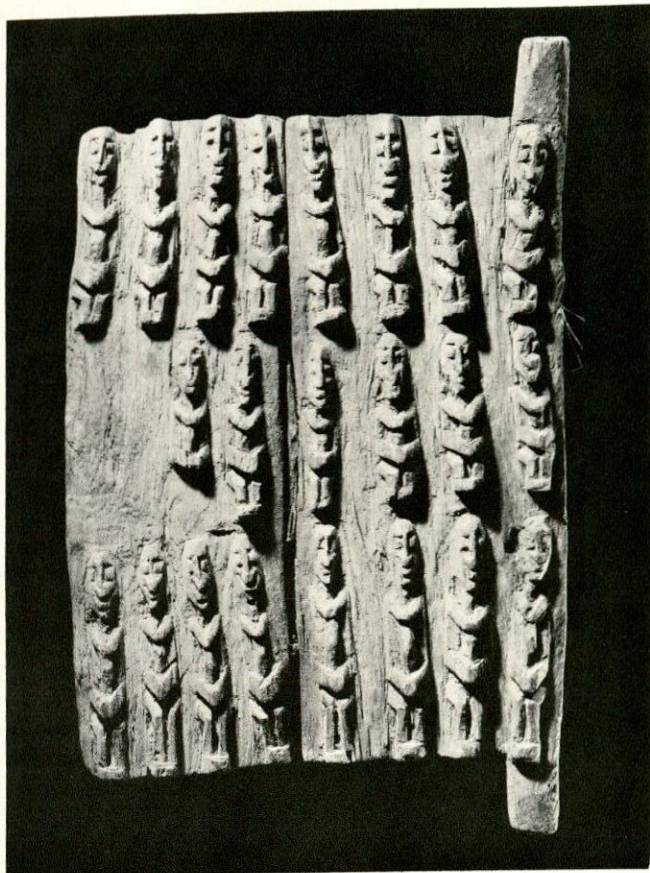
135. Dogon.
Stool.
 Wood.
 Ht. 23 cm.
 Acc. No. 74029.



134.

136. Dogon.
Granary window, carved with three rows of figures.
 Wood.
 Ht. 41.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74134.

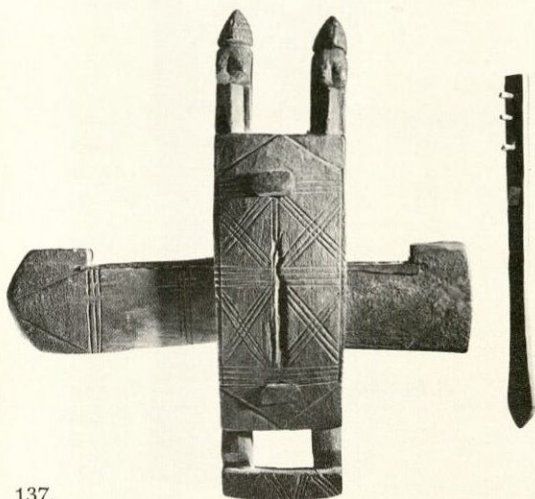
Dogon construct tall, solid grain storage structures, and these carved windows traditionally blocked access to the inside.



136.

137. Dogon.
Granary door lock, bolt, and key.
 Wood, metal.
 Ht. 35.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 75012.

Lock is surmounted by two female figures.



137.

138. Dogon.
Granary door lock and bolt.
 Wood.
 Ht. 30 cm.
 Acc. No. 74017.

Body of lock has two human figures and a crocodile carved in relief, and is surmounted by a pair of *nommo*. For a recent discussion, see P. J. Imperato, "Dogon Door Locks," *African Arts* XI(4):54-57, 1978.

139. Dogon.
Ring.
 Bronze.
 Ht. 7.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74114.

The ring is in the form of a human figure wearing an elaborate headdress and mounted on a horse or gazelle.

BAMBARA. The Mande-speaking Bambara (or Bamana) farm the Niger drainage in Western Mali. Their agricultural rites involve figures and masks carved by the blacksmiths (Dogon blacksmiths specialize in statues, not masks). The best known are the *chi-wara* and *sekuni-kun*, antelope headdresses danced in male-female pairs, in celebration of the crop cycle. Bambara also have more secular figures used for entertainments. A comprehensive exhibition of their art was shown at the Museum of Primitive Art, *Bambara Sculpture from the Western Sudan*, 1960.

145.

140. Bambara.
Female figure, standing.
 Wood, aluminum eyes.
 Ht. 52 cm.
 Acc. No. 74001.

141. Bambara.
Female figure, standing.
 Wood.
 Ht. 40.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74005b.

This is the female member of the pair which includes No. 142.

142. Bambara.
Male figure, standing.
 Wood.
 Ht. 42 cm.
 Acc. No. 74005a.

143. Bambara.
Female figure, standing.
 Wood, cowrie shells, beads.
 Ht. 72.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74150.

142. 141.



144. Bambara.
Mask, in form of long-horned cow's head.
 Wood, beads, metal.
 Ht. 80 cm.
 Acc. No. 75020.

From Bougouni.

145. Bambara.
Mask, surmounted by female figure (n'tomo).
 Wood, cowrie shells, seeds, resin.
 Ht. 80 cm.
 Acc. No. 74118.

Initiation mask for boys. From Kolokani.

146. Bambara.
Mask.
 Wood, metal (brass?) sheeting.
 Ht. 23.5 cm.
 Acc. No. 74063.

A "passport" mask.



147.



147. Bambara.

Headdress mask, in form of female antelope and young (*chi-wara*).

Wood, raffia.

Ht. 94 cm.

Acc. No. 75028.

148. Bambara.

Headdress mask, in form of male antelope (*chi-wara*).

Wood, raffia.

Ht. 101.5 cm.

Acc. No. 75029.

149. Bambara.

Antelope headdress (*sekuni-kun*).

Wood, cowrie shells, red seeds.

Ht. 49 cm.

Acc. No. 74146.

From Macina. The *sekuni-kun* is similar to the *chi-wara*, but has only one horn.

150. Bambara.

Ritual hoe, in the form of an antelope.

Wood.

Ht. 57 cm.

Acc. No. 74100.

151. Malinke.

Mask (*konden*).

Wood, silver, aluminum, nails.

Ht.

Acc. No. 74096.

While many Malinke are in extreme southwestern Mali, this mask is from the region of Kouroussa, Guinea. It is danced, by people who consider themselves to be Muslim, at 'Eid and Tabaski. It was early thought that Islam was incompatible with masking; R. A. Bravmann, *Islam and Tribal Art in West Africa* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), has demonstrated the contrary, that ritual sculpture can be maintained in Muslim communities.

