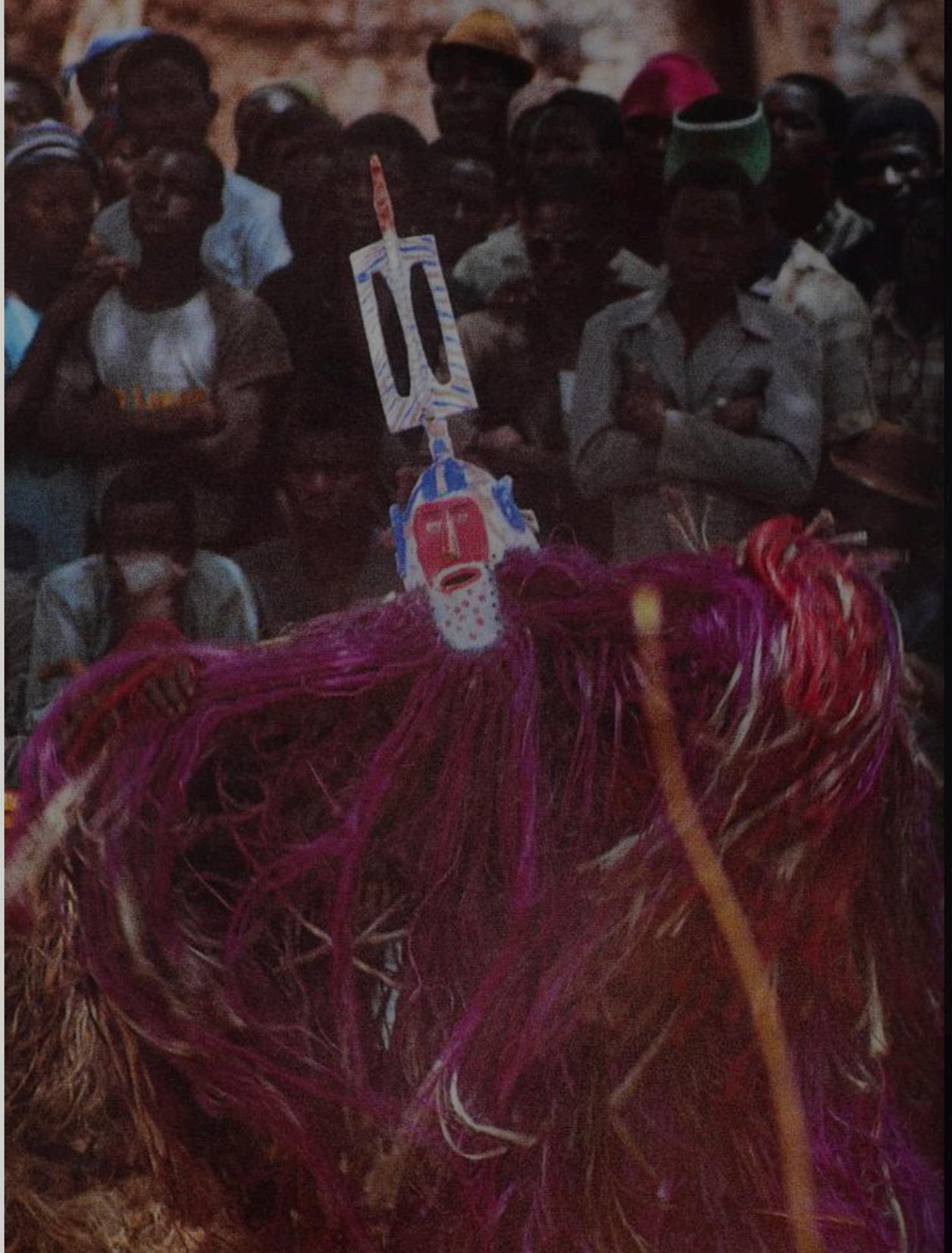


CATALOGUE OF WORKS

The objects in the catalogue photographs are listed in the entries from left to right and from back to front.

In the catalogue entries the abbreviation "PR" represents Proper Right, i.e., the right side from the perspective of the object rather than the viewer. "PL" represents Proper Left.

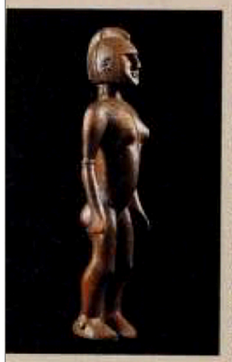
CR = Christopher D. Roy

TW = Thomas G.B. Wheelock

CHIEF FIGURES

1

1 Standing Female Figure, Mossi *nakomsé*
South Central Burkina Faso, Saponé region, wood, wire, oil-base polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 20"h.
With a portion of the base remaining, it seems likely that this is a *nakomsé* sculpture, representing an ancestor of a chief. Displayed only at annual *Na-poosum* festivals, such statuary visually bolster the inherited authority of a chief to rule. The few examples of sculpture by this hand or workshop are very distinctive, notably the extraordinary paired medial hair crests, wasp waists and often energized stances. Two magnificent, large, Mossi *nakomsé* post figures from this workshop are in American collections, one formerly in the Wally Zollman collection in Indianapolis and the other in the Dintenfass Collection in New York City. TW



2

2 Standing Female Figure, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, 25"h.
Provenance: Marc and Denyse Ginzberg, Alvin and Estelle Abrams, Issaca Zango
The figure is covered with the old scars all Mossi women once wore to mark identity and passages in life, especially childbirth. CR
Issaca Zango, the Mossi art dealer who, by the early 1970s, was traveling back and forth from Abidjan to New York, brought this figure along with two others to New York. All are of similar size and age but by very different hands and completely different conceptions. There are several other examples of large *nakomsé* ancestral sculptures in this striking style with wasp waists, abdomens and chests rising to a peak that forms a medial ridge, and faces marked by clearly-defined high cheekbones. Christopher Roy has published several in this rather rare and distinctive style.[1] Another figure by perhaps the same hand was offered at auction in Paris in 2003.[2] TW

3 / 4

3 Standing Female Figure, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, Boussé region, wood, synthetic beads, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 18¼"h.

4 Standing Female Figure, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, cowrie, fiber cord, oil-base polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 16¾"h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour
The right figure with its shoulders back and head up has a commanding stance, appropriate to an ancestor of a *nakomsé* ruler. The face with tiny eyes, placed so high, is an endearing contrast to the severity of the stance. The figure to the left has a well-developed patina and is by an unknown but recognizable hand from the region around Boussé, 40 km. to the northwest of Ouagadougou. TW

CHIEF POSTS

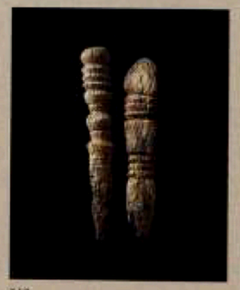
In addition to the ancestor figures, a Mossi chief, or *naba*, possesses two other figurative forms, both, in part, for public display. The first are paired doorposts that are sunk in the ground to either side of the entrances to royal compounds. They may be made purely of stacked geometric shapes, or they may be carved as figurative male-female pairs. In either case, their presence informs the passerby of the importance of the occupant. On a practical level, their placement by the walls to either side of the entrance serves as support for the woven thatch door, which is slipped between the posts and the wall at night to block the entranceway (fig. 5). They have a physical as well as a spiritual purpose. As protective spirits they guard the compound from evil. The third type, sunshade roof-support posts, may not be sculpted, or they may be carved with stacked geometric forms or a figure. Sunshade structures are built close to the chief's compound. It is there that the local lineage leaders meet with the village chief. CR

5

5 Female Doorpost Figure, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, 42⅞"h.
The hairstyle of this very large post figure with its high, well-developed sagittal ridge and large circular forms representing tightly compacted braids at either side of the head resembles several different doll styles from north of Ouagadougou. The post may have originated from somewhere within the triangular area defined by Kongoussi to the northwest, Kaya to the northeast and Ziniaré just north of the capital. Arguably, as the profile outline from behind the head and neck and down the back is not a continuous sweep, the post may be from the southern portion of this triangle, the Ziniaré region. What a pity I did not have the opportunity to secure the male half of the couple. TW

6

6 Chief's Doorpost, detail, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central or North Central Burkina Faso, wood, 45⅝"h.
Provenance: William Wright
The spherical form of the head and uniform medial ridge, with sections removed to indicate the nose and mouth, are reminiscent of a style of Bobo statuary; however, as noted elsewhere in this volume, there are figures with similarly composed heads that are thought to be Mossi from the region around Yako (cat. 194). In addition, while the stacked geometric forms are common to both Bobo and Mossi posts, this type of post, one that is not designed as a support, is not known by me to occur among the Bobo, but is commonly seen planted on either side of entrances to compounds of *nakomsé* chiefs, the pair serving to guide and hold in place a moveable woven screen used to block the entryway. The image is a detail of the top ⅔ of the post. TW



7 / 8

7 Chief's Doorpost, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, 31¾"h.

8 Chief's Doorpost, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, remnant oil-base polychrome, 29⅛"h.
Doorposts are typically found in male-female pairs. It is tempting to read these two as a pair, the delicacy of the post to the left having female qualities, and the post to the right, a strongly male character. However, as Christopher Roy has reported that the rings refer to Mossi arm rings worn by Mossi wives, they are more likely both female and not a pair. There is evidence of red and blue oil-based paint on the post to the right. Apart from decorative appeal, oil-based paint would have increased the resistance of the posts to weathering. Both posts are from a hard, durable wood and, contrary to the reported annual discarding and renewal, were clearly in place for many years. TW

9 / 10

9 Chief's Female Doorpost, Mossi *nakomsé*
North Central Burkina Faso, wood, 72⅛"h.

10 Chief's Male Doorpost, Mossi *nakomsé*
North Central Burkina Faso, wood, 74⅜"h.
Given the closed circle at the top of the right-hand post, it is less likely that these tall, regal posts served as sun shelter supports, but rather were a male-female pair set in the ground to either side of an entranceway to the compound of a chief. TW

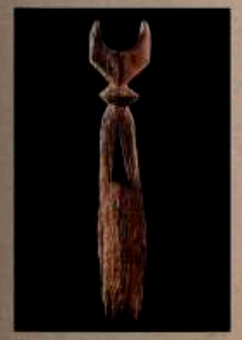
11 / 12

11 Sun Shelter Support Post, Mossi *nakomsé*
North Central Burkina Faso, wood, 62⅛"h.

12 Sun Shelter Support Post, Mossi *nakomsé*
North Central Burkina Faso, wood, 69½"h.
The stacked, geometric forms, carved on Mossi posts, offer a broad range of stylistic variation. Very narrow but pronounced rings separate elegant lozenge and spindle forms on these two posts. The geometric forms occur in repeated units, each of similar lengths, on most of the posts previously illustrated (cats. 6–8) and the next (cat. 13). TW

13

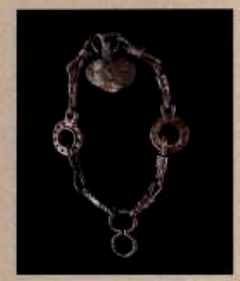
13 Sun Shelter Support Post, Mossi *nakomsé*
North Central Burkina Faso, wood, 73½"h.



14

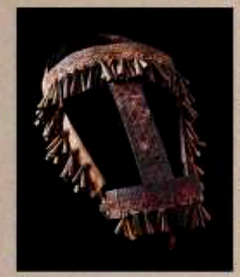
14 Sun Shelter Support Post, Mossi *nakomsé*
North Central Burkina Faso, wood, 39¼"h.
Mossi and Kurumba chiefs erect large sun shelters in the courtyards of their palaces, beneath which they meet and greet the elders of their communities. The shelters are constructed of rows of posts such as these, whose forked ends support beams that in turn support layers of mats. Men of the community, to whom the chief has awarded wives, may donate posts in return for services of the chief. The female features of the posts remind the donors of their obligation to donate their first female child to the chief to perpetuate this system of royal wife-assigning. The shape just above the breasts represents the distinctive brass bracelets worn by the wives of chiefs. CR
The smooth surface on the PL side of the fork on the post shown below left is "fill" that probably masks a break. It appears likely to be an African restoration but not a repair performed at the village level. Although it is not unusual to encounter objects that have been repaired with the application of tree sap mixed with sawdust, it is not clear to me that these repairs are local repairs. Filling a loss area is rarely done and "painting out" the loss area to mask the break does not, to my knowledge, occur. Breaks are repaired by binding with wire, leather, string, or cord, or with commercial nails or forged staples either used alone or applied in conjunction with strips or patches of sheet metal. Glue would not have provided a repair strong enough for the post to bear the load for which it was originally designed, and nails or staples could not be used, as the wood, once seasoned, is too hard to penetrate with nails. As an indication of the density of some of these woods, professional base makers, who weld the support stands for displaying such objects, have serious difficulty penetrating the harder woods, even with modern steel bits. TW

WEAPONS AND HORSEGEAR



15

15 Horse Bit and Bridle, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, iron, copper alloy, 13"l.
This bit is typical of the complex work of Mossi blacksmiths, in mixed materials, generally cast brass and iron. Herta Haselberger photographed a virtually identical but older cast-brass bit among the Kaséna in Koumbili in 1967.[3] It is, however, not likely that it was the work of a Kaséna smith and far more likely that it was derived from an unfortunate Mossi traveler waylaid by Kaséna brigands, a once common occurrence in Kaséna territory along the route south from Ouagadougou to northern Ghana. The argument that it might have been purchased seems doubtful, as horses must have been very rare in Kaséna farming communities.[4] TW



16

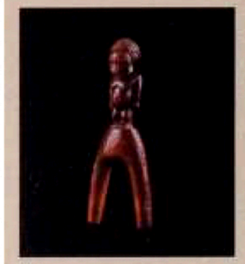
16 Horse Bridle, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, sheet metal, unidentified fabric, 18"l.
The scores of pendant metal cones were designed to jingle with the movement of the horse. Each is a piece of rolled tin or light sheet metal with a thin tab securing it to the headband. The wider bands are double layered with the top layer embossed, and, like Mossi leather appliqué work, cut out to show red fabric between the layers. TW

17 / 18 / 19

17 Knife with Sheath, Mossi
Central or North Central Burkina Faso, copper alloy, leather, iron, 17"h.

18 Knife with Sheath, Mossi
Central or North Central Burkina Faso, wood, leather, iron, 24⅛"h.

19 Knife with Sheath, Mossi
Central or North Central Burkina Faso, wood, leather, iron, 19¾"h.
The wood handles on two of these knives most closely resemble dolls originating in the Ziniaré-Kaya region. The leatherwork is typical of workmanship in Kaya, the renowned center of Mossi leatherwork. All three of these knives were reported to have been collected to the north of Kaya, near Bourzanga. While it was said that they were used for performing animal sacrifices at family altars, the fine embossing on the sheaths and the cascades of long tooled panels and fringe certainly suggest that they exist for wear and symbolism. The patina on the larger wood-handled knife is well developed, indicating that the knife was not only for show but was much used. The figure on the brass knife handle has an animal-like head that wears the traditional Mossi crested hairstyle, the *gyanfo*, and Mossi-like rings around the top of its neck. The torso is modeled in a form similar to the others, but with nubile rather than mature breasts. If my reading of the head is correct and it is an animal, this anthropomorphized combination of animal head, framed above and below with human features and mounted on a human torso, is extremely unusual for sculpture in Burkina Faso. There are examples of sculpture with human heads, either with secondary animal features, like horns, or mounted on animal bodies, like some large, dried clay shrines, but not the reverse. My source for this material in the early 1970s was a Kurumba named Konfé Idrissa, who collected objects from the Kurumba region south to Kaya. He died in 1974 from meningitis, and it was not until many years later that I discovered that he had been an interpreter for Annemarie Schweeger-Hefel, who published his photograph in *Die Kurumba von Lurum*, her work with Wilhelm Staude. Fully half of the many runners and dealers



20

with whom I did business in the 1970s had died from various causes by the end of the decade. TW

20 Slingshot with Standing Figure *bandaa*,[3] Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 7 ⅛" h.
Provenance: William Wright
Slingshots are common, especially among the Lobi. Generally, Lobi-sculpted figures represent protective spirits. While the sculptor may have just intended the figure to be decorative, the importance of spirit figures makes it more likely that the figure represents a specific protective *koteé* spirit.[4] Her cast-down eyes provide an alluring charm in any case. TW

21 / 22

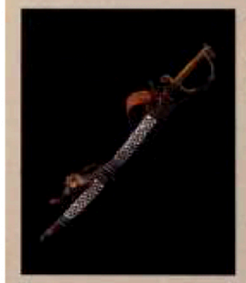
21 Serpent-form Impaling Sword, Turka
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, 33⅝" l.

22 Serpent-form Impaling Sword, Turka
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, 34" l.

23 Serpent-form Impaling Sword, Turka
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, leather, 34 ¾" l.

24 Serpent-form Impaling Sword, Turka
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, 32¾" l.
According to Herta Haselberger,[7] both Frobenius (1907/08/09) and Binger (1892) reported that the Turka were superb metal casters. However, by the 1960s, the fieldwork of Haselberger revealed that there were no longer any Turka metal casters. Turka snake swords were first reported by Binger during his 1887–89 journey and published in 1892. Haselberger related that Binger called them "sanegue," meaning iron in the shape of a snake, and that they were said to have been carried over the shoulder. Binger reported that this type of armament was found as far away as the city of Kong. Further, she stated that H. Hugershoff (Reinhard Hugershoff?), in 1908, had sketched a serpent sword among the Senufo at Sikasso and that Tauxier, in 1933, reported that the French had confiscated them between 1915 and 1919. Haselberger photographed one among the Tusyan in 1967. While not being terribly conversant with weaponry, it would seem to me that the shape of these swords would have made them impractical and that, if they were found as far afield as Kong, they must have been thought to possess potent magical properties. Of the many examples I have seen, norle has been preserved in a pristine state. The blades of all are V-shaped in cross-section, the anterior portions swelling laterally, reminiscent of the hood of a cobra, and sizeable portions of the serpentine backs are very delicately incised with fine lined geometric patterning. Many materials were used to make the handles, including homespun, leather, and reptile skin. TW

23 / 24



25

25 Sword with Sheath and Animal-form Handle, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, various copper alloys, iron, leather, plastic, 27" l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

26

26 Sword with Sheath and Animal-form Handle, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, various copper alloys, iron, leather, plastic, 23" l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele
Neither of these short swords appear to have seen extended service as there is no appreciable wear on either the cast-brass sword hilts or their leather scabbards. They were perhaps part of *nakomsé* chieftains' ceremonial regalia. The leatherwork includes sections of thin, intricately woven plastic strips, which is reminiscent of Tuareg workmanship and limits their possible age. Stylistically they are not Tuareg, and the fact that they are figurative decreases the likelihood that they were made by either Fulani or Songhai, both of which are heavily Islamized and do not carve images. TW

SACRED OBJECTS

SCULPTED SPIRIT POSTS

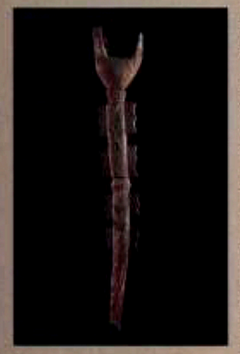
Guy Le Moal has researched the function of Bobo altar posts.[8] To paraphrase Le Moal, the Bobo regard two spirits, *duba* and *vyetogo*, as particularly efficacious supernatural forces for combating sorcery. Most of the posts that follow were probably dedicated to one or the other of these spirits. The trifurcate posts, known as *se le* by the Bobo, were designed to cradle pots containing water, some millet beer and roots of vegetable material that is associated with the protective spirits. There are two altars to *duba*, the male manifestation which is the principal altar, *duba se*, and its female counterpart, *duba na*. *Duba* exists within the kivi tree, *Afzelia africana*, the roots of which make up the charged vegetable matter contained in the pot. Both the shaft and the forked branches of the *se le*, associated with *duba*, are sculpted in geometric forms. While these forms are purely decorative, a rectangular element, carved at the bases of the trifurcation, is the male symbol for *duba*. Lower on the shaft or near the bottom there is the representation of either a chameleon for the male, *duba se*, or of a lizard for the female, *duba na*. The male, *duba se*, is always placed at the east side of the village from where disorder and dangers emanate. The female, *duba na*, is likewise represented by a trifurcate post supporting a covered pot, but, unlike the ubiquitous male manifestation, occurs only in a limited geographic area, the central region that is occupied by the Syekoma Bobo lineages. The female form is placed at the eastern edge of the village beside its consort, *duba se*.
Vyetogo has supplanted *duba* in the ever-present struggle against sorcery. *Vyetogo* first appeared among the Bobo living south of the Black Volta in the middle of the 19th century. The cult was adopted by a village in the central Bobo area in 1900 but did not spread further until the 1940s and 50s, continuing its northward spread throughout the 1960s. *Vyetogo* inhabits a clay pot supported by the same trifurcate *se le* as the *duba* posts. It is always represented by two posts, one male, the other one female. They are very similar to male *duba* posts, except that they are little sculpted and are located inside the village. Like *duba*, they too are renewed every seven years.

This type of shrine, a pot containing water and spirit-inhabited vegetable matter set on trifurcate posts, is not limited to the Bobo. Although the associated spirits may differ, and some posts may not be sculpted, the shrines can be seen among most Burkinabé ethnic groups (p. 108). Those neighboring the Bobo, which have adopted some Bobo cultural traditions, may have adopted these protecting spirits as well.
Most of the posts illustrated appear to be far older than the seven years reported. They are generally uniformly weathered, which suggests that those collected had been left in place after their deconsecration. Had they not, one side would usually show deterioration from organic processes: insectival, bacterial and fungal. They are carved from such exceedingly hard wood that I would not be surprised if some posts were more than a century old. TW

27 / 28

27 Serpent-form Post, Nuna?
Southwest and West Central Burkina Faso, wood, 68 ¼" h.

28 Serpent-form Post, Nuna?
Southwest and West Central Burkina Faso, wood, 69 ¼" h.
This massive pair of post-like serpentine figures would more appropriately be categorized as statuary, as neither was embedded in the ground. Examination of the bottom of their bases yields no indication that they were cut from a longer shaft. Although details of their heads and tails are different, and the figure on the right is marginally more massive than its counterpart, they were probably designed to be seen as a pair, one spiraling clockwise, the other counterclockwise. It would be tempting to assign them to the Fon in Benin, where pythons play important religious roles, but they are so large that it seems unlikely that they would have been trucked six or seven hundred miles up from the coast. The Burkinabé, who handled the sale, assigned them a Nuna origin. TW



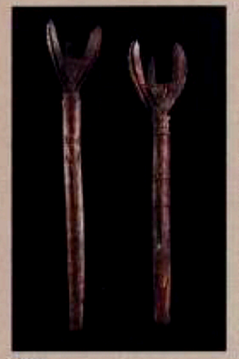
29

29 Shrine Support Post, Turka?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 70" h.
The Burkinabé from whom I bought this post, understood it to be Turka, but the attribution remains uncertain, as the original procurer may have been obfuscating to protect his source. The face and uppermost portion of the torso of the female figure in relief, near the top of the post, has been sheared off. The weathering of the loss area is the same as that of the surrounding surface, indicating that the loss occurred long before the post was removed from the ground. This post, as is true of other trifurcate posts, undoubtedly supported a ceramic pot inhabited by a protective spirit. The pot held by the post was likely to have been a women's shrine similar to, if not the same Bobo *duba na* spirit, as there are two female references: the lizard and the figure. TW

30 / 31

30 Shrine Support Post *se-le*, Bobo
Central or Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 84" h.

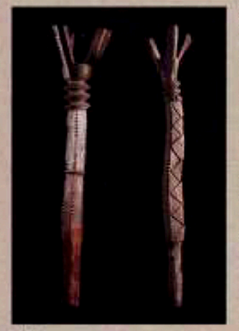
31 Shrine Support Post *se-le*, Bobo
Central or Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 52" h.
These posts may be a male and female pair of *vyetogo* spirit posts. Because neither post, offers either the escutcheon-like rectangle, reported at the base of the trifurcation of a *duba se* post, or a sculpted reptile, it is unlikely that they represent *duba*. However, like *duba* posts, they are sculpted. While Le Moal wrote that *vyetogo* posts are less sculpted, if sculpted at all, the sole illustration from his 1975 article, cited above, is of a sculpted post assigned to *vyetogo*. TW



32 / 33

32 Shrine Support Post with Lizard *se-le*, Bobo, Syekoma clan
Central Western Burkina Faso, wood, 91 ¼" h.

33 Shrine Support Post with Lizard *se-le*, Bobo, Syekoma clan
Central Western Burkina Faso, wood, 84 ½" h.
Both of these Bobo posts, with lizards carved in relief, almost certainly belong to *duba na*, the female consort to *duba se*. The post to the right appears not only to be older than the other post but also shows both more details (note the collar at the top of the shaft) and a generally fuller, more confident approach to the entire carving. Both lizards hold a triangular object of unknown meaning in their mouths. TW



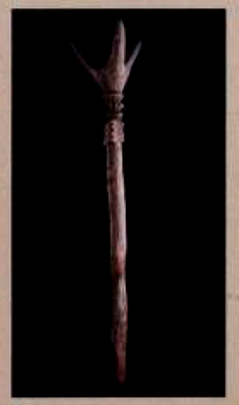
34 / 35

34 Shrine Support Post *se-le*, Bobo, Kouka region
Central Western Burkina Faso, wood, 80" h.

35 Shrine Support Post *se-le*, Bobo, Kouka region
Central Western Burkina Faso, wood, 78 ½" h.
The post to the right may be described as having an escutcheon-like rectangle at the base of the trifurcation, but lacks the carved chameleon associated with *duba se*. Both posts, one far older than the other, are heavily sculpted, and are probably more safely attributed to *vyetogo*. TW

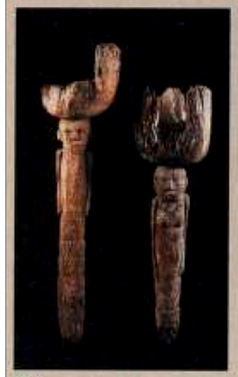
36

36 Shrine Support Post *se-le*, Bobo
Central or Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 70" h.



37

37 Shrine Support Post *se-le*, Bobo
Central or Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 98 ½" h.
Like the two previous examples, these two posts are better ascribed to *vyetogo* rather than to *duba*. The formal aspects of their sizes and volumes are completely different. The very old post to the immediate left (cat. 36) is robust and segmented, with the sections slightly swollen, as if constrained along the length by the narrow sets of rings. The post below left (cat. 37) is unusually tall and narrow. It is devoid of sculptural form for most of its considerable length. Approaching the top, it opens in a brief conversation of complex volumes that terminate as abruptly as they began, bursting into a graceful tripartite florescence. TW



38 / 39

38 Caryatid Shrine Support Post, Karaboro
Southwestern Burkina Faso, Labola, Tiefora or Kassala village, wood, 59 ½" h.

39 Caryatid Shrine Support Post, Karaboro
Southwestern Burkina Faso, Labola, Tiefora or Kassala village, wood, 52" h.
According to my source for these Karaboro posts, they are only found in three Karaboro villages: Labola, Tiefora and Kassala. The current sculptor at Tiefora, age 48 or 49, identified these posts as having been carved by his father, who died circa 1985. The son has continued sculpting in his father's style.[8] There appears to be some difference between the styles of these two posts. The post on the right belongs to a group which is more compact and enjoys subtler development of the organic volumes than that of the post on the left. The latter is stylistically more closely allied to the third Karaboro post illustrated (cat. 40).
TW

40

40 Shrine Support Post, Dagara?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, Diébougou, wood, 52 ¾" h.

41 Caryatid Shrine Support Post, Karaboro
Southwestern Burkina Faso, Labola, Tiefora or Kassala village, wood, 47 ¼" h.
The Karaboro caryatid post (cat. 41) is unusual, combining two carving techniques, sculpture in the round and in relief. This combining of techniques is also seen on a Mossi door lock (cat. 519). The post to the left (cat. 40) differs in several ways from the other posts illustrated here. A figure boldly projects from the trunk of the post. The remnant of an animal stands on the opposite side and, like the figure, was carved fully in the round. In addition, this post is distinguished by a four-branch arrangement, which, presumably, like the trifurcate examples, also supported a spirit sanctuary pot. The diameter of the log was sufficient not only to create the support elements but also to allow for the two sculptures on opposite sides of the post. The figure, which at first glance appears rudimentary, is sufficiently distinctive to be attributable to a hand or workshop, albeit unknown. The chest, thrust forward and conceived as an enormous triangular plain, is mirrored in the distinctly triangular dome of the forehead. The pendant arms descend from the lower edges of the chest volume. The long, rectangular nose extends from beneath the brow and the planar face is sharply truncated to form a broad chin.
TW

41

42 Shrine Support Post, Bolon
West Central Western Burkina Faso, wood, 43 ½" h.

43 Shrine Support Post, Bolon
West Central Western Burkina Faso, wood, 38 ⅝" h.

42 / 43 / 44

44 Shrine Support Post, Bolon
West Central Western Burkina Faso, wood, 41 ⅝" h.
None of these posts is as old as the Bobo counterparts illustrated here (cats. 30–37). There is wide variation in the rendering of these three Bolon altar posts, as there is with four others in the same suite, but not illustrated. The details of the arms are highly variable. The arms are notched along their sides in some cases, down the middle in others and, on some, not notched at all. Likewise, the large cog-like elements along their trunks vary in conception, placement and number. In all cases the sculpture is carved with great confidence. The Bolon have adopted *vyetogo* from the neighboring Bobo and these posts may well be *vyetogo* altars.
TW

45

46

MASKS

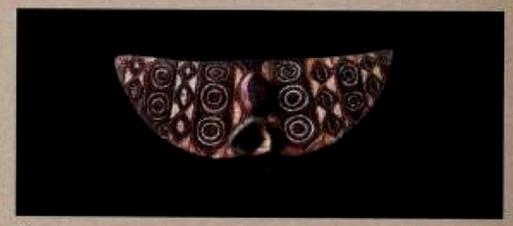
NUNA

45 Monkey Mask, Nuna
Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 13" h.
Provenance: Nobel and Jean Endicott, T. Wheelock
Monkey masks are often the lead masks in Nuna dance groups. As lead masks, the responsibility for conducting blood sacrifices may fall to them. The emphasis on the mouth and teeth yields a ferocity, which is further enhanced by its attribute, a bludgeon, with which some sacrifices are said to be executed. This club is itself sacred as is witnessed by the heavy sacrificial incrustations (p. 1).
TW

46 Antelope Mask, Nuna
Southwest Central Burkina Faso, Silli-Poura region, wood, indigenous polychrome, 12" h.
Provenance: René and Maud Garcia
The florescent petaloid pattern around the eye is a common Nuna motif not seen on the masks of other ethnic groups. This design is associated with masks in the western Nuna region, south of the road from Ouagadougou to Bobo-Dioulasso. The square-cut horns are unusual.
TW

47 Winged Mask, Nuna
Southwest Central Burkina Faso, Leo region?, wood, undifferentiated polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 23 ¼" w.
Provenance: Karl-Ferdinand Schädler
This small, winged mask and the larger (cat. 46) were collected years apart, the larger in Ouagadougou, the smaller in Munich. They share design elements, pigments and similar depth of age and probably belonged to the same dance ensemble.
TW

48 Broad-Winged Bird Mask, Nuna
Southwest Central Burkina Faso, said by furnisher to be from Leo region, wood, iron, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, undifferentiated polychrome, 63 ⅝" w.
Provenance: Peter and Nancy Mickelsen
This very old, winged mask originally had two additional birds perched on the wings. The bird on the left is a restoration. Though probably European, the composition of the distinctive orange pigment has not been determined. This telltale pigment shows up on a much smaller winged mask (cat. 47) of the same age and with similar geometric patterns on its wings as this larger example. Unlike most other large Nuna winged masks that I have examined, this mask may have been worn at an off-vertical angle, as the vertically striped volume below the face is an open cylinder through which the masquerader could have peered.
TW



47

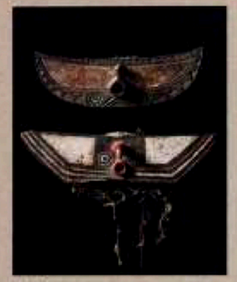
48

49

49 Monkey Mask, Nuna
Southwest Central Burkina Faso, said by furnisher to be from Leo region, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 12" h.
Provenance: Peter and Nancy Mickelsen
Monkey masks are very common among all of the peoples of Burkina Faso. They represent the trickster in African life. Just when everything is going well and the family is prospering, some terrible accident happens, caused by the trickster. Such masks are usually worn by boys or by young men who accompany the other masks and help by picking up fallen batons or other objects. Between the performances of larger masks, the "monkey" may perform ribald and comical scenes to a laughing audience. The wearer of the monkey mask may also use a whip to keep the crowd from the performance area.
CR
This old mask has a deeper interior than most masks from Burkina Faso. This represents a sculptural format that has fallen out of fashion. The very old *hornbo* mask (cat. 137) has similarly wide cheek plates and a deep interior. Scarification lines, which descend from beneath the eyes rather than from the nose, comprise a Nuna pattern that is also archaic. I have seen this type of scarification on two old Nuna statues, one in the Barbier-Muller collection in Geneva and the other in the Louvre,[9] and on a monkey mask published in 1968. The latter example was carved without eyes, but the scarification lines descend in a vertical row from beneath the brow, filling the upper third of the face.[11] The eyes on the mask illustrated here bear a greater resemblance to Mossi Kokologho-style masks, from 100 km to the north of Leo, than to most Nuna masks. The striking single bull's-eye on the PL forehead is unique.[12]
TW

50 Broad-Winged Bird Mask, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 53" w.
Birds, crocodiles or chameleons carved in the round or in high relief on the planar surface of the wings often appear on broad-winged masks among the Nuna. An animal or human head, carved in relief, may project from the center, between the wings. A bird with its head, neck and tail feathers is the central element on this mask. The oval volume in the middle represents the body of the bird. Four small birds are carved in the round across the wings. The small bird on the far PR is a restoration. The petaloid design elements, which are exclusively Nuna, indicate that the mask may be from the Poura-Silli region. Norman Skougstad photographed this mask in Burkina Faso in 1975 (fig. p. 128).
TW

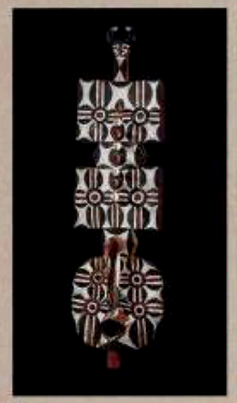
50



51 / 52

51 Winged Mask, Nuna or Nununa
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 20" w.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

52 Winged Mask, Nuna or Nununa
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, oil-base polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 22 ½" w.
Provenance: Franz Burkhard, collected 1960s by Burkhard
Small, winged masks are sufficiently rare that there are few examples to provide points of comparison. While both may be Nuna, their reduced emphasis on surface design suggests they might also be attributable to the Nununa.
TW



53

53 Double-paneled Plank Mask, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, Silli-Poura-Fara region, wood, leather, undefined fabric, undefined cord, tin alloy, commercial nails, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 46" h.
On the face of it, this would seem to be little more than a nicely executed Nuna plank mask, albeit of considerably greater age than is readily discernible without seeing the interior of the mask. The buffalo head, carved in the round, is charming, and the eyes at the crook in the beak unusual, but not unique. That which is extraordinary, and which demonstrates the virtuosity of the sculptor, is the sandwich-like, double-plank format, the two sets of panels carved to the front and back of the vertical axis. The mask belongs to a particular Nuna sculptural tradition that carves the backs of masks in a shield-shaped outline, broad and horizontal across the top, with the descending sides gently curving inward to meet at the bottom in a point.
TW

54

54 Plank Mask, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, Silli, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 46" h.
The wear patina of the mask is well developed, indicative of considerable age. In the early 1980s a small private collection in Munich held an old hyena mask with an almost identical open basketry surface design. Norman Skougstad photographed this plank mask in Silli, Burkina Faso, in June 1975 (fig. p. 130).
TW

55 / 56

55 Crocodile-Hornbill Composite Mask, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, Poura-Fara region, wood, fiber cord, oil-base polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 68½"l.

56 Crocodile Mask, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 69¾"l.
Crocodile masks are quite common among the *gurunsi* and the Bwa. This fine Nuna example (far left) combines a crocodile with the head of a hornbill. The Bwa tell the story of an elder who was searching for new land to farm and who became lost and lay down in the shade of a tree to rest. He heard a noise and stumbled toward the Black Volta River. He tripped over a root and tumbled head over heels to the edge of the river, and stopped just short of the jaws of an enormous crocodile, which slowly opened its jaws to reveal a great carp between its teeth. The elder carefully drew out the fish and scurried up the bank, where he cooked and ate the fish, restoring his strength, so that he was able to lead his family to the spot where they settled and prospered, thanks to the crocodile. Another recounting of lineage origin credits crocodiles with lining up end to end across a river, allowing ancestors to cross over their backs and elude their enemies. While almost all other masks perform individually, it is common to see a pair of male-female crocodiles perform together. The hornbill is a symbol of knowledge of the spirit world. CR
While not quite as aged as its very old companion piece, the mask on the far left enjoys considerable age, as witnessed in a well-patinated interior and the highly patinated short shaft connecting the crocodile to the hornbill mask proper, where it must often have been held by assistants to the masquerader, easing it on and off his head. Orange-brown oxidized wood is visible along the eroded edge of the PR front leg. This curious combination of a crocodile mounted on a hornbill is a theme that is repeated on a Nuna mask in The Virginia Museum of Art. The exceedingly old mask (cat. 56, right, in the picture above left) abounds in subtle sculptural details. The eyes are rendered as quarter spheres with the flat side forward, an extraordinary depiction of crocodile eyes breaking the surface of the water. The body is surprisingly thin, with the ventral side pronouncedly concave. The end of the tail is odd, deliberately notched horizontally at its tip. As is so often the case with very old, much-prized masks, many bits of wire and scraps of sheet metal hold loose parts to the core of the mask. TW

57

57 Hornbill Mask, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, cane, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 32½"l.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

58

58 Hornbill Mask with Chameleon, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, oil-base polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 33¼"l.

59

59 Hornbill Mask with Bird, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, iron, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 39"l.
The hornbill, *Bucorvus abyssinicus*, is a very large bird that mates for life. Each year, the female makes a nest in a tree hollow, and the male and female seal the entrance to the nest with clay. The male then spends the next weeks flying through the forest searching for lizards, beetles, etc., which it passes to the female on her eggs inside the nest. The Nuna and others see this constant passage from outside to inside as a metaphor for the passage to the world of spirits. I have documented on DVD two such masks performing at a mask festival at Pouni.[13] CR
The hornbill, with its spirit-world associations, is a particularly common mask form. The beaks are generally depicted as very large, arcuate at the top, concave beneath, and joining distally in a perceptibly hooked point. The distinctive casque on the top of the proximal end of the beak is usually slightly raised in an elongate triangle painted black, in bold contrast against the red of the beak. Two of these three examples display a large disk at the back of the mask, the significance of which is not known to us. Each expresses plumage differently, as cones, a single flat incised tab or as a deeply serrated ridge. The surface design motifs are quite different on each of these masks. The first (cat. 57) displays the familiar Nuna petaloid elements; the last (cat. 59) offers parallel and individual lines; the second (cat. 58) displays large black and white triangles in association with the eyes as well as parallel bands and lines. The eyes are rendered as small circles around a large round center on the first example; as wide nested circles, target motifs, on the second, and as peg-like prominences on the third. TW

60

60 Janus Hornbill Mask, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, Silli-Poura-Fara region, wood, indigenous polychrome, 33"l.
Janus hornbill masks are rare. This example has clear, if not great, age. The Nuna surface design is dominated by acute triangles radiating from the eyes. TW

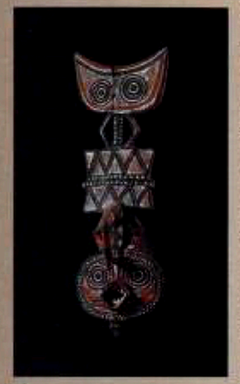
61

61 Hornbill Mask *wankr*, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, remnant indigenous polychrome, organic material, 34"l.
Coming from a Nuna family altar, this superb mask has lost all but its black paint. It is likely that it served as the lead mask, the *wankr*, and was only danced on special occasions. *Wankr* are considered exceptionally sacred, each having had a celestial origin. As such, they only appear for special ceremonial occasions.[14] The surfaces on this example are eroded from the deteriorating effects of blood sacrifices. The nasal casque is well developed, as are the wattle-like appendages descending from the underside of the base of the beak. Unlike more recent examples, the ends of the upper and lower beaks do not meet. The interior is deeply excavated which, like the open-beak format, may have gradually fallen out of fashion. TW

62

62 Antelope Mask, Nuna
West and Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 38"l.
Having seen so many Bwa and *gurunsi* antelope masks over the years, it takes a remarkable example to attract my attention. This is just such an example, with its exuberant ears and strong horns, bold fields of alternating dark and light triangles, their depth of carving, the splendidly economic use of red, its large size and substantial age. The pattern of squares composed of paired white and black triangles is not uncommon on Nuna masks. The wide field of squares is, however, unusual on an animal mask. TW

NUNUMA AND WINIAMA MASKS



63

63 Plank Mask, Winiama or Nununa
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 32½"h.
While one cannot admit to having a favorite among children, masks are another thing. I vividly recall seeing this mask for the first time, dragged unceremoniously from beneath a Burkinabé's bed in Bobo-Dioulasso way back in 1974. Like many other masks from the region around Ouri the ethnic origin of this splendid old mask is not certain. I favor Winiama but arguments can be made for Nununa. Recently repainted, as is customary among most Burkinabé ethnic groups that wear masks, the hue of this particular red pigment, derived from hematite cobbles, is especially appealing. TW

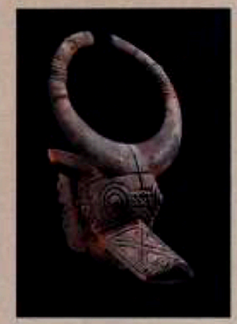
64 / 65

64 Mask with Superstructure and Spirit Figures, Winiama or Nununa
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, commercial nails, fiber cord, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 50½"h.
Provenance: Hélène and Philippe Leloup

65 Mask with Superstructure and Spirit Figures, Winiama or Nununa
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 51"h.
Provenance: Wolfgang Lauber, Walter Kaiser
Each of the Bwa mask types is derived from a Nuna or Nununa conception. This complex plank mask evolved into the type the Bwa in Boni call *bayiri*, the spirit of fertility and well-being. The graphic patterns represent moral and ethical laws. The hooks may represent beaks of birds, the spine of a serpent, or a variety of other elements. The figures at the top are spirit figures. CR
These two masks, so similar in their overall conception, are quite different in both detail and age. The elegant mask to the left (cat. 64) offers a splendid rhythm in its tightly-arrayed repetition of beak forms front and back. The older and more fragile of the two (cat. 65) has fewer but more defined and larger, medially arranged, hooked beaks. The three figures at the top, when compared to the strikingly abstracted six figures on the somewhat more recent mask, seem almost naturalistic. A closer look reveals the inclusion of more surface design motifs in the earlier piece, semicircles and small triangles, in addition to the crosses, nested circles and patterns of squares. Lastly, the older of the two boasts a charming mask-like hyena head in place of a hooked beak, in the back, just above the mask proper. The term "more recent" should not be construed to suggest anything approximating new. The older mask is solidly 19th century, while the more recent, bought in Paris in 1979, has well-oxidized wood and general surface characteristics that suggest an early, first-half 20th-century date. TW

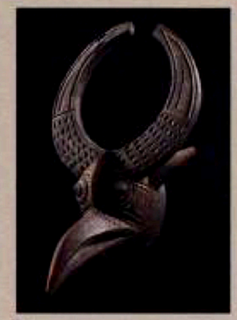
66

66 Buffalo Mask, Nununa
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, wire, chalky pigment, indigenous polychrome, 21"h.
Very old masks are generally rare in Africa, where the moisture fosters the growth of wood-destroying animal life from boring insects to bacteria. Apart from the care provided prized objects, the largely dry climate in Burkina Faso is responsible for exceptional preservation. Like the mask that follows and a fair number of others illustrated here, this mask is undoubtedly 19th century and possibly older. TW



67

67 Buffalo Mask, Winiama or Bwa
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, wire, leather, fiber cord, remnant indigenous polychrome, 18"h.
It is difficult to know to which ethnic group this very old buffalo mask should be attributed. I associate the large, simple X forms, devoid of smaller patterns in the open areas, with Bwa material. However, the wide horizontal strip connecting the eyes I do not consider to be Bwa. Another perspective might hold that, because the surface of the mask has little or no sacrificial material and may have been danced even in its present state, it could be Winiama; however, as the fragility of the wood does not lend itself to supporting a fiber cowl, it is doubtful that it has been danced in many years. This mask and the previous buffalo mask have nearly identically-placed design motifs. Apart from the presence or absence of color, the major differences between the two masks are in scale and in the rendering of the horns. The horns on the former are distinctly rounded in cross-section. The horns on this example are more compressed front to back, yielding a flattened aspect. While there exists uncertainty about the precise origin of this example, there is no doubt as to its depth of age. Collected in 1974, it could easily be from well into the 19th century. TW

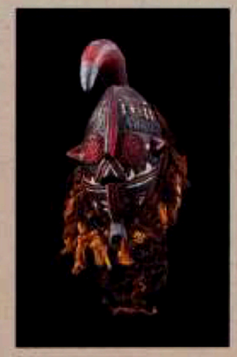


68

68 Buffalo/Bird Composite Mask, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, leather, wire, remnant indigenous polychrome, 28½"h.
The shape of the horns creates a graceful outline that is repeated in the gentle curve of the beak, unifying the sculpture. The mask is, by choice, left unpainted, indicating that there is an unpredictability to the behavior of the spirit, likened by Chris Roy's informant to an unkempt man with mental problems.[15] Combining elements drawn from the world of the living, the horns of a buffalo, and a bird-like beak, this mask exemplifies the supernatural quality of a bush spirit, something manifestly different from the familiar animals that populate the natural world. TW

69

69 Hornbill Mask with Superstructure, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 38"h.
Provenance: Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of T. Wheelock, December 23, 1997
The insect-eroded edges of the back of the smoke-impregnated mask are glossy black from wear. Several aspects of the condition of this mask point to its ethnic origin. It does not appear to have been painted for many years. There is no evidence of sacrificial material on this mask, which precludes its having been on an altar. From the freshness of the luminous patina in and around the holes that supported its fiber cowl, it appears to have been danced not long before it left its village context. Taken together, a Winiama origin is most likely. TW



70

70 Scorpion Mask, Nununa or Bwa
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, commercial nails, wax, *Abrus precatorius* seeds, indigenous polychrome, oil-base polychrome, 17"h.
Provenance: William Wright, Ruth Franklin, collected by William Wright
Although this mask is attributed to the Nununa or the Bwa, I saw an identical mask at a Nuna mask performance in the town of Puni in 2005. It represents a scorpion, a creature that is certainly ubiquitous in Burkina Faso. This is a good example of the sort of entertainment masks that Nuna and Bwa artists have created. Elaborate performances have been invented to recreate the motions and character of

the scorpion, and people travel for miles to attend performances in which such masks appear. This mask is exceptional for the red seeds, set in wax to form the eyes, and for the bright black pigment, made by boiling the seed pods of the Acacia tree. CR

It is interesting that Chris Roy observed such a similar mask performing in a Nuna village, because there are elements in this mask that are far more suggestive of a Bwa or Nunuma origin. The thick black pigment is characteristically Bwa and not Nuna. I tend to associate the use of masses of red *Abrus precatorius* seeds as popular among the Nunuma and the Bwa, who apply them around the eyes and, on certain types of *hombo* masks, both on the mask's surface and clumped in wax over the small, wood, hornbill head that is mounted in the foreheads of the masks (cat. 204). I acquired this mask in1985, and the mask probably left Burkina Faso five to ten years earlier. Over the thirty-five intervening years, the conception could have been adapted from the Nunuma by the Nuna. Scorpion-inspired masks are rare in Burkina Faso. I know of one other example, formerly in the Harry Franklin collection.[38] Both masks share the stinger element but are otherwise quite different. In this example, the stinger is obvious, but the sculptor has included another, more subtle, reference. The projection beneath the chin, a commonly seen element to help the masquerader grasp the mask securely during the rigors of a performance, has been carved to suggest a scorpion's claw. TW

71

71 Rabbit? Mask, Nunuma
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 13" h.

72

72 Chameleon or Composite Mask, Nunuma
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 16⅛" h.

73 Guinea Fowl Mask, Winiama or Nunuma
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 15½" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

Apart from the wrong direction of spiral, the circular tail of cat. 72 looks like that of a chameleon; however, elements of the rest of the mask include the beak, wattles and crest of a rooster. Birds, even domesticated birds, often appear as the embodiments of spiritual beings from the wilderness. The variety of forms of masks gives the performers enormous latitude for creativity in inventing new and unusual dances that will attract the attention of the audience and make the performer famous. There is a fiction that each performer is anonymous, although the truth is that everyone in the community knows full well who is wearing the mask, and performers earn respect and fame through their skill and the effectiveness of the dance. CR

These three masks, as Christopher Roy reminds us, do not represent particular animal species but rather reflect aspects of these species that are seen in the characterizations of the individual spirits through the masks. The guinea fowl mask on the left and the rabbit-like mask (cat. 71) are very old; the chameleon-bird mask in the middle is somewhat younger. It came out of Africa in 1993. Judging from evidence of the years of service required to build up patinas, it is certainly from the first half of the 20th century. I would hazard the 1940s. TW

73

74

74 Warthog Mask, Nunuma
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 15"l.
Provenance: William Wright

75 Antelope Mask, Nunuma or Bwa
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, wire, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 19⅛" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

Both of these masks enjoy considerable age. Among the Bwa, Nunuma, Winiama and Nuna, masks that reflect antelopes and buffalos are common. This antelope mask is one of the best I have encountered among those which typify the genre. Its excellent proportions and orderly details exemplify this form and reflect the confidence of the hand of a masterful carver. The bold X on the muzzle of the antelope and round eyes with no radiating design elements constitute an attribution more plausibly Bwa than Nunuma. On the other hand, the low, red, medial crest between the eyes is a characteristically Nunuma feature. The warthog mask illustrates several conventions followed by Burkinabé sculptors who carve for the Bwa and various *gurunsi* groups. The curious lumps at the side of the head of the animal, from which it derives one of its English names, "warthog," are represented on either side of this mask by two rows of three truncated cones. The great round tusks are presented arising from the forwardmost corners of the mouth and bowing inward. The muzzle is generally elongate and adheres to the triangular cross-section convention. The muzzle has been rendered somewhat flattened on this old mask, as if the animal were low to the ground, eyes attentive, ready at any second to bolt off into the scrub. Sometime in its history, the mask suffered a serious mishap and the broken sections were carefully bound in repair. TW

75

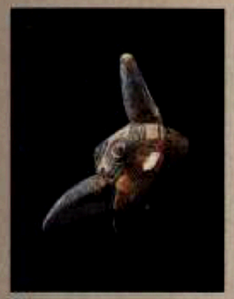
76

76 Elephant Mask, Nunuma
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 16"l.

77

77 Ram Mask, Nunuma
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 14"h.

These two masks are, for me, unique representations. Their interior surfaces indicate decades of service but stylistically they are less "classic" in their conception illustrating the agile imaginations of Burkinabé sculptors in their capacity for adopting new forms according to the demands of their clients, all the while maintaining the telltale conventions which ground them in their cultural contexts. A new form is the manifestation of a spirit described from a dream of a client or through the interpretation of a diviner. The entire elephant form is novel, its floppy-eared representation unique. The ram-inspired mask shows admirable skill in the rendering of the horns. The curlycue white line on the muzzle and curved, dentate lower jaw are departures from convention. Ram masks do occur among other Burkina Faso ethnic groups, but to my knowledge there is only one other sculptor who has produced such splendidly spiraled horns, a Bobo blacksmith who, with his "workshop," produced three or four extraordinary ram masks among a quantity of stylistically very distinct helmet masks.[39] The Bobo helmet mask with horns (cat. 183) is, if not by the same hand, illustrative of his Bobo workshop style. TW

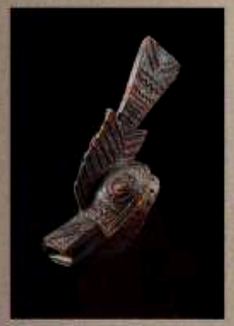

78

78 Guinea Fowl Mask, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 13¼"l.
Provenance: Ilia Malichin

79 Fish Mask, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 17"l.

This Winiama mask (cat. 79) represents a fish that miraculously offered itself up to the founding ancestor, saving his life, so that he could bring his family to settle and prosper on new land. The performer scurried around the performance area, followed by an elder man or woman with a large wicker fish trap. Each time the elder lowered the trap over the fish it "swam" out from beneath, until at the last moment it acquiesced and allowed itself to be trapped. CR

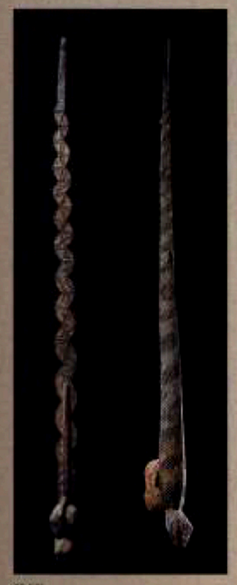
In the belief that the dentate ring within the eye is characteristically Winiama, these two masks have been grouped together. The fish, wanting for fresh paint, is almost certainly Winiama. The guinea fowl mask is by the same workshop as cat. 73 but is older. These two masks may have originated in Ouri, where the Konaté blacksmith family has long produced masks for the surrounding ethnic groups. TW


79

80 Serpent Mask with Superposed Second Serpent, Nunuma or Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, wax, remnant indigenous polychrome, 122¼"l.
Provenance: Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of T. Wheelock, December 23, 1987; Alain Dufour, collected by Alain Dufour mid 1970s

81 Serpent Mask *wankr*, Altarpiece, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, 114¼"l.

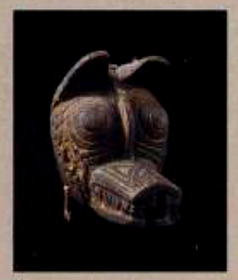
The serpent mask to the right (cat. 81) is from a family altar and was probably a sacred *wankr* mask. It was said to be Winiama at the time of its purchase in 1977 in Burkina Faso. It offers several details of note. The mask is rendered straight and in fully three dimensions rather than the commonly seen nearly flat convention with a wavy outline. In lieu of carving an undulating form, the sculptor has incorporated a continuous zigzag of parallel lines yielding a sense of serpentine movement that is curiously reinforced by the occasional placement of the nested circle motif that, by breaking the design, draws attention to the intended notion of movement. The triangles at the neck nudge the eye toward the very toothy business end of the snake. The mask is inspired by a specific species of snake, the African Rock Python, *Python sebae sebae*, a terrestrial constrictor that reaches 28 to 30 feet. It is the only snake on the African continent to achieve this scale. Pythons are the oldest family of snakes and the sole group with species that have retained atrophied skeletal hind legs and pelvises that recall their evolutionary four-legged origin. This condition is expressed externally by a small pair of anal spurs that protrude from beneath a ventral scale to either side of the cloaca. The sculptor has incorporated a reference to this singular feature with a pair of tabs near the tail of the snake. The length of the underside of this old mask was excavated in a V, lightening it in consideration for its wearer, a feature unlike any serpent mask I have seen. The mask to the left (cat. 80) is a dramatic stylistic contrast to the former mask. It is flat and undulating, with the tail end, the distinctive growing section, left straight. The presence of what I take to be a juvenile snake mounted on its back is a curious addition. The head is rendered more traditionally than the former example, with a pronounced angular shift of planes where the jaws meet the head proper. While commonplace on most Bwa and *gurunsi* buffalo and antelope masks, this shift off axis is applied to many more mask formats among the Nunuma and Winiama, including many of their masks with complex superstructures. The jaws are evenly open in this example and are lined, top and bottom, with small notches representing teeth. The cross-section is a regular pentagon, with the bottom, which is slightly convex, meeting the sides at 90°. (This is a format typical of certain Nunuma, Winiama and Bwa mask types. The hyena mask (cat. 83) offers another example of this mouth type.) Remnant wax at the center of its ringed conical eyes likely held bright red *Abrus precatorius* seeds. The lack of refreshment of the painted surface suggests it might be Winiama. This mask, while hardly as old as the previous Winiama example, has substantial age, certainly the first half of the 20th century. TW


80 / 81

82

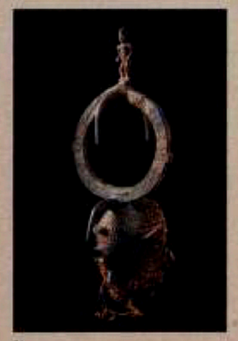
82 Monkey Mask *wankr*, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, organic material, 13"h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

The heavy encrustation of blood, feathers and perhaps millet beer indicates that this fine old monkey mask was the lead mask in an ensemble, and perhaps a *wankr*. The bulk of the encrustation is on the top of the head, not on the sides of the mask or its knotted fiber cowl. One can surmise from the freshness of the cowl that the mask was still actively danced at the time it left Africa. This, in conjunction with the dark, unrefreshed surfaces, points toward a Winiama origin. The mask has retained a pendant cowrie earring. TW


83

83 Hyena Mask, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 12"h.

As old as this aggressive mask undoubtedly is, it appears, like a previous hornbill mask (cat. 69), to have been worn up to the time that it left its village. Even broken surfaces are patinated smooth from years of handling. Like a number of other masks shown here, the surface has a patina developed on layers of carbon soot deposited from the smoky environment in which it was stored. Such an environment protects the mask directly by acting as an insecticide, and indirectly by speeding the drying process, thus depriving the would-be invaders of moisture and further impeding their destructive process. TW


84

84 Mask with Circular Superstructure and Spirit Figure, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, leather, fiber cord, remnant indigenous polychrome, organic material, 34"h.
Provenance: William Wright

Mask superstructures with open-circle forms are a rarity in the corpus of art from the Burkina Faso region. This mask is unusual, not only for the open ring, but also for the strange mushroom-like or button-shaped nose, the deep cylindrical and thin-walled mouth, and the simple ring eyes with a hole in their centers. Even the long, pointed ears differ from the norm. The figure, albeit less dramatically cubistic, is similar to the pair of figures on the mask that follows (cat. 85). The pair of excrescent tabs on either side of the open circle are enigmatic elements that also occur on superstructures of Winiama, Nunuma and Bwa masks, as well as along the top edges of Bwa butterfly masks. They are not found on Nuna masks. TW

85

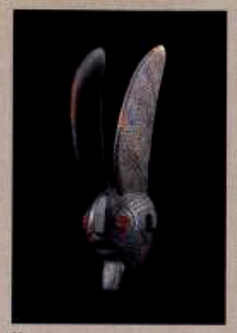
86

87

85 Mask with Two Spirit Figures, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, remnant indigenous polychrome, 25¼" h.
The Winiama people of Ouri and other towns in central Burkina Faso carve masks of this type to represent spirits of the wilderness. This mask bears a pair of spirit figures carved in the distinctive Winiama style. The angular faces, large C-shaped ears, and narrow heads are typical of the Winiama, as is the diamond-shaped mouth of the mask. These were worn at funerals, initiations, and at annual celebrations when the community was swept of evil magical forces and purified for the coming year. The figures were painted a bright red, the color of danger and of spiritual beings. CR
That which, to the Western eye, is strongly reminiscent of cubist sculpture is typical of a "school" of Winiama figure sculpture. Other examples illustrated here are the standing figure, belonging to a diviner (cat. 195), and a heddle pulley (cat. 509). The figures, like most Bwa and *gurunsi* figurative sculpture, are represented in a palms forward, fingers-down gesture, an awkward position for the human hand. The meaning of this apparently significant hand position is in many cultures associated with some form of supplication but this has not been confirmed for the Winiama, or for neighboring groups that share the gesture. The mask was repainted at least once as the figures show a layer of dark red pigment, flaked away, exposing beneath it a brighter layer of red. Hans Himmelheber photographed this, or a remarkably similar mask, during his 1952–53 excursion to West Africa and reproduced the photograph in his seminal 1960 text, *Negerkunst und Negerkünstler*,[18] in which he mistakenly assigned it to the Bobo, reflecting the limited state of ethnographic knowledge of the time. TW

86 Crest Mask, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, wax, *Abrus precatorius* seeds, undifferentiated metal, cotton cord, leather, indigenous polychrome, 18½" h.
The years of field research by Christopher Roy has established that masks with arcuate or straight vertical crests are attributable solely to the Winiama, although there is a crested style found among the central Bwa in the Dédougou region. Susan Vogel memorably described this very old example as having a "fish-trap mouth." The eyes were once covered with bright red *Abrus precatorius* seeds. This fearsome mouth, while rare, is not unique to this mask. The interior of the mask has one of the deepest translucent wear patinas that I have observed from the entire region. TW

87 Crest Mask, Winiama or Nunuma
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, leather, commercial nails, chalky pigment, indigenous polychrome, 32" h.
Aside from the spectacular form, the mask has an extraordinary wear patina developed on carbon-rich layers, deposited over years of exposure to the protective smoky environment in which it was stored. It would be hard to conceive of this mask as any younger than 19th century but easily imagined as still older. The distinctive pink pigment is foreign and must have found its way to rural markets, where the owners of the masks bought it. Possibly the same pigment can be seen on several objects from roughly the same region, the very large, horned Samo mask (cat. 164) and the equally large-proportioned commemorative wrestling championship scepter, also Samo (cat. 260). The (likely) same pigment is found on a Ouagadougou-style Mossi ram mask (cat. 108), which, if it is the same, points to the Central Market in Ouagadougou as the ultimate in-country source, from which location drummers dispersed with their wares. Having noted how unusual were the ears on the mask with circular superstructure (cat. 84) we must note their similarity to the ears on this mask. TW



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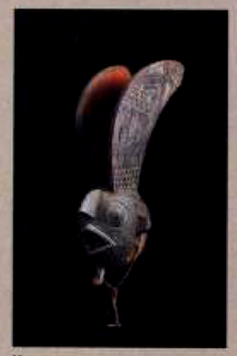

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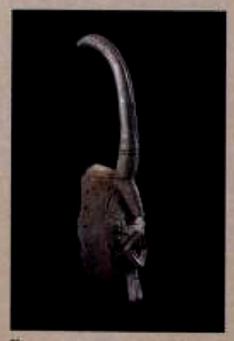


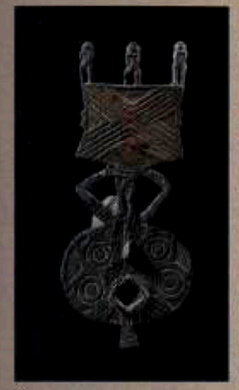
91

88 Double Crest Mask, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, wax, *Abrus precatorius* seeds, remnant indigenous polychrome, 30" h.
Provenance: William Wright

89 Crest Mask, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, nylon cord, remnant indigenous polychrome, 36¾" h.

90 Double Crest Mask, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, cane, cotton cord, remnant indigenous polychrome, 30¾" h.
This quite common mask form never ceases to seize my attention. Their heads and crests are unusually large and their wide, nightmarish mouths, aggressively agape, are invariably armed with lethal spirit-threatening teeth. The crests are flat and range from thin to relatively thick; their size is consistently wide and high with a smooth, shallow, backward curve. Both sides of single crests and the two outer surfaces of bi-crested and tri-crested types are richly intaglio carved with expansive, nested X and V shapes and serrated bands or rows of triangles. The two sides are never the same, and one side usually displays a series of singular, enigmatic forms seen only on the crests of this mask type. They form a row of stemmed, blade-like elements that are perhaps symbolic scarification blades, tying the masks to initiation, and are present on all three of these masks. They are carved in intaglio on cat. 90 and in the reverse on the other two masks. The mask on top (cat. 88) is very old with a glossy black patina; the other two (cats. 89 and 90) are of much more recent vintage, two or three decades. TW

91 Crest Mask *Keduneh*, *wankr* Mask Altarpiece, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, 20½" h.
Provenance: Pierre Robin, said to have been collected in the 1960s by Colonel Grillot
Keduneh is the name given to this mask with one curved horn by the Winiama in Ouri, Soubouy, Oulo and other towns north of Boromo. This very dark, old mask was placed on a shrine, where it received sacrifices to the spirits of the wilderness. CR
The same hand or workshop that created the Bwa *hombo* mask (cat. 136) almost certainly produced this extraordinary and equally ancient mask. Both masks are markedly narrow and have wide collars yielding deep interiors. The features are bolder on this mask and the boldness is intentional, as it, like the shape and minimal volume of the face itself, affirms and reinforces the line of verticality. Its presence is as illusive and fleeting as the spirit it represents. TW



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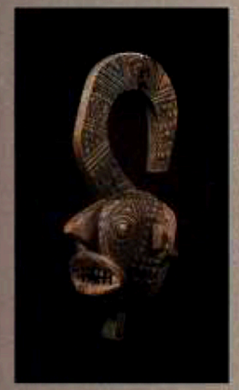

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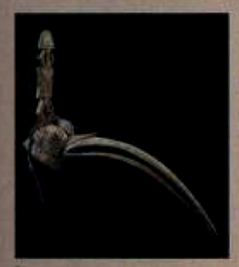


94

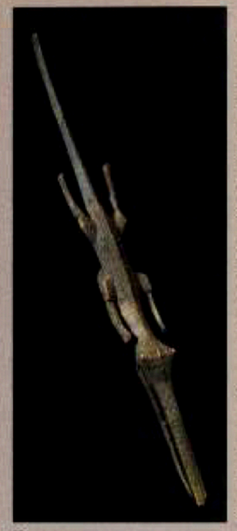
92 Plank Mask with Spirit Figures, *wankr* Altarpiece, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, undifferentiated cord, organic material, 23½" h.
Provenance: Michael Wyman, Mo Styart
The short plank mask with figures may be the prototype for what came to be known among the Bwa as a leper mask. The beak has long been lost. Fragments of the back edges of the mask are carefully wrapped with cord and secured to the back. The figures atop the mask, handless, and with truncated arms and ill-defined features, are unlike any we know. The PL figure is a restoration. TW

93 Crest Mask, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 27" h.
The near full-circle crest on this unusually large old mask is very similar to the *keduneh* mask photographed in Ouri in 1984 by Christopher Roy (fig. 14). The volume of the head is massive for a mask of this general style and, in itself, sets the mask apart. Also of note is the highly unusual elongation of the geometry above and below the eyes. The surfaces have long gone unpainted, as we have come to expect of many Winiama masks. TW

94 Hornbill Mask, *wankr* Altarpiece, Winiama or Nunuma
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, organic materials, 45" l.
Provenance: William Wright
All of the hornbill masks that I can attribute with certainty to the Nuna have more robust, shorter bills than the narrow, gracefully arced bill enjoyed by this mask. The oldest Nuna example in this collection (cat. 61) has a kind of counterbalance feature that I find consistently Nuna, and a beak length similar to the beaks found on more recent Nuna hornbill masks (cats. 57, 58 and 59). Apart from the exquisite beak, the noteworthy aspects of this mask are the gibbous eye mounds, the casque at the proximal end of the beak which lifts up at its anterior end, the tightly limited design elements in the middle of the beak and the short superstructure, the central panel of which has two stubby tabs, curious elements that, because they occur similarly positioned on many other Nunuma, Winiama and Bwa masks with superstructures, must surely carry symbolic content. TW

LÉLA MASKS

95 Crocodile Mask, Léla
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, leather, commercial nails, remnant indigenous polychrome, 84" l.
Several unusual aspects of this mask, the extreme narrowness of the body and the extraordinary attenuation of the mouth immediately announce themselves. However, still more unusual is the enigmatic relationship of the hollow, tubular throat to the interior of the mask. As is often the case with masks among the Bwa and *gurunsi* groups, the mouth opens to the interior of the mask, but in this case, unlike most examples, the pitch of the opening would not have permitted the mask wearer to see through the opening. The interior of the mask is very shallow, which, given the age, could result from years of gradual losses to the edges, but in my view, was more likely deliberate. These two aspects, the shallowness of the interior and the functionless mouth opening, leads me to believe that the mask was worn like a Ouagadougou-style mask, horizontally rather than diagonally, such that the mask wearer could have seen through the mouth. I assign the mask to the Léla, because the mask was said to have come from the northern *gurunsi* region rather than from Mossi country, and because the masking tradition of the former is said to be similar to and probably pre-dates the neighboring Ouagadougou-style Mossi tradition that dictates that masks be perched on their heads like caps. The object has had some restoration work in Africa but probably at the dealer level. The bindings that secure the hind legs and PR front leg have all been "painted out," something that would never have occurred in a village context; further, the tightly wrapped leather collar has a rather too uniform patina, suggesting that it is an addition, which probably conceals and helps secure a complicated break. TW



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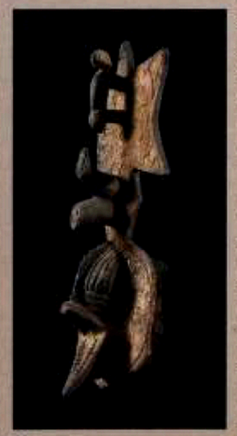


96

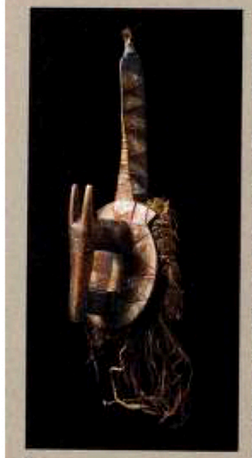
SISALA MASKS

Northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso is home to two closely related Gur masking traditions, *sikiɛn*, as masking is called among the Sisala, and *sigma* or *simma* among the Vagala and Tampulma and the smaller Nome and Batige groups. All four latter groups were historically under the control of Dagomba Kingdoms and regarded by the Dagomba as very low on the social scale. The Chakalle also adhere to *Simma* and share the lack of status of the aforementioned groups, but near Wa, in a historically Mamprussi region. Both the Dagomba and the Mamprussi are linguistically and culturally closely related to the *nakomsé* Mossi, who likewise were overlords to Gur-speaking groups. None of the latter groups is known to have had a masking tradition.[19] All of these Ghanaian Gur groups wear masks of basically similar form, flat discoid face or forehead masks with no eyehole, and with their backs carved in an inverted U-shape, that is, open at the bottom. This feature is unlike most Burkinabé *gurunsi* masks, which have closed oval backs. Some, like the Sisala, Nome and Batige, have demi-ovoid heads on the faces of the disks and flat horns or ears either cut from the disks, as is the case in the Nome and Batige (a field photograph was published by Bravmann in 1979, as referenced above), or extending the disk planes into long horn-like elements, as with the Nome, Batige and Sisala, or plank superstructures, one of which is seen on the Sisala mask below (cat. 96). The Vagala and Tampulma develop an animal head on the face of the disk that is carved in the round in a truncated U, forming a handle-like head, beak or snout (cats. 97 and 98). The masks of these groups all function as spirit shrines which, after sacrificial propitiations, offer solutions to problems through interpretations of the manner in which the sacrificial animal expired. The known "active" Sisala mask, photographed in northern Ghana by John W. Nunley,[20] would likely have served at funerals but at the time last examined, in the mid-1970s, had so deteriorated that it could no longer be worn.[21] *sigma* and *simma* masks continue to be active at funerals. TW

96 Mask with Superstructure, *wankr* Altar Object, Sisala
Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, 27½" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour
Masks that are used every year in public performances are repainted annually. Only the oldest masks, that never appear in public but are hidden away in the houses of people, acquire this dark patina. This is an example of a very old mask that was retired from

performing and became an altar or shrine object on which sacrifices were offered to the spirits. There is a very nicely carved chameleon on the plank, a powerful symbol of magical transformation. CR

The oblong volume, forming the head lying on the conventional rounded disk, which supports a superstructure, may be an identifying feature of Sisala masks. The gaping mouth with rows of teeth is like nothing seen before from Burkina Faso. As is the case with numerous other masks of exceptional age, features that are unfamiliar have probably dropped out of the canon and been replaced by more recent interpretations. There is very little published on this *gurunsi* group. As mentioned above, John Nunley published field photographs of fragments of Sisala masks from an altar in Northern Ghana. One of the fragments had a similar volume head planted on a disk.[22] Another stylistically similar, somewhat fragmented, but breathtaking example belongs to the Swedish collector Jan Lundberg and is published in a Malmo Konsthall catalogue.[23] TW



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98

MASKS FROM NORTHERN GHANA

97 Antelope Mask *sigma*, Vagala or Tampulma
Northern Ghana, wood, commercial nails, feathers, fiber, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 23" h.

98 Buffalo Mask *sigma*, Vagala or Tampulma
Northern Ghana, wood, unidentified polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 22" h.
Provenance: René and Maud Garcia

These masks are from Northern Ghana, but in the formal aspects of their construction they bear some important similarities to certain *gurunsi* and Bwa mask styles from Burkina Faso. The central feature in common to both cases is a flat disk from which some aspects of the head of the spirit animal or facial features project in high relief. In addition, a superstructure may extend upward from the top of the disk with its frontal plane conforming to that of the disk. This is witnessed in the two examples illustrated here, the horns of the Buffalo and the tail of the antelope. The latter, however, is carved in the round. Common to the northern Ghana masks is the curiously consistent presence of one or several nail-length iron barbs impaling the exterior cheek plates. Their meaning is not known. Another formal aspect in the conception of these masks is the form consistently taken at the backs of the masks. Among the Bwa and *gurunsi* groups, on most face masks of this scale, the walls of the interior backs of the masks form a closed circle or an oval. Among the Northern Ghana groups, the backs are invariably an inverted U shape and open at the bottom. This same inverted U format occurs on Sisala masks (cat. 96), at least from what we know of them, and on the masks of *hombo* blacksmiths of certain Bwa villages (cats. 149 and 150). Whatever the linkage between these groups, it is obscured by the passage of time, but in the case of the Bwa examples the fact that the masks seem to be the spirit *hombo*, a blacksmith spirit, would suggest that smiths more than likely, and not surprisingly, played a key role. TW

99

MOSSI MASKS

Christopher Roy was the first researcher to define style regions for the multitude of stylistically different Mossi masks. He identified the relationship of the various styles to the histories of each region and their autochthonous inhabitants, all of whom were conquered by the *nakomsé* Mossi and now consider themselves Mossi. Each of the lineages that constitute the original farming populations, the *tengabisi*, in each style area, has its own totem. These totems are generally different animal species, but in some cases are humans, or spirits with human or animal attributes who played central roles in the myth of origin of the lineage. Mossi wood masks represent these various totems. The Ouagadougou or Southern style is characterized by small wood masks that are generally worn on top of the head with heavy conical fiber costumes that fall to the ground. Usually, the oldest of the masks is the most revered, the *wan-kasenga*. It is only danced on important occasions and is otherwise kept on the family altar, where it serves in communications with lineage ancestors and the spirit world. The remaining masks of the lineage, referred to as *wan-biti*, are similar in appearance to the *wan-kasenga* and represent the same totem. As they are less important, they are seen on less significant occasions as well as those prestigious occasions when they accompany the *wan-kasenga*.[24] TW

99 Buffalo Mask, Kokologho-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Southwest of Ouagadougou, Kokologho region, wood, indigenous polychrome, *Hibiscus cannabinus* fiber, 24 ¼" l.
Provenance: Peter and Nancy Mickelsen

Like the warthog mask (cat. 100) there is a highly developed patina on the underside of the jaw. The sculptor has scooped out the horns in a most inviting visual fashion and repeated the rhythmic curves in the rounding of the open mouth and with incised white lines that descend from the eyes and loop inward before ascending the forehead. This rendering of the horns seems to be unique to this sculptor. I have seen one other published example by the same hand but only a fragment, the telltale horns and a small portion of the head remaining. This magnificent mask was the extraordinarily generous gift of Peter and Nancy Mickelsen for which I am beyond grateful. TW

100 Warthog Mask, Kokologho-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Southwest of Ouagadougou, Kokologho region, wood, *Hibiscus cannabinus* fiber, indigenous polychrome, 23¼" l.

This is one of the most skillfully carved and most expressive examples of Mossi masks from the southwest area I know of. It represents a bush pig, or warthog. Such animals are still common in the wilderness and are frequently startled by farmers walking through the bush on their way to their fields or while hunting. When surprised, bush pigs make a huge noise and rush off grunting and squealing, leading their piglets to safety. When represented by masks such as this, they embody the spirit of a supernatural being that appeared to the ancestors of the family in the form of a bush pig. CR

Masks in Burkina Faso that are actively worn are refurbished annually, with a few exceptions. Old paint is removed, and new paint is applied. Among some groups, fiber costumes must be renewed annually. Among others, such as the Mossi, they are renewed as needed. In this example the fresh paint obscures the mask's very considerable age.

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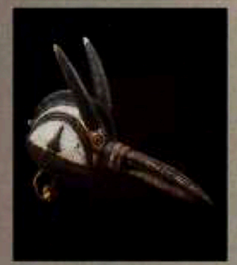

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Its age is, however, in part revealed by a highly developed wear patina on the underside of the lower jaw, where the mask, heavy with its attached fiber cowl, would have been held by attendants and lifted on and off the head of the masquerader. This mask, the previous mask, the three that follow, and the very old *wan-kasenga* (cat. 131) originate in the area west and south of Ouagadougou, the region between Saponé and Kokologho. All six examples differ from the Ouagadougou style in their size: they are notably larger. One aspect of their construction is also different. Unlike the Ouagadougou-style masks, the Kokologho-style examples have an opening from their mouths to the interiors of the masks. Theoretically this reflects the position the mask could have assumed on the head of the wearer, angled downward, over the forehead, such that the wearer could see through the opening breaching the mouth. With some exceptions Ouagadougou-style masks are worn perched on top of the head like caps, the masquerader seeing out through the fibrous costume. Practically, given their weight and potential awkwardness, the Kokologho-style masks may, regardless of the opening, also have been worn on top of the head. Lastly, the knobs representing the verruca, the facial protuberances of the warthog from which its common name is derived, occur in two pairs on this warthog mask. This is the correct number associated with the species of warthog *Phacocoerus aethiopicus*, which inhabits the savannah of Burkina Faso.[25] The Nuruma, to the west, represent three pairs of verruca on their warthog masks (cat. 74) but judging from other examples of Mossi warthog masks, the Mossi consistently carve two pairs. TW

101 Short-horned Antelope Mask, Kokologho-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Southwest of Ouagadougou, Kokologho region, wood, indigenous polychrome, *Hibiscus cannabinus* fiber, 22½" l.

In contrast to the age of the other examples of the Kokologho style, this short-horned antelope mask, probably representing a Grimm's duiker, *Sylvicapra grimmia*, is relatively recent, perhaps from the 1950s. Although of more recent vintage it is nonetheless a masterfully rendered object. Of special note is the complex and delicate geometric pattern that runs the length of the narrow, elongate snout. The prominence of the design is less in its incised origin than in the build-up of black pigment which is water-resistant and thus during washing remains in place while the other pigments are soaked off. The black pigment is produced from seed pods boiled in water and, in some instances, by the addition of coke from iron smelting, a reminder of the masks' blacksmithing origin.[26] TW

102 Kobe Antelope Mask, Kokologho-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Southwest of Ouagadougou, Kokologho region, wood, indigenous polychrome, *Hibiscus cannabinus* fiber, 22½" l.

The annual application of paint also conceals the depth of age of this mask. The interior is richly patinated and deeply eroded. Not shown in any of these pictures is the very long, flat, braided tail, several inches wide, that descends from behind both this mask and from behind the warthog mask (cat. 100) and terminates in a fiber tuft. Masks in collections with even this reduced amount of original costume are exceptionally rare as the bulky costumes are usually jettisoned in their villages of origin to facilitate transportation on bicycles or motorbikes. As these costumes shed, if they do survive Africa the costumes are, more often than not, discarded by dealers in deference to those members of a client's family whose responsibility it is to keep house. TW

103

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105

103 Composite Mask, Kokologho-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Southwest of Ouagadougou, Kokologho region, wood, indigenous polychrome, 30¾"l.

This somewhat enigmatic mask represents a bush spirit resembling perhaps a bird with vertically interpreted tail feathers or a warthog with its short up-thrust tail and knobby head. However, it is best thought of simply as the bush spirit that it is, with composite animal features. While quite different from the previous Kokologho-style examples, it is similar to the others in its scale, its breached mouth and the distinctive banding at the base of the snout, which is also seen on the two previous Kokologho-style antelope masks (cats. 101 and 102) and on the forward part of the snout of the warthog mask (cat. 100) although, in the latter case, given the position, these may simply be representations of wrinkles. TW

104 Antelope Mask, Ouagadougou-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, region north of Ouagadougou, wood, wire, leather, cotton cord, remnant polychrome, 24 ¼" l.

This antelope mask is similar in scale to the Kokologho masks but, because it was collected by Kaboré Arouna, who was known to have traveled exclusively in the region immediately north of Ouagadougou, it is ascribed to the Ouagadougou-style area. While it shares the breached mouth of Kokologho-style masks, its large eyes with their pronounced raised outer ring are different from the eyes of the previous examples. This eye style is seen on other similarly large masks from the same region. This mask was probably retired to an ancestral shrine house but does not show the heavy sacrificial surface typically associated with shrine objects. Nevertheless its importance as a sacred object is witnessed in the efforts to maintain its integrity. Note the native repairs to the tip of the PR horn and to the ears. The quality of the eroded wood suggests that the altar on which this mask served had fallen into disuse or perhaps been abandoned. TW

105 Rooster Mask *wan-noraogo*, Ouagadougou-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, north or west of Ouagadougou, wood, wire, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 18" l.
Provenance: Jean Citroen

This old mask suffered breakage while in use. Sections were lost along the PR back edge and the lip of the PL edge of the mask has been broken along the line of the original holes that pierced the edge. The remnant holes are reduced to scalloped indentations along the edge. To keep the mask in service, newer holes were subsequently pierced along the broken edge on the PL side and paralleling the deeper loss along the back. Largely based on its size this mask is considered more likely to have originated in the Ouagadougou-style area rather than the Kokologho region. Its length dimension is less than the 21 to 26-inch lengths recorded for masks assigned to the latter group. However, Kokologho-area origin is equally plausible given the breached mouth and banding along the upper portion of the base of the beak, features thought characteristic of Kokologho-style masks. TW

106

106 Hawk Mask *wan-silga*, Ouagadougou-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 10½"h.
Provenance: William Wright

107 Albino Mask *wan-mwegha* or Fulani Woman Mask *wan-balinga*, Ouagadougou-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 12⅛"h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

In the 1970s several masks like the mask illustrated below left were said to come from east of Kaya, near Pissila. This location was never confirmed and is problematic as masks from that far eastern Mossi area are thought to belong to either the Kaya-style group or the Bulsa-style group, both stylistically radically different from the style of this mask. Neither of these masks nor the mask illustrated farther ahead (cat. 132) belong to either of these style groups but appear allied to Ouagadougou-style traditions. Unlike the previous Ouagadougou-style masks, which were worn on top of the masqueraders' heads, all three of these masks were worn over the face. Their flat facial planes are pierced by circular eyeholes. The albino or Fulani woman mask enjoys considerable age but the hawk mask, a remarkably abstract conception, is ancient. That it has survived and remained active is a credit not only to its caretakers but also to the density of the wood from which it was fashioned. Often with old but still active masks their annual refurbishing yields the deceptive impression of newness but in this mask the age is apparent even through the paint. It would be my contention that, given the favorably dry climate of Burkina Faso, masks are often so well cared for that, if carved from a hard wood, spared grievous accident or honored as shrines, they may survive for some centuries. If the present practice of carving objects only from freshly cut wood is applicable to the past, which is undoubtedly the case as the denser woods once cured become so hard as to be unworkable with an adz or an ax, C14 dating techniques are today sufficiently advanced that, in conjunction with tree-ring analysis, approximate ages could be determined for many of the older objects from Burkina Faso. The information this would deliver would be, I believe, nothing short of a revelation. TW

107

108

108 Ram Mask *wan-pesego*, Ouagadougou-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, probably from the region between Yako and Ouagadougou, wood, indigenous polychrome, unidentified polychrome, 13¾"l.

Small ram masks are less common than antelope masks. This example, although eroded inside and out, has continued to be danced. Of note is the lovely, smooth, sweeping outline from the end of its muzzle to the tip of its horns. The pink pigment is foreign and may be the same as that seen on several other masks and objects in this collection from 150 miles west of this region (cats. 87, 164, and 260). TW

109

109 Fulani Woman Mask *wan-balinga*, Ouagadougou-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, probably from the region between Yako and Ouagadougou, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 14½"h.

110 Antelope mask *wan-nyaka*, Ouagadougou-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, probably from the region between Yako and Ouagadougou, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 24¼"l.

Both the Fulani woman and the antelope mask are old enough to be lead lineage masks but neither seems to have had the abundance of sacrificial material on its surface to support the likelihood of that status. Although another fine antelope mask is illustrated here (cat. 111) this example is notably different. It has wonderful long ears that, judging from the small hole at their base, probably once held tufts of protruding hair. TW

110

111 Antelope mask *wan-nyaka*, Ouagadougou-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, probably from the region between Yako and Ouagadougou, wood, iron, indigenous polychrome, 22⅛"l.

For many years masks in this style were misattributed to the Bobo, because they were thought to resemble Bwa masks, which were mistakenly referred to as Bobo-Oulé or "Red Bobo." The French misunderstood their Jula interpreters, who told them the Bwa and Bobo (Bobo-Fing) were related, and Western collectors were unable to distinguish between the many styles of the southwestern Mossi, Nuna, Winiama and Bwa. In fact this is a fine example of the style of the Mossi who live in the southwestern area of the Mossi plateau, northeast of the Nazinon River. It represents the small antelope called a red-fronted gazelle or *Gazella rufifrons*. The S-shaped horns are typical of this antelope, as is the narrow, almost pointed snout. The small bird above the head may indicate that this is one of the attendant masks that accompany more sacred masks at funerals, or it may simply be a creative addition by the artist. CR

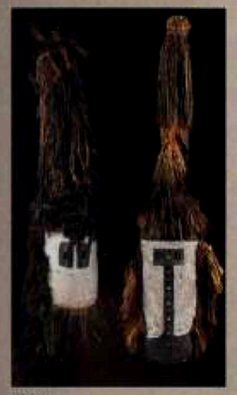
Small birds are often affixed to a variety of masks but, as they are only pegged in place on iron spikes, they loosen and, more frequently than not, are lost. The top edge of the openwork superstructures on many *karansé* (sing. *karanga*) have several holes, which probably held pegs that secured such birds. Similar-size birds are seen on some Nuna winged masks, where they are perched along the top of the wings. Buffalo masks from both the Bwa and various *gurunsi* groups may be seen to have a single small bird on top of the head between the horns. When this mask was acquired in Burkina Faso, the bird was firmly affixed, the thick black pigment lapping the iron pin. With packing and unpacking for various exhibitions the bird has loosened to the point that it is now removable. TW

111

112

112 Rooster Mask *wan-noraogo*, Ouagadougou-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, probably from the region between Yako and Ouagadougou, wood, wire, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 19"l.
Provenance: Ladislas Segy

Thinly carved and unusually old, this mask is feather-light, delicate and subject to breakage. The numerous holes attest to the breaks that occurred in its village context. Published in 1976 by Segy,[27] the parts had already been glued together. The mask shows evidence of much sacrificial material and may have been the *wan-kasenga* of its lineage. TW



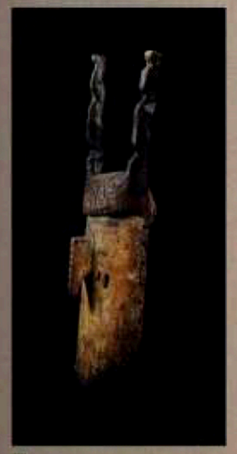
113 / 114

113 *Wan-zega* Mask, Boulsa-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
East Central Burkina Faso, wood, *Hibiscus cannabinus* fiber, indigenous polychrome, 80"h.
Provenance: Peter and Nancy Mickelsen

114 *Wan-zega* Mask, Boulsa-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
East Central Burkina Faso, wood, *Hibiscus cannabinus* fiber, indigenous polychrome, 61"h.
Provenance: Ernie Wolfe Gallery

Mossi in the far eastern area near Boulsa and Zeguedeguin use sets of three masks: a male, the *wan-zega* or red mask; a female, the *wan-sablaga* or black mask; and the protective dwarf spirit, *yali*, which is the most important of the three (fig. 19). Both of the masks shown here are red, male masks. *Wan-zega* behaves aggressively, chasing spectators and using whips liberally to keep crowds back from the performance area. The example on the left is notable because so much of the costume is intact. When the entire fiber costume has been striped the masks lack almost all visual appeal, and are good examples of how distorted an idea we get of objects that are intended only to be seen intact and in performance. The costume worn with these masks includes trousers of red hemp that permit the performer to run fast and catch members of the audience. I encountered one such mask in Sini that carried a 4-foot piece of ¼-inch steel reinforcing rod as a whip. I made a point of staying out of its sight. The performer also carries a reed between his teeth through which he blows air, creating a high-pitched twittering sound like a bird. CR

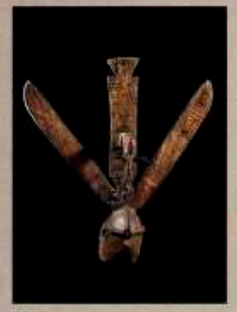
Despite the fact that neither of these masks has a red costume they belong to the *wan-zega* category of masks. The mask on the right has a medial black stripe with a vertical row of peg-like protuberances alternately painted red and white. Incised in each is a right-angle cross. It is not known if this is purely decorative or holds symbolic meaning. Over the years since it left its village context, the mask to the left has shed half of its original fiber. Though an elevated level of humidity might stay the deterioration process of the fiber, it might simultaneously invite organic decay or a florescence of surface bloom. To date no conservation technique has come to my attention to prevent this gradual deterioration of hibiscus fiber. TW



115

115 *Yali* Mask, Boulsa-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
East Central Burkina Faso, wood, remnant indigenous and oil-base polychrome, 25 ⅝"h.

Yali masks are the most important of the three Boulsa-style mask forms and a mask type seldom encountered. All are distinguished by a pair of short horns, some straight and smooth, others, like this example, straight but undulating. The surface of the half cylinder, which forms the bulk of the mask, may be smooth, broken only by eye slits or, bisected by a low crenulated ridge or, as in this instance, by a hooked nose. Just as the horns have widely-set undulations, the front surface of the nose is notched in segments. Judging from the location of small patches of remnant red pigment, a broad central band across the eye slits and including the nose was once bright red. Remaining spots of white and perhaps black suggest that the red area may have originally been entirely white or that the red band was broken in places by areas of white and perhaps black. The surfaces above and below the red band were probably white. TW



116

116 *Karanga* Mask, Risiam-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, iron, leather, remnant indigenous polychrome, 31"h.
Provenance: William Wright, Richard Feletti, collected by William Wright

I barely know what to make of this unique and astonishing mask. It is from the Risiam area in the north, and was surely carved by *nyonyosé*, who use plank masks of the type for which the Mossi are best known. The bird's head and beak attached to the plank are not unusual, but the triple plank and the shape of the face are very unusual indeed.

I have never seen anything like this in Burkina Faso, but the patterns of use are ample evidence that it is old and authentic. The painted patterns on the planks are fine and numerous, and the object as a whole is quite remarkable. CR

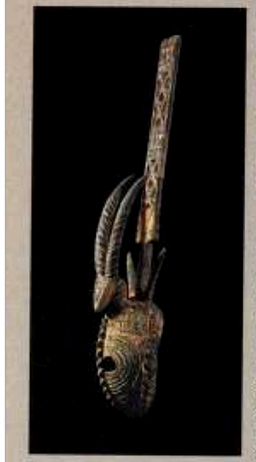
This mask, with a smoothed, worn surface, enjoys a highly-developed honey-colored patina indicating many generations of handling. The peculiar rough-textured surface over much of the face of the mask and the remnant chicken feathers leads me to believe that much of the mask proper was once covered with sacrificial blood and millet beer that was partially removed after the piece left Africa. It may well have been the primary mask of its lineage. The significance of the fiber bundle in the bird beak is uncertain, but it resembles spirit-charged magic bundles. The mask has undergone multiple village-level repairs. Bent iron tabs secure broken sections of the cheek plate, the bird head, the side of the triangle at the top of the mask and the base of the PR arm of the V. The central element was apparently always a separate element and is attached with leather thongs. This V-shape-format superstructure is undoubtedly rare but in the last few years four others have come to light. All belong to either the Risiam or Kaya-style groups. Three of the aforementioned masks in this format have a similarly truncated central, vertical plank on to which an additional element was attached, a figure in two cases, a lost, and therefore unknown element in the third. In the fourth example the mask is monoxylic and the central section is a plank reaching the same height as the lateral diagonal arms.[28] TW

117

117 *Karanga* Mask *mowango*, Kaya-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 35"h.

In far northeastern Mossi country, the Kaya and Dablo region, the *nyonyosé* carve masks with convex faces and numerous arms or branches that spring from the central plank. These are used at funerals and initiations, just as other Mossi masks are. This is one of the best examples, with enormous round eyes and finely painted graphic patterns that represent moral lessons. CR

This style, with its branched superstructure, is very similar to a Kurumba mask style reflecting the autochthonous origin of the Mossi *nyonyosé* in



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the region. It is more customary for the geometric patterns that decorate Kaya masks to be, like their Kurumba counterparts, painted but not incised. However, on this mask the sculptor has applied paired, parallel incised lines to the superstructure with sets of alternating red and white stripes between the lines on the arms. The convex face is covered with small, round pyroengraved cavities offering a contrast in textures. The mask is probably no older than mid-20th century. TW

118 *Karanga* Mask, Risiam-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 37 ¼" h.
Provenance: William Wright
This northern Mossi plank mask was made and used in the region around the large Mossi town of Kongoussi, directly north of Ouagadougou (fig. 20). The people who lived in the region before 1500 were Kurumba. When the *nakomsé* created the Mossi states many of the Kurumba were integrated into Mossi society as *nyonyosé*, whose descendants continue to make masks. Those peoples farther north, in Aribinda and other towns in the Sahel, remained independent and are still called Kurumba. The antelope is the form in which a spiritual being appeared to the ancestors of the family. The plank is the *yaaba soore*, the "path of the ancestors." CR
In contrast to the previous mask (cat. 117) this mask is very old. The quality of erosion to the surface and secondary deposits is reminiscent of objects found in caves. The motif of expanding nested circles that spread out from either eye like ripples from a stone dropped in water are associated with the Risiam-style group. Old examples, like this, are quite rare. TW

119 *Karanga* Mask, Yatenga-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Northwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, 73" h.
Provenance: William Wright
Yatanga-style masks are closely related to Dogon stylistic traditions just as the current-day Yatanga *nyonyosé* were, as Christopher Roy points out, originally Dogon. The similarity of the single-figure Dogon mask, *satimbé*, to the Yatenga *karan-wemba* masks, and of the tall, narrow openwork Dogon *sirigi* to the Yatenga Mossi *karanga* (pl. *karansé*) is immediately recognizable. More obscure is their shared method of supporting the masks while dancing. Both groups use a dowel, which is inserted through the sides of the mask and is gripped between the dancers' teeth.[29] This dowel method is specific to these two populations. The Bwa and various *gurunsi* groups favor fiber rope tied through a single or pair of holes and, like the Dogon and Yatenga Mossi, secured by the dancers' teeth. *Karansé* take one of two basic forms, either short or long. There is another example of a long *karanga* by the same hand that carved the fine old mask above. In that example the horns arise in a V-shape. It changed hands at Sotheby's New York in the 1980s. TW

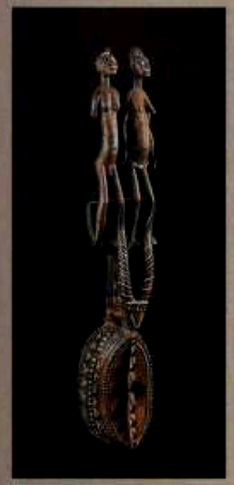
120 *Karanga* Mask, Yatenga-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Northwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, 65⅝" h.
Provenance: Art Institute of Chicago
The delicacy of carving on this very old, longer-format *karanga* is difficult to match, let alone exceed. I will never comprehend why the Art Institute elected to deaccession this piece or the pair of very old Lobi ivory figures (cats. 222 and 223); but I am delighted with their decision. TW

121

122

121 *Karanga* Mask, Yatenga-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Northwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 42 ½" h.
Until about 1980 the Mossi were known only for masks of this type, from northern Yatenga. William Fagg, the famous scholar of African art, published a number of examples, which he described as "archetypes" of the Mossi style. He also stated in a publication that all the Mossi were Muslim and no longer made art. Unfortunately for him but happily for us, most of what he reported concerning the Mossi was in error. The Mossi continue to make and use masks, and fewer than half are Muslim. This northern style is only one of half a dozen different Mossi styles, each a mirror of the history of the creation of individual Mossi states after 1500 AD. CR
The same Mossi blacksmith family that produced two *karan-wemba* masks and a figure illustrated here (cats. 123, 124 and 193) carved this mask. At some point in its past the top portion of this *karanga* was broken and a replacement section lashed onto the back behind the open oval. Judging from the broken end, the replacement is thicker than the original, indicating that the attached section was not the original piece reattached. The entire mask bears the same depth of patination so one can surmise that the accident occurred early in its long history. Among Burkinabé ethnic groups it is unusual to find a mask to which a part post-dating the original carving has been added. One encounters countless examples of masks to which broken portions have been laboriously reattached at their original break site or even bundled and attached elsewhere in an effort to preserve all that is sacred. Although not visible in the photograph, the very old leper mask (cat. 92) has just such a bundle of cheek-plate fragments firmly wrapped and attached at the back. In the case of this *karanga*, judging from the similarity of patinas, the addition would have occurred very early in its history and the breakage must have been so catastrophic as to preclude the possibility of reattachment. A Bwa mask with somewhat later "ears" lashed onto the face of the mask (cat. 143) is a second example of this anomaly. What induced this event will never be known. In one still-more curious example of an addition rather than a replacement, a plastic doll has been tied onto a *karanga*, converting it into a *karan-wemba* (fig. 21). On another, a traditional figure was secured to a *karanga* where the horns normally project. Both mask and figure are old and would appear to have been joined many years before the mask was collected.[30] TW

122 *Karan-wemba* Mask, Yatenga-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Northwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 34 ¼" h.
Provenance: René Rasmussen
Both the Mossi in Yatenga in the northwest and the Dogon in Burkina Faso and Mali carve masks like this one with the figure of a woman above the face of the mask. This is because the Mossi in the northwest region and the Dogon share common ancestors. Dogon masks represent *Yasigine* or *Satimbe*, an elder woman who has experienced two *sigui* ceremonies sixty years apart and who is the only female member of the mask society. For the Mossi these represent a woman who has married, had children and grandchildren, and, whose husband having died, has return to the home where she grew up. There she is regarded as a living ancestress, and when she dies her funeral is celebrated with a mask like this example. CR



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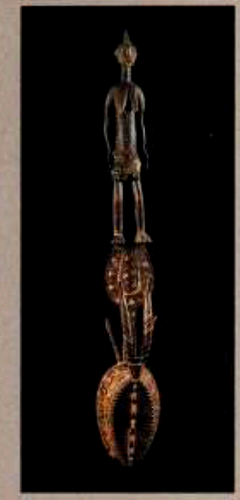
This genre of mask commemorates the clan's beginnings. Stories of origin are passed on orally from generation to generation and this mask is a symbolic representation of a particular clan's origin. This genre of mask carries aloft the stylized representation of the clan's female progenitor. It simultaneously honors that progenitor and the primordial spirits associated with the clan's origin as well as the deceased woman for whom it is danced. It therefore carries seminal powers and all the regenerative forces that that implies. This glorious old *karan-wemba* mask is closely related to the Helena Rubenstein *karan-wemba*. The figures on both arise from the front of a short plank. On both, the horns are backwards to join the plank, and the legs, which engage the plank at the ankles and buttocks, are dramatically bent at the knees. However, in detail the two pieces are quite different. The Rubenstein mask lacks the ears which in this *karan-wemba* formally mirror the figure's arms, and together contain the rhythmic repetition of the central sculptural elements, the antelope horns and the figure's sharply sprung legs. The mask, from the figure's head to the mask proper, is delicate and tightly composed. The Rubenstein mask, on the other hand, is less contained. It enjoys bolder facial features and, augmented by a strongly arched back in combination with the bent legs, a dramatic dynamism in its profile. TW

123 *Karan-wemba* Mask, Yatenga-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Northwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, cowrie, forged iron nails, *Hibiscus cannabinus* fiber cord, remnant indigenous polychrome, 34 ¼" h.
Provenance: Roger Budin
This is the only example, of which I am aware, of a *karan-wemba* mask with both a male and female figure. Both the mask proper and the figures are of a style reflecting a recognizable, but unidentified, blacksmith family. I know of at least fourteen examples of *karan-wemba* masks, two standing figures perhaps derived from masks and one *karanga*, by this prolific workshop. The styles of both masks proper and the figures are distinctive. The masks are elongated ovals outlined by a narrow, finely dentate frame. Their flat, concave faces are bisected by a medial ridge cut in triangles that diminish in size from the center. The figures are rather "mannered," always long of torso and arms, their backs with a pronounced curve. Large hands display well-defined digits. Heads are somewhat longer front to back than wide. The mouths are thin-lipped, wide and separated, the eyes circular and usually deeply excavated to accommodate a fragment of shell. A vertical series of horizontal cuts extending from the end of the long, narrow nose to the top of the forehead is characteristic. Equally characteristic is the rendering of abdominal and facial "ladder" sacrifications, each delineated by a pair of incised parallel lines which contain a row of intaglio squares painted alternately red and white. The two figures on this example participate in all of the defining aspects but their heads appear slightly smaller than the norm. Most *karan-wemba*, in fact most masks from Burkina Faso, are monoxylic. However, here the figures were carved separately and mounted on top of the plank with forged iron nails inserted through the feet. At some time in the mask's past the figures became dislodged and the feet broken such that the figures could not be reattached as they had been but were instead pinned through their legs to the front of the mask. As the remnant holes in the feet of both figures line up with the holes on top of the mask, I am certain that they were the original figures. That the mask's panel



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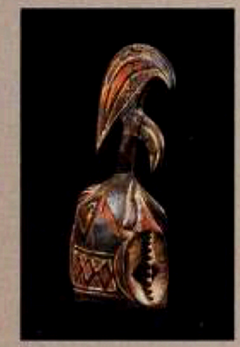

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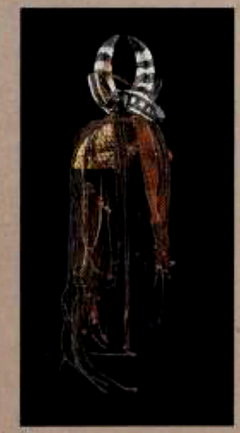


126

superstructure was intentionally truncated is born out by the intaglio frame that surrounds the perimeter of the panel on all sides. I visited Mr. and Mrs. Budin at their home outside of Geneva in the early 1980s and was dumbstruck by this mask. At the time I could never have imagined that it would someday be on the market, let alone that I would buy it. TW

124 *Karan-wemba* Mask, Yatenga-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Northwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, cotton cord, commercial nails, homespun cotton fabric, remnant indigenous polychrome, 46" h.
The same blacksmith family that produced the bi-figured *karan-wemba* (cat. 123), the *karanga* (cat. 121) and the standing figure (cat. 193) also carved this mask. Some details differ between this and the other two masks. On this mask, the face is narrower, and the antelope head smaller than on either of the others. The teardrop shape of the plank supporting the figure, however, is the same in outline as that seen as openwork on the plank of the *karanga* mask (cat. 121). The mask arrived at my door directly from Africa with the appropriately modest, original homespun skirt still in place. TW

125 *Karanga* Mask, Yatenga-style, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Northwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, *Hibiscus cannabinus* fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 23¾" h.
Provenance: Walter Randell, James Economos, Jay C. Leff, acquired by Leff before 1967
The superstructure on this very old and perhaps unique, Yatenga-style Janus helmet mask seems to be an abstract representation of a crested bird, which presumably was the lineage totem. The face on the back of the mask is similar to the front face. It too has triangular eye openings but the medial facial ridge has fewer crenulations and there are what I interpret to be horns, two highly-stylized, parallel vertical ridges that extend from the top of the oval face up the crown of the helmet. The back face has suffered some vertical loses above one eye and below the other. This piece was acquired by Jay Leff by the mid-1960s, when it first appeared in one of several Leff exhibition catalogues. I first saw the mask on the market in the early 1980s in Houston but thought the price at that time so high, I let it pass. I had occasion to visit Mr. and Mrs. Leff in Pittsburgh years after I had first seen the mask in Houston and years before I finally purchased the mask, but did not think to inquire about its provenance. Sadly, by the time of its purchase in 2003, Mr. Leff had died and the opportunity to learn more about the provenance of this extraordinary mask had passed. A similar flat-hooked beak or crest occurs on another unique mask that I also believe to be *nyonyosé* from Yatenga, a monoxylic headpiece in the form of a hollow, semi-spherical cap with beaks or crests projecting front and back from the top of the dome. [31] TW

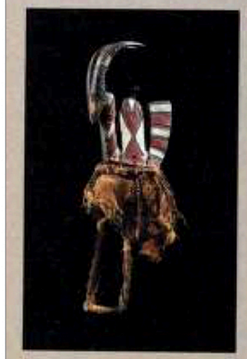
126 *Zazaigo* with Buffalo Head, Mossi *nakomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, Yako-Gourcy region, wood, fiber, homespun cotton cloth, cotton cord, animal hair, indigenous polychrome, 7⅞" h.
Provenance: Madame Nelly Van den Abbeele
Christopher Roy published an article on *zazaido* (sing. *zazaigo*) describing this *nakomsé* Mossi masking tradition.[32] *Zazaido* dance groups have eight to twelve dancers who form a circle, then, to the musical accompaniment of drums, flutes and iron gongs, dance together in a line in a formal pattern of steps mimicking those of the antelope.

127

The groups perform at *nakomsé* celebrations and funerals. The origin of the *nakomsé zazaido* dance tradition is not known. While the physical resemblance to Bamana *chi-wara* headdresses is striking, there is no evidence of a Malian origin of the Mossi tradition. It is difficult to formulate a route this Mandé agrarian rite would have followed from the Bamana region to the Mossi plateau, let alone discern the immediacy of its appeal. Not only is it a geographic jump, never, to our knowledge, having been adopted along the way by the intervening Mandé-origin ethnic groups, Bobo, Samo and Marka-Dafing, but also a leap in purpose from agricultural to non-agricultural. If it is of Mandé origin, it must have been a complex and fascinating story.

Unlike the other *zazaigo* illustrated here, this buffalo head is quite distorted and fanciful, a stylistic approach I have seen applied to several other *zazaigo* buffalo caps. Sprigs of animal hair that spring from the ears remain extant on this piece. These additions are usually lost. Several masks in this collection exhibit ear-associated holes, from which it is imagined that hair was similarly once inserted: the Ouagadougou-style *wan-nyaka* mask (cat. 110), a Bobo horned helmet mask (cat. 183) and a Bobo *nyanga*, antelope mask (cat. 178). TW

127 *Zazaigo* with Two Antelopes, Mossi *nakomsé*
West Central Burkina Faso, Kwaltangen region, wood, cotton homespun, cotton cord, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 9¾" h.



128

128 *Zazaigo* with Antelope, Mossi *nakomsé*
West Central Burkina Faso, Kwaltangen region, wood, cotton homespun, cotton cord, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 9¾" h.

This fine *zazaigo* crest above (cat. 127) was carved by the artist Yamba Ouedraogo, with whom I visited and spoke in the town of Kwaltangen in 1976–77. The young men who wore the mask were of a voluntary organization that performed good works in the community, sponsored by the village chief. These objects resemble Bamana *chi-wara kun* in many ways, and it is entirely possible that they are the result of the introduction of the *chi-wara* crests into the Mossi area. Their use continues in Kwaltangen and elsewhere in northern Mossi country. CR

The emphasis on red rather than black seems typical of *zazaido* from the Kwaltangen region. Many *zazaido* with different animal heads, displayed front and back, exist in the region. The example above (cat. 127) is by a particularly prolific hand, identified above by Christopher Roy. Of these two *zazaido* the patina on cat. 128 signals that it is the elder of the two. The sculptor has effectively lent a present alertness to its stance as if, at an instant, it might dart off into the bush. TW

129 / 130

129 *Zazaigo* with Antelope, Mossi *nakomsé*
North Central Burkina Faso, Yako-Gourci-Kongussi region, wood, cotton homespun, beads, fiber, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 11" h.

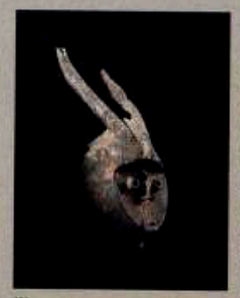
130 *Zazaigo* with Female Figure, Mossi *nakomsé*
North Central Burkina Faso, Yako-Gourci-Kongussi region, wood, cotton homespun, beads, fiber, cotton cord, indigenous polychrome, 9" h.

These fine *zazaido* were carved in the region northeast of Yako, between Yako and Kongoussi. They are of the same type as objects I have seen in Kwaltangen, and I assume were also used by a young men's association. These were worn with fairly simple costumes that included a belt with iron clappers and a cotton shirt, but there was no effort to conceal the identity of the performer (fig. 22). CR

These two *zazaido* belonged to the same *zazaido* dance group. Unlike most examples of masks and *zazaido*, the figure on what was probably the lead *zazaigo* (cat. 130) was carved separately on its own narrow base and was attached to the supporting antelope body with cording. The retention of the skirt and jewelry is fortuitous and adds the charm of familiarity to this headpiece. Compared to the companion piece (cat. 129) the width of the support base on the antelope body is narrower than it would have been if the *zazaigo* were originally an antelope, cut at the neck. The fragile nature of attachment brings into question how the wear patina could have developed on the figure. Further, the figure has a wear patina that is more evolved than the patina on the rest of the *zazaigo*, which, perhaps, suggests that the figure may have been transferred from an earlier *zazaigo*. While such transfers are not a common practice there are examples among both Risiam and Yatenga *nyonyosé* groups. Christopher Roy photographed a Risiam-style *karanga*, which had been converted into a *karan-wemba* by the addition of a black plastic doll (fig. 21) and, in his 1987 book, illustrates another, a converted Yatenga-style *karanga* with a traditional figure lashed to the top of a truncated plank.[88] TW

131

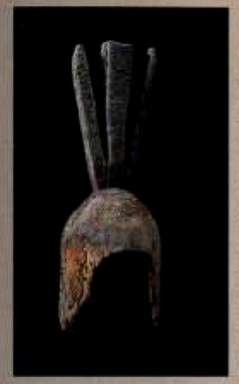
131 Rooster Mask *wan-noraogo*, as an Altar Shrine *wan-kasenga*, Kokologho-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Southwest of Ouagadougou, Kokologho region, wood, organic materials, 21¾" l.



132

132 Composite Bush Spirit Mask as an Altar Shrine *kinkigo*, Ouagadougou-style, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, remnant indigenous polychrome, 14½" h.
Provenance: J. Liotard

These two masks, placed here at the end of the Mossi section, like the two Kurumba masks that follow, ceased to function as danced masks but served as shrines on family altars. They have become vehicles of communication with lineage ancestors and the spirit world. Both were lead masks for their families and, in that capacity, served on their altars between the ceremonial events during which dancers donned and danced them. Once they had deteriorated to the point that they could no longer perform, they remained permanently among the remnants of still older lead masks on their respective altars. The large rooster totem mask (cat. 131) belonged to a family in the Kokologho-style area. Even in its current state it remains a grand mask with its full beak and handsome cockscomb. The mask, with remnant vertical horns and cylinder eyeholes (cat. 132), most likely belongs to the Ouagadougou-style group and is probably from the same area as the two other small Mossi masks also worn over the face and earlier illustrated (cats. 106 and 107). TW



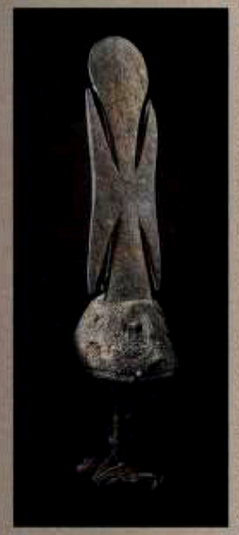
133

KURUMBA MASKS

133 Mask with Tripartite Superstructure as an Altar Shrine, Kurumba
North Central Burkina Faso, Titao-Pobé Mengo-Bourzanga region, wood, organic material, 22" h.

134 Bird-form Plank Mask as an Altar Shrine, Kurumba
North Central Burkina Faso, Arbinda, Béléhédé or Yoro, wood, leather, wire, organic material, 25¾" h.

The mask below left (cat. 134) is Kurumba, although the presence of incised lines is atypical of the area. There is a large leather panel attached to the PL side that is a restoration by a Burkinabé dealer, which accounts for an inconsistency in the organic surface material (not visible in the illustration). In 1972, Annemarie Schweeger-Hefel and Wilhelm Staude published a photograph[89] of an Arbinda mask house with *adones* masks, hyena masks, and a mask similar to the subject mask arrayed before it. The lack of eyeholes, combined with the rectangular opening on the helmet portion of the mask above left (cat. 133), indicate a Kurumba origin. This conclusion is determined by comparison with three other masks that are almost certainly Kurumba in origin. These masks are not included here, as all three were so recently carved when they were collected in 1972 and, in two cases, aberrant, that it is not possible to be certain if they are traditional pieces. The abundance of sacrificial material on both of these masks indicates that they, as with the previous two Mossi masks (cats. 131 and 132), had evolved into purely shrine objects that served as vehicles of communication with spirits and the dead. TW



134

BWA MASKS

Bwa wood mask traditions are a relatively recent phenomenon, regionally replacing, among the families who adopted them, the much older, time-honored and otherwise ubiquitous leaf masks which were dedicated to Do, the primary deity concerned with matters of earth and man. Leaf masks exist for only a day. They are newly constructed each morning, worn for the day and destroyed at night. Their representation on both cult and everyday objects bears witness to their protective nature (cats. 278 and 396–400). Emily Hanna-Vergara has defined three distinct style areas for Bwa wood masks and suggests that the stylistic differences reflect the influence of their various neighboring ethnic groups from which the Bwa adopted the cult.[90] Her Central Style Area, which includes Dédougou and surrounding villages, has developed a tradition of small masks worn over the face (cats. 151–155) which she concludes were originally influenced by ethnic groups to the north, the Samo, Kurumba and perhaps Mossi. Neighboring *gurunsi* masking traditions to the east and the south have influenced her southern-style area, which encompasses villages from Boni to Dossi, Yenou, Bahoun, and Pa. Among a multitude of forms (cats. 135–150) the style area is best known for its impressive plank masks. Lastly, she identifies a western-style area with Boboesque helmets with elongate faces and broad rack superstructures. An example of a mask in a very similar style is illustrated in this collection by a Bolon mask (cat. 185). The Bolon and the Bwa that share this mask style lie to either side of the Bobo, the Bolon to the west of the Bobo, the Bwa, immediately opposite the Bolon, to the east of the Bobo. TW

135

135 Blacksmith's *kobiay* Mask, Bwa, Didiro Clan
Western Burkina Faso, Houndé, wood, tin, tacks, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 43" h.

This mask was carved by the blacksmiths of the Didiro family in the town of Houndé, just southwest of Boni in central Burkina Faso. It represents *hombo*, the protective spirit of the smiths in that area. Similar masks represent the same spirit of the smiths in Ouri, to the northeast of Boromo. This is a fine, elegant and expressive example of the best of art from Burkina Faso. It is colorful, well carved, light, symmetrical, and shows evidence of considerable use in performances in Houndé. CR

Old *kobiay* blacksmith's masks, while much copied, are rare and this style, characterized by the great disk, extremely rare. I know of very few of quality with age in private collections and fewer still in institutions. There was a superb example of an older Didiro family *kobiay* mask on permanent exhibition in Paris at the old Musée des Arts de l'Afrique et l'Oceanie which, by now, has presumably been transferred to the Musée Branly. The mask illustrated here has a well-developed patina on its interior, and the tab beneath the chin, gripped by the dancer to stabilize the mask during animated performances, shows a highly developed patina on its posterior side. The front of the grip was painted with black pigment during its last renewal. TW.

136

136 Blacksmith's Forehead Crested *hombo* Mask, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, bluing, 17" h.
Provenance: Erwin and Marcia Hersey

This is markedly similar but slightly more recent than the old sacred *hombo* mask that belonged to the Konaté smiths in Ouri (cat. 137). It too may have been carved in Ouri. The use of blue pigment is unusual for people in central Burkina Faso, but the color gives that mask a character and quality that is absent in other masks from the area. CR

The pigments on this mask may have been applied after the mask exited its village context. They have an unsettling freshness about them, especially the white. Regardless, the ancient mask is superb. Its composition is at once bold and delicate. The volumes, different in the extreme, integrate remarkably. In both this mask and the next (cat. 137) the curved outline of the forehead blade mirrors the line of the ovoid head. On this example the narrow composition of the face, its elongate nose, striations on the chin grip and emphasized teeth reinforce the verticality. The excrescent ears, narrow and pert, contain the volume of the head and balance the protuberance of the handle. Formal elements of this mask are strikingly similar to a Winiama mask, *Kedumeh* (cat. 91), and in all probability are by the same workshop if not the same hand. TW

137

137 Blacksmith's Forehead Crested *hombo* Mask, *wankr* Altarpiece, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, Ouri, wood, fiber cord, organic material, 15⅝" h.
Provenance: Pace Primitive, Rolf and Christina Miehler, field collected in the 1970s by Rolf Miehler

This mask once belonged to the Konaté family of smiths in the Winiama town of Ouri, north of Boromo in central Burkina Faso. It represents the *hombo* spirit that watches over and protects blacksmiths. Traces of sacrifices darken the mask and appear on only the oldest masks in central Burkina Faso. CR

Ouri is a Winiama village, but the Konaté family of blacksmiths consider themselves Bwa. They carve masks for the Winiama as well as for both

the neighboring Bwa and Nunuma. Although the Konaté ally with the Bwa, their own *hombo* masking tradition, judging from the apparent ages of this and the previous *hombo* mask (cat. 136), predates the late 19th-century adoption of wood masks by the Bwa. In Houndé, the masks of blacksmiths have a very large disk arising from the top of the head. These are representative of a spirit that takes the form of a rooster. While that may also be the case for this ax blade mask, I know of a number of examples in which the back of the blade turns abruptly upward, which may be a reference to a chameleon's tail with its virtually pan-African misrepresentation curling up counter-clockwise rather than down clockwise.[36] TW

138

138 Serpent Mask *doho*, Bwa, Nyumu family, Boni

Western Burkina Faso, wood, hair, indigenous polychrome, 180¾" h.

Provenance: William Wright

The Bwa in Boni, Dossi, and Pa are famous for the enormous serpent masks they carve to honor a spirit that appeared to them in the form of a serpent. These masks appear at almost every celebration, because they attract large crowds of spectators, both from the local community and from significant distances. People come to town to see the masks, and spend their money in the market, contributing to the prosperity of the village. The wearers of these serpent masks also perform frequently at the large cultural festivals in Ouagadougou, Bobo-Dioulasso, Dédougou, and Pouni, a recent development in Burkina Faso. CR

Christopher Roy recounts the mythic events surrounding a serpent and the clan's progenitor[37] in the Bwa Masking chapter of this book. The story relates that a large serpent allowed a Bwaba ancestor to take shelter in its burrow. The natural history of the African Rock Python, *Python sebae sebae*, almost certainly the reptile depicted, lends credence to the tale. This species of python is particularly aggressive and cantankerous, attaining nearly 30 feet in length, a reptile to be reckoned with. However, during the dry season, this and other African pythons from the sub-Saharan savannah hibernate in holes and hollows excavated by other animals. This habit could allow an interloper to share its den. Thus, this part of the myth of origin of the clan has the potential ring of credibility. At fifteen feet of undulating length, this is the longest serpent mask known to me. Dancing such an object, held upright by nothing more than a rope between the teeth and a knotted net cowl drawn over the head and shoulders, is a *tour de force* of which there are few equals. This particular mask was illustrated, albeit cropped and reversed, leading a procession in Boni in the 1970s in *The Dance, Art and Ritual of Africa* by Michel Huet.[38] The image is republished in this volume (pp. 4/5 and 207). In his 1987 text Christopher Roy identifies the local name for serpent masks as *doho*.[39] The addition of hair embedded on the pubis of statuary (cat. 210) and occasionally above the eyes on masks (cat. 176) is not uncommon; however, the application of stiff hair to represent lashes above the reptilian eyes of this serpent mask is morphologically incorrect and bizarre but not unique among Bwa serpent masks. I do not recall encountering this phenomenon on neighboring *gurunsi* serpent masks. This feature serves to reinforce the spirit aspect of these masks. TW

139

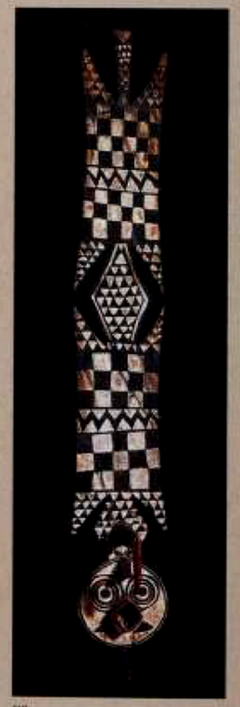
139 Butterfly Mask, Bwa

Western Burkina Faso, Dossi, wood, wire, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 96½" w.

Provenance: John A. and Marcia Friede, René Rasmussen, collected in the 1960s in situ by Marie-Ange Ciolkowska

The Bwa in Boni and Dossi carve very large, broad masks with numerous concentric circles across their wings. These represent the butterflies that metamorphose and rise in clouds around the pools of water left by the first rains of spring. These masses of butterflies are a manifestation of the power of new life and the awesome power of the blessings of God. The performers must limit their movements to slower rotation in one direction, because the weight of the masks and the momentum of the spinning are such that the young men risk serious injury if they attempt to be too agile. CR

In 1955, Kunz Dittmer and Jürgen Zwernemann from the Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg photographed this then very old mask in Dossi (p. 208) accompanied by the far more recent *bayiri* mask (cat. 142).[40] Several years later the mask was collected in situ by Marie-Ange Ciolkowska and sold to René Rasmussen. It is not recorded, but I believe she may have purchased the fine old serpent mask in The Minneapolis Institute of Arts at the same time.[41] The surface carving is deep and the wood extraordinarily thin and fragile. The term "butterfly mask" is rather liberally applied to winged masks in Burkina Faso. This particular style, very long and decorated with a linear series of nested circles, is the only style correctly spoken of as a "butterfly" or, more accurately, a spirit that takes this butterfly form. What is often a hooked beak projecting from the center of a mask is, in this case, straight, terminating in a flat plane with a T-shaped ridge, suggestive of the proboscis of a butterfly. There are other similarly elongate Bwa masks that have a small, hooked, beak-like projection in its place. It is not known if they too are identified with butterflies. The wood of this mask is well oxidized and brittle and gives every appearance of very considerable age, an age that may well predate the supposed late 19th-century adoption of wood masking traditions from the *gurunsi*. It is, of course, entirely possible that Dossi saw fit to incorporate the *gurunsi* masking cult long before the lineages in Boni, whose dates are verified by interviews with lineage elders by Christopher Roy.[42] TW



140

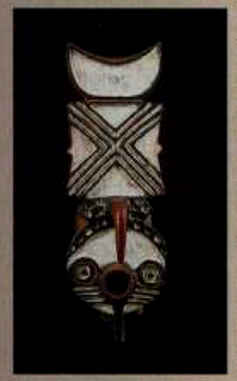
140 Plank Mask *nwantantay*, Bwa

Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 79½" h.

Provenance: Alain Schoffel, Maurice Ratton

Plank masks such as this example are the major artistic expression of the southern Bwa. The masks are signboards or tablets on which the graphic patterns communicate the ethical and moral values of the community. These are religious laws that the people of the community must observe if they are to receive the blessings of God. The black and white checkerboard on this mask represents the value of lifelong learning. The black rectangles represent the sacred goat-hide mats darkened by decades of use by seated senior elders during mask performances, while the white rectangles represent the new, white goat hides given to young initiates. The zigzag across the center of the mask is the path of the ancestors. CR

According to Alain Schoffel, from whom I bought this mask in 1979, Maurice Ratton, the brother of the renowned collector-dealer Charles Ratton, bought the mask before World War II. In general, the earlier plank masks are thinner than their more recent counterparts and often have the appearance of deeper carving. The first is a function of the time allotted and level of care, that the sculptor would afford the task. The second is also a function of time, but, in this case, it is the effect of the passage of years required for the black pigment to accumulate with annual repainting. This pigment derives from seed pods boiled to a tarry consistency. There is an annual washing and repainting of masks. The washing removes the red and white pigments but leaves the more water-resistant black. Some of the earlier Bwa plank masks, such as this example, have small details that seem to have dropped out of the style canon. The nose on this mask is delicately ribbed on either side, a detail I have not seen on more recent examples. In addition, the descendent part of the beak is thinner than is seen on later pieces, and the vertical line is broken by an indented semicircular ring near the top, a detail also lost. Lastly, the painted black lines, matching the delicacy of the features, are narrower than is generally the case for younger examples. TW

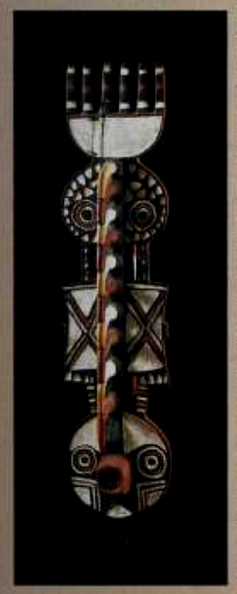


141

141 Dwarf Mask *luruya*, Bwa

Western Burkina Faso, Dossi, wood, oil-base polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 20½" h.

Judging from its interior and exterior surface wear and the date it left Africa, 2001, this finely carved mask is of relatively recent vintage, perhaps no more than fifteen or twenty years old. TW



142

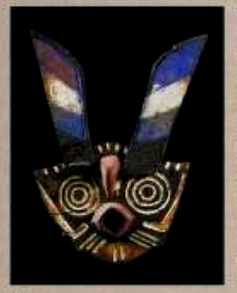
142 Mask with Superstructure, Multiple Beaks and Figures *bayiri*, Bwa

Western Burkina Faso, Dossi, wood, commercial nails, indigenous polychrome, 46½" h.

Provenance: Ilia Malichin

Certainly, the masks of the Bwa people must be among the most abstract anywhere in Africa. Unlike European artists who have struggled for centuries to recreate nature and to represent spiritual beings as humans, African artists have used abstract forms to communicate abstract ideas. Their images do not imitate nature; they have rarely attempted to do so. Instead, they make the most abstract, invisible, and ineffable of supernatural beings visible through the use of abstract shapes and images. This tall plank mask represents a spirit of nature and new life named *bayiri*. CR

This mask did not leave the village environment until late 1979 or 1980, when Ilia Malichin purchased it in Burkina Faso. It is made from a medium-weight wood and shows only a modest patina, more than enough to assure that it has served in dance, but not enough, at least by conventional wisdom, to affirm more than a decade or so of active wear. During the dry season southern Bwa wood masks are danced frequently, not just for ceremonial occasions but weekly on market days. There is no reason to believe that this mask was danced any more or less than others of its ilk, and its surface gives every indication that it had never been set aside to accumulate dust and detritus. The significance of this lies in the fact that it was active for at least twice as long as we would suppose, judging its surface wear based on our previous notions about surface patina and age. The earliest documentation we have for the mask is 1955, when it was photographed by Kunz Dittmer in Dossi accompanied by the butterfly mask above (cat. 139). As stated previously, the photograph which is reproduced here (p. 208) was published in 1978.[43] In the interim years, from 1955 to 1979, it was photographed in situ both by Henri Kamer and published in 1970[44] and again, in the early 1970s, by René Moser.[45] We do not know when the mask was made except that it was prior to 1955. This is a span of twenty-five years, over which only a modest patina developed. TW



143

143 Mask with Ears, Bwa

Western Burkina Faso, wood, metal, bluing, indigenous polychrome, 27" h.

Provenance: Franz Burkhard, collected 1960s by Burkhard

This is one of the most striking and unusual masks I have ever seen from Burkina Faso. It is a pure fantasy, an invented image of an invented spirit. Bwa artists must invent the forms in which spirits appear to their clients, and in this case, the spirit took a truly original shape, with what appear to be enormous blue ears. It is also remarkable for the subtle but quite wonderful lack of pure symmetry that gives the object such vitality. CR

Either with or without the "ears," to my knowledge this is the only known example of this genre of mask. Unlike most masks from Burkina Faso, which are monoxylic, the ears on this mask appear to have been an afterthought, as they are rather haphazardly bound to the face of the mask, covering the carved surface details. The surfaces of both the mask proper and the ears show signs of very considerable age. There is a well-developed wear patina inside, well-oxidized wood on the elements of the face and on the unpainted surfaces, and the subtle, layered evidence of small events that occurred over time. The ears, while offering good evidence of age, do not show the same degree of oxidation as the mask, either because they are not as old, or the wood types are not the same and express oxidation differently. I am grateful to my good friend, now departed, Franz Burkhard, for parting with this and a number of other remarkable objects which he had collected. Starting as a young man shortly after World War II, he would cross the Sahara and, during his adventures, acquire traditional objects from West Africa. TW

144

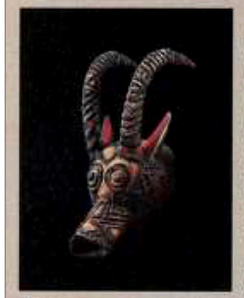
144 Double Chameleon Mask, Bwa

Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 19" h.

Provenance: Alain de Monbrison

Age is difficult to establish and particularly if the approximate date at which an object left Africa is unrecorded. This mask came out of a private collection and was not accompanied by provenance information. The interior shows a developing patina not unlike that of the *bayiri* mask illustrated above (cat. 142) and, like it, the wood is not notably oxidized. Given the little that is known, I would place its time of origin as no more recent than mid-century. As a mask type, chameleon representations are relatively rare; I know of only seven or eight and all either Bwa or *gurunsi*. Far and away the most outstanding examples are two old Winiama masks with single chameleons, both by the same remarkable hand, one at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History in Los Angeles and the other on permanent exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. TW

145



146

145 Hawk or Vulture Mask, Bwa, Dossi
Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 52⅝"w.
Provenance: Alain Dufour
Without knowing the context it is not possible to distinguish which bird, a hawk or a vulture, is the inspiration for this mask. There is a good interior patina, which, extrapolating from what we know about age and patina from the above *bayiri* mask, coupled with an approximate date that it left Africa, the early to mid-1990s, leads us to believe that it was produced early in the third quarter of the 20th century. TW

146 Antelope Mask, Bwa or Nunuma
Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 18"l.

147

147 Hyena Mask, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 16"l.
Provenance: Jean Citroen
Both the antelope and hyena masks are from private collections and have significant age. The wood on the hyena mask is dry and oxidized, and the piece has the "feel" of an object that has long languished in a museum. Jean Citroen likely bought it from a dealer who had acquired it from an earlier European collection. The antelope has lost most of its white pigment; the red has dulled over time. The black pigment forms high ridges that are the thickest I have observed. Said to have come from a private collection in Geneva, it too appears to have been on display for many years. TW

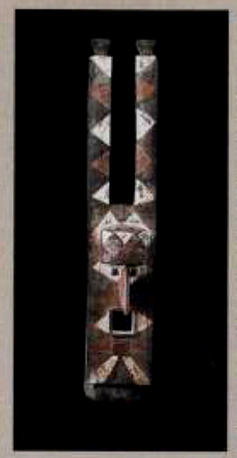
148

148 Buffalo Mask, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, wire, indigenous polychrome, 17½"l.
There are several sculptural approaches to carving the open muzzle of Bwa buffalo masks. They entail a choice in degree of angle that the muzzle projects from the plane formed by the head and horns: a near continuation of that plane or an angular projection forward. This mask participates in the former, the far less common of the two formats. The interior patina and general surface wear on this mask comfortably places it in the second quarter of the 20th century. TW

149

149 Buffalo Mask *wankr* from an Altar, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, organic encrustation, 33"h.

150 Mask with Superstructure *hombo*, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 44¼"h.
Provenance: Milton Gross
Both of these masks originate from a blacksmith family mask-carving tradition derived from a different origin than the Nuna-Nunuma-Winiama sources, said to have yielded the more familiar mask types illustrated above.[46] There are a number of stylistic details unique to this style and common to most masks of this group. The dominant structural element is a double plank superstructure that frequently occurs with a cross member, forming an H. The vertical elements are usually continuations of the facial plane. They arise from either side of the top of the



150

"head," are relatively narrow, and each terminates with a V-notch or inverted trapezoid as that of a stylized tail feather. Although not present on either mask shown here, the cross bar feature is present on the mask worn by a diviner's standing figure (cat. 204). The same statue offers an example of the second element common to so many masks in this style group, a long-billed head of a bird on a stem, pegged into the forehead of the mask. The head of the bird has a globular, amorphous quality, as it is wax-covered and once completely embedded with red *Abrus precatorius* seeds. Neither of the masks published here is illustrative of either of these two typical features. They do however share the planar aspect that typifies this style and likewise a formal element, the shape of the portion of the back of the mask that surrounds the wearer's head. This structure of the back of the mask takes a form sufficiently different as to point to an origin other than the Nuna-Nunuma-Winiama complex. The back is a high, walled, inverted U form, a shape strikingly different from the familiar round and oval-walled backs. According to my informants, the masks with flat vertical superstructures are spoken of as *hombo* spirits, a spirit associated with blacksmiths. They reported this style in both Bagassi and Bahoun. Both the spirit name associated with this mask type, *hombo*, and the town Bahoun, where this mask type has been seen, are corroborated by Emily Hanna-Vergara's field research. Her informants reported that *hombo* was not adopted in Bahoun until 1975.[47] The horned buffalo mask from an altar may be a different representation of the spirit *hombo*, but there is no supportive information to confirm this possibility. TW

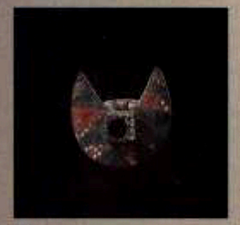
151

151 Crest Mask *hako*, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, Dédougou region, wood, indigenous polychrome, 10⅝"h.
Children from the Dédougou area, first learning to dance masks, wear this type of mask. It occasionally appears at ceremonies with the group of family masks to which it belongs.[48] The presence of white dots on a red field is a frequently applied motif, as is the sectional relationship of white-outlined red and black triangles on the crest of the mask. This charming mask, collected in 1974, has little wear patina but its use is affirmed by numerous tooth marks inside and out on the bottom of the mask collar, telltale impressions recording the grip of the wearer during performance. According to Hanna-Vergara, the Dédougou-style *simba* masks are all carved in Paradé, a village 30 kilometers southeast of Dédougou.[49] TW

152

152 Hornbill Beak Mask *simbo bagoun*, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, Dédougou region, wood, indigenous polychrome, organic material, 16"l.
Provenance: Robert Duperrier
This mask from the Bwa town of Dédougou, north of Boni and Dossi, represents a hornbill. The style of masks from Dédougou is smaller and less expansive than masks from southern Bwa country, but their performances are just as spectacular, emphasizing spinning and twirling to make the strands of the fiber costume fly outward. The hornbill is a very large bird whose actions serve as a metaphor for the spirit world. CR
No better realization occurs, of the known examples of this beak mask form. Here, the aggressive nature of this gender-associated male mask is manifest. The eyes are minimal, beady and intent, the lengths of both bills dentate. The volume of the truncated conical base gives weight to the forward drive; the bulk of the upper beak with its nasal casque

complements the thrust. The hand of the sculptor is firm and confident, creating with minimal line the impression of strength and size. Throughout much of the 1970s, I generally made four annual trips to Burkina Faso, durations defined by the type of tickets I held, usually 21 to 45 days. Occasionally I remained in the country for as long as six months. In either case, without fail, I was able to return to New York with at least one spellbinding object ... and usually many more. For almost a decade, a kind of pride of discovery prevented me from buying an object unless I could indulge in the vanity of thinking I had "discovered" it in country; However, early in 1978 I returned without a single object of merit. By then, I had wearied of the compulsive African sojourns, and, seizing upon the rewardlessness of that sojourn, I resolved to terminate my African peregrinations. This object was the first piece I bought outside of Africa. Curiously, it was acquisition number 1001. (Not truly accurate as along the way there had been a fair number of appended alphabetic subsets). TW



153

153 Winged Mask *pi*, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, Dédougou region, wood, commercial nail, indigenous polychrome, 9" w.
Provenance: John Rewald

154

154 Winged Mask *pi*, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, Dédougou region, wood, indigenous polychrome, 17⅝" w.

155

155 Winged Mask *pi*, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, Dédougou region, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 19⅝" w.
Provenance: Erwin and Marcia Hersey
From her research, Emily Hanna-Vergara reports that these winged masks, or *pi*, translate as "moon" masks.[50] It is my contention that the form of the masks refers to moths, which, of course, are nocturnal and only visible in the light of the moon. The paired vertical projections at top center of these masks easily read as the notably large antennae specific to moths. These and the two previous masks belong to the central style area distinguished by Hanna-Vergara. All are referred to collectively as *simba* and perform at both agrarian ceremonies appealing for rain, and at funerals.[51] In Burkina Faso, not long after my arrival, I was ushered into the inner sanctum of one of the venerable dealers in Bobo-Dioulasso. He dragged, from under a bed, a small metal trunk, of the variety produced in mainland China and sold in markets throughout Africa. The narrow winged mask shown here (cat. 155) lay by itself on the floor of the trunk. He offered it to me at a price that was probably relatively modest, but at that time, I was still struggling to determine what constituted the "right" price and I let it pass. I later saw it on the wall of the Herseys' apartment in New York, and the reader can well imagine my jubilance when, years later, it appeared at auction. TW

MARKA-DAFING MASKS

156 A Female Bush-spirit Mask *taba* or Antelope Mask *kou*, Marka-Dafing
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 26"h.
The Marka-Dafing live in north central Burkina Faso. They migrated into the area from the north, bringing Mandé-style carving with them, adding to their masks the red, white, and black graphic patterns that are so typical of the many peoples of Burkina Faso. Masks

156

157

158

such as this are funerary, honoring the deceased and permitting his spirit to begin the long journey to the spirit world. CR
The balance and symmetry combined with the delicacy of design makes this a particularly memorable example of a "classic" Dafing-style mask. The fresh paint conceals the age witnessed in the dark wear-patinated interior of the mask, as in a great many masks from Burking Faso. The presence of a Voltaic diamond mouth is something of an aberrance, as the mouths on Dafing masks are generally formed with either narrow blocks, separated to indicate lips and often augmented by a third and fourth block, carved to represent dentition, or by a cylindrical form armed with a horizontal line of teeth. I acquired this mask in an unlikely venue. I had been staying in a small apartment overlooking the bay at Cannes in the fall of 1978 and wandering in an outskirt of Cannes I found the mask in the window of an antique shop dealing in provincial French furniture. The owner, who probably had taken the mask on consignment as a favor, was not, however, giving it away. Not carrying anything approaching sufficient cash, I found myself reduced to driving up and down the coast to town after town between Cannes and Monte Carlo, endeavoring to withdraw the local limit on my American Express Card. From that moment, I upgraded to a gold card, but, having thus prepared myself, never again had an occasion to strain its gilded plastic limits. TW

157 Crescent-moon Mask *karou*, Marka-Dafing
Northwestern Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 26 ½"h.
The overall form of this mask, while instantly identifiable as a Dafing mask, has a number of elements that are surprisingly radical departures from the norm. Rather than flat, the face is rounded and, together with the brow, yields a large egg-shaped volume. The brow has only a slight overhang that diminishes laterally to conform to the oval edge of the volume. The narrow nose is handled as a separate block independent of the brow and rises high above the surface level of the brow. The brow itself is bisected by a second tab-like block, which extends as far above the surface as the nose. The large crescent-form superstructure with its exuberant sets of nested circles, a quintessential Voltaic motif, is spectacular and plays off the large tab ears and chin support. The flat surfaces of the brow-crest display two additional pairs of nested circles. TW

158 Crescent-moon Mask *karou*, Marka-Dafing
Northwestern Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 29"h.
Provenance: Pierre and Claude Vérité, Mr. and Mme. Blanc, Colonel Gilbert
There are very few examples of Marka-Dafing masks in collections anywhere, and this is the most beautifully carved I have ever seen. The carving style is very much like that of the Bamana and other Mandé peoples, but the patterns are purely Voltaic, and the lunar crest above the face is a feature of many masks of the Bwa people who live to the southwest of the Marka-Dafing. As with so many people in Africa who have moved from one area to another, the Dafing have blended ideas about religion and spirituality, economics, education, and farming from the peoples among whom they have lived. These masks are visual documents of that blending. CR
Of the various forms of Dafing masks, the *karou* is relatively rare. Though I may be overlooking some examples that appeared at auction, aside from the preceding mask (cat. 157) Henri Kamer in his

1973 Brussels exhibition catalogue published the only other example of which I am aware.[52] Domba Blegna, a Dafing researcher, cited the origin of the *karou* mask from Soungoulé village, about 30 km southwest of Safané.[53] There it was recounted that a woman who was collecting firewood in the bush found a pot with small iron objects, including one in a crescent form. Frightened by what she had discovered she turned to leave but heard a voice instructing her to return to her village with the objects. The objects were taken to a diviner, who pronounced them gifts of God and instructed the family to make a mask honoring the crescent form, whose lunar aspect was proof of its celestial origin. Thus the first *karou* mask came into being. Numerous lineages adopted the various Dafing mask types, all of which enjoy similar origins centered around a found iron object or a dreamt event. Following a rule of transference, if a clan acquires a mask from another clan, the mask must be somewhat different, that is, not an exact replica of the parent mask. Even though this mask and the previous masks are both *karou* types, there are many differences in detail. Note crescents surrounding the eyes on one, a star form around the other, teeth on one, a tongue on the other, parallel diagonal scarification marks on the jaws of one, nested Vs on the other, pointed ears vs. squared ears, differences in design and design complexity on the crescent lunar panel, and differences in overall proportions one from the other. This, the older of the two masks, has received greater attention to detail. It is the oldest example of a Marka-Dafing mask that I have encountered. According to a handwritten note tacked to the back of the mask, which included erroneous ethnographic information, it was brought to France in 1920 by "*Colonel Vést*" (*vétérinaire*, it has been suggested) *Gilbert ancien chef du service zootechnique du Haut Sénégal et Niger.*" The note indicated that the mask had had a "*barbe*," a beard, between 1.0 and 1.20 meters in length, which I take to mean the remaining part of the net and fiber cowl that was once attached to the mask.

160

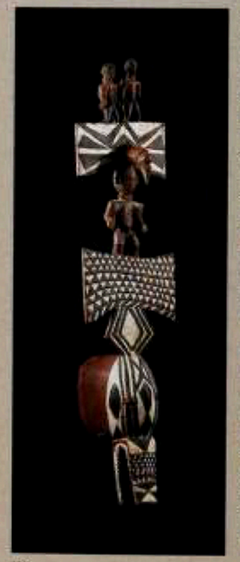
of the ovoid are the defining features of the Samo "classic" format. Samo masks conforming to this canon are, however, rare. Seldom do they appear at auction and there is but a smattering in public and private collections. Two fine old examples are held in private collections belonging to René and Anne Vanderstrate in Brussels and the Menil Collection in Houston.[55] In both examples the lengths of the plank fall somewhere between the lengths of the two masks illustrated here. The plank on the Vanderstrate piece terminates in a tight tuft of orange-red dyed fiber. The Menil mask resolves in a delicately cut, crescent form. The painted terminus on the longer mask (cat. 160) is narrow, elongate, and enigmatic. Once perhaps the head of a bird or of another animal, it is no longer decipherable. The terminus of the shorter mask (cat. 159), a narrow, flat stem topped by a circle shape, is also seen crowning small Nununa or Winiama plank masks but has yet to be interpreted. While the Samo are Mandé in origin and settled in their general region, before the arrival of the *nakomsé* five centuries ago, this classic style bears no stylistic relation to basic Mandé mask features. Knowing now that the style is southern Samo in origin, one might anticipate *gurunsi* influences. Their neighbors directly to the east, broadly in the Yako region, were once an independent *gurunsi* group which, after the *nakomsé* invasions five centuries ago, became *nakomsé* subjects and evolved into the *sukomsé* of today. Christopher Roy defined the basic format of the *sukomsé* mask style from the Arbollé-Yako area. The mask is demi-oval, bearing horns that develop from the upper portion and extend backward. A crest completely bisects the mask. Unlike most *sukomsé* masks from other regions, this style covers the face. It has paired horizontal eye slits to either side of the medial crest to accommodate the dancer.[56] The stylistic relationship between the southern Samo, *maaka*-style masks and the Mossi Arbollé-Yako area tradition is immediately evident. Michel Izard states that a sizeable portion of the area to the east of Samo territory and west of Yako is land designated Mossi, but continues to be much disputed by the Samo, who, with the Mossi, continue to populate the area.[57] Samo masks of this style, with the straight, narrow plank, and no open-work carving, are similar to those of the Kurumba with similar planks. In addition, Françoise Herité, who spent much time among the Samo, once showed me photographs of Samo masks from the northeast, bordering the Mossi. They conformed to Yatenga-style *karansé* but the planks lacked openwork.[58] This particular *gurunsi/nyonyosi* stylistic influence is not limited to the Samo. It should be noted that the bi-sected demi-ovoid mask with horns but without eye slits exists among other Samo groups (cat. 164) and also occurs without the horns but with the paired eye slits, in some examples of the Dédougou-style Bwa mask, the *sambo noua*.[59] Masks of the type just discussed are the only masks attributable with certainty to the Samo. The others illustrated here are, for various reasons, thought to be Samo, but their attributions are unsubstantiated. TW

159

SAMO MASKS

159 Horned Mask with Short Superstructure, Southern Samo
Northwestern Burkina Faso, Seberé, near Toma, wood, copper wire, undifferentiated metal wire, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 34"h.

160 Horned Mask with Superstructure, Southern Samo
Northwestern Burkina Faso, Seberé, near Toma, wood, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 58¾"h.
The Mandé-related Samo are linguistically split into two groups, one in the south, *maka*, and one in the north, which is subdivided into two dialects, *matya* and *maya*.[54] Each is incomprehensible to the others. To my knowledge, no published fieldwork addresses the masking styles of these three linguistic areas. However, from recent information that accompanied two masks illustrated here (cats. 159 and 160) it would appear that this particular style is attributable to the southern Samo. If one can speak in terms of "classic forms," in the sense of the shapes and characteristics that define our notion of a particular style, these two masks fit the definition. The demi-ovoid mask proper with its continuous medial crest that bisects the length of the mask and extends the length of a narrow plank superstructure, paired horizontal eye slits, and a long pair of horns that arise from the upper surfaces

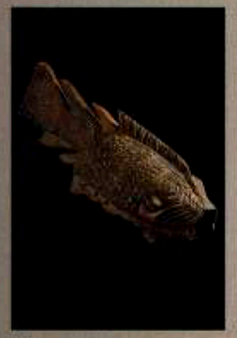


161

triangles with the Samo, about whose masking traditions there is no supportive documentation. The figures are not the work of a hand I recognize but are distinctive. The rudimentary hands appear to assume the palms-forward gesture. The heads are singularly egg-shaped with the two halves meeting at the top to form a low, sharp medial ridge dividing the top of the head and forehead as far as the line of the brow. The necks are all of the pronounced geometric ring shape typically found both on Mossi posts and the occasional Mossi figure but not on figures of the *gurunsi* or Bwa. As the Samo, a Mandé group, have been profoundly affected by the stylistic masking traditions of their Voltaic neighbors (see above cat. 160) it is entirely possible that the mask reflects Mossi, i.e., pre-*nakomsé* invasion *gurunsi* influences. TW

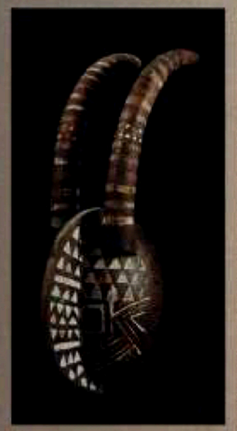
162

162 Antelope Mask, Samo or Winiama
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 20½"h.
Provenance: Ilia Malichin
The wide fields with parallel rows of small incised triangles I associate with the Samo, however the mask has not been recently repainted but appears to have been actively danced, which also suggests a possible Winiama origin. TW



163

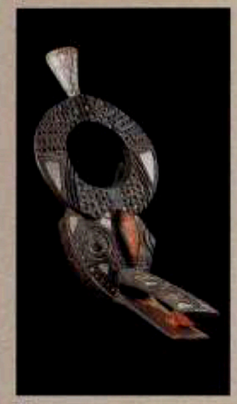
163 Fish Mask, Samo
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 19"l.
Provenance: Charles Ratton
This is a superb fish mask from the Mandé-language Samo who live west of the Mossi. Many peoples in Burkina Faso use fish masks, including the Bwa and the *gurunsi*. The story is told of an elder who had wandered far from his home looking for new land to farm where his family could settle. He became lost and disoriented and was close to starving. He came across a low pond that had filled with water during the rainy season and tried to catch a large fish in the pond. The fish was able to elude him easily, until at the last moment it sacrificed itself to the elder. He took it up on the bank, built a fire, grilled the fish, and ate it, restoring his strength so that he was able to return home and bring his family to the spot where they settled and prospered. The detail on this mask is as rich as that of a fine Japanese artist. CR



164

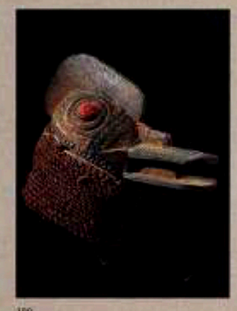
To my knowledge, this refined and naturalistic mask is unique. It was old when it was collected, which, given the provenance, was probably in the 1950s or the 1960s. Like several other masks shown here, the fields of small triangles are suggestive of a Samo origin. One could argue, of course, that the small triangles are more imitative of scales than indicative of origin. TW

164 Horned Mask, Samo or Dafing
Northwestern Burkina Faso wood, indigenous polychrome, colored chalk or pastel pigment, 32"h.
This mask type, with curved horns, a halved ovoid face and expansively bold medial facial crest also occurs among the Dafing but is not known on such a large scale. This mask is gigantic by comparison to the few known Dafing examples. As a rule, gigantism is a red flag signaling the potentially spurious, but the inside of this mask shows a dark, advanced wear patina denoting very considerable usage and age. The attribution is, in part, a reflection of its initial identification by the seller in Burkina Faso in 1976, who proclaimed the mask not to be Dafing, but Samo. As previously indicated, the pinkish pigment is similar to the pigment cited in association with several other objects illustrated here (cats. 87, 106, and 260), one of which, the wrestlers' trophy staff, is thought definitely to be Samo. TW



165

165 Composite Animal Mask, Samo or Nununa
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 30½"l.
Provenance: Freddie Rollin



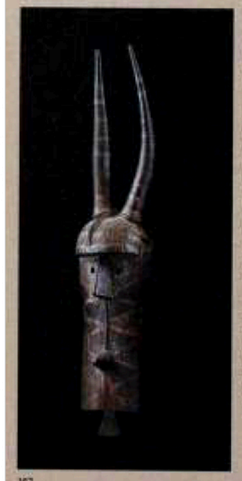
166

166 Duck Mask, Samo
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, cotton cord, wax, *Abrus precatorius* seeds, plastic beads, indigenous polychrome, 18½"l.
The elders in Ouri told me that ducks are supernatural creatures, because when all the other domesticated fowl die of various diseases, the ducks always carry on and are the last to go. The assumption is that they have the power to resist illness, so masks that represent them are associated with healing power. This wonderful mask (cat. 166) has red seeds set in wax for eyes. CR
The Burkinabé, from whom I acquired the duck mask (cat. 166) in Ouagadougou in 1975, identified it as Samo, which is perhaps supported by the fields of small triangles on the head and the bill. Once again, the fields of small triangles may be a motif that confirms the attribution for this mask as well as for the mask above (cat. 165). The red color of the semicircular medial crest between the eyes, on the latter, is associated with Nununa masks and, therefore, a Nununa assignment is possible.
Only the first two of these eight masks attributed to the Samo are a secure attribution. Upon acquisition in Burkina Faso, the dealer established the identities of the duck mask and the large mask with the curved horns. While Burkinabé dealer attributions are notoriously inaccurate, I tended to put credence in these, as the Samo attribution was and remains obscure. The others, categorized on the bases of their fields of triangle motif, is an assumption yet to be confirmed. TW

BOBO MASKS

Le Moal defines two styles of blacksmith-lineage *molo* masks[60] and lists a number of distinguishing features: the Kurumani style, largely from the central Bobo region, here represented by cats. 168–170 and 172, and the Taguna style, found in the northern Bobo region represented by cats. 167 and 171. Kurumani is the town that is now the center for the Sanu lineage, the lineage that originated *sibe*, the particular cult that gave rise to the first *molo* masks. All subsequent *molo*, all of which other lineages adopted, including the Taguna style, owe their origin to this prototype. None of the *molo* masks presented in this volume exactly fits the Le Moal prototypic style characteristics. For example, his Kourumani style has round eyes, ours rectangular; his Taguna style, with the mouth placed high and with protuberant lips, ours, in one case with lips in a boxed format (cat. 171), in the other, either possibly represented as a truncated cone or not at all (cat. 167). This is not a measure of shortcoming in Le Moal, whose depth of commitment to research should be an inspiration to future generations of students, but of the breadth of cult borrowing among the Bobo. Bobo observance dictates exactitude in mask-creating and that a mask's prototypic form may not leave the family. Variations in mask details occur only when another family acquires the mask and its accompanying cult. The new mask is similar to the prototype from which it is copied but deliberately

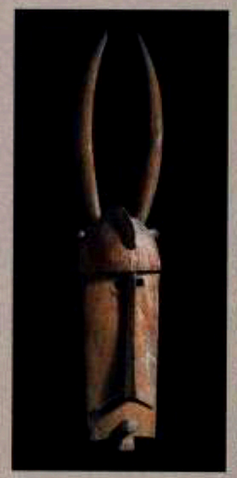
incorporates changes in detail. The mask, in turn, becomes a prototype, which, in its new exact form, may not leave its family; hence in these *molo* masks we are witness to variations not necessarily observed by Le Moal, albeit in masks of ages certainly predating the appearance on the scene of Le Moal by a great many years. Wood types from which the Burkinabé carve traditional objects are rarely recorded. However, Le Moal identifies the wood type from which all *molo* are made as *Afzelia africana*, a dense, hard and heavy wood. The tree is sacred to many ethnic groups and provides the roots in the raised pot altars to the spirit *duba*. Certain *molo* mask dancers perform at specific events, initiations, burials, and funerals. In the Ouagadougou museum's research archives, Le Moal left a series of photographs of a pair of *molo* masks at a deceased's compound prior to the burial, questioning its spirit to determine the cause of death. With the blurring of blacksmith exclusivity of *molo* and other masks of blacksmiths, the adoption of some farming lineages of blacksmith masks has occurred. Bobo blacksmiths lay claim to three additional wood mask types, the *nwenka*, with a long, narrow face and an axial superstructure with paired openwork wing shapes to either side. These are the only masks by blacksmiths not adopted by the farming communities. Farming families revere a very similar form of mask, a *syékele* mask, the *kelepene*. The major difference between the two types lies in the bottom portion of the superstructure and how it relates to the helmet. The width of the bottom of the superstructure lies directly on the helmet on *syékele* of the farmers. The only portion of the superstructure to be in contact with the helmet is the axial shaft on *nwenka* masks. There are important examples, however, in which the inside bottom edge of the two lowest wings come in brief contact with the helmet. A third mask type that was originally exclusive to blacksmiths is the *nyenga*, an antelope mask whose sole function it is to accompany the *nwenka* masks. Lastly, there is a group that is strictly comprised of entertainment masks, the *bolo*. *Bolo* represent numerous animals and humans. Structurally they are either half helmets with slightly elongate, anthropomorphized faces or they are masks that are true helmets, covering the head on all sides as far as the shoulders. Minimal animal features may be added to a *bolo* mask to indicate the animal that is represented. The farmers have several mask types that are exclusively their domain; those that find their origin in a specific cult are *syékele* masks. They include the *kelepene* group plus the *tu*, which is a highly abstract buffalo mask with a *kelepene*'s narrow, elongate face and two vertical horns that are planar, their flat sides facing forward, and a third type, the *kuma* bird masks, that represent the large terrestrial hornbill. The latter are much smaller than the *tu*. Their faces are elongate, but on a reduced scale. A long, often naturalistic beak projects forward from the mid-point of the nose-ridge and, extending from the top of the head, two horn-like elements that may curve dramatically either forward or backward are said to represent the bird's crest. TW



167

167 Blacksmith's Male (?) *molo* Mask, Taguna-style, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood (*Afzelia africana*), undifferentiated metal, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 58"h.
Provenance: Peter and Nancy Mickelsen

168



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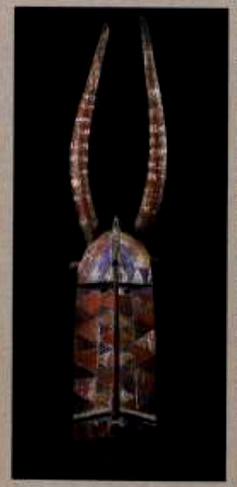
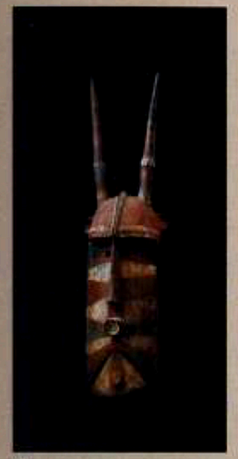


170

168 Blacksmith's Female *molo* Mask, Kurumari-style, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood (*Afzelia africana*), indigenous polychrome, 57½"h.
The very large and impressive *molo* mask (cat. 167) was used by Bobo smiths during initiations to represent the God Dwo, spirit of new life and growth in the springtime. The long rectangular face and strong vertical horns are quite typical of the type called *molo*, one of the most important and sacred of all Bobo masks. Bobo performances are very athletic, with violent spinning in such a way that the mask may even fly from the head of the performer, and is held in place only by his firm grip on a fiber handle behind the chin. CR
To my knowledge the forward curve to the massive horns are unique to the Taguna-style-based mask (cat. 167). A second variation from the prototype is the absence of a mouth. If correctly interpreted, the truncated conical volume is the umbilicus, a prototypic Taguna-style feature. Like all of the *molo* masks illustrated here, it is exceedingly old, in fact, sufficiently old as to invite carbon dating.
The interior of the *molo* (cat. 168) is glossy black from countless years of wear. The mask's great age is even more clearly seen in the deep radial erosion at the top of the head. A subtle feature varying from the prototype is the shape and placement of the ears. In this example, short of a location actually between the horns, these ears are placed as high as possible, tucked in at the base of the horns. Their shape, truncated cones, is a canonical form, among other geometric volumes, that may be applied to represent several different anatomical features: ear, mouth or umbilicus. What we might at first interpret as flaring nostrils are more likely representations of the raised scarification pattern, a prototypic Kurumani-style feature that is thought never to be associated with the Taguna style. The application of polychrome with no surface carving is typically Bobo. Incised lines are seldom seen. TW

169 Blacksmith's Female *molo* Mask, Kurumari-style, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood (*Afzelia africana*), remnant indigenous polychrome, 64"h.
Provenance: Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of T. Wheelock, December 23, 1997, Maurice Bonnefoy
Among the Bobo, retired masks are not placed on altars as vehicles to accept sacrifices but stored in perpetuity in the recesses of the *wasa*, the family ancestral shrine house. Le Moal believes that many such retirees exceed a century in age.[6] The *molo* mask to the left (cat. 169) as well as the *nwenka* mask (cat. 175) and *syékele* mask (cat. 174) are from this retired state. All have surfaces completely devoid of paint and variously covered in years of detrital accumulation. This mask must have been retired for some years before it was sold. Most of the painted surface has been lost but remnants of red polychrome are visible beneath the detritus layers on the PL side of the face beside the nose and remnant white is discernible between the nose and mouth. Lacking paint, the formal aspects of the sculpture come into their own. Each element, the ears, nose, mouth, cicatrix, bib-like face, holding tab, medial crest and, of course, the horns, is a discreet volume which, in the tradition-steeped variations in placement, helps to provide the grandeur of the whole. As on all of the *molo* illustrated here, the back of the "bib" has a dark, exceedingly well-developed wear patina. TW



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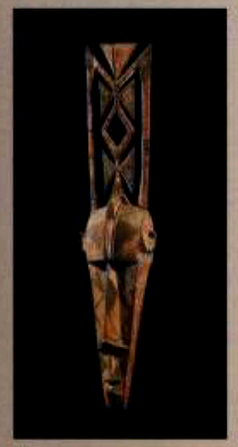


173

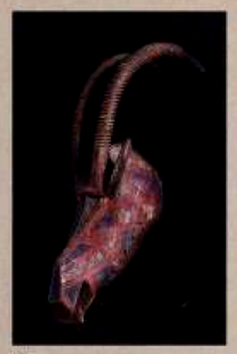
170 Blacksmith's Female *molo* Mask, Kurumari-style, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood (*Afzelia africana*), indigenous polychrome, 72"h.
Provenance: Marc and Denyse Ginzberg
This is one of the most spectacular and powerful *molo* masks I have ever seen. The mask is carved of dense, hard wood and is very heavy. Much of the vivid red, blue and white pigment remains, giving the mask a good approximation of how it appeared in village celebrations. Such masks were the most sacred masks of the blacksmith priests of Dwo, used in men's initiations. CR
Among the discrete elements whose form (and sometimes placement or absence) is dictated by the specifics of ownership, the variation in horn shape and dimension is immediately noted. These horns are not round in cross-section but distinctly oval. The curious holes at the base of the PR horn were used to secure the horn, once broken but re-attached. TW

171 Blacksmith's Female *molo* Mask, Taguna-style, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood (*Afzelia africana*), indigenous polychrome, 52"h.
Provenance: Johann Levy

172 Blacksmith's Female *molo* Mask, Kurumari-style, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood (*Afzelia africana*), hemp cord, undifferentiated polychrome, 59¼"h.
The form of horns on the *molo* to the left (cat. 171) with a swelling midway along their lengths is, in shape if not size, typical of the Taguna-style female *molo* mask. The shape of the horns of the male Taguna-style mask adheres to their Kurumani origin and is straight. The large triangle inset at the bottom of the "bib" is a novel variation on this exceedingly old mask. Its support grip, or *siri*, the tab that extends down from the bottom of the bib, has probably been lost. This appendage is of practical value. The wearer grips the *siri* to aid in securing the heavy, ungainly mask during energetic performances. Curiously, Le Moal listed it as prototypic to the Kurumani substyle but did not include it in the list of Taguna-style prototypic features. The *siri* is, however, present on line drawings of both prototypes by Le Moal. It is possible that a *siri* was never present on this mask. The remnant cone projecting from near the bottom of the bib represents the umbilicus, which, as mentioned earlier, is prototypic to the Taguna style. The Kurumani-style mask with the V-shape horn projection (cat. 172) at first appears to be a male version, as it seems to lack a mouth. However, close inspection reveals a circular area of loss beneath the nose, where the mouth once projected. TW

173 Farmer's *syékele* Mask, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 50½"h.
Provenance: Leof collection
The elegantly carved, central openwork diamond and free-floating triangular forms of the panel offer an engaging contrast to the similar forms rendered in paint on the vertical, flat surfaces of the face and nose, many of which remain only in outline. The confidently executed volumes that descend the medial line of the face attest to the consummate skill of the sculptor. The horizontal nostril plane alone invites the pleasure of a second look. TW

174 / 175



176

177

174 Farmer's *syékele* Mask with Horns *kelepene*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 72¾"h.

175 Blacksmith's *nwenka* Mask with Superstructure, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 68"h.
Provenance: Alain Schoffel, Patricia Whithorn
As a variation of the Kurumani prototype *nwenka* mask, this example (cat. 175) differs in the presence of two crenulated longitudinal ridges at either side of the face, the symmetrically placed cones at either side of the forehead, and the lack of defined lateral nostrils and mouth, although it should be noted that the lack of mouth typically defines a male mask. The *kepelene* mask (cat. 174) is close in morphological details to the prototype from Kurumani, where the cult originated. The differing features are the crenulations, which continue from the medial crest down the length of the nose, and the lack of carved abstract representations of eyelashes and eyebrows. TW

176 Kobe Antelope Mask *nyanga*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, beeswax, hair, chalky pigment, indigenous polychrome, 39"h.
Provenance: Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of T. Wheelock, December 23, 1997

177 Kobe Antelope Mask *nyanga*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, oil-base polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 41"h.
Bobo Antelope masks were originally the exclusive domain of blacksmiths, but over time, farmers adopted them; therefore, it is impossible to know the origin of a mask without knowing its context. The mask that is now in the collection at the Metropolitan Museum (cat. 176) offers some interesting sculptural variations from that which we think of as the norm. The flat planes that form the top and front portions of the muzzle are arresting innovations. Perhaps not unique, but certainly of note, is the placement of the small rectangular eyes, tucked directly below the brow. The ears and horns align in a row and spring directly from the abbreviated, angular brow, a most unusual configuration. The artist applied eyelashes of coarse animal hair embedded in wax to the angled wall of the brow. The presence of eyelashes is not in itself unusual; the location of their mounting is. Frequently, pegged into the jaws of *nyanga* masks are antelope teeth, but, in this mask, they have been lost. The holes along the low crest behind the horns would certainly have once held a fiber mane. The mask was not terribly old when acquired in 1976, probably no more than mid-century.
In the case of the *nyanga*, below left (cat. 177), several features significantly differ from the other two *nyanga* masks illustrated here. There is no brow ridge, and the horns stem from the top of the mask, affording a long, elegant sweep from nose to pate. To augment this line, the sculptor has eliminated the fiber mane altogether and, instead, created a well-developed medial crest that extends in a graceful continuation of the line of the snout, from the level of the eyes up over the crown, nearly to the back edge of the helmet. Large square-cut eyes are accentuated. At minimum, this mask originates from roughly the mid-20th century, but men have danced it for many years, as it only came out of Africa early in 2005. TW

178

178 Kobe Antelope Mask *nyanga*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, ungulate teeth, fiber, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 36" h.
This is a wonderful *nyanga* or antelope mask from the northern Bobo and represents the large roan antelope, *Hippotragus koba*. The piece is superbly carved, with a large, broad snout, a curved face, and elegant horns whose sweep balances the reverse curve of the face. It is remarkable that so much of the iron-red and black pigment have been preserved, giving the piece some of the fresh character it would have had, newly-painted, when Bobo initiates used it in performances. It also has a bit of the hempen costume, also died red, attached around the head. Masks such as this were used by young Bobo men to mark the passage of the numerous steps in initiations that took well over a decade to complete. This is an exceptionally fine example of the Bobo style. CR

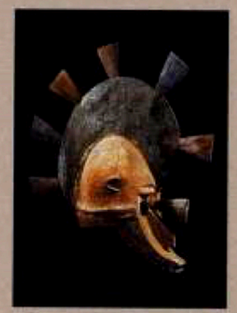
The shape of the eyes is peculiar to this piece as generally the Bobo cut square or, more rarely, round eyeholes. Like the rendering of the horns, the modeling of the snout is naturalistic and sensual. To the side of either horn there is an empty cavity that may once have held representations of ears. The fiber cowl and crest have been stained with aniline dye, a common practice among many Burkinabé groups. TW

179

179 Helmet Mask with Equestrian Figure *bolo*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, Solenzo region, wood, iron, undifferentiated metal, fiber cord, indigenous polychrome, 23½" h.
Provenance: Franz Burkhard, collected in 1960s by Burkhard
The toothy diamond-shaped mouth on a flat rectangular plank that represents a face is atypical of the Bobo but is a stylistic element common to many Bwa masks. However, while helmet masks are, to my knowledge, unknown among the Bwa, they are common place among the Bobo. I believe the basic format of a mask, the helmet-form in this case, is a more significant indicator of ethnic origin than the stylistic elements superposed upon it. The face's painted black squares are thick and not carved or incised, which may be a further indicator of a Bobo origin. Burkhard's notes identified this mask as Bobo. There are several other reasons for tentatively agreeing with this assignment. While at the time it was collected the term "Bobo" served as something of a catch-all, which included the Bwa, more recently a similar, but much newer, example with a rider wearing Western clothing was said, by a well informed Burkinabé art dealer, to be Bobo in origin. In addition, there are published examples of typical Bobo-style *bolo* helmet masks surmounted by a horse and rider in European clothes. Finally, I recently received field photographs of Bolon masking, including two with equestrian figures on helmet masks. The question of meaning is challenging. Unlike the previous examples cited, the figure on this mask bears no resemblance to a European. The mask may, in fact, predate the arrival of Europeans. That it might be a mounted hunter figure harking back to myths of origin is doubtful on two counts. One, the bell is hardly an element associated with a hunter's stealth. Two, according to Myran Echenberg, there is virtually no likelihood that a Bobo would have been in possession of a horse as these animals were simply too costly for a Bobo to afford.[62] For the same reason this precluded the possibility that the rider might be a mythic clan warrior. Echenberg proposed that it could represent a form of spirit protection against invaders, at first African warriors and later, as suggested by the clothing on more recent examples, European invaders. I would propose that the presence of the bell could be a reference to the many bells commonly hung on the horses of raiding cavalry, the ringing and clanking cacophony intended to add to the general din of an attack and to further spread fear and confusion among the ranks of hapless farmers. TW

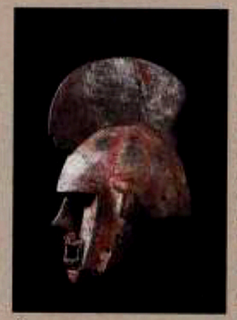
180

180 Double-crested Male Hornbill Mask *kuma*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 27½" h.
Provenance: Guy Van Rijn
There are two variations of this type of *kuma* with long, flat planar faces: one with a rounded, slight swelling in the mid-section of the long nose, as in this example (though barely recognizable from the angle of the photograph); the other type, straight-nosed without the swelling, the significance of the difference, unknown. The presence or absence of a mouth on Bobo masks is often gender-specific. As this *kuma* lacks a mouth, the mask may be male. Note the diagonal scarification on the face. Masks from Muna, in northern Bobo country, often display the square-cut, raised scar. This mask probably left Africa in the 1950s or the1960s. It has wear, but not enough to take it into the 19th century; the 1920s or the 1930s is more likely. TW



181

181 Crested Helmet Mask *bolo*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, Kolonpuié-Koumi region, wood, iron, bluing?, indigenous polychrome, 26" h.
This helmet mask, a very early acquisition, was my initial exposures to bluing used as a pigment. Bluing is a form of commercial laundering bleach, which is sold in blocks. Its use as a pigment is so common across Sub-Saharan Africa as to have almost become "traditional." The striking medial crest with excrescent tabs occurs on both fiber and fabric Bobo masks and fabric Bolon and Zara masks. A similar composition may be seen in fabric Bolon masks illustrated in this volume (cats. 186 and 187). Blacksmiths in Kurumani were said to have exchanged one of their own masks for a Zara *bolo* mask.[63] A Zara *bolo* looks very much like the Bolon fabric and cowrie shell masks referred to above. The Bobo do not use either fabric or cowries on their masks, thus, when they adopted the Zara mask, they converted the fabric elements entirely to wood. This Bobo *bolo*, while perhaps no more than fifty or sixty years old at the time acquired, 1972, may reflect that early adoption and conversion. At the time of purchase it was, however, said to come from the area immediately south of Bobo-Dioulasso, quite a distance from Kurumani. TW



182

182 Crested Helmet Mask *bolo*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, Dandé region, wood, chalky pigment, indigenous polychrome, 17⅛" h.

183 Horned Helmet Mask *bolo*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 23½" h.
The Bobo (called Bobo-Fing in older publications) carve helmet masks like these examples to serve as popular entertainment masks at performances that are open to the public. Although these are not the most sacred masks of the community, they are much appreciated by the people of the community when they perform at funerals, initiations, harvest festivals and other celebrations. Their performance is extremely athletic, with the mask spinning wildly around and around, leaping high into the air as the strands of the fiber costume fly outward. CR

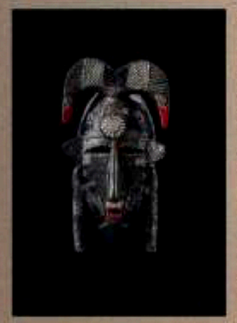
Usually, Bobo masks are smooth-surfaced with geometric patterns applied with paint alone. On the example with the crest (cat. 182), however, augmented scarification lines outline the face, with incised lines. Like the previous mask (cat. 181) the dominant secondary feature is the high crest motif. This mask, akin to the mask to the left, with the anthropomorphic head with short horns (cat. 183), resembles the *bolé* (sing. *bolo*) masks of blacksmiths from Tasila in the north. These masks are either all helmet types in which the back half descends to the neck, or full helmets that are cylinders, which rest on the shoulders and are hemispheric on top. On some of the half-helmet masks, the entire mask depicts an animal. More often, animal features are appendages to an anthropomorphized head. The mask with horns is a prime example of the latter. Both of these masks show fully-developed wear patinas and certainly date back to the first half of the 20th century. TW

183

BOLON AND ZARA MASKS

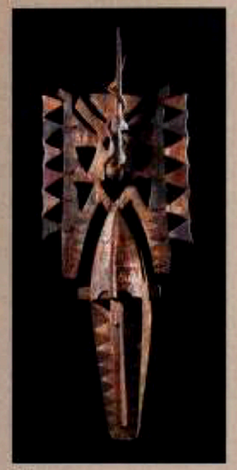
Several Malian ethnic groups, the Bozo and Marka, also make wood masks with metal surface decoration. Like those groups, the Bolon are of Mandé origin and speak a Mandé dialect. The Bozo material is easily distinguished simply because stylistically it does not look anything like either the Marka or the Bolon. The primary difference between the latter two is mask width. The Marka material, while otherwise strikingly similar, is noticeably narrower than the Bolon masks.

R.P.F. Jaquinod studied Bolon traditions in the village of Dionkélé between 1954 and 1961. According to Jaquinod,[64] the Bolon have a number of mask types, each of which is associated with a particular ceremony, for example, circumcision, age grade initiations, agricultural ceremonies, or funerals. Both the wood with metal masks, the *koufen*, and the fabric masks with large discoid crests replete with cowrie shells, the *kengoni*, belong to a category of masks, the *dogbé* or "white masks," which are the responsibility of the *dodi*, adult men of the third initiate age grade. The eldest males, those who have passed their authority over most quotidian village matters, cults and dance on to the *dodi*, are associated with both painted wood masks with costumes composed of leaves, branches and fiber, the *Do-ulé* or "red masks," and all fiber masks, the *surukuba*, that, as with the *kengoni*, act as police enforcers. Variation does occur, however, as I believe the *syékele* wood mask shown in a Le Moal field photograph has a costume of only long wide fiber strands with no evidence of leaves or branches.[65] The *dogbé* masks participate in several ceremonies in a policing context. All three of these masks appear at important celebrations and funerals; in addition, each mask type has ceremonial occasions specific to it at which it appears. TW



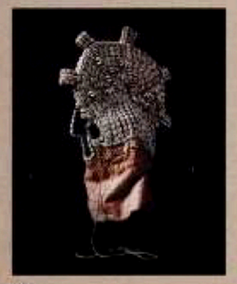
184

184 Mask with Face *koufen*, Bolon
Western Burkina Faso, wood, aluminum, undifferentiated metal, oil-base polychrome, 13¾" h.
The repoussé sheet-metal sections are symmetrically arranged with careful placement to augment the features. The paired isosceles triangles to either side of the nose serve to unify the facial features and, in conjunction with the stellate element on the forehead, focus our attention. The sculptor who conceived this mask has combined geometric shapes cut from both unpainted silver-gray metal sheet and dark blue commercially colored metal sheet playing light against dark and the judicious application of green and red oil-base paint to small sections of the finished surface. TW



185

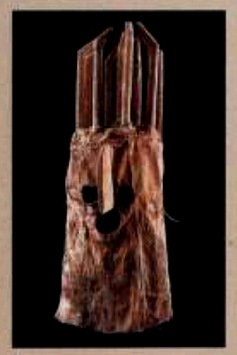
185 Mask with Elaborate Superstructure, Bolon
Western Burkina Faso, wood, iron, leather, steel screws, oil base polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 58" h.
I am certain that this mask came from a Bolon village, as my source, proved dependable, was quite definite on this point. No available evidence exists of Bobo masks with either this rack superstructure or with animals attached to the front. However, Jean Capron reproduced a photograph of two very similar-style masks attributed to the Bwa dancing in a northwestern Burkinabé Bwa village, Sabwéra, very close to Bobo territory[66] and not far from the Bolon. It would seem that this specific style spread both to the east and to the west from a Bobo source. A figure from a mask wearing a similar-style headdress is illustrated here (cat. 208). TW



187

186 Crested Hood Mask *kengoni* or *kérengoni*, Bolon
Western Burkina Faso, homespun cotton fabric, cotton cord, cowrie, 23½" h.

187 Crested Hood Mask *kengoni* or *kérengoni*, Bolon
Western Burkina Faso, homespun cotton fabric, cotton cord, cowrie, 24" h.
The presence of *kengoni* masks, whips in hand, serve to maintain order and correct conduct with particular attention to young boys and girls.



188

188 Hood Mask, Zara or Turka
Southwestern Burkina Faso, homespun cotton fabric, cotton cord, wood, 29" h.
At the time of acquisition this cloth mask was said to be Turka. If so, its function is unknown but as there are Islamized Turka it may be similar to the Bobo-Dioulasso Djula's nocturnal Islamic cloth *djinn* masks described by Bravmann[67] or may be an adaptation of the animist Zara nocturnal mask, *gena*. The *gena* mask is described as having eight pointed, crown-like projections and a cloth nose with no indication of a wood insert of equivalent dimension. However, there may be stylistic variants in different communities. The *gena* mask is the first of the "white" masks to appear and arrives immediately following the brief manifestation of the lead mask, *yereke*. The dancer's costume is entirely white. The *gena* mask is closely associated with the Zara altar, *Za Dwo*. In that the Zara revere the same deity as the Bobo, Dwo, there is a relation of considerable deference between the two peoples. The rites that the two groups perform, while mutually respected, in detail, run counter to one another. Bobo masks perform in daylight, Zara masks only at night. Bobo eschew cloth in their dance costume, Zara dance costumes are largely fabric. The Bobo reject the use of cowries on their costumes, the Zara the converse.[68] TW

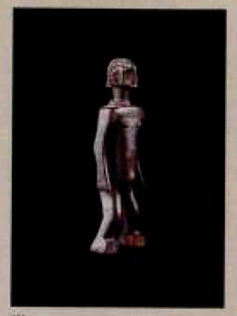
189

TUSYAN MASKS

189 Buffalo Helmet Mask *kablé*, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, cane, fiber cord, 19½" h.
Provenance: William Wright, Gilbert and Rhoda Graham, William Wright
There are large numbers of Senufo and related peoples in southwest Burkina Faso, including the Tagwara in the north, who use masks in the *Komo* association, the Tusyan in the south, who wear masks such as this in initiations, and the southern Senufo who also live in Ivory Coast and use a range of objects associated with the *Poro* association. Helmet masks such as this, with the large figure of a bush buffalo above the head, are one of several types of masks that are still very much in use by the Tusyan for funerals and rites of purification. Susan Cooksey has reported, based on solid research in the region, that they continue to be a vital part of Tusyan culture. CR
While *koniake* masks are worn during initiations and at planting and harvesting, the buffalo helmet masks, *kablé*, appear at funerals and village purification ceremonies. Wood buffalo masks are the only wood masks associated with funeral and purification rites and are the exclusive domain of families who honor the buffalo as their totem. All other families' totems are manifest in fiber or other materials that are too fragile to have been collected. While a sizeable number of *kablé* have been offered on the market, it was not until 1989 that I found an example that I deemed of sufficient quality to acquire. Subsequently, to my great delight, this example, for me far the most beguiling that I have encountered, reappeared on the market.
TW

190

190 Buffalo Mask *koniake*, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, fiber, fiber cord, wax, *Abrus precatorius* seeds, indigenous polychrome, 37¾" h.
After initiation, the Tusyan formerly hung the masks outside their doors, but, as one can easily imagine, that tradition ended long ago, of necessity. This mask, of course, represents a bush buffalo. Other characters represented include the heron, the stork, the kingfisher, the panther, the monkey, the bush pig, and the elephant. The most senior initiation is held once a generation, and was held in 1933 and again recently, according to Susan Cooksey at the University of Florida. The most famous and elaborate is the superb piece in the collection of the New Orleans Museum of Art. CR
Among the Tusyan initiations, the Grand *Lo* are held on a mammoth scale but they are few and far between, usually some 40 years apart. There were initiations in 1893, 1933 and 1989.[69] For these initiations each young initiate receives a *koniake* mask that represents his clan totem and is his protective spirit. There are two forms of *Lo* ceremony, a biennial and the 40-year cycle Grand *Lo Do* initiation. Males receive new names at both, one name by the father at the infant's first biennial *Lo*, and the second for the grand *Lo*, which replaces the previous. The latter is assigned through the spirit world from ancestors who have died since the last Grand *Lo*, and is that of an animal which thereafter is the man's totem, with its associated taboos. A number of these masks have found their way into private and public collections. The most published and therefore best known is the handsome example housed in the Barbier-Muller Collection in Geneva.[70] TW



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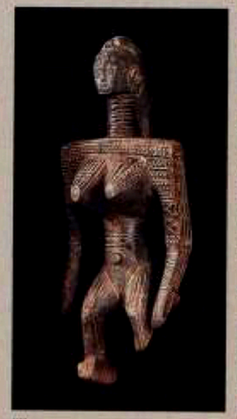


193

PROTECTIVE AND DIVINATION SCULPTURE

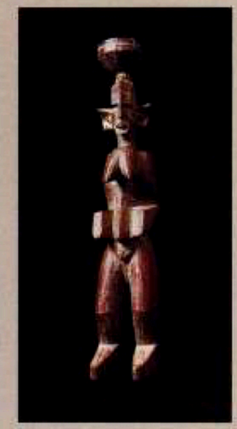
191 Container in the Form of a Standing Figure with Removable Head, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, Kongoussi region?, wood, 7¼" h.
Provenance: William Wright
This miniature figure is exquisite, solidly planted on two typically large Burkinabé-style feet. Its head, which is a removable stopper, plugging the hollow body container, is more likely attributable to the Mossi than to the Bamana, which it also resembles. Similar, rounded neck rings appear on a number of other Mossi figures in this collection (cats. 193 and 231). The placement of the bands of scarification on the torso resemble those on several Mossi door locks, thought to be from the Kongoussi region, north of Ouagadougou (cats. 520 and 524). There is no identifiable scent associated with the hollow interior, and its purpose has not been determined. TW

192 Standing Female Figure from a *karan-wemba* Mask, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Northwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, aluminum, cotton cord, cowrie, indigenous polychrome, 20¼" h.
Everything about this figure fits the norm that defines the workshop if not the artist who created it. Drawing on a Western term, figures by this hand have a "mannered" quality in their elongate proportions of the torso, arms, and neck, the exaggerated arch of their backs, and rhythmic flow of their arms. There are three masks by the same workshop (cats. 121, 123 and 124) in this collection, the latter two, masks with figures. The figure-type is discussed above (cat. 123). This figure wears a cowrie shell necklace and a miniature aluminum bracelet with a central band embossed with Xs. The cross motif is incised along the narrow edge of the hair crest. While it might have some significance on the bracelet, on the crest it represents the hairstyle. White pigment fills the eye sockets, but judging from other examples each may once have held a smooth flake of cowrie shell. White and red pigment is present, per expectation, but the belly benefits from the application of some lavender and pale yellow chalky pastels. The bottom of the feet have probably been cut and painted, as their surfaces are smooth and do not share the effects of age, borne on the rest of the figure. The only other single figure from this workshop of which I am aware was offered to Susan Vogel in the late 1980s. While I recall my conviction that it was "right," I do not recollect if the undersides of its feet appeared eroded or cleanly cut. TW

193 Standing Female Figure from a *karan-wemba* Mask, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Northwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, metal, 20" h.
Provenance: Armand Arman
Karan-wemba is the *Mooré* name given to Mossi masks with a female figure representing the maternal origin of the clan. Apart from regional differences in the mask proper and, where present, in the plank, there are several basic forms of *karan-wemba* masks: masks, each with a figure standing in front of or beneath a vertical plank of variable conception and dimension; masks with the standing figure mounted on a short rectangular column, flanked either side by the diagonally rising arms of a V-shaped superstructure; masks with a figure standing alone with no accompanying plank, its feet straddling either side of the apex of a short column; masks with some form of superstructure but with the female figure represented solely by a head mounted on top of the superstructure. This figure strongly resembles the generally robust presence of figures that I associate with the third type, the masks with a stand-alone figure. The other examples from this category also had scarification patterns carved deep into the surface. However, the degree of scarification sets this figure apart. The cascading hairstyle, which in this example seems to have originally fallen in overlapping layers, is commonly associated with this type of mask. The broad shape of the buttocks, projected with a flat underside, so clearly differentiating the thighs, is shared by other figures on masks belonging to this category. The old shear surface at the inside of the remaining foot suggests a loss appropriate to a figure with its feet straddling the sides of the support column, a distinctive structure also common to masks of this category. I mistook the glossy patination of the face for a sheet metal surface for an embarrassingly long time. It is, however, wood.
The eyes alone are metal, which is another feature typical of this *karan-wemba* format. The remnant hands show incised lines at the backs, indicating what remains of the fingers. The hands assume either a palms-to-the-posterior or palms-forward position which is contrary to the hand gesture commonly associated with *nyonyosé* as well as *nakomsé* figures, most of which are portrayed with their hands at their sides, palms facing their bodies. This, however, is not a hard and fast rule, as shown both by an example at the Stanley Collection at The University of Iowa which boasts an example which shares the same hand position as the subject figure,[71] palms directed either forward or backward, and, similarly, by an unusual Yatanga-style *karan-wemba* sold at the *Vérité Collection* auction, catalogue lot number 52,[72] which has hands facing palm forward. TW

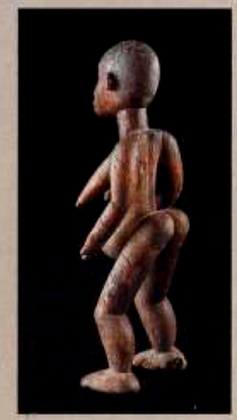
194

194 Standing Female Figure, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, Yako/Koudougou region, wood, cowries, beads, iron, leather, cotton cord, 17⅝" h.
There are a number of examples of Mossi figures in this style. They are readily distinguishable by their short, widely set legs, the exaggerated slope to their shoulders, and flat inset facial planes with delicate linear features. The faces, with noses and mouths contained in a narrow medial ridge, are reminiscent of certain Bobo figures and similar to several Mossi figures thought to be from the west or northwest Mossi regions. All of the figures of this genre are roughly the same size. The Islamized *nyonyosé* dealer, originally from Yatenga, identified the figure as having belonged to a Mossi diviner or earth priest from the region around Yako and said that the presence of the iron blade supported a *sukomsé* attribution. The iron appendage worn on a braided leather necklace may be either a knife or a bull-roarer rhomb, which is closely associated with the autochthonous culture. The presence of prepubescent breasts further reduces the likelihood that the figure represents a *nakomsé* ancestor. Despite the fact that this figure, like others of the genre, shows no evidence of the blood sacrifices, it likely belonged to a *nyonyosé* diviner. The facial cicatrices include a ribbon of short parallel horizontal lines from the top of the forehead circling down the cheeks to the jaw, three strong lines down either side of the face, and four or five parallel, short, vertical incisions above the eyes. According to the unpublished study of Burkinabé scarification by Vincent Sedogo, this last feature is associated with the Taonlense Mossi from the Koudougou region.[73] These same scars over the eyes, however, are also associated with some *karan-wemba* figures (cats. 123, 124, and 192) from the Yatenga region farther to the north. A Mossi *tengsoba* wood-and-iron staff of a diviner (cat. 231) bears a handle with a head exhibiting pinched features, stylistically close to this figure. The claim is that it, too, is from the Yako region. TW



195

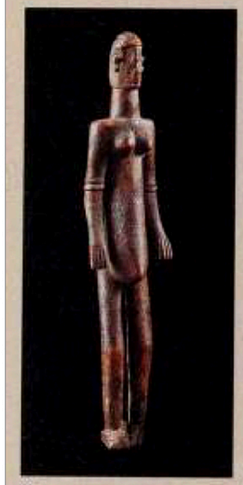
195 Standing Female Figure, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 15½" h.
Provenance: Thomas Alexander
This is a fine archetypal Winiama figure, with a narrow head and enormous C-shaped ears. The same style appears on other individual figures, on heddle pulleys, and on masks. This is the type of figure used by a diviner, placed on one of his shrines to embody the spiritual beings, which he consults. CR
The blocky angularity, odd volumes, aberrant proportions and anatomical placements recall, in Western terminology, "cubism," which most certainly evolved long after the development of this Winiama style. Burkinabé material was late to arrive in Europe but it was the shock in the encounter of such visual ideas that so fascinated early 20th-century artists. Several objects with figures in this style, illustrated here, are alluded to above, a heddle pulley probably by the same hand (cat. 509) and a mask with two figures by a similar hand (cat. 85). Sculpted female bowl-carrier figures are rare in the Burkinabé sculptural canon. Apart from other Winiama examples, I am only familiar with occurrences among the Lobi groups. TW



196

196 Standing Female Figure, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, remnant indigenous polychrome, 24" h.
While one sometimes hears that figurative sculpture is more common amongst the Nuna than the Bwa, I have found the contrary to be the case. Most Nuna figurative sculpture shares with the Bwa and other *gurunsi* groups the palm-forward hand attitude, the meaning of which is not established. I identify four somewhat loosely defined Nuna figurative styles. The first is based on the superb Barbier-Muller standing figure with the facial plane beneath the eyes, filled with parallel, straight scarification lines running at a steep diagonal towards the sides of the face.[74] Another large and fine example of the first style graces the Louvre.[75] The second, as the first, is not represented in this collection. It is generally as large, with distinctly elongate legs, arms, body and neck, the face with wide nostrils but with otherwise more conventionally Voltaic facial features than the Barbier figure. Toumani Triandé[76] illustrates several examples from the Burkina Faso National Museum collection. A third style is based solely upon a quality of head shape that is long, narrowing downward into a long chin, the mouth generally placed high relative to the bottom of the chin. The standing figure on a scepter illustrated here (cat. 258) is an example of this style. The animated figure (cat. 196) represents a fourth style. The salient characteristic in this case is a voluptuousness and dynamism of the body. This curvaceous example offers a dynamic cascade of diagonal lines witnessed in the exaggerated length of the breasts, their protuberant nipples mirroring the diagonally directed fingers, the line of the low, fulsome belly descending to the umbilicus, the lower arms terminating in the open-palm gesture. The thighs, in an unbroken line and volume, culminate in perfectly rounded, projected buttocks that counterbalance the protuberant belly. The totality of line and sensuous volume upon sensuous volume is superb. Two other examples, reflective of this style, were in the collection of Karl Heinz Krieg in Germany

in the early 1980s. The broad, wide-lipped mouth and, to a lesser extent, the flared nostrils on this example are uncharacteristic of most Burkinabé sculpture, but these elements, in conjunction with the very low, strongly projected belly, its underside at virtually ninety degrees to the body, are features seen to point to Nuna origins. All three aspects are seen on two other Nuna pieces illustrated in this collection, a small standing figure belonging to a diviner (cat. 197) and a figurative scepter (cat. 254). The Barbier-Muller figure, though radically different, shares large lips and a nose that widens at the nostrils. Similar renderings of these facial features recur, albeit separately, on five large Nuna figures in the Triandé publication. TW

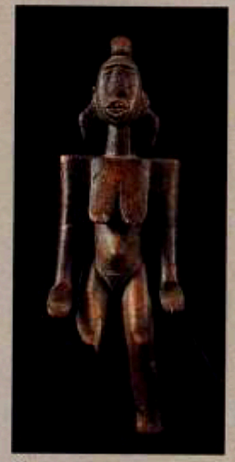


197

197 Standing Figure, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, 10⅛" h.
Provenance: William Wright
A Burkinabé dealer attributed this small, elongate figure to the Nuna at the time of purchase. The hand position is interpretable from the faint definition of fingers, as either palms forward or palms back, hand positions associated with *gurunsi* and Bwa sculpture. Much larger examples of Nuna sculpture feature the elongation of the figure, which is not, to my knowledge, identified with the Bwa. The most telling Nuna feature is the thickness of the lips. The mouth appears, at first glance, simply to be a typically Voltaic diamond shape, but closer inspection reveals that the mouth opening is atypically small and the lips atypically wide. The nose broadens toward the nostrils but not to the degree one associates with Nuna facial rendering. The low and pronounced belly projection is also a Nuna feature. Both this belly-form and the thick diamond-shaped lips are distinctive features on the small Nuna figure surmounting a scepter (cat. 254). The unfortunate horizontal line between the chin and the mouth on the PR side of the face is an accidental cut that does not continue to the other side of the face. TW

198

198 Standing Figure, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 7¼" h.
Provenance: Joseph Herman
There is enormous variation in Bwa hairstyles, judging from the Bwa statuary assembled for this book. The coiffure of almost every Bwa figure is different from every other. A low medial crest parallels hair in longitudinal rows in this example. What appears to be a braid descends on either side of the face in front of the ears. Two large figures (cats. 199 and 200) exhibit more elaborately rendered side tresses. Scarification patterns vary from figure to figure. This statue has three vertical striations at the sides of the face, V-formed cat whiskers, the top meeting the diagonal scar off the nose, and three pairs descend straight from the lower lip. A zigzag line in a rectangular field forms a row of triangles across the chest. Triple-lined rays spread in three cardinal directions from the umbilicus. The small, rudimentary palms are interpreted as facing forward. Hollowed eyeholes are circled by remnants of a raised ring and probably indicate previous eye insets. TW

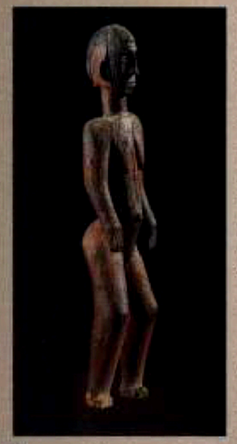


199

199 Standing Female Figure *muiha* or Diviner's Figure, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, 22½" h.
Provenance: Freddie Rollin
Single Bwa standing figures such as this one are very rare. This may be an example of the type of spiritual figure called *muiha* in the town of Boni, which watches over the entire community and provides prosperity and well-being to those who honor it. It is only slightly smaller that the *muiha* in Boni, but the style is from an entirely different, unknown town. The carving is very strong and expressive, and in spite of the damage to the leg it is an important example of the carving style of the savanna areas of West Africa. CR
The blacksmith who carved this sculpture may also have carved the figure that follows (cat. 200). There are, however, subtle differences, which could either be attributed to evolution in the sculptor's style or the work of another hand. Compared to the painted sculpture, this figure's face is fuller, the eyes are carved rather than cowry shell additions, the mouth with teeth is more fully developed, the side locks more expansive and the kneecap is rendered as a circular flat plane, not rounded. The four sets of three crudely incised scarification marks radiating from the umbilicus are so haphazard and *maladroit* as to almost certainly be later additions not intended by the sculptor. The nose is an old, village-level restoration of sorts and may contain fragments of the original nose. The most striking difference between the two figures is their surfaces, one with no evidence of polychrome and the other thickly painted. This may represent not a stylistic difference but a functional one. The few figures known to be *muiha* are painted. This figure has a well-developed handling patina with no indication that it was ever painted. While it is possible that the two figures were carved for two different families, one with a tradition of painting its *muiha* figures and the other with not painting them, it seems more likely that the highly patinated statue served a diviner and the painted figure was a *muiha*.[77] Having said all of the above, there is the possibility that neither are Bwa, but rather, Nuna. This argument centers on the very *gurunsi* diamond-shaped mouth and the entire monkey-mask quality of the face. Bwa monkey masks, from what little is known of them, are round;[78] *gurunsi* monkey-masks are more elongate. However, refuting a Nuna attribution are the presence of side tresses, which are also seen on the small Bwa figure (cat. 198) and not known to be a Nuna hairstyle, and, most convincing, the presence of black, painted, vertical scarification lines over the eyes on the painted figure (cat. 200). These scars are not associated with the Nuna but seen on Bwa, Winiama and some western Mossi figures. Other facial scars on the figure (cat. 200) are more visibly carved but, in addition, painted black. TW

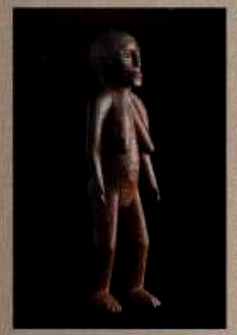
200

200 Standing Female Figure *muiha*, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, undifferentiated beads, indigenous polychrome, 24¾" h.
Provenance: Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of T. Wheelock, December 23, 1997, Franz Burkhard, collected in 1960s by Burkhard
It seems likely that this is a *muiha* figure, as discussed in the previous entry (cat. 199). The red pigment is thick in places and has developed a shiny patina from handling. Except for the vertical primary facial scarification marks, which are incised, the cicatrices are painted black over the red surface. In addition to the long cascades of necklace beads, she carries a large magic bundle between her breasts. The whitish patches in her hair are an organic crystal bloom, which occurs on some objects that have been washed or anointed with a substance like shea butter.[79] *Muiha* female figures, like Mossi *karan-wemba* figures, are public figures and, as such, in their original settings are always displayed appropriately attired in a skirt, homespun for the Mossi figures, fiber strands for the Bwa *muiha*. TW



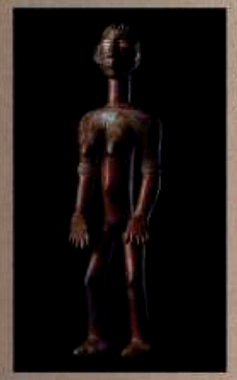
201

201 Standing Female *muiha* or Diviner's Figure, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, iron, indigenous polychrome, organic matter, 23" h.
Provenance: Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of T. Wheelock, January, 2000, Leonard Kahan
This is thought to have been a *muiha* figure, but given the quantity of sacrificial material encrusting the surface, it might also have served a diviner as a spirit world intermediary. Having said that, it is recognized that *muiha* figures may have been, over time, the recipients of equally copious blood sacrifices as received by shrine figures belonging to diviners; on the other hand, it is not clear that all such figures are the direct recipients of blood sacrifices. TW



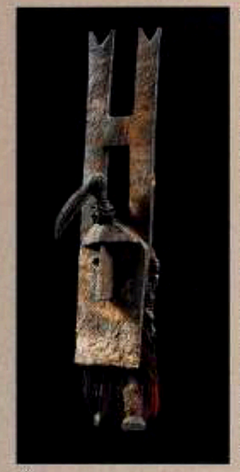
202

202 Diviner's Standing Female Figure, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, cowrie, indigenous polychrome, 16" h.
Provenance: Raymond E. Britt Family Collection, Marc and Denyse Ginzberg, William Wright
The palms-inward attitude of the hands and relatively small size, compared with statues thought to be *muiha* figures, and the highly-developed handling patina may indicate that this fine old piece was once a diviner's spirit figure. The inward hand position is not unique to this figure. The hands face inward on the figures on the large staff (cat. 248). This very old figure is marked by a marvelous fleshiness to the torso, well-developed facial contours, inset shell eyes, and a complex coiffeur. Scarification patterns are incised on the face but painted on the upper chest. TW



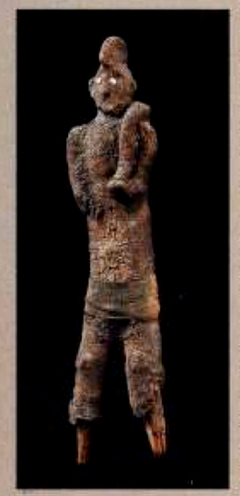
203

203 Standing Female *muiha* or Diviner's Figure, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, cowrie, commercial nail, indigenous polychrome, 17⅝" h.
This figure could either have been a diviner's accoutrement or a *muiha* figure. Like the small Bwa figure (cat. 198) but unlike three of the previous four larger statues, there are scarification marks across the chest as well as carefully executed bracelets on the upper arms. Like cat. 199 the knees are distinctly flat. The deeply carved hairstyle, more closely identified with Bwa and Bobo than *gurunsi* tradition, was seen earlier with equal strength but different rendition on the small Bwa diviner's figure (cat. 198). TW



204

204 Diviner's Figure Wearing a *hombo* Mask, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, wax, cowrie, fiber, organic material, 23¼" h.
Provenance: Jacques Hautelet
This standing figure wearing a mask was part of a Bwa diviner's altar and served as a vehicle of communication with the spirit world. The mask is a *hombo* mask, a term associated with a spirit honored by Bwa blacksmiths. *Hombo* masks take completely different forms among various blacksmith lineages in different villages. The *kobay* rooster mask with the large circular crest (cat. 135) is from Houndé; masks with an ax-like appendage erupting from the forehead (cats. 136 and 137) are from Ouri. There are a number of variations of the type of *hombo* mask worn by this figure. They are associated with Bagassi and Bahoun, the latter confirmed by Emily Hanna-Vergara,[80] and, probably, other, yet to be identified, villages. (See the entry for cat. 149 for a brief discussion of the mask type.) The hornbill beak, pegged into the forehead, is typically found on masks of this genre. On full-scale masks they are wax-covered and embedded with red *Abrus precatorius* seeds. What appears to be remnant wax on this bird's head may have, likewise, once held these seeds. The masks themselves often have design elements augmented by the addition of these wax-embedded seeds. The figure is draped in a fiber costume with decorative cowrie shells darkened by soot and sacrificial material. The ubiquitous blood-and-feather sacrifices encrusting the surfaces once charged this object with supernatural powers. TW



205

205 Standing Spirit Figure with Hoe, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, clay, cowrie, organic material, 29⅞" h.
Provenance: André Blandin, collected in 1973 or 1974 by Blandin
The short, hand-held hoe, or *daba*, the principle farming implement, embodies all aspects of fecundity and carries immense spiritual significance. It is this tool, suffused with its potent meaning, which is carried over the PL shoulder of this figure. The statue was either part of a family altar honoring a spirit entity or stood by itself as an altar. Although the *daba* is presumed to be a male attribute the presence of a skirt and abdominal scarification leads me to believe it is a hermaphroditic spirit entity. That Blandin attributed the statue to the Bwa likely reflects information garnered at the time of purchase. Perhaps the wide medial crest and set of triple diagonals sloping away from the nose supports this but none of the features cited is exclusive to the Bwa. Made of clay molded and dried over a support stick, statues like this example are rarely seen in either public or private collections. Inherent fragility accounts for the sparse representation. Hanna-Vergara illustrates a single standing figure of dried clay which she refers to as a "spirit." It is planted under a shelter, either inside or outside of a compound, in Dossi, a Southern Bwa village. It appears to be of similar size and proportions to this figure.[81] Statues of this type are usually part of a complex of figures all molded as a single sculpture. These sculptures, perhaps either to simplify the modeling process or to project an arcane meaning, are portrayed seated with legs extended. They cannot generally be moved or separated without destruction. Dried clay figures are common to numerous Burkinabé ethnic groups and may be found as part of a family altar in an interior sanctuary deep within the compound of a lineage leader. Others, often very large, are part of exterior altars. TW

206

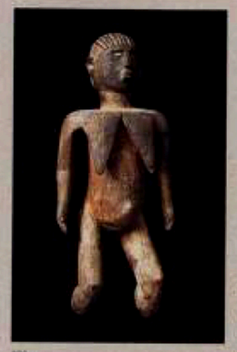
207

208

206 Standing Diviner's Figure with Articulated Head, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, cotton fabric, fiber cord, cowrie, wax, organic material, 14⅛" h.

207 Standing Diviner's Figure, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, aluminum, fiber, fiber cord, 14" h.
The figure below left (cat. 207) with a fiber costume and an embossed aluminum face framed by a finely plaited, crested head covering likely represents a fiber mask. The body inside the costume consists of nothing more than a thick dowel with a round hole at the bottom end. Although the hole might indicate that the figure had been some form of finial, patination on the dowel argues that it was animated by hand and belongs to the genre of diviner's objects that were hand puppets. Given the likelihood that the headpiece represents a fiber mask, and that fiber masks are common among the Bobo but not seen among the Bwa, this is most likely part of a Bobo diviner's "kit." The spooky figure above (cat. 206) has an articulated head more or less held in place by a carved groove and condyle and the tight fabric head-wrap. The bottom of the columnar body of this figure is patinated and terminates in a flat-ended pommel, a feature typical of this genre of object – with or without the articulated head. Though now in a disheveled state, considerable work went into this puppet. There are at least three layers of different types of fabric. The hair is plaited fiber cord with decorative cowrie shells tied into their ends. The rough surface of the facial plane appears to be remnant wax, which implies that what we see is not the original surface, and the remnant shape of the PL eye is suggestive of a cowrie shell imprint. Several other examples, not illustrated here, both with and without articulated heads, have applied metallic facial surfaces as well as cowrie shell eyes. The prominent nose assumes a more comfortable proportion when the open area of articulation is viewed as the mouth. This nasal elongation, which is reminiscent of many Bobo masks, is typical of the articulated head-type of hand puppet. While speculative, it seems possible that a diviner ventriloquized the conjured spirits as he manipulated the head. This possibility is reinforced by an article published in 1964 by Père Hébert and Frère Guilhem, both of whom lived in Tussiana, a southern Tusyan town. They discoursed on forms of ventriloquism used by Tusyan diviners,[42] whose contacted spirits spoke through the mouths of a pair of statues that were an important part of Tusyan diviners' equipment. Very often, various object types burst quite suddenly upon the market. They are seen for a few months, then, the source having dried up, they disappear from the marketplace. As this was the case with both of these two types of hand puppets that "came out" simultaneously, it is very likely that if one is Bobo, so, too, are all of the others. TW

208 Standing Figure with Headdress, Bolon or Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, oil base and indigenous polychrome, 17⅝" h.
Provenance: André Blandin
This figure wearing an elaborate head rack was once pinned through a pair of holes in the torso to the superstructure of a mask. The superstructure on the figure probably derives from a Bobo blacksmith *nwenka* prototype, but the square shape of the rack is unknown to masks known to be Bobo. While originally attributed to the Bobo, it is more likely that this figure is either Bwa or Bolon, from a village in close proximity to, or intermingled with, the Bobo. Capron published a photograph of two similar masks performing in a Bwa village.[43] This mask type is definitely also associated with the Bolon, as seen in the recently collected example illustrated in this volume (cat. 185). The flat nose of the figure may be more characteristically Bobo, but the overall head shape resembles both Bobo and Bwa statuary. TW



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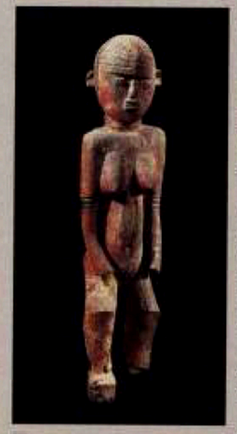


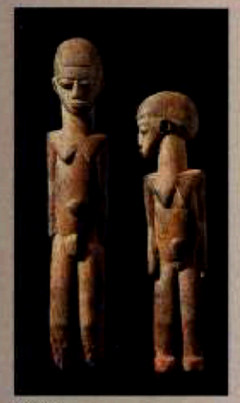
210

211

209 Standing Female Figure, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, cowrie, 19" h.
This old figure, with deeply carved hair, straight, flat nose, and box-like mouth, both confined to a narrow format (as seen on several Bobo *batuma* staff figures (cats. 251 and 252), flattened breasts and hands turned inward, is thought to be Bobo. A similar figure, which recently exited Africa, was also attributed, on reasonably good authority, to the Bobo. There is no recorded information regarding Bobo figurative sculpture. TW

210 Standing Female Figure, Pougouli/Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, hair, oil-base polychrome, indigenous polychrome, organic material, 31⅛" h.
There is scant information regarding Pougouli statuary. What is known is that the Pougouli have so intermarried with neighboring ethnic groups that it is unclear whether their origins are *gurunsi*-group or Lobi-group. The upper-arm bracelets are commonly seen on Nuna statuary but not identified with Lobi figures. Likewise, the emplacement of pubic hair pressed in wax is not common to Lobi figures but occasionally associated with *gurunsi* and Bwa figurative sculpture. Hands positioned facing inward is common to Lobi groups and not unknown among the Nuna. A particularly appealing feature is the repetition of blocky tripartite elements, which make up the eyes and the mouth. TW

211 Altar Spirit Figure *kotina*, Birifor or Dagara
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, 33½" h.
The seemingly rudimentary statuary of this inverted Y type have subtle aspects worthy of a closer look. On this example the belly swells slightly, rising to the umbilicus. The facial planes are represented by a large, very shallow concavity to either side of a faint midline. A miniscule mouth is discernible, and possibly a nose. The barely visible nature of the features yields a haunting, apparitional quality to the sculpture. Daniela Bognolo has published the interior of a Birifor *thilduu*, a patrilineal shrine, with a number of ancestor *kotina* figures in this Y-type style.[44] TW



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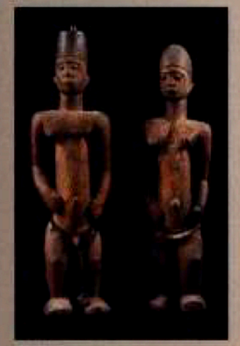

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212 Standing Male Figure *kotina* or *kothila*, Lobi
South Western Burkina Faso, wood, 22⅛" h.

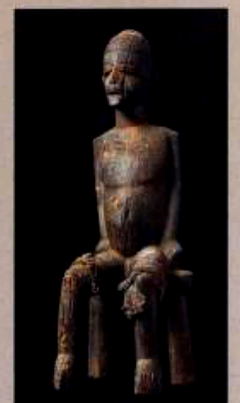
213 Standing Female Figure *kotina* or *kothila*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 18⅝" h.
These two Lobi figures were collected together and are probably an ancestral couple, *kotina*. Their calm demeanor is typical of *kotina* figures kept in the ancestral shrine, the *cokotin*, the domain of the most senior chief of the entire patrilineage. Stylistically, they are representative of a style specific to the paternal side of the family. The Lobi have attracted considerable attention from the academic community. An important notion, advanced by Daniela Bognolo, is that individual sculpture styles are the province of specific paternal lineages; thus with marriages between Lobi-related peoples, a sculptural style may appear among not only the Lobi but among Lobi-related lineages, Dagara, Birifor and others.[45] TW

214 Standing Bird Figure *sosir thuno*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, 24½" h.
Provenance: Franz Burkhard, collected in the field by Burkhard
This bird is one of two that were collected at the same time by Burkhard. The two are illustrated together in the Museum Reitberg exhibition catalogue[46] by Piet Meyer. Bognolo contends that *sosir thuno* are not true totems but revered animals that did, nevertheless, play a central role in a foundation story of the progenitor of a lineage. People designate such animals as sacred and honored on shrines.[47] The reputations of these bird spirits included flying to the persons who commissioned them and alerting them to impending threats. TW

215 Standing Figure with Outstretched Arms *buthiba*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, 14⅛" h.
This was a protective figure, its arms flung upward to ward off malevolence from the spirit world. TW

216 Standing Male Figure *kothila*, Lobi/Dagara
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, iron, copper alloy, 26⅜" h.
Provenance: Franz Burkhard, collected in the field by Burkhard

217 Standing Female Figure *kothila*, Lobi/Dagara
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, cowries, iron, undefined cord, 25" h.
Drawing upon the investigations of Daniela Bognolo, the male figure, identified by a specific attribute, his *chechia*, the French military fez, is an ancestral figure from the paternal side of the family.[48] The ancestral couple has come from an interior *thiduuu* shrine. The Tusyan buffalo, attached to one of several different style chains wrapped around the male's waist, and the bracelet incised around the PL wrist of the female figure and the large cowrie belt around her waist are unusual, contributing to the personalization of the figures. TW



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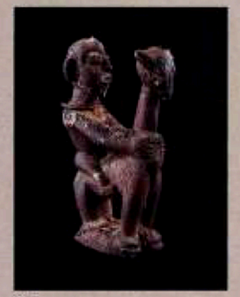

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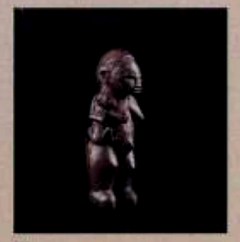


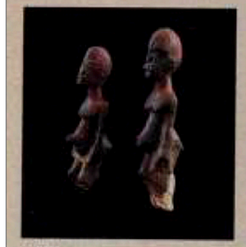
221

218 Seated Figure *buthiba*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, cotton fabric, organic material, 25⅝" h.
All Lobi seated figures participate in the odd, though inventive, format in which the legs of the figure also serve as the absent front legs of the chair. With the exception of this sculpture, all of the comparably large, seated Lobi figures are portrayals by the Lobi sculptor Lunkens Pale, of Colonel Lerouisique, a French medical officer, who served in Bobo-Dioulasso from 1910 through 1930.[49] They probably tapped into the spiritual power of the Colonel to heal, in their context as altar figures. This statue is by a different hand. It has significant age, and while not identifiably a portrait of the Colonel, may also have served as a spiritual aid to physical healing; in this case, specifically healing some form of leg disability, which may be indicated by the sympathetic magic inherent in the presence of wrapped fabric and cord around both thighs. TW

219 Equestrian Figure *buthib-thuu*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, copper, organic materials, 9" h.
A diviner may have prescribed the equestrian figure to represent a spirit that manifested itself in this form in the dream of his client. The finely turned copper necklace displays subtle detail in workmanship. TW

220 Chameleon Altar Sculpture *sosir thuno*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 23½" l.
Daniela Bognolo contends that *sosir thuno* are animals that played a central role in the foundation story of a lineage progenitor. They are not true totems but are revered and considered sufficiently sacred to honor on shrines.[50] The form of the head is that of a chameleon but the tail shares no such resemblance, reflecting the otherworld nature of this spirit creature. TW

221 Standing Female Figure with Child *buthiba*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, 6⅝" h.
Provenance: William Wright
Buthiba are personal spirits that provide aid or protection for specific problems, needs or threats,



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222 Diviner's Standing Figure *buorthila*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, ivory, organic material, 5¾" h.
Provenance: The Art Institute of Chicago, Albert F. Gordon

223 Diviner's Standing Figure *buorthila*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, ivory, organic material, 6¾" h.
Provenance: The Art Institute of Chicago, Albert F. Gordon
The small size and sacrificial surface patina on these two figures suggest that they are a pair of diviner's spirit figures, *buorthila*. The smallest examples, the *to-hine*, dark from sacrifices, are the most powerful.[89] The chalky whiteness of the surface breaks on the legs indicates considerable age. Ivory Lobi figures are relatively rare and figures of this age extremely rare. TW

224

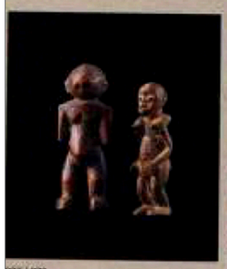
224 Standing Figure, Protective Talisman Pendant *koteé*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 3⅛" h.
When a Lobi travels beyond his own village limits, the domain protected by the primary spirit of his home village, and especially when he traverses areas of the bush between villages, he is vulnerable to attack by malevolent *koteé* spirits. According to one informant of Daniela Bognolo,[90] as a defense, the Lobi carry talismans that are protective *koteé* from their home villages. TW

225

225 Standing Male Figure, Turka
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, 11 ½" h.
Provenance: Pace Primitive Gallery, Rolf and Christina Miehler
This beautiful figure has that which appears to be a sweating palm-oil patina, unusual on an object from Burkina Faso. There are at least two other figures, probably by the same hand. One is in the identical stance but is female. It once belonged to Lucien Van de Velde. The two were probably not from the same shrine, as that female figure had a mat grayish, rather than a palm-oil patina. The third is a maternity figure, advertised some years ago in *Arts Afrique Noire* by Alain Dufour. TW

226

226 Kneeling Female Figure, Gouin or Karaboro
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 8½" h.
Provenance: Joseph Herman
Kneeling female figures in this style are not rare. Like the preceding figures, their attribution has been uncertain. They have, however, usually been assigned to the Tusyan and their heads do resemble carving on a recent *daba* that was said to be Tusyan.[91] However, Susan Cooksey observed that the abdominal scarifications are "definitely not Toussian" and that the "helmet headdress" is associated not with the Tusyan but with the Senufo.[92] Herta Hasselberger thought figures in this style to be either Gouin or Karaboro based on the collection data accompanying five examples collected in Banfora in 1930 that are in the Basler Museum's Wirz African Collection[93]. TW



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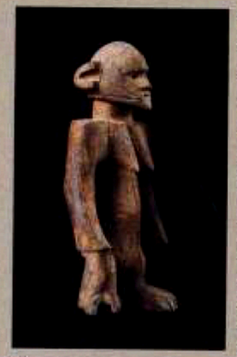
227 Standing Female Diviner's Figure, Turka?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 4⅝" h.

228 Standing Female Diviner's Figure, Sembla or Gouin
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 3⅞" h.
At the time of purchase in Bobo-Dioulasso in 1973, the small figure with a spherical head (cat. 227) was said to be Turka. In the intervening years there has been no evidence to either affirm or refute that assertion. Initially understood to be Gouin, cat. 228 is more likely Sembla. René Bravmann published a pair of similar-style figures he reportedly collected from a Sembla diviner in the early 1970s.[94] Stylistically this figure is akin to the figure on a cane illustrated further on (cat. 245). Both of the figures shown here are small and do not show evidence of having been carried as protective spirits. Given their size and the considerable encrustation on both, they may have belonged to diviners' shrines. TW

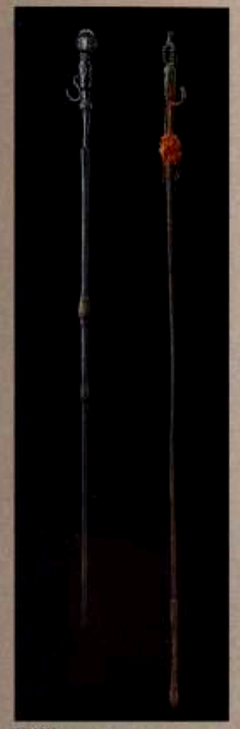


229

229 Diviner's Standing Female Figure *tasé*, Tusyan or Turka
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 12" h.
Provenance: William Wright

230 Diviner's Standing Male Figure *tasé*, Tusyan or Turka
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 12¾" h.
Provenance: William Wright
Père Hébert and Frère Guilhem, both of whom lived in the southern Tusyan town of Tussiana, published an article in 1964, devoted to Tusyan diviners. They reported a hierarchy among Tusyan diviners, a dividing point being those who possess a pair of statues, through which spirits speak during a séance. The sole descriptive detail offered is that they are about 12 inches high and are in male-female pairs. They are *tasé*, from which the upper-grade diviners derive their title, *tasé*.[87] *Sétó*, a spirit entity, who does not speak directly to the diviner but through the medium of his divining equipment, assists these diviners. The *tasé* do not appear to represent *sétó*, but act on his behalf, so they apparently are not, themselves, the recipients of sacrifices. This accounts for the relatively clean surfaces of the sculptures. Central to the process among most Tusyan diviners is a slab of basalt 16" × 8" × ¾" which constitutes a portable altar which, when struck with a small forked stick, makes a ringing sound, a characteristic of this rock type. The most common form of divining revolves around cowrie shells and other small objects which are thrown either on the flat top of the sounding stone or on the ground. A number of the cowries have specific attributes, the divination rendered according to how they fall in relation to one another and whether they land right side up or upside down. The *tasé* come into play when divining a cause of death, which is the most common question put to diviners. If an individual is determined to have caused the death, the diviner contacts the spirit of that person. The spirit responds in a high-pitched, otherworldly voice, through the mouth of one of the *tasé*. Without the ability to ventriloquize in both very low and a very high ranges, the diviner will not rise through the higher levels within the diviner hierarchy. If a child in the diviner's family dies as the diviner reaches the zenith of his ability, the high voice of the diviner is recognized as the voice of the child coming from the beyond.[88] *Tasé* are only publicly displayed during the Grand *Lo* initiation, occurring every forty years, at which all Tusyan diviners gather. During their days of exposure for the duration of the initiation the diviners' wives continually and assiduously brush over the figures with fly whisks to prevent pollutants from contact with the sacred and maintain the spiritual purity of the figures. TW

230



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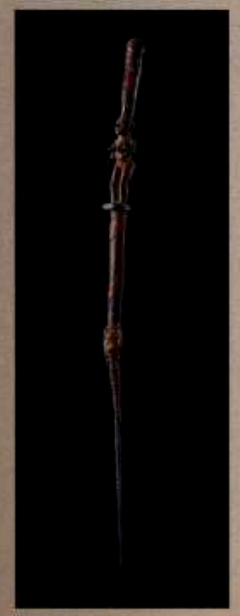
DIVINATION, PROTECTIVE, AND PRESTIGE STAFFS AND SCEPTERS

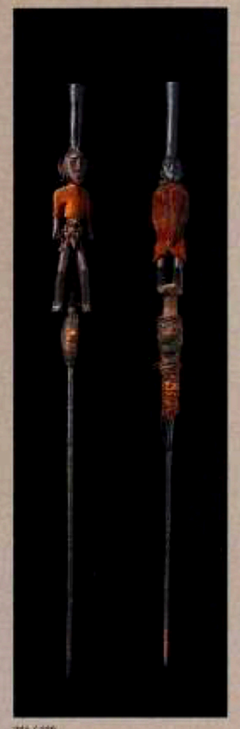
231 Tingsoba Staff, Mossi *sukomsé*
Western Burkina Faso, Yako region, wood, iron, organic material, 47¼" h.

232 Staff with Figure, Mossi or Sisala
Southwest Central Burkina Faso, copper alloy, iron, undefined fabric, organic material, 54¼" h.
Provenance: William Wright, collected 1989–90 by Wright
The head on the Mossi staff to the left (cat. 231) bears strong similarities to a particular style of Mossi figures, an example of which is illustrated here (cat. 194). The facial planes on both the statue and the staff are flat and inset, carved into the front of the head, more completely on the figure than on the face on the staff. The features are similarly rendered, nose and mouth narrowly confined with the lips puckered and the eyes small bumps. The necks on both are ring-like elements, the figure's strongly reminiscent of the geometric volumes seen on Mossi sun-shelter posts. On the staff, the pair of narrow, well-defined neck rings bear greater similarity to those on the stopper-head of the small Mossi container-figure (cat. 191) and on the heavily scarified *karan-wemba* with multiple rings (cat. 193). Returning to the comparison with the first described Mossi figure, the breasts on both this staff and the figure are indicated by small bumps and a ribbon of closely set, short, horizontal lines extends down the cheeks of both in a "ladder"-form, faintly visible on the statue and, clearer on the staff.
Except for a thick double-strand necklace, a waist sash and anklets the elongate nubile figure on the staff on the right (cat. 232) is otherwise unclothed. A Sisala attribution for this staff originated with the Burkinabé antiquarian who sold the object to William Wright. So little comparative Sisala material is recognized that, apart from the hand gesture that may be associated with other *gurunsi* groups, this attribution cannot be verified on stylistic grounds. An argument, albeit weak, can be made for a Mossi attribution. The element in iron that curves upward from below the feet of the figure is a form of hand rest. I associate hand-rest elements with Mossi *tingsoba* staffs although the hand-rest examples that I have examined are stylistically more similar to that seen on the staff to the left (cat. 231), a very different form and one that projects from the back of the staff rather than the front. The head on the figure is noticeably small, which is a stylistic conceit also seen on some Mossi statues, for instance, the door lock illustrated here (cat. 519). While I associate the hand gesture, which may be interpreted as either palms forward or palms back, with Bwa and *gurunsi* figurative traditions and rarely with Mossi sculpture, there are examples of the gesture on some indisputably Mossi objects, as discussed above (cat. 193). All are admittedly thin grounds for an attribution. TW



233

233 Diviner's Staff with Female Figure, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, reptile skin, leather, iron, indigenous polychrome, 42" h.
Provenance: René Bravmann
The figure surmounting this staff has her arms bent at the elbows and her hands resting on either side of her belly. The hands do not appear to be held in the palms-forward gesture. This is not unique among Bwa figures, as witnessed on the large Bwa T-shaped staff with five figures, chameleons and birds (cat. 248)



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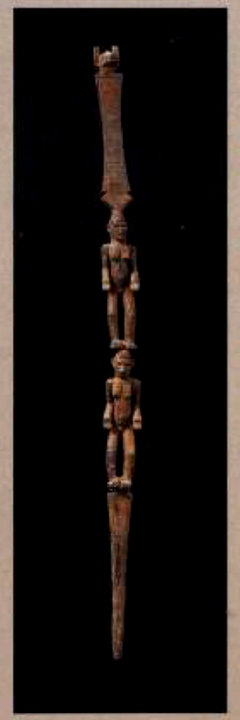
and figure (cat. 202). The thin mouth with minimal lips is similar to the mouths on numerous Bwa figures and staffs illustrated here. The hair, in horizontal rows shaved in an inverted V above the ears, is also similar to the coiffeur on the female figure on the staff shaft (cat. 248), as are the presence of upper-arm bracelets. The Bwa figure with hands facing inward (cat. 202) has a variation in hairstyle but the same shaved inverted V above the ears. The scarification patterns are not the same, however, and, unlike the T-form staff figures, the figure on the Bravmann staff is more naturalistically rendered, its rounded volumes dissimilar from those of the standing figure, but also voluptuously appealing. The carved ribbon that wraps around the length of the staff in low relief is most unusual, an element one would more likely associate with Akan cultures to the south. TW

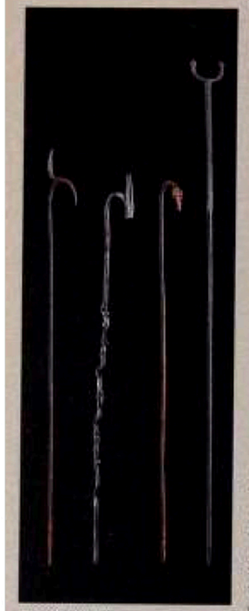
234 Diviner's Staff, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, iron, wire, leather, cowries, undefined cloth, organic material, 48⅜" h.

235 Diviner's Staff, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, iron, animal hide, undefined fabric, undefined cord, organic material, 48¼" h.
Provenance: Franz Burkhard, collected 1960s by Burkhard
The staff on the left is the type owned by diviners among the Bwa, the Nuna, the Winiama, and the Lobi.[95] The style of the face and scars of this particular piece is Bwa. Each diviner may own up to a dozen of these staffs, which accumulate layers and wrappings of magical materials that give them spiritual power. CR
These staffs, while probably both Bwa, have very different scarification patterns, as do the staffs in the field photograph of a diviner's shrine (fig. 26). The patterns on the staff to the left (cat. 234) are associated with a number of ethnic groups; those on the figure on the staff to the right (cat. 235) are unfamiliar, but so, too, are the patterns of scars on one of the figures thought to be Bwa illustrated here (cat. 203). It appears that someone deactivated the portion of the power-bundle wrapped around the staff below the figure, before the staff was sold. This staff type is said also to be Bobo, though this has not, to my knowledge, been substantiated.



236

236 Staff with Two Figures *dambeó*, Winiama
Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, 50" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour
The double-figure composition of this staff is the typical format of Winiama staffs used by diviners. The staff is sufficiently encrusted with sacrificial material and detritus that the scarification patterns on the figures are difficult to read. The expressive face and gesture of the lower figure is of particular note, as are the unusual and charming hyena-shaped animal head at its apex, and the curious large triangles incised on the handle, which may signify bull-roarer rhombs. Roy associates the *Wiri* name *dambeó* with Winiama staffs.[96]



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237 Antelope-head Cane *bangalbri*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, 40 ¾" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

238 Antelope-head Cane with Snake *bangalbri na yu yenyo*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, 38" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

239 Snake-head Cane *bangalbri*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, 37 ¼" h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

240 Diviner's staff, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, iron, 49 ½" h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele
The field research of Klaus Schneider reveals the placement upon shrines of iron canes with curled ends as walking sticks to aid the shrine spirit, *thil*, to actively move about.[91] His examples, while not animal forms, seem closely related to the three "animal staffs" illustrated here (cats. 237–239). Piet Meyer illustrates a split prong iron Lobi cane, very similar to example cat. 238 but without the snake wrapped around its shaft. The name he cites is *bangalbri na yu yenyo*.[92] Both Meyer and Schneider apply the general term *bangalbri*. André Blandin published a similar staff in a vertical bi-pronged serpent form identified as Lobi.[93] None describes their examples as animal forms. A number of staffs, very similar to the Bwa staff with the U-shaped end (cat. 240), are seen in the photograph of a southern Bwa diviner's shrine (fig. 26). Stamped into the upper portion of the shaft is a complex pattern of fine lines, narrow ribbons, and triangles of cross-hatch or parallel diagonal lines.

241 Dance Cane with Janus Figure *bober*, Lobi
Burkina Faso, by Sikire Kambiri or workshop, wood, 41 ½" h.

242 Dance Cane with Janus Figure *bober*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, by Sikire Kambiri or workshop, wood, leather, 42 ⅞" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

241 / 242 / 243

243 Dance Cane with Figure *bober*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 49 ⅝" h.
Provenance: William Wright
Figurative canes, *bober*,[94] were once carried in dance. Today the practice has all but ended. They also served as protective devices to insure safety when traveling outside the home or the village area of a Lobi. Beyond that safe zone, all is fraught with danger from alien *koteé* spirits. *Dagol* are the figures on both the single figure and the Janus canes, personal *koteé* spirits to ward off malevolent forces.[95] These two Janus canes are either from the hand or from the "school" of the Lobi sculptor Sikire Kambire. They are, however, different in enough details to suppose two different hands. The example on the left (cat. 241) is black from smoke and long handling that has smoothed the surfaces. The middle cane (cat. 242) is very delicately carved and laboriously sheathed in stitched and woven leather. The single, figure cane (cat. 243) is a graceful composition of rhythmic lines, legs that magically meld with the handle and a beautifully rendered head. The shaft is bound in both leather and hide and terminates in a large iron tip, perhaps, as is frequently the case, as much for the inherent magic properties of iron to protect the owner as the increased durability of the cane. TW

244 / 245

244 Truncated Dance Cane with Figure *bober*, Lobi/Dagara
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, undifferentiated metal, 30" h. × 6 ½" w.
Provenance: Charles and Kent Davis

245 Cane with Figure and Finial Head, Sembla
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, brass upholstery tacks, plastic beads, cotton cord, undifferentiated metal, 33 ½" h.
The protective *koteé* figure, *dagol*, on the truncated cane (cat. 244) is in the same style as the two large figures (cats. 216 and 217) and the stool with two side-by-side heads (cat. 535).
René Bravmann published a pair of figures similar in style to the Sembla cane (cat. 245), which he reportedly collected from a diviner in the early 1970s.[96] The handle of the cane terminates in a human-style head with a deeply concave face. Carved in low relief are a snake that extends from the end of the staff to the feet of the figure, and on the opposite side, behind the figure, a crocodile with a bird trapped in its mouth, the meanings of which are unknown. A small figure in a similar style is illustrated here (cat. 228). TW

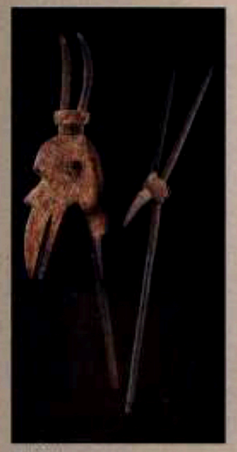
246 / 247

246 Cane with Figure, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, Kaya–Barsalogo region, wood, 42 ¼" h.

247 Cane with Head and Feet, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 37 ½" h.
The Mossi cane probably originates from the Kaya region to the north of Ouagadougou, as the figurative handle of the vertically standing cane (cat. 246) closely resembles dolls from that area. Some dolls, beyond play, have important roles in fertility. In this context, however, the significance of the doll-type figure remains a mystery. There are several other examples known, each by different hands in the Kaya and other styles. The flat facial plane and tight linearity of the facial features on the head on the cane to the right (cat. 247) are similar to the features on two Bobo *batuma* staffs illustrated farther on (cats. 251 and 252). That which appears to be a protruding foot might also represent a crest associated with the bird form of the handle. TW

248

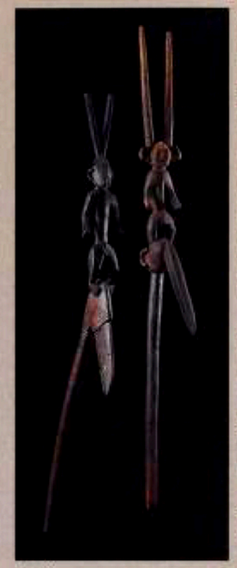
248 Scepter, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 41" h.
Young Bwa men carry staffs such as this in dances in the fields, following the harvest. The figures represent the spirits that bring fertility and abundant harvests to the fields. This wonderful piece has four humans, three hornbills, and two chameleons attached. CR
This staff, mightily armed with multiple spirits, is a protective device. The crested birds may represent roosters or cranes. Their disks are similar in scale to the disk on the rooster mask, *kotway*, of the Bwa blacksmiths. Roosters are protective and very aggressive. They might also represent the Black Crowned Crane, *Balearica pavonina*, an eye-catching crane with a large disk of gold feathers crowning its head. These birds, perhaps noted for their tenacity and protective natures, utilize an extended back toe, which allows them to perch and roost in trees, among cranes, an activity unique to only two species of this genus. The male figure wears a war or hunting flute carved in relief on his chest, in either case, an aggressive masculine symbol. The remnant polychrome reveals once bright coloring, increasing its visibility and further alerting negative forces to the power of its presence. Curiously, none of the figures assumes the palms-forward gesture, usually encountered on Bwa statuary. Perhaps, given the aggressively protective nature of this staff, the absence of the palms-forward gesture reinforces the notion that the latter hand position is, as in other cultures, supplicatory. It is surprising, considering the ubiquity of the gesture, that no information about its meaning among the Burkinabé groups has come to light. The Bwa and the Bobo have cultural affinities that override their different origins, and this staff type may be functionally somewhat analogous to the Bobo *batuma* staffs, which, also, are spirit-infused devices carried to the fields to protect crops. TW



249 / 250

249 Scepter *batuma*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, wax, 58 ⅛" h.

250 Scepter *batuma*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, wax, 59 ¼" h.
"Batuma" is the term applied by Le Moal to a large hornbill scepter, crowned with a standing figure. The examples sited by Le Moal were completely covered by cowrie shells embedded in beeswax, as is the case with the original surfaces of three of the four *batuma* scepters illustrated (cats. 249, 250, and 252). All three of these staffs were retired from service, their valuable cowries removed. The impressions of the shells are visible on the remnant wax.
Blacksmiths are the exclusive makers of *batuma*. Their function rests with the *yelele* initiate grade and their cultivation of the fields. When the fields are ready for tilling, a procession of people carries the *batuma* and plants them in the ground, making a sacrifice. *Batuma* call to mind the Senufo staffs with seated female figures, *dalèu*, awarded after the field-tilling competitions of young initiates. *Batuma* have a curious relationship with rain. They have, on the one hand, a powerful influence upon the forces of nature that control the rain. According to Le Moal, if they want no rain, the *batuma* is embedded in the ground at the western side of the field; if rain is needed, it is placed on the eastern edge, the direction from which storms originate. On the other hand, the *batuma* has, itself, a profound dislike for rain, and, to protect it from so much as a drop, if rain is imminent, it is the responsibility of the swiftest runner in the *yelele* age grade to race with it to the protective cover of the village.[97] The *batuma* described by Le Moal all have a figure mounted on a hornbill's head. In addition, there is usually a chameleon on the crest. Because these two creatures played a crucial role in a creation myth of a lineage, they have earned a place of honor, much as is seen in so many Burkinabé cultures. According to Le Moal, every Bobo village has from one to many *batuma*. *Batuma* may differ morphologically from village to village, which, in my view, would account for the lack of chameleons and the presence of the antelope horns on the four *batuma* presented here. I would venture that the variations in myths of origin from lineage to lineage would account for the variations in types of animals represented on *batuma* scepters. A superb *batuma*, with a standing figure that is completely intact with its covering of cowrie shells and wrapped strands of colorful wool or cotton yarn, was collected in Bobo-Dioulasso by René Bravmann in the early 1970s and is now in the Seattle Art Museum's collection.[98] TW



251 / 252

251 Scepter with Figure *batuma*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 48 ¾" h.
Provenance: Karl-Ferdinand Schädler

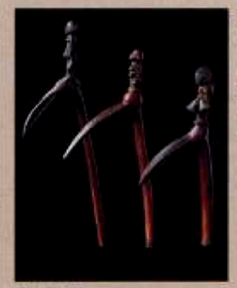
252 Scepter with Figure *batuma*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, beeswax, 55" h.
The *batuma* to the left (cat. 251) has some patination from handling along the shaft but, curiously, shows no evidence of having borne a layer of cowrie shells embedded in wax as is seen on the other *batuma* presented here. The beak and perhaps the frontmost portion of the head behind the beak of the staff to the right (cat. 252) is an inelegant African dealer restoration that is a flawed interpretation of the original forms. TW

253 Scepter with Superstructure, Nunuma or Winiama
Western Central Burkina Faso, wood, 26" h.
This very handsome scepter has excellent age and is finely carved with careful attention given to the subtleties of detail. On most scepters the bird's beak is handled in a rather cursory fashion but on this scepter the beak is allotted more attention. TW

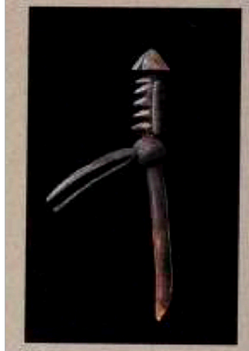
254 Diviner's Scepter with Figure, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, 22" h.
Provenance: Joel Cooner

255 Diviner's Scepter with Figure, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, iron, 19 ¾" h.
Provenance: Hélène and Philippe Leloup

256 Diviner's Scepter with Figure, Nuna or Nunuma
Southern or Western Central Burkina Faso, wood, copper alloy, iron, cotton cord, 17 ¾" h.
Provenance: William Wright, collected 1970s by Wright
The full lips and wide mouth and nostrils on the exquisite figure on the scepter to the left (cat. 254) are stylistically typical of one of a number of weakly-defined Nuna sculptural styles. The facial features of the energized Nuna figure illustrated earlier (cat. 196) are similarly handled. The mouth on the very narrow standing figure (cat. 197), while lozenge-shaped, also presents the Nuna-like fullness in the lips. Finally, the very low, strongly projected belly is shared by other Nuna figures. The hands of the figure on the scepter in the middle, with its distinctive upward-turned facial plane, are clearly held parallel to the body and not palms forward, which increases the likelihood that the scepter is neither *gurunsi* nor Bwa and probably Lobi. On the scepter with bells (cat. 255) the PR hand (the PL is lost) seems to hold a palms-forward position. While it could be Bwa, it is thought that the lack of scarification suggests a greater likelihood that it is Nuna or Nunuma. The bottom ends of scepters such as these are often blunted from wear, as they were thumped on the ground by diviners to call up their spirit guides for divination. TW



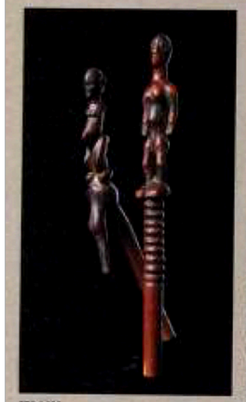
254 / 255 / 256



257

257 Diviner's Scepter, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, 13½" h.
The vertical series of projections in front and formerly in back of this old scepter are reminiscent of Bwa *bayiri* masks (cat. 142) and the similar Winiama masks (cats. 64 and 65). However, the rows of projections on those mask types are hooked; these projections are straight and faceted. Similar, but much larger, straight, faceted projections occur in rows on some Nuna hornbill masks (cats. 57 and 59). The cap, though conical rather than pyramidal, is similar to that seen on the scepter considered to be Winiama or Nununa (cat. 253). It is more likely that this scepter is *gurunsi* rather than Bwa and, while arguably Nununa or Winiama, I am inclined toward a Nuna attribution. TW

258 Diviner's Scepter, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, Zawara, wood, 11⅜" h.



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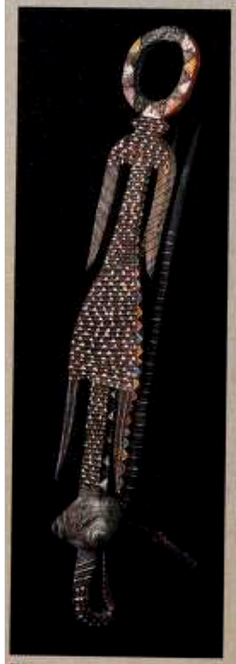
259 Diviner's Scepter, Nuna
Central Southwestern Burkina Faso, Leo region, wood, 13¾" h.
Provenance: William Wright
The diviner's scepter to the left (cat. 258) is probably from Zawara, an important Nuna village. I had this on good authority at the time of purchase, 1974, in Burkina Faso. This origin helps confirm that the figurative style is, in fact, Nuna. The lips are parted, triangular and very well defined. The narrow head shape, with its pointed chin and placement of features, is characteristic of one style of Nuna figure sculpture. Inexplicably, as there is no indication of breaks and there is a uniform patina, the carver deliberately omitted arms. While restorers outside of Burkina Faso could have accomplished such an appearance, its acquisition in 1974 predates artificial patination of this level in Burkina Faso. The wide lips, the hand position and the lack of scar patterns on the vertcal scepter (cat. 259) leads me to believe it to be Nuna rather than Bwa, whose figures are generally scarified, or Lobi, whose hand gestures do not include the palms-forward pose. TW



260

260 Wrestling Trophy Scepter with Abstract Figure *gnidro*, Samo
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, organic material, chalky pigment, indigenous polychrome, 63" h.
This abstract figure with its astonishing open-circle head, rows of small triangles and pastel coloring has a much smaller complement, in the National Museum reserves in Burkina Faso. It would appear to have come from the same village context, as not only was the form the same but so, too, the colors and type of paint. An illustrated handheld scepter with a female figure attached by the seat and the heels to a plank is published in the catalogue of the National Museum from 1969 in Ouagadougou. That same format is echoed by some Mossi *karan-wemba* figures. The plank on that scepter projects from the top of a hornbill head, the beak of which forms the hook of the scepter. Tounmani Triandé assigned it the name *gnidro*.[58] Nothing that I have read addresses Samo wrestling competitions directly. However, among the neighboring Dafing, formalized wrestling is a large-scale cultural event. Domba Blegna[59] cites that the Dafing matches take place on "the night of the full moon after the red sorghum has been harvested." There is competition both within age grades, between age grades, and with neighboring villages. Matches are also a formalized approach to the settlement of quarrels. The outcome establishes relative positions and brings order within the community. TW

261 / 262 / 263

261 Ceremonial *daba* or Ceremonial Weapon Handle, Lobi or Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 24½" l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

262 Handle for Ceremonial *daba*, Bobo or Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 21¼" l.

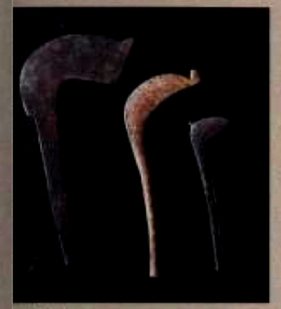
263 *Daba* with Antelope-form Handle, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, iron, 31½" l.
"*Daba*" is the universal Burkinabé term for a hoe for tilling fields. It usually carries a strong spiritual content as an object vital to food production. The *daba* to the right, with supported antelope horns (cat. 263), is very similar to one seen carried on the shoulder of a Bwaba farmer, illustrated on the cover of Jean Capron's book *Communautés Villageoises Bwa*.[11] The vertical tab may represent the tail of an antelope, as seen on some Mossi *zazaido* (cats. 128–130). The supported horns attest to the hard service of the object. The underside of the forwardmost portion of the arc on the middle antelope scepter-cum-*daba* (cat. 262) has a deeply carved V-shaped notch that continues into the shaft as a narrow, square and deep hole, which must have been designed to accommodate the securing tab on the proximal end of an iron blade. While there is no evidence of the natural abrasion one would expect from the presence of a blade secured on the end, the handle, beneath layers of dusty incrustation, has a dark, glossy patina, demonstrating years of ceremonial use. The mat gray detrital surface, typically seen on long-retired Bobo masks, leads me to refine the original "Bobo" attribution, which could have referred to either the Bobo or the Bwa. The origin of the elegant bird-form scepter, ceremonial *daba* or weapon (cat. 261) on the left has not been established. TW

264

264 Scepter, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso wood, iron, wire, 38⅛" h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

265

265 Scepter, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 27" h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

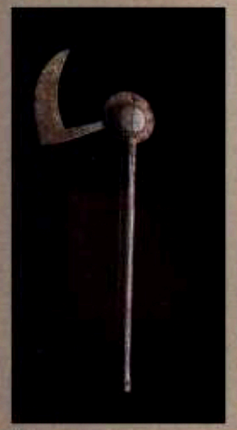


1 / 267 / 268

266 Scepter, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 23" h.

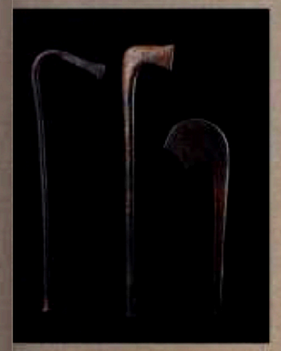
267 Scepter, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 21" h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

268 Scepter, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 15¾" h.
Customarily, the club-type scepters in this flat, elegantly fluid form seem to be of Bobo origin, and probably, dancers carried them or ceremonies employed them. To date, no corroborative information has surfaced. The largest (like cat. 264) are rather rare. There is another fine example of this large variety in the Menil Collection in Huston.[112] TW



269

269 L-form Scepter with Head, Wara, Tiefo or Bobo
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, iron, 28½" h.
Franz Trost recorded this form in a line drawing of the front of a mud-brick Wara compound in southwestern Burkina Faso.[111] He documented a molded mud relief of a pair of similar scepters placed in "rampant" heraldic fashion to either side above the entrance door. Herta Haselberger illustrates similar scepters in two line drawings; one scepter, very similar to this example, she attributes to the Wara. Her second example is a drawing from 1967 of the Tiefo wood door of a blacksmith from Tiefora on which is either painted or carved a standing figure, legs apart, PR hand-akimbo, left hand extended upward holding a weapon of the same shape as our example. The end of a diagonal zigzag form, which I interpret as lightning, intersects the top of the blade.[114] André Blandin illustrates a similar weapon, attributed to the Bobo, which he collected in Bobo-Dioulasso;[115] In addition, from 1997 to 1998, when peripatetic Burkinabé art dealers offered this and other similar examples for sale in New York, the attribution went to the Bobo. All of the above ethnic groups, and others not mentioned from the southwestern region, may also have adopted this weapon. With its combination of smooth and saw edges, it is a fearsome weapon against unseen malevolent forces. TW



1 / 271 / 272

270 Scepter, Bobo or Tusyan
Western Burkina Faso, iron, 33⅝" h.

271 Scepter, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 35⅛" h.

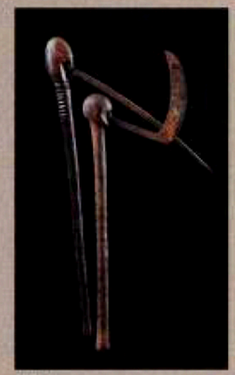
272 Scepter *kebere*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, Solenzo region, wood, iron, 25⅞" h.
The scepter with two rounded tacks on one side of the head, a *kebere* (cat. 272), has finely serrated edges both on the "face" and continuing over the top of the club head to the back. Le Moal gives a detailed description of its role in initiations.[116] Many Voltaic ethnic groups, having been in contact for untold generations, adopted from one another, as the perceived need arose, hence the difficulty in assigning attributions without collecting directly from communities themselves. Henri Labouret illustrates a similar form with a narrower club head and lacking the metal "eyes" from the Lobi.[117] The middle scepter (cat. 271) has a well-developed patina. Of note are the three series of delicate notches on either side of the edges of the face. The iron staff (cat. 270), as with the preceding staff, has a flared blade. Its smoky patina indicates that it was stored with other valued objects. André Blandin illustrates a very similar example, said by the vendor in Bobo-Dioulasso to be part of the regalia of a mask.[118] Both are beautiful forms. TW

273

273 "Fishtail"-form Scepter with Head, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, iron, 28¾" h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

274 Spiked Scepter with Head, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, iron, 27" h.
Provenance: William Wright, collected 1986 by Wright

275 L-form Scepter with Head, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, iron, 26" h.
Provenance: William Wright
Each of the three above scepters, at the times of purchase, were considered Bobo. All of them probably functioned in ceremonial contexts. TW



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276 "Sickle"-form Scepter, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, iron, wood, leather, 17½" h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

277 "Sickle"-form Scepter, Lobi or Bobo
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, 18" h.

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278 "Sickle"-form Scepter, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, iron, wood, leather, plastic, 18" h.

279 "Fishtail"-form Scepter, Lobi or Bobo
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, leather, reptile skin, undefined fabric, 23⅛" h.
The sickle-form scepter below left (cat. 278) has a Bwa leaf mask, with the typically peaked crest and long, continuous feather train down the back, etched into the blade, firmly establishing the ethnic identity of the scepter. The specific form of the headdress further narrows its origin to the southern Bwa. Michael Huet published an image reproduced here (fig. 15) of a leaf mask carrying a sickle-form scepter, similar to cat. 277, the example without wrapping. Guy Le Moal also published a line drawing of this type, illustrating a cult object belonging to Dwo, on which were the evidence of sacrifices. The forging of that object was exclusively from an iron *daba*, used to dig the grave of a Bobo who had died inexplicably beyond the pale, in the bush.[58] André Blandin published an example identified as Bobo and used in dance performances.[119] Blandin reported a "fishtail"-form scepter, similar to that illustrated to the right (cat. 279), attributed to a "*gurunsi chef de terre*."[120] Burkinabé vendors have offered me similar examples consistently attributed to the Bobo. TW

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ARTICLES OF PERSONAL ADORNMENT, TALISMANS AND OTHER SPIRIT-ASSOCIATED OBJECTS

The world in which the vast majority of Burkinabé live is a virtual supernatural ether, suffused with unseen beings and ethereal powers. Nothing happens by chance; any event that occurs, good or bad, is linked in some manner to this unseen world. Diviners specifically prescribe the vast majority of objects that appear to be personal adornment. These are medicinal or spiritual remedies or spirit entities to fight attacks from natural and supernatural sources. There are, however, objects thought to be purely for adornment with no spirit content. Common among this group are many types of hairpins. TW

280 / 281 / 282 / 283 / 284 / 285 / 286 / 287

280 Hairpin, Bwa or Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 4" h.

281 Hairpin, Bwa or Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 3⅛" h.

282 Hairpin, Bwa or Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 5¼" h.

283 Hairpin, Bwa or Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 4⅝" h.

284 Hairpin, Bwa or Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 3¼" h.

288 / 289 / 290 / 291

285 Hairpin, Bwa or Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 5½" h.

286 Hairpin, Bwa or Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 3¼" h.

287 Hairpin, Bwa or Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 3⅛" h.

288 Hairpin, Bwa or Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum or aluminum alloy, 4¼" h.

292

289 Hairpin, Bwa or Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum or aluminum alloy, copper alloy, 4" h.

290 Hairpin, Mossi?
Central Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3½" h.

291 Hairpin, Mossi?
Central Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅞" h.

292 Hairpin, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 8" h.
The selection of hairpins represents some of the few objects illustrated here that are purely for adornment, with no spiritual component. Most are the products of the lost wax-casting technique, some are then cut and incised. Most of the production of these cast aluminum alloy hairpins are thought to be Bwa, though it is said that Dafing smiths also produce objects from aluminum alloy. André Blandin reported that, according to Tounmani Triandé, the Director of the National Museum in Ouagadougou, a hairpin, like the long copper alloy example (cat. 292) and a shorter, cast copper alloy hairpin (like cats. 290 and 291), were Mossi "*gratte-têtes*" from the Kaya or Bulsa regions.[132] Triandé described the long type above as a scorpion. I am inclined to see it as an abstraction closely allied to some of the Mossi sun-shelter posts with neck rings, forms like cat. 13. Annemarie Schweeger-Hefel and Wilhelm Staude cite the similarity to both posts and masks.[133]

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295 / 296

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293/294 Paired Woman's Cylinder Anklets with Reptiles, Kaséna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, both 6" h.
Provenance: Dos Winkel

295/296 Paired Woman's Cylinder Anklets with Reptiles, Kaséna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 6¾" h. and 6⅝" h.
Provenance: William Wright
By the early 1970s, pairs of cylindrical anklets with low-relief reptiles, worn by women, could be found for sale at the compounds of local Ouagadougou art dealers, who had culled them from the mounds of brass anklets and bracelets at their dilapidated street stalls, lined up beside the entrance to the Buffet Hotel. Diviners prescribed many traditional brass objects for their curative or protective properties; women wore others solely for their fashion appeal. Metal snakes, worn as protection from venomous bites, suggests the possibility that, given the daily vulnerability of women to crocodile attacks while fetching water and washing, such anklets were prescribed as a defense. It is also possible that a curative or protective object-type becomes fashionable and is eventually worn by all without being prescribed, theoretically losing its original curative or protective value. TW

297 Woman's Cylinder Anklet with Crocodiles, Kaséna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 5½" h.
Provenance: William Wright

298 Woman's Cylinder Anklet with Weevil, Gouin
Southwestern Burkina Faso, probably Bounouna region, copper alloy, 5¾" h.
André Blandin, in his first African metals publication,[134] attributed what he called a bracelet to the same caster as the anklet on the right (cat. 298), to the Gouin, based on several examples in the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale à Tervuren, collected in the Bounouna region in southwestern Burkina Faso in 1968. He describes the insect on his example as a spider, but I am inclined toward the Tervuren beetle determination, in this case a weevil. Herta Haselberger collected three such Gouin pieces in Bounouna in the 1960s and described them as women's anklets.[135] Early in the 1970s, I saw a similar anklet in Bobo-Dioulasso, collected by René Bravmann. Blandin also acquired an example of the head-to-tail, side-by-side, double crocodile anklet,[136] similar to cat. 297. Its meaning is unknown to me as a Voltaic motif. Farther south, among the Akan, the double crocodile refers to a proverb, commonly encountered on their gold weights. While it is not possible to know if the brass caster's intention was to reflect the proverb, it is likely that the motif was adopted from the Akan. TW

299

299 Anklet with Human Head, Mossi or Nuna
Central Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 8" l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele
The Mossi attribution is purely speculative. A number of sculpted objects known to be Mossi share a distinctly small, spherical head, similar to the head on this archaeological anklet. The stalked cup and specific form of the decoration on one side of the anklet are very similar to a bird anklet (cat. 303), supporting the theory of a Nuna origin. TW

300

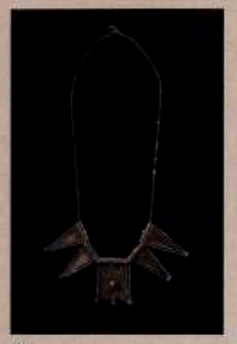
300 Woman's Paired Anklets with Bird's Heads, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, cotton cloth, aluminum alloy, both 7¼" l.
Dealers have offered me many Bwa aluminum anklets, but these are the only two I am convinced are a pair. The disk-like crowned head may represent one of two bird species, the rooster or the spectacular Black Crowned Crane, *Balearica pavonina*, common across the Sahel. These cranes have an extended hind toe, which provides them with the ability to perch, a singularly unusual activity for cranes, which undoubtedly has not escaped the Bwa. Two birds display the same plumage on the large T-form Bwa scepter (cat. 248). This striking disk form also appears on the *kobiey* mask (cat. 135) of the Didiro blacksmith clan, which reputes to be the plumage of a rooster. The fiercely territorial and protective character of the rooster could also explain the reference to the heads of birds on these anklets. TW

301 / 302 / 303

301 Woman's Anklet with Bird's Head, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 7⅛" l.
Provenance: William Wright

302 Woman's Anklet with Bird's Head, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 7⅜" l.
Provenance: William Wright

303 Woman's Anklet with Bird's Head, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 7½" l.
Provenance: William Wright
All three anklets are of considerable age. The forwardmost, however, has a well-worn but unoxidized surface, which suggests its actual wearing, just before its sale. The surface appears to have remnants of blood sacrifice, implying either that it had been prescribed by a diviner, the blood sacrifices made to a curative or protective spirit, or that its owner was recently deceased and sacrifices were made to honor her. All three heads of birds may represent the Helmeted Guinea Fowl, *Numida meleagris*. Wild guinea fowl are native to the area and are domesticated. Both male and female are incessant foragers that help keep ground-crawling insects in check. Perhaps more germane, guinea fowl are notably monogamous. The oil-lamp form at the back of these anklets represents something, yet unknown. Similar forms appear on other anklets (cat. 299) as well as on bracelets (cats. 311 and 313–315). Among the current day Gan, in the southwest of the country, Madeline Père reports[137] that a similarly posterior placed, mushroom-shaped device is described as "*le tas d'ordure commun*," a "common refuse heap" or a "common anus," through which the evil absorbed by the inherent magical properties of an anklet's head is ejected. The term "common" comes into play as the forms of anklets analyzed by informants of Père had anterior-projecting multiple heads. I am inclined to think the fundamental nature of this analysis likely applies across the board, with variations in the form of the posterior projection. With this information in mind, the cleansing activity of the guinea fowl takes on a more potent spirit-world meaning. TW



304

304 Skeuomorphic Amulet Necklace, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, fiber cord, 14½" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour
The pendants on this necklace bring to mind protective leather amulets and may be skeuomorphic representations in brass. This form of amulet is Islamic in origin. Typically, a marabou, an Islamic holy man, writes "protective text," culled from the Koran. The paper is folded and sewn into leather pouches, and worn on one's person for protection. With the cross-pollination of ideas, traditionalist diviners have long prescribed similar leather pouches, filled with magic ingredients. TW

305

305 Necklace, Gan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 7¾" w.
Most of the archaeological material from Burkina Faso is said to be Gan, hence the attribution for this necklace for which there is no known recent counterpart. The capped cones on either side rise on short narrow stems; only the capping of the cones distinguishes them from the nearly identical conical forms on the bracelets in cats. 311, 313 and 315. The significance of the cone forms is a mystery in either case. TW

306 / 307 / 308 / 309 / 310

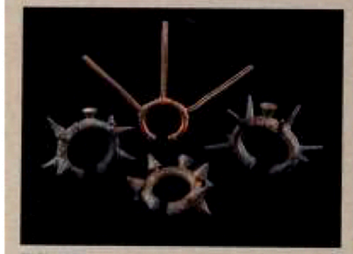
306 Upper Arm Bracelet, Bobo?
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 7¼" h.

307 Upper Arm Bracelet *manogokaka*, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, stone, undifferentiated metal, cotton cord, 5½" h.
Provenance: William Wright

308 Upper Arm Bracelet, Kaséna
Southern Burkina Faso, ivory, 10⅜" h.

309 Upper Arm Bracelet, Kaséna
Southern Burkina Faso, ivory, undifferentiated metal, 6" h.

310 Inlaid Bracelet *zusokadaga*, Mossi?
Central Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 4⅛" h.
Mossi men wore marbled, black, stone arm bracelets called *kaka*. The stone is from Hombori, east of Bandiagara in Mali. The Mossi call Hombori "*Manoga*." "Bracelet" is *kaka* in *Mooré*; therefore, the armlets are *manogokaka*. They are also *kugrikaka*, *kugri* meaning "stone." The traditional stone bracelets are very expensive, so a trade has developed in black glass substitutes, made by the Nupe of Bida, in northwest Nigeria. *Kaka* (such as cat. 307) were intended to protect the owner from disease, to make him handsome and attractive to women, and to give his wife many healthy children. CR
This Mossi *kaka* (cat. 307) had been broken. To insure its continued service, the bracelet was repaired at the village level with several narrow strips of delicately embossed metal. Both ivory bracelets (cats. 308 and 309) are probably from the East Kaséna and were worn on the upper arms of men. The smaller one has a carefully executed thick wire repair, reminiscent of European and American turn-of-the-century porcelain repairs. Herta Haselberger cites the turn-of-the-century findings of Tauxier, concerning ivory work among the East Kaséna but reports seeing none herself.[138] The origin of the glossy, smoke-blackened wood bracelet (cat. 306) is uncertain. At the time of purchase, a dance scepter with the same patina accompanied it and was thought to be Bobo. Several holes run through its edge that may have held decorative attachments, indicating the probability of ceremonial wear. Mossi women wore large, copper alloy inlaid bracelets. The Mossi attribution for this bracelet (cat. 310) is, however, uncertain. TW



311 / 312 / 313
314

311 Bracelet with Conical Projections, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 4 ½" h.

312 Bracelet with Long Projections, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 8¾" h.
Provenance: Michael Rhodes

313 Bracelet with Conical Projections, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 5⅞" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

314 Bracelet with Conical Projections, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 4" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

Various styles of spiked bracelets are common in Burkina Faso; yet there is no solid evidence confirming a particular origin except Bwa and possibly Kaséna. Examples cast in both brass and aluminum projecting relatively straight, moderately long spikes are identifiably Bwa as leaf masks are incorporated in the castings (cat. 397). André Blandin purchased one similar with spikes approaching the example illustrated here, with the shorter spikes (cat. 314) and recounts hearing that it originated from the region around Po,[128] which is the East Kaséna area. The form does not appear to be Lobi as no citation exists from Henri Labouret, Piet Meyer, or Klaus Schneider. Their protective function remains obscure, but the cup-type projection is strikingly similar to those seen on a number of anklets, thought to be Nuna. In the latter cases, I speculate that the cups may have served to jettison the evil that the anklets absorbed (see cats. 301–303). TW

315

315 Bracelet with Conical Projections, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3⅝" h.
Provenance: William Wright

The finely rendered heads at the ends of the bracelet are an arresting addition to an otherwise common form. TW

316

316 Bracelet: Open Jawed with Fine Teeth, Lobi?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, 3¼" w.
Provenance: William Wright

317

317 Bracelet, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3¾" w.

Across Africa, one of the most common decorative elements applied to lost wax brass objects is that of halved circles formed from delicate thread-sized wax spirals. The halved elements on this bracelet (cat. 317), applied in three rows, were oval rather than circular. The gaping dentate maw on the forged and cut iron bracelet (cat. 316) would give pause to the most malevolent of threatening spirits. TW

318 / 319

318 Snake Bracelet, Lobi?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, 3½" w.
Provenance: Michael Rhodes

319 Snake Bracelet *tvr(i)fa*, Gan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 4⅝" w.
Provenance: William Wright

A diviner may have prescribed the iron snake bracelet with four symmetric tight loops (cat. 318) to prevent snake bites. The complexly composed Gan snake bracelet (cat. 319) probably represents a protective spirit entity, *tvr(i)fa*, which served as protection against sorcery rather than to ward off attacks from natural-world serpents. This spirit may be single-headed but the most frequent representation has multiple heads (cats. 325 and 330). It is said to take a zoomorphic form, often serpent-like, and be semi-aquatic, hiding in the water, where it transforms itself into a multi-headed spirit creature that sucks blood from its victims before paralyzing them with an electric discharge like that of the local electric catfish.[130] TW

320 / 321

320 Bracelet with Gecko, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3" w.

321 Bracelet with Chameleons, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3⅝" w.

322 Bracelet with Snake, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅞" w.

323 Bracelet with Lizards, origin undetermined
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3½" w.

The wide base of the tail of the lizard on the bracelet in cat. 320 is suggestive of a gecko, a generally nocturnal reptilian hunter, equipped with suction-cupped feet that allow it to defy gravity and maneuver miraculously upside down and across slick vertical surfaces. The origin of the bracelet with three chameleons (cat. 321) has not been established. Distinctive triangular chameleon heads is one of a number of recognizable styles of representation. Chameleons have primeval associations. Many Burkinabé cultures believe them to be the first animals that God put on earth and, as such, they are closely associated with the notions of time. Paraphrasing the Le Moal discussion of chameleon pendants among the Bobo,[131] many forms of pendants, including chameleons, have been in use for so long that the objects' intrinsic meanings have been adopted by a broad spectrum of Burkinabé ethnic groups (Mossi, Nuna and other *gurunsi* groups, Gouin, Turka, Tusyan, Syemou, Bwa and Lobi). The slowness of movement of the chameleon represents the infinite duration of cosmic time, and its continued slowness confirms that chameleons still participate in that primordial temporal state. Above all, they are the envoys of God, *Wuro*, among the Bobo, His messenger, carrying His words and admonitions; hence, chameleons command the

322 / 323

attention of diviners to decipher their messages. The bracelet on the lower left (cat. 322) is a Tusyan-style snake bracelet, certainly a prescribed protective device, a type which was once commonly worn by many peoples. The fourth bracelet (cat. 323) displays the same reptile, probably a lizard, symmetrically at either end. Among the Bobo, the lizard is associated with women and their shrine to *duba na*.[132] TW

324 / 325

324 Spirit Talisman, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, iron, 10⅝" l.

325 Circular Pendant with Four Snake Heads *tvr(i)fa*, Gan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, lead alloy, leather, 2¾" h.

Diviners frequently prescribed serpents of this scale to thwart attacks by venomous snakes. Appropriately, the wearers usually lashed them to their leg. The African Rock Python, *Python sebae sebae*, as discussed earlier under cats. 80 and 81, belongs to the only snake family to have retained skeletal elements from its early evolution, a vestigial pelvis with hind-leg structures expressed externally as two small spurs that protrude at either side of its cloaca. The iron serpentine reptile (cat. 324), however, is possessed of four appendages, a condition long since lost in snakes. It is, therefore, clearly an entity from the spirit world and more likely served to guard a shrine than the leg of a farmer. Madeleine Père photographed a protective pendant as an amulet still worn by the Gan, very similar to the four-headed pendant illustrated here (cat. 325).[133] The heads on both are blunted diamond shapes with an outlining ridge, an axial ridge that bisects the head and round lump eyes, each with a deep horizontal slit. The example illustrated here is heavy and has the grayish appearance of lead, the only object from Burkina Faso made from this mineral that I have encountered. With its multiple heads, it is a typical representation of the Gan spirit entity *tvr(i)fa*. This spirit came with the Gan when they migrated from Ghana in the mid- to late 15th century.[134] It belongs to the category of Gan spirit entities that are discovered during everyday activities, *sim nyaaba*. After hearing the circumstances surrounding an arresting event, a diviner reveals the identity of the spirit involved, its physical expression, and the requisite sacrifices. Among the myriad of spirit entities, *tvr(i)fa* is a particularly powerful protector, capable of infinitely expressing itself in an infinite variety of forms and places. This includes secreted in old honey, still on its wax comb, sometimes lodged in a Baobab tree, or in very dirty water, where it can live for as long as ten years, and in old termite mounds or on hills with sparse vegetation. Informers claim that it inhabits the courtyards of those who believe in it, and that at a particular time of day, from within a termite mound, it makes the sound of a distant passing mobilette.[135] TW

326

326 Paired Chameleon Pendant, Bobo?, Bwa?
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 1⅞" l.

Diviners, among numerous Burkinabé ethnic groups, commonly prescribed pendants with vertically-stacked paired chameleons. A child often wore a single chameleon suspended from a necklace. The primordial nature of chameleons associates them intimately with notions of cosmic time, as discussed earlier (cat. 321). Many pendants were prescribed by diviners as a counter to ill omens associated with, among other things, the phase of the moon approaching the moment of birth of a client. Among the Bobo and other groups the diviner divulges this information through séance with the soul of the child at risk. The soul of a person has contact with God at some stage in its existence, and through His revelations the soul has the opportunity to counter an imbalance through the spirit force of symbolic representation in a multitude of forms, including cast copper alloy pendants. The Bobo called these *sabi na fré*, roughly, "things of the soul." This opportunity was afforded all Bobo children, and Bobo cherished their *sabi na fré* throughout their lives. The double chameleon, which is probably either a conjugating pair or a pair of twins, indicates that a serious abnormality occurred at the moment the soul entered the fetus, immediately prior to the birth of the baby. The specifics are undefined but put to right by the strength behind the pendant. Many Burkinabé cultures more or less subscribe to arcane notions concerning the omens associated with various states of the moon. Michèle Coquet and Luc Regis, as with Le Moal, above, elucidated the chameleon's relevance to Bwa notions of cosmic time and origin.[136] Whether Bobo or not, the three chameleons (cats. 326, 332, and 335) belong to a category of object equivalent to the Bobo *sabi na fré*. TW

327

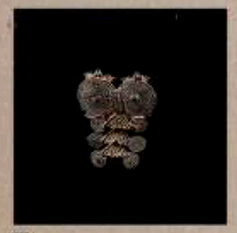
327 Gecko Pendant, Tusyan?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2 ⅝" l.

People generally regard geckos in West Africa with apprehension, erroneously thinking them to be venomous;[137] that being the case, the representation might be a protective device. TW

328

328 Monitor Lizard Pendant, Tusyan?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅝" l.

These lizards connote curative or protective benefits. Among the Bwa, the monitor lizards of the fields, *wo hâro*, encountered while clearing their fields, promises a good harvest.[138] TW



329

329 Paired Turtles Pendant, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2 ⅛" l.

The precise meaning of this relatively common form eludes us. However, the triangles with spirals possibly relate to movements of the moon through the night sky, and, more profoundly, omens reflecting an ill-timed relationship of the menstrual cycle of a mother, to the course of the moon and the moment of birth.[139] The vertical striated plaque that unites the two turtles may be a calendar reference.[140] The Tusyan view turtles as beneficial.[141] The combined elements bring to mind Bobo *sabi na fré* (see cat. 326 above). TW

330

330 Paired Serpents Pendant *tvr(i)fa*, Gan?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2" l.
Provenance: Fred Jahn

Madeleine Père illustrates this pendant as an example of a representation of the aggressively protective spirit entity *tvr(i)fa*.[142] (See cats. 319 and 325 above.) TW

331

331 Riverine Animal Ring, origin undetermined
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅝"l.
The paddle-like feet lead toward a riverine attribution but beyond that uncertainty, even less is known about either the origin or purpose of this curious ring. TW

332

332 Chameleon Pendant, Bwa or Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2"l.
Provenance: Alain Dufour
Arcana surrounding the chameleon as a cosmic entity are discussed above (see cats. 321 and 326). In her discussion of *sim-nyaamba*, the Gan notion of a type of spirit entity that an individual finds during his or her daily activities, and, through a diviner, adopts for protection and to promote fecundity, Madeleine Père describes several telling beliefs associated with chameleons. To paraphrase, according to her informants, a female chameleon, found laying eggs, is a *sim-nyaamba*. He who finds her, takes her eggs and converts them into amulets, which are then wrapped in goatskins and placed around the house; following this, a larger representation in termite clay is created, and the skins and amulets buried beneath it. The people believe chameleons capable of effecting change for others, noted, as they are, for their ability to change their own colors; thus, the owner of the shrine can alter his own circumstances. The power of chameleons can be positive or negative. A chameleon found at a crossroad is bad luck and can be a predictor of death. A chameleon encountered walking in front of a person is, however, considered good luck.[163] TW

333

333 Turtle Ring, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 1⅞"l.
Frère Blaise reported that the Tusyan believe that a turtle kept in a container of water for several weeks and then released at the edge of a lake becomes a protector of the family. He further states that knowledge of the family turtle is strictly secret, and that the family makes substantial annual sacrifices to insure the continued benevolence of the turtle.[164] TW

334

334 Scorpion Ring, Lobi?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 1¾"l.
Provenance: Alain Dufour
Neither the precise meaning of the scorpion nor the ethnic origin of the ring are known. It seems likely, however, that it is a protective device to defend against supernatural forms of attack. TW

335

335 Chameleon Pendant, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 1½"l.
Chameleons as talismans are discussed under a number of previous entries (see cats. 321, 326, and 332). TW

336 Serpent Talisman, Tusyan or Gan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 6"l.
Provenance: William Wright
Snakes in iron or copper alloy serve on shrines as protection against malevolent spirit forces or are commissioned to be worn on one's person to protect against snake bites. Somewhat larger snake representations in iron have been recorded strapped on farmers' legs.[165] André Blandin published a number of similar examples but considered his examples to be Senufo.[166] TW

336

337

337 Standing Bird Pendant, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅛"h.
I have seen at least one other virtually identical example of this captivating bird-like creature with one arm akimbo reaching behind its back, and the other arm raised with its hand on its head. As it is not unique, it might be said to have a formulaic quality and probably represents a spirit entity with a particular attribute associated with the gesture. TW

338

338 Paired Birds Hairpin, Mossi or Bwa
Central or Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 5¼"h.
The Burkinabé appreciate the monogamous nature of doves, as do many cultures. Tounmani Triandé, a former director of the National Museum in Ouagadougou, assigned several hairpins with paired birds to the Mossi. Those examples, published by André Blandin, have neck-rings like those of the Mossi, geometric elements at the tops of the stems, beneath the birds.[167] However, because the quality of the copper alloy used here is similar to that of a number of Bwa objects, a possible Bwa attribution is not discounted. TW

339

339 Hornbill Pendant, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅛"h.
Provenance: Alain Schoffel

340 Bird Pendant, Tusyan?
Southwestern Burkina Faso copper alloy, 2½"h.
Provenance: William Wright

341 Bird Pendant, Tusyan?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅝"h.
Herta Haselberger reported that Frère Guilhem, who was Director of The College of Toussiana, and a well-regarded authority on the Tusyan, maintained that such animal figures (cats. 339–341, 350, 352, and 353) were Tusyan clan totems, conferred upon initiates at the Grand *Lo* initiation ceremony which occurs at forty-year intervals.[168] Jean Hébert, who also lived in Toussiana and published extensively on the Tusyan, stated that Tusyan men received three different names through their life times. Each successive name replaced the previous name. The first, received at birth, was numeric, indicating which male child he was in the sequence of conceptions, taking into account miscarriages. The second name assigned the child by his father at its first biannual *Lo* initiation referred to the character of the child. The child inherited its third and final name from either the paternal or the maternal lineage, an animal name drawn from an ancestor who had died since the previous Grand *Lo* ceremony. The animal is a totem in the sense that the bearer of its name could neither eat that animal nor cause it harm. Hébert lists twelve animal names in their order of importance but does not make an association with the animal pendants.[169] The large hornbill is not on the list from Toussiana but, along with the buffalo, is the most common of the various animal-form pendants. Hébert, however, lived among the Southern Tusyan at Toussiana and not among the Northern Tusyan from the region around Orodara, where the casting of a great many animal pendants occurred. It is possible that the large hornbill (cat. 339), which is the work of an Orodara blacksmith, represents a Northern Tusyan clan. TW

340 / 341

342

342 Bird on Open-work Dome Pendant, Tusyan?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅛"h.
The significance of the format of a bird perched on an inverted basket-like dome is unknown. Pendants of this type, in this size, are common. TW

343 / 344 / 345 / 346 / 347

343 Paired Birds Ring, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 1⅛"h.

344 Bird Ring, Nuna?
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3"h.
Provenance: Tambaran Gallery, Arnold Syrop

345 Hornbill Ring, Nuna?
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅝"l.
Provenance: William Wright

346 Paired Birds Ring, Nuna or Bwa
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 1½"h.

347 Bird Ring, Bwa?
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 1¾"h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour
The specific significance of rings with birds has not been established. It is likely that many groups wear them. TW

348

348 Paired Standing Birds Altar Object, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 4"h.
This handsome pair of heron-like birds is from a shrine. It is made from a high-copper-content alloy. The darker areas are remnants of blood sacrifices. There is a strikingly similar example that is half an inch higher and cast in aluminum.[170] TW

349

349 Bird Standing on Semi-sphere Pectoral Pendant, Nuna or Tusyan
Southern or Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 5"h.
Provenance: Erwin and Marcia Hersey
Just how this spectacular pendant form was worn, or even if it was worn, is a mystery. TW

350 / 351
352 / 353

353 Warthog Pendant, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅞"l.
Herta Haselberger reviewed what earlier researchers had surmised concerning the function of some of the cast-brass bird and animal pendants. She reported that Frobenius, in his 1907–1909 publication, cited them suspended from belts, and that O.J. Maesen had determined that among the Senufo, such animal figures were associated with ancestors and were attached to belts worn by women. Frère Guilhem, the Director of The College of Toussiana, and an authority on the Tusyan, believed that the *Lo* initiation ceremony[171] presented occasion to confer upon an initiate, a brass animal. This may well be the case, as there is an abundance of buffalo pendants, and the buffalo is the totem of a great many Tusyan families who wear the buffalo helmets, *kablé* (cat. 189) at village purification ceremonies and funerals.[172] The panther, the buffalo, and the warthog are all representative of Southern Tusyan family totems.[173] The antelope pendant (cat. 351) is an unusual form and not listed among the Southern Tusyan animals. It may, like perhaps the hornbill, represent the totem of another Northern Tusyan family (see cats. 339, 340, and 341). The pendant has, what for me, is a touching story associated with it. It came from an older man named Garaba So, whom I befriended as he was leaving the compound of one of the better-known dealers in Bobo-Dioulasso. He supplied that dealer with traditional, small brass castings. We communicated as best we could, and he invited me to visit him the next time I was in Bobo-Dioulasso. Upon my return, I did, but he was not there. His wife informed me that he was in the hospital. Not long afterwards, I had occasion to be near the hospital, and paid him a visit. He appeared to be in a very weakened state and seriously ill, so, not wanting to tire him further, I wished him well and departed. As is so often the case in Africa, if someone falls ill with one malady, a host of other endemic diseases that a man harbors, but that a strong constitution has held in check, come to the fore and fatally overwhelms his diminished resources. When next I was in Bobo-Dioulasso and dropped by his home, I learned with no small sadness that such had been his case. His wife, still bereft, pressed this little amulet into my palm, telling me that her husband had wanted me to have it. TW

354

354 Elephant-head Pendant *taàri komé*, Thuúna
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 6⅝"h.
Daniela Bognolo not only dispels the long-held notion that these pendants are whistle forms, but also that they are Lobi. She reports[154] that the Thuúna once exclusively wore them, and that they represent the heads of elephants. The Thuúna are culturally distinct from the Lobi, as are the Dagara and the Birifor, and other, smaller, Lobi-related groups. Thuúna territory, largely south of the Lobi, was once elephant country, roughly extending along the Ivory Coast-Burkina Faso border from south of Kampti, southeast to the Mouhoun River (formerly the Black Volta), and southward along the west bank of the river, as far as Bondoukou in the Ivory Coast. This shape neck pendant was the emblem of initiation of an elephant hunter in the august Thuúna hunter's cult, *bãbà*. Thuúna hunters who had killed at least three elephants chose those who were permitted initiation into their cult. *Bãbà* cult membership both assured protection to hunter members and identified those privileged to hunt elephants. The emblems of the cult, the *taàri*, worn by hunters have several forms, but this form, *taàri komé*, which is usually in ivory, is by far the most common, as elephant habitat was the Thuúna domain. All hunters that were not Thuúna but sought membership in the cult were permitted to wear only the emblem associated with their origin. Upon initiation the hunter took the tusk from the first elephant he dispatched after his initiation to the Thuúna priest of the *bãbà* shrine, where a member of the family of the priest carved the appropriate emblem. They alone were protected from the cult's deadly spell over ivory carving. Once initiated, a man could, construct a *bãbà* shrine at his home. Each Lobi elephant hunter initiated into the *bãbà* cult could wear only a large, ivory, crescent-shaped emblem, *taàri bãbà kúkon*, representing a tusk. Those Dagara hunters honored by membership wore a large, flat ivory ring, a *taàri thãnumé*, as their *bãbà* cult emblem. It evoked the point of the tusk of a charging elephant. A Birifor cult member was permitted a *taàri katira-bonkur*, which means "a male animal that breaks the trees in the bush." This pectoral consists of a large, flat, ivory ring loop with ends that project upward at 45° and are tied to either end of a neck suspension cord. The Lobi and the Birifor attempted independence from the Thuúna cult domination and made their own pendants, but elephants ostensibly killed all those who used the fraudulent *taàri*. Nonetheless, to differentiate themselves from the users of false pendants and to maintain their status, the Thuúna *bãbà* cult followers ceased using the ivory *taàri* and added an initiation into an additional cult, *maasé*, which permitted the true followers to wear similar pectorals but fabricated in iron or, as in the example illustrated here, brass, rather than ivory. André Blandin illustrated several of this rare brass form of *taàri komé*.[155] TW

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355 Flute-form Pendant, origin undetermined
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅜"h.
Provenance: William Wright

356 Flute-form Pendant, Bwa?, Lobi?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅝"h.

357 Plaque Pendant with Flute and Spirals, Tusyan?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅞"h.
Provenance: Dos Winkel
According to Guy Le Moal, the Bobo and Bwa whistle forms in copper alloy pendants, combined with symbols related to cosmic time, reference the function of the large, transverse armed flute, the *sine pyene* among the Bobo, that is blown at the moment of the new year when the moon first appears on the western horizon. This is a highly important cult object and is the same flute that calls men to arms and rallies hunters. While only partly understood, the presence of spiral forms reinforces its relationship to the movement of time, which in Mandé culture are symbols for time that is not linear but is in perpetual rotation.[156] The amulet (cat. 357) would have been prescribed by a diviner to counterbalance the ill effects of cosmic events immediately preceding birth; among the Bobo it would belong to the *sabí ne frè* category of amulet. It was the conviction of Le Moal that over the centuries, many visual symbols such as these spread throughout much of the Burkina Faso region.[157] The two other flute amulets (cat. 355 and 356) have less arcane meanings and are likely symbols for spirit entities that induced the birth of the child. Although they may not be Bobo, they are functionally equivalent to *sabí ne frè* amulets. TW

358 Shackles Pendant, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅜"w.
Provenance: William Wright
The prescribing of *sabí ne frè* amulets to adjust for the ill omens of cosmic imbalance in the moments prior to birth is not the only reason for their creation. Some represent the genie spirit entity that brought about the birth of the child. No one knows either the spirit entity or the meaning of the slave shackles, as they relate to the genie. The triangular forms at either end of the horizontal bar are lunar symbols, often seen individually as *sabí ne frè* amulets. It would seem that the genie involved in the wearer's birth had cosmic ties or that the diviner chose to combine their inherent powers into a single amulet. TW

359 Ring with Five Arms, Bobo
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, cotton cord, 3⅛"h.
The combination of the patina on the ring proper and the presence of an attachment cord suggests that this bizarre, and certainly awkward, ring was worn both as a ring and as a pendant. The four cardinal-point projections, each composed of paired contiguous rods, their lengths finely ringed and capped, are morphologically closely related to the emblematic legs of the genie of the Bobo blacksmith, *wiyage kolo*, illustrated by Le Moal.[158] *Wiyage kolo* is renowned for bringing babies into the world and is a representation of a *sabí ne frè* in a number of formats. The presence of four projections would argue for a female wearer, as the number four is associated with women and the number three with men. The strongly phallic axis emphasizes the character of the male form of this genie. There are considerable darkened areas that are remnants of blood sacrifice, a subject not discussed by Le Moal in relation to *sabí ne frè*. The case made for *wiyage kolo* is speculative. TW

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360 Ring, Bobo?
Copper alloy, 2¼"h.
Other rings in this high, hollow domed form with medial slits occasionally appear on the market. André Blandin published an example, which he attributes to a Bobo village chief, stating that it was worn for "certain ceremonies."[159] TW

361 Ring in the Form of a Bracelet, Tusyan?, Bwa?
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 1⅜"h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour
The design of this ring derives from bracelets like some illustrated above (cats. 311, 313, 314, and 315). There is no satisfactory establishment of the ethnic origins of the bracelets or of the ring. One argument is that they may have absorbed potential evil and ejected it. (See above bracelet entries.) TW

362 Diviner's Miniature *daba*, origin undetermined
Iron, 4⅝"l.
Miniature hoes, *daba*, are associated with competitive success preparing a field for sowing and the supernatural qualities of the farmer's *daba*. The people believe that a form of magic is responsible for winning this competition, potentially achieved with a miniature hoe, prescribed by a diviner, either to activate success or to express thanks for a realized success.[160] They regard iron as a particularly powerful substance. The fact that it is not a pendant may mean that it was an altar object. TW

363 Horn-shaped Pendant *uma*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 4¾"h.
Among numerous groups, horns are closely associated with medicinal powers. Piet Meyer wrote that old women wore them suspended on their chests.[161] TW

364 Crescent Pendant *kukukbol*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3⅛"h.
Crescents are generally associated with the moon and the moon with the movement of time. Given the suspension holes at the ends, the pendant was probably worn as a pectoral, and may have been a personal amulet to balance negative forces that were active at the time of the wearer's birth.[162] Piet Meyer identified the name associated with this object type, *kukukbol*.[163] TW

365 Disk Ring, Nuna?
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅛"w.
This unusual large ring enjoys a handsome wear patina. It was ascribed to the Nuna by the Burkinabé vender at the time it was purchased, 1973. Its meaning is not known. TW

368 / 367 / 368 / 369 / 370 / 371
372

366 Mask Ring *zonie*, Nunuma
Western Central Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3"h.

367 Mask Ring *zonie*, Nunuma
Western Central Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3⅛"h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour

368 *Loniaken* Mask Pendant, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, leather, 4⅝"h.
Provenance: William Wright

369 Antelope Mask Ring, Nuna?
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅝"h.
Provenance: William Wright

370 *Loniaken* Mask Pendant, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, leather, 3⅛"h.

371 Mask with Crest Ring, Winiama or Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2⅜"h.

372 Antelope Mask Ring, Winiama, Nunuma or Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 1⅝"h.
The Tusyan are a Senufo people near Banfora, in southwestern Burkina Faso. They still make and use wood masks in initiations, and they still make and use cast-brass figures in divination. Most recently, Susan Cooksey, at the University of Florida, has completed an exhaustive study of the arts of divination of these creative people. Initiates may have worn these objects (cats. 368 and 370), or perhaps the initiates held them in their mouths by the cords to keep them silent during one stage of the initiation. CR
Christopher Roy has reported that women wear Nuna mask pendants as protection; because of prohibitions, the masks are otherwise not available to women. It is plausible that a man, while traveling, may wear a likeness of the primary mask of his family, the *wankr*, for the same protection it affords at home. Roy assigns the name *zonie* to a Nunuma mask ring similar to the two with superstructures (cats. 366 and 367).[164] The two rectangular pendants are Tusyan *loniaken* masks (cats. 368 and 370) worn for the six-week-long *Lo* initiation, celebrated every forty years. The ring with the small mask with a central vertical crest (cat. 371) may represent a Winiama crested mask or the *hombo* mask of a Bwa blacksmith. TW

373 / 374 / 375 / 376 / 377 / 378

373 Bird's Head and Plaque Pectoral Pendant, Nuna, Nununa or Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 4 ½" h.

374 Crescent and Figure Pectoral Pendant, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3 ⁹⁄₁₆" h.
Provenance: André Blandin

375 Plaque with Antelopes Pectoral Pendant, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 5 ⅛" h.
Provenance: Daimon Brandt

376 Hornbill Mask and Crescent Pectoral Pendant, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3¾" h.
Provenance: Nobel and Jean Endicott, Erwin and Marcia Hersey

377 Mask and Crescent Pectoral Pendant, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3¾" h.
Provenance: Nobel and Jean Endicott, Erwin and Marcia Hersey

378 Crescent Pectoral Pendant with Figure, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3 ⁹⁄₁₆" h.
Provenance: Michael Oliver, René Rasmussen

Nuna women whose families owned a mask identical to the one cast in brass wore these brass pendants (cats. 376 and 377). Because women cannot wear the masks, they are able to acquire the spiritual protection afforded their brothers when they perform by wearing this pendant. Among most of the peoples of Burkina Faso, everyone in the family has access to the masks, male and female, young and old, but only men wear them. CR

André Blandin published a number of lunate pendants and Tounmani Triandé, a former Director of the National Museum in Ouagadougou, related the crescent elements in large pendants to the position of the moon in its cycle at the time of the birth of the wearer,[165] which he had presumably gleaned from his personal acquaintance with Guy Le Moal. Le Moal, in discussing crescent forms on Bobo amulets,[166] defined the critical moment as not that *of* birth but rather, *before* birth, when the soul is thought to enter the fetus. These objects with crescents have a double form of protection, associated with an adjustment of cosmic importance offered by the crescent portion and the additional protection of the family mask or a female spirit entity. Blandin published a rectangular pectoral, similar to cat. 373, and believes it to be Bwa, but acknowledges that the Nuna often receive credit for them. The larger rectangular pendant (cat. 375) shares with cat. 373 the same overall shape, with similar semicircular design motifs and the deeply dentate fringe along the bottom. Between its combination of two antelopes in the round, arranged in reverse directions and crocodiles similarly arranged, which are completely enigmatic, and the unique shape of its attachment device, there are lingering questions. TW

379 Standing Figure Pendant *bateba*, Lobi?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3 ½" h.
Provenance: Fred Jahn

380 Standing Figure Talisman, Bwa?, Lobi?
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3 ¼" h.
Provenance: Kegel-Kenietzko

381 Standing Figure Talisman, Gouin?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3 ¼" h.

382 Standing Diviner's or Altar Figure Talisman, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 2 ¾" h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

383 Standing Figure Pendant *bateba dunoni*,[167] Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3 ⅝" h.
Provenance: William Wright

In Burkinabé cultures there is a pervasive fear of sorcery. Among the Lobi portable *bateba* (like cats. 379 and 383) are carried as a defense to repel witchcraft.[168] Piet Meyer illustrates a *bateba* with a head with an unusual feature that is also seen on the figure to the left (cat. 379). In both examples a flat medial ridge with horizontal striations starts as a nose and continues up over the center of the head.[169] The semi-seated figure, the second from the left (cat. 380), has a very distinctive head with a strongly delineated hairline running side to side across the top of the high forehead. The hair runs straight down the sides in vertical rows from the midline with a thick braid extending back, down the center of the head. The upper half of the face is dominated by an enormous recumbent pyramid that represents the nose. The triangular aspect of the volume is mirrored in the angularity of the lower portion of the face. It is thought to be Lobi but a Bwa origin cannot be discounted. The central figure with spread legs is designated Gouin, but only because it was so named when it was bought in Bobo-Dioulasso in 1973. There is insufficient information to either confirm or deny this attribution. A serpent winds over the back of the aluminum male figure with binocular eyes and elephantine ears (cat. 382). It is a potent image of a protective spirit. The combination of snake and figure, spirit or human, is seldom encountered in Burkina Faso. TW

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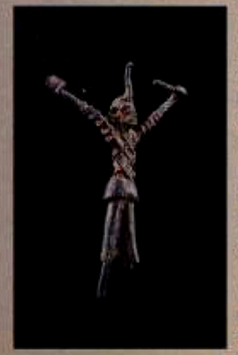


387

384 Paired Seated Figures Pendant, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2 ½" h.
Provenance: William Wright, Joseph and Margaret Knopfelmacher

385 Four-figure Pendant, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 3" h.

386 Two-figure Pendant, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2 ⅛" h.

All three of these figurative objects are thought to be Tusyan. The standing pair (cat. 386) has no attachment loops and there is no evidence that cording was woven between the arms and the torsos. It was probably part of a diviner's kit, its well-worn surface indicating much handling. The central piece with four figures standing on a trapezoid (cat. 385) and the extraordinary seated pair (cat. 384) have loops for suspension on their backs. They are presumed to represent protective spirit figures prescribed by diviners for their clients. All have strong visual affinities with the Senufo, who use very similar protective amulets. André Blandin offers a wide range of like figures in his comprehensive publication on West African brasses.[170] TW

387 Dancing *warba* Figure, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 4 ⅝" h.

P. Fuchs, in 1960, published an article on Mossi figurines,[171] claiming that genre figures in copper alloy or aluminum derived from the sets of figures depicting everyday Mossi life that were traditionally cast after the death of the Mogho-naba, the Mossi Emperor, and deposited, along with a likeness of the deceased Emperor, in the care of the Loumbila-naba in Loumbila, north of Ouagadougou. A Mossi jeweler who, like his colleagues, normally only produced jewelry for women and the various cast parts of Mossi equestrian caparison, made the portrait and the accompanying figures. The production of statuary carried with it a stigma that probably derived from the compulsory banishment of the jeweler commissioned to make the Mogho-naba statuary. The prohibition against modeling figures was broken in 1915 by Joseph Badoit, a Christianized Kaséna or Nankana from northern Ghana, who came from a region with a long tradition of metal casting but apprenticed under the Pères Blancs in Tunisia, in 1915. Badoit formed figures in wax and, supplying the metal, commissioned the castings from the traditional Mossi jewelers. The prohibition broken, around 1920, Mossi jewelers began to produce commercial sets of specific figures inspired by the Mogho-naba genre figures. There were eight different sets, each comprised of a number of enamel painted figures. The eight sets were masks, musicians, dancers, warriors, hunters, farmers, women at work and caring for their babies, and the Mogho-naba and his court. The figure illustrated (cat. 387) is a traditional *nakomsé* Mossi *warba* (or *wavabe*) dancer wearing a cloth wrap from its waist to its knees, a net shirt, a high crested head-piece and, in its hands, a metal clacker to beat the time, and a horse- or donkey-hair fly whisk. These dance groups performed traditionally at *nakomsé* enthronements and funerals but today are more secular and appear for weddings and public festivals. The figure is probably an early production piece, as its modeling is detailed and it is cast in copper alloy, which the metal casters were soon to abandon, producing their figures in less expensive aluminum. Judging from the lack of paint, the surface encrustations and the missing base and lower portion of the legs, this was a flawed casting that would normally have been melted down and recast but was apparently set aside, lost, and only recently discovered. TW

388 / 389

390 / 391 / 393 / 392

394 / 395

388 Ring with Figure, Bwa?, Lobi?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 1 ⅛" h.
Provenance: Michael Rhodes

389 Pair of Spirit Figures Riding on Paired Snakes, Altar Object, Bwa?
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, organic material, 2 ¹⁵⁄₁₆" l.

A protective spirit entity made itself known to a diviner. The diviner, in turn, prescribed the ring for his client. The extraordinary paired spirit couple riding on two snakes is probably from a Bwa shrine, where it served a protective or curative function. Large snakes in Burkina Faso are ground-dwelling pythons whose habit of hibernating in burrows during the dry season and emerging with the rains associates them with both the invisible spirit world and the world of the living. The paired spirit entities, thus mounted, even more readily avail themselves of both worlds. TW

390 Standing Figure Pair on a Divination Circlet, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, iron, 4 ¾" w.

391 Standing Figure Pair on a Divination Circlet, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, cowrie, leather, undifferentiated cord, copper alloy, iron, 3 ⅜" w.

392 Seated Figure Pair on a Divination Circlet, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, iron, 2 ¾" w.

393 Standing Figure Pair on a Divination Circlet, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, iron, 3 ⅜" w.

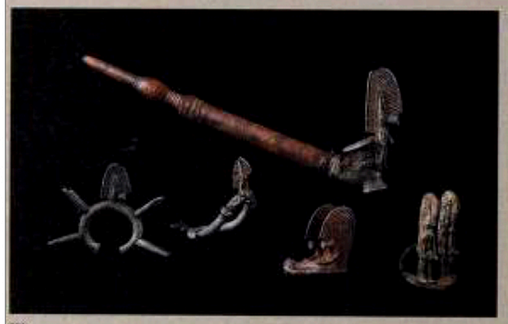
394 Standing Figure Pair on a Divination Circlet, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, iron, 3 ¾" w.

395 Standing Figure Pair on a Divination Circlet Bracelet, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, iron, 3 ½" w.

The Bwa, Dagara, Senufo, Tusyan, and Lobi all make divination circlets and bracelets with small cast-brass figures. These are worn by men and women to provide the protection of the spirits they embody. These spirits, like humans, occur in male-female pairs. Here (cat. 293) a male figure carries a hoe over his shoulder. These may be arm bracelets, or a shrine may receive them as offerings. Diviners use them to contact the spirits. CR

None of the six examples of brass and iron divination circlets was presented to me as Lobi; all were said to be either "Bobo" or Bwa. To my knowledge this genre of divination object is not used by Bobo diviners, so

the misused "Bobo" attribution referred to Bobo Oulé, the Bwa. The couples seated or standing on the twisted iron rings are spirit couples whose purpose it is to aid the diviner in his spirit world quests on behalf of his clients. The circlets are placed on the diviner's shrine. While usually shrine objects, the bright patina on cat. 395 confirms that this form is in some cases worn as a bracelet. Klaus Schneider found them to be called *nihamba* in the Houndé region, where he did the fieldwork for his dissertation. He described them as standing in water in a small open-mouthed clay pot, *nihambapanko*, 3¾" high, with a 4⅞"-diameter opening and a single row of 12 to 14 evenly spaced lumps around its midline.[172] The field photograph by Klaus Payson (fig. 28) shows a diviner's shrine with at least eight diviner's circlets on the ground and three or four pots that are similar to the pot described by Schneider and that, judging from their dark, glistening interiors, appear to be filled with liquid. Christopher Roy reports that this type of divination object is called *mwani* in Bagassi but *hnobiŋ* in Houndé.[173] Possibly these name differences from the Houndé area reflect the individual names with which each diviner addresses his particular spirit entity. Clearly from the names provided by Schneider, the circlet is intimately associated with the pot in which it resides. TW



396
397 / 398 / 399 / 400

396 Pipe with Standing Leaf Masquerader, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, wood, 15½" l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

397 Spiked Bracelet with Leaf Mask, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 4¾" w.

398 Child's Anklet with Leaf Masquerader, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 4¾" w.

399 Pair of Seated Leaf Masqueraders Altar Object *biému*, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, organic and mineral encrustation, 2¾" h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

400 Standing Pair of Leaf Masqueraders on a Divination Circlet, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, iron, 4⅛" h.
This very fine Bwa pipe (cat. 396) cast of white metal from a moped engine has a figure of a leaf mask representing *Do*, the spirit of rebirth and growth in the springtime. The heavy wear of the surface indicates years of use by the owner. Surely, this must have belonged to a senior male elder of a family that used leaf masks. CR

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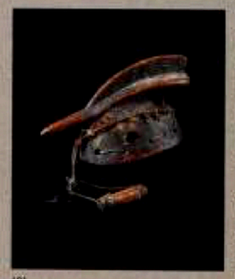

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These five objects are grouped together because they all bear images of Bwa leaf masks, a manifestation of the Bwa divinity, *Do*. *Do* is called upon, on each object, to bring his protection to the wearer. Different areas of Bwa territory produce leaf masks in forms specific to their regions. Emily Hanna-Vergara describes these in some detail in her dissertation.[174] All of those shown here represent a specific form of leaf mask known only in southern Bwa villages. Among those communities willing to reveal the name they are known as *bieni*. According to Hanna-Vergara, the body of this form of leaf mask is entirely covered with leaves of the "raisin tree," *Lannea microcarpa*. The leaves attach to the torso and limbs of the dancer by a frame constructed from stiff branches, secured with vines. The "face" is a truncated straw cylinder, its larger end projected forward through the leaves. The crest is composed of long hornbill feathers (*Calao bucorvus*) and continues in a train down the back of the dancer. In the central Bwa territory the crests are made from stalks of dried grass and are very similar to Dafing leaf masks; they do not descend in back. On three of the five objects shown here, the trains are sharply reduced, perhaps to keep the trains of the otherworld spirit entities from contact with the mundane. A child wore the small anklet (cat. 398). Judging from their encrusted surfaces, the seated pair (cat. 399) and the circlet with two standing masqueraders, belonging to a diviner (cat. 400), are from shrines. This would suggest that not all of the circlets owned by diviners are kept in water in a ritual pot, as described by Klaus Schneider (see above, cats. 390–394). Most of the aluminum objects cast for the Bwa, are the work of Dafing blacksmiths. Christopher Roy offers 1909 as the first year the English introduced aluminum coinage in Ghana.[175] Although it is unlikely that melted aluminum for traditional castings occurred in Burkina Faso at such an early date, these objects could be from no earlier than that date. TW

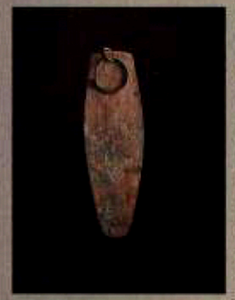
401 Miniature Antelope Mask, Nuna or Nununa
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, leather, remnant indigenous polychrome, 8½" h.

402 Miniature Antelope Mask *nyanga*, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, oil-base polychrome, indigenous polychrome, 12" h.

403 Miniature Double Crest Mask, Altar Object, Winiama
Western Central Burkina Faso, wood, indigenous polychrome, 10" h.

404 Miniature Rooster Mask, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, wood, iron chain, cotton cord, fiber cord, organic material, 6" l.
It is thought that all four of these "maskettes" came from shrine rooms. Two are encrusted with sacrificial materials, and certainly, either they are from shrines, or they were themselves shrines (cats. 403 and 404). The small antelope mask (cat. 401) has an odd band of leather around the base of its horns. The Bobo *nyanga* (cat. 402) is a solid block of wood with no excavated interior. It is likely that both of them were part of the disparate object accumulation that is typically seen in shrine rooms, not all of which are the recipients of sacrifices (fig. 9). Suspended from the small Ouagadougou-style Mossi mask is a reed whistle. The whistle is made from a blade of grass stretched between two halves of a dowel. This same type of whistle is also found attached to the insides of full Ouagadougou-style mask costumes, an example of which is in the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum collection in San Francisco. The shrill fluttery sound produced by blowing between the dowel halves is the "voice" of the spirit entity that is within the mask. TW

405 / 406



407

405 Medicinal or Protective Rattle Wand, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, gourd, iron, fiber, cotton cord, homespun, organic material, 27¼" h.

406 Calabash Personal Altar, Mossi *sukomsé*
Central Burkina Faso, calabash, feathers, cotton cord, organic material, 7⅛" w.

407 Bull-roarer, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, forged iron, 13⅛" h.
While perhaps not entirely appropriate to an "art" book, these three objects are included, as they are representative of an unseen arsenal of spirit-communicating, curative, and protective devices designed to insure the well-being of countless traditional Burkinabé. The piece on the left (cat. 405), which was presented to me as *sukomsé* Mossi, is "loaded for bear." Its complex composition must have served to ward off numerous malignant forces. The wood stick has an iron hook protruding from one end and, attached in clumps at either end, triangular and trapezoidal pieces of calabash with dentate leading edges and strands of *Hibiscus cannabinus* fiber. A cloth-covered power bundle is wrapped around the midsection of the stick and secured with a web of cotton cords of various thicknesses. Suspended from it are several smaller, soiled, cloth-covered bundles that may have been commandeered from another device. A loose cord is attached at either end of the shaft, presumably to hang or to carry the object. When shaken, the calabash tabs would have clattered. The lack of evidence of blood sacrifice on the object suggests that the empowering forces may never have been activated, which may be the reason I was able to acquire the object. The inverted calabash shrine (cat. 406) received blood sacrifices. It is patinated inside and has a fiber cord stretched across its diameter, from which it may have been hung. The cord is too tight for the calabash to have been worn over the head in a manner similar to that occasionally seen among the Lobi. The bull-roarer rhomb (cat. 407) was presented to me as Bwa. It is the central element in the Bwa cult of *Do*, for it is thought to be *Do* itself. Out of sight of villagers, it would have been spun overhead from a cord and its eerie whine interpreted as the voice of *Do*. Jean Capron, when working among the northernmost Bwa in the area around San, recorded the Bwa names for the rhomb *aliwé*, "he cries," and *tinyisé*, "he makes noise" and for the voice itself, *dotanu*.[176] According to Capron, in the San area, this manifestation of *Do* is stored in a sheepskin pouch in the rafters of a deliberately chosen dilapidated house in the village, which is the *Do*-house, *dozo*.[177] Christopher Roy, working far to the south among the Southern Bwa, records that the bull-roarer is stored in a pot where the cultivated fields abut the bush,[178] an apt location, as *Do* presides over both realms. Such rhombs are cult objects, central to many Burkinabé belief systems. They may be used when masks are about to appear or during initiation and in a variety of other contexts, differing from one ethnic group to the next. Bull-roarer rhombs take different forms. Le Moal cites pairs of small rhomb amulets that offer the protection of *Dwo*, the Bobo name for *Do*.[179] Michele Dacher states that among the Gouin as well as the Turka, Karaboro and Tusyan, the bull-roarer rhomb, *dogo*, is the most important representation of their *Do* and is central to initiations. She describes small models of *dogo*, crafted by blacksmiths for protection in homes, where they are hung from the rafters in rooms.[180] Among the Tusyan, according to Père Jean Hébert, the sacred rhomb is under the authority of the Priest of *Do*. He is also partially responsible for the biannual *Lo* initiations, when both ten-year-old boys and girls, who were married the prior year, are initiated into the "genie" *Do* and are shown the rhomb. Hébert also states that everyone in the community may have miniature rhombs for protection.[181]

APPAREL AND DANCE ORNAMENTS

This section opens with the seemingly mundane *tingsoba* regalia, and on the two following pages, with the strange bird-beak headpiece and regalia worn by a Mossi healer, a *baga*. Both the *tingsoba* and the *baga* are key individuals whose purpose it is to provide for the well-being of Mossi society. While to some, arguably more ethnographic than aesthetic, objects like those at the end of the last section set the contextual stage on which most of the objects that populate the pages of this book play their roles as intermediaries between the physical and the spirit realms or as protective devices against threats from those realms and the natural world. Other objects, among them some utensils, pipes, stools, chairs, ceramic pots, and heddle pulleys, enjoy the protection of spirit elements incised or carved in relief or in the round.
Even here, with the *tingsoba* and the *baga* regalia, the ubiquitous human need for balance and stability in an uncertain world is reflected in the subliminal sense of well-being projected by aesthetic expression. Witness in the simple regalia of the *tingsoba* a certain balance in the placement of the power bundles along the shaft, and the simple, deliberate symmetry of the amulets on the hat, gestures we almost take for granted, but gestures nonetheless that perhaps instinctively provide the sense of order and control that is wanting before the forces of nature. TW

408

408 *Tingsoba* Staff, Mossi nyonyosé
Central Burkina Faso, specific region of origin unknown, wood, iron, leather, homespun cotton fabric, organic material, 54¼" h.
Effigies composed of articles of clothing and personal possessions that belonged to the deceased memorialize the grave sites of some lineage heads, priests and the like of various ethnic groups. This staff with the hat that follows (cat. 409) perched on top was said to have been planted in the ground over the grave of a Mossi *tengsoba, a nyonyosé* earth priest. The Y-shaped wood staff is wrapped with three bundles of charged organic material and tipped at the bottom with a forged iron point. The bundles and the forged iron provided the staff's bearer magical powers and spiritual and corporal protection. TW

409

409 *Tingsoba* Hat, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Central Burkina Faso, specific region of origin unknown, homespun cotton, leather, organic material?, 9½"h.
This cotton cap is made from dyed and woven homespun with leather amulets filled with protective materials stitched to the surface. Similar protective leather amulets are prescribed by diviners to be worn by their client/patient attached to necklaces or belts or tied onto arms or legs. Hunters and warriors, whose occupations expose them to both natural and supernatural dangers, may wear hats and shirts massed with similar amulets. TW

410

410 *Baga* Headdress, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Central Burkina Faso, specific region of origin unknown, marabou stork beak (*Leptoptilos crumeniferous*), wood, cowrie, cotton homespun, leather, cotton cord, 33½"h.
Provenance: William Wright

411 *Baga* Shirt, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Central Burkina Faso, specific region of origin unknown, cotton homespun, cowrie, 33"h.
Provenance: William Wright

412 *Baga* Pants, Mossi *nyonyosé*
Central Burkina Faso, specific region of origin unknown, leather, cotton cord, 40"h.
Provenance: William Wright
The *baga* headdress consists of the beak of a marabou stork wrapped in cowrie-encrusted homespun cloth forming the cap, with panels extending like a cowl, over the shoulders. The cowrie-wrapped cylinder at the back of the top of the headdress, originally proffered a spray of horsehair. The cowrie-encrusted triangle with leather fringe along the bottom and leather cord at the top fell from the neck as a pectoral. Fly whisks and long iron thumb gongs were carried in the hands but are not illustrated. The pants legs are the natural colored leather, lying behind the two narrow, black, leather appliqué panels to the left in the photograph and the single panel to the right. The fine appliqué work is similar to the workmanship in traditional *nakomsé* equestrian caparison. The shirt, pants, and fly whisks belonged to a *baga* ensemble, which included a smaller, more recent headdress. Early in the last century an artist traveling with Leo Frobenius painted a watercolor of a *baga* in full regalia, which is reproduced here (p. 325). TW

411

412

413

413 Drummer's Leather Hat with Chameleon Emblem, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, leather, mane hair, 22"h.
Provenance: William Wright
Norman Skougstad photographed two Nuna drummers with long cylindrical drums at a funeral (p. 326). They were wearing hats with cowrie shells and a leather, tab-like plank mask emblem rather than the chameleon emblem. Skougstad reported that the emblem on a Nuna drummer's hat designated his village of origin.[162]

414 Dance Belt-skirt, Bwa?
Western Burkina Faso, homespun cotton cloth, cotton cord, brass crotals, commercial buttons, 34"w.

415 Dance Belt-skirt, Bwa?
Western Burkina Faso, cotton, synthetic fiber cord, cotton cord, commercial buttons, 33"w.
There is some variation in size of the small brass bells on the skirt shown on top (cat. 414). Regrettably the origins and, by extension, the occasions for which these skirts were worn, are unrecorded. TW

414

415

416 Dance Skirt, Dorosie
Southwestern Burkina Faso, cowries, cotton fiber, cotton cord, 28¾"w.
This skirt was noted as Dorosie at the time of purchase, and, as that attribution is uncommon, it receives greater credence than otherwise might be accorded. The large side panels are divided into four triangular quadrants by double-rowed cowrie shell ridges. The smaller central panel is divided into four square quadrants by ridges of cowries formed in a single row. A firm cowrie-covered element resembling a tail in the center projects from near the top of the square between two quadrants. Extending from its tip are a number of long, colored cotton strands each of which terminates with a single cowrie. The orientation of the skirt is not known but, because the waist is so small, this skirt was either not designed to be closed or was intended to be worn by a young person. TW

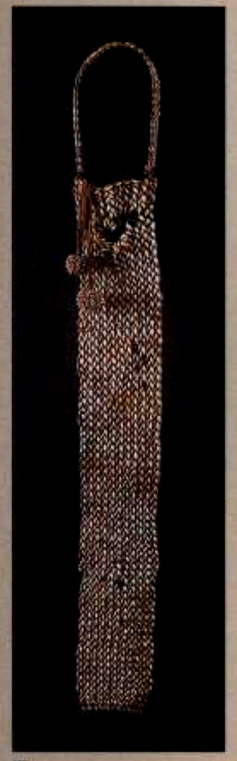
416

417 Drummer's Headpiece, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, cowries, homespun cotton cloth, cotton fiber, cotton cord, 10"l.
At the time of its purchase from a Burkinabé dealer, this lovely little headpiece was said to be part of a Bwa drummer's regalia. TW

417

418

418 Hat, Turka or Gouin
Southwestern Burkina Faso, cane, leather, cotton cord, 16½"h.
This and two additional hats of the same style and age were said to be Tusyan when they were bought from a Burkinabé in 2000. There has subsequently been no evidence to support the attribution. Susan Cooksey recounted seeing a very elderly man in Fabedougou making hats like this,[163] which argues strongly for a Turka origin. Michèle Dacher believes similar, but presumably smaller, hats are worn to protect babies and may be Gouin or, possibly, Turka.[164] TW



419

419 Cowrie "Bridal Belt" *cémellè*, Gouin
Southwestern Burkina Faso, cowries, cotton cord, 59"l.

420 Cowrie "Bridal Belt"?, Gouin
Southwestern Burkina Faso, cowries, cotton cord, 43"l.
Michèle Dacher wrote[165] that this object (cat. 419) is known as a marriage matt and is made from cowrie shells. It is probably Gouin and is called a *cémellè* or *cornélle*. A bride sits on a large matt with her marriage gifts spread about her and the *cémellè* placed either vertically or horizontally on her head. She dances some steps with the *cémellè* balanced on her head. Their vulvaesque openings identify cowries with fecundity and, by extension, with wealth. After the ritual, the *cémellè* is kept by the chief of the matrilineal side of the family of the wife. It will be used for the marriage of a man in her family. The *cémellè* is viewed as a potent religious object. A wedding ceremony could not be held without one.
There is no field evidence linking the belt (cat. 420) to the Gouin marriage ceremony. However, the two objects were sold to me as Turka and as an ensemble, the *cémellè* accurately described as a bridal "matte." Judging from the similarity of their surfaces, it seems highly likely that the *cémellè* and the belt were stored together in the home of the lineage leader. That Dacher, who has done extensive fieldwork among the Gouin, never encountered such a belt may indicate that this *cémellè* and belt are, in fact, as described by the seller, Turka, a group that is closely related to the Gouin, with whom they are thought to have immigrated. The cowries composing the *cémellè* are themselves notable for their unusually large and uniform size. This must once have been a very expensive and prestigious item. TW

420

421 / 422

421 Ceremonial Wand, origin undetermined
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, cowries, cotton cord, 19"l.

422 Ceremonial Flail, origin undetermined
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood?, cowries, cotton cord, undifferentiated fabric, 35"l.
No information has been found to help identify either of these objects, both of which were collected in Western Burkina Faso. The wand, at the time of purchase, was said to be Turka; the flail was unattributed. TW

423 Wand, Ceremonial Regalia, Dorosie?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, leather, cowrie, cotton cord, 14"l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

424 Wand, Ceremonial Regalia, Dorosie?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, leather, cowrie, cotton cord, 15⅛"l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

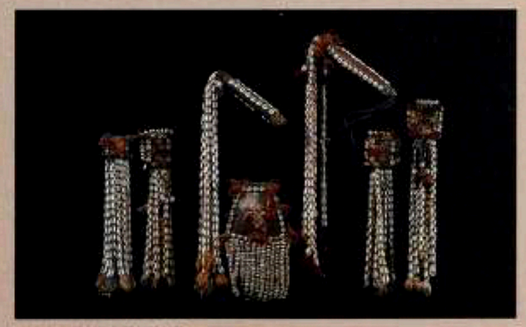
425 Scepter/Flail, Ceremonial Regalia, Dorosie?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, cowrie, wood, leather, cotton cord, 20⅛"l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

426 Pectoral or Cache-Sex, Ceremonial Regalia, Dorosie?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, Undifferentiated metal, cowrie, leather, cotton cord, 11"l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

427 Scepter/Flail, Ceremonial Regalia, Dorosie?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, cowrie, wood, leather, cotton cord, 21½"l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

428 Wand, Ceremonial Regalia, Dorosie?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, leather, cowrie, cotton cord, 15⅛"l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

429 Wand, Ceremonial Regalia, Dorosie?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, leather, cowrie, cotton cord, 17¾"l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele
If the dance skirt shown above (cat. 416) is Dorosie, as it was said to be, the similar use of tufts of dyed cotton, the square formats divided into triangular quadrants on the hand-held wands, the abundance of cowries on these seven objects and the use of lines of cowries along the handles of the flails, as similarly applied to the "tail" of the dance skirt, may all point to a similar Dorosie origin. TW



423 / 424 / 425 / 426 / 427 / 428 / 429

FLUTES

Flutes all have the same basic construction. They have a hollow core that is open at the mouth end. Air is blown across the mouth in the same fashion as a sound is made from a jug or a bottle. Flutes may be straight, have knobs, or have arms. Usually, one or two side holes are burned through to the central hollow to allow changes of pitch to be created by covering or uncovering the hole or holes.

Flute shapes cross cultural frontiers, making attributions difficult even with field collection data; therefore, many of the flutes illustrated have not been assigned origins. Where an origin is offered, it was usually supplied by the seller, who, if he did not collect the object himself, probably knew the area from which his supplier collected. Christopher Roy, in his 1987 text, compiled what little information is known about styles of flutes and the circumstances in which some are played.[186] Paraphrasing from Roy, flutes are an integral part of many ceremonies and may be accompanied by several different types of drums and balafons. Unlike drummers and balafon players, who belong to castes, flutes may, in principal, be played by any male in the community. Generally, however, flutes are played singly by older men or by groups composed of odd numbers of initiated men. While certain styles originated with particular peoples, the shape of a flute reflects the context in which it was played more than it does its origin. Among the Bwa, Samo and Dafing flutes with three side holes are played to announce both the beginnings and the ends of wrestling matches. The honor to play the flute on these occasions goes to the champion wrestler. The Bwa, Nununa, Winiama, and Kaséna produce phallic-shaped flutes that accompany fertility-associated events. Young Bwa farmers have weeding competitions. Each carries a large flute, through which several notes are blown, indicating the completion of his plot. The Bwa and the Nuna carve large flutes with arms akimbo, yielding an open-work diamond shape. Notes played on these flutes sound an alarm and warriors carry them into battle; also, such flutes are played to signal the beginning of a communal hunt. Diviner and healer consecrations are accompanied by long flutes with as many as five pairs of holes. Highly-patinated flutes were passed down through the family, often at initiations. These flutes were imbued with enormous spiritual strength and were played to honor the deceased at burials and funerals, where their sound gave voice to ancestors and bush spirits alike. TW

430

430 Flute with Arms Akimbo, Kaséna
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, 15" h.
Provenance: William Wright
This fine old flute is feather-light and highly patinated. The incised lines have become filled and grown to form dark ridges, as is often the case with very old objects, well patinated from handling. TW

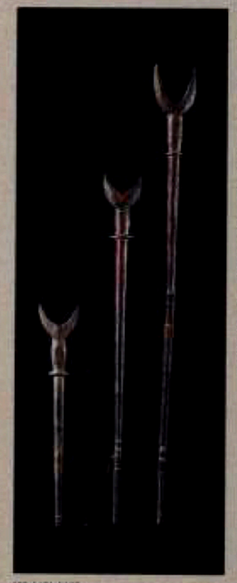
431 / 432

431 Flute with Arms Akimbo, Samo, Bwa or Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, lizard skin, cotton cord, 20¾"h.

432 Flute with Multiple Knobs, Nununa, Winiama or Nuna
Western Central Burkina Faso, wood, snake skin, cotton cord, 20¼"h.
Whistles of this type (cat. 431) can produce only one or two notes, so they are played in large groups in which a dozen young men alternate to produce a series of notes that are repeated throughout the performance. These long, slender whistles are from the north, while the broader whistles with flaring arms are from the central area. CR

433 Chevron Mouthed Flute, Bwa or Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 22⅛"h.

434 Long Chevron Mouthed Flute, Bwa or Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, Collected in Solenzo, wood, cotton cord, 34½"h.



433 / 434 / 435

435 Long Chevron Mouthed Flute, Bwa or Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, Collected in Solenzo, wood, 46"h.

436 Long Chevron Mouthed Flute, Lobi?
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 33¼"h.

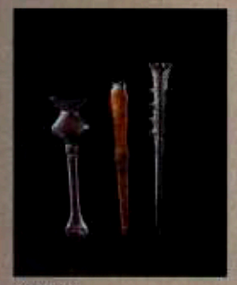
437 Rifle-form Flute, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, metal, 32½"l.
Provenance: André Blandin
The rifle-format of the flute below (cat. 437) would suggest its use for either hunting or war. The rifle portion is somewhat crude when compared to the masterful rendering of the mouth portion. The three flutes to the left are by the same hand or workshop, and, based on where they were collected, may be attributed to the Bwa or the Bobo. The elegant black-patinated flute (cat. 436) is perhaps Lobi, but the attribution is far from certain. TW

436 / 437

438 Side-blown Flute, origin undetermined
Western Burkina Faso, wood, reptile skin, cotton cord, copper? wire, 12⅞"l.

439 Horn-shape Flute, origin undetermined
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 11"l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele
Side-blown flutes are rare relative to vertically held flutes. The circumstances of their use is unrecorded.

440 Straight Bulbous Flute, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, 11½"h.



440 / 441 / 442

441 Straight Flute, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, animal hide, 11¾"h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

442 Flute with Multiple Knobs, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, 13¾"h.
Provenance: Joseph Herman

443 Flute in Diamond Akimbo-form, Bwa or Nuna
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 11⅝"h.

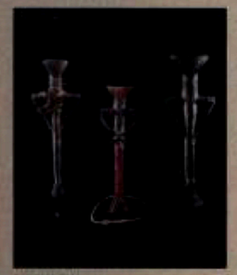
444 Straight Bulbous Flute, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, leather, 17"h.

443 / 444 / 445

445 Straight Flute, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, 18"h.
Cat. 445 is a very slender, elegant whistle from the Nuna or another people in western Burkina Faso. Years of storage in the rafters of the kitchen have given it the glossy black patina. CR

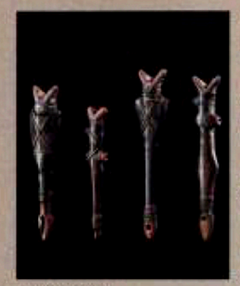
446 Flute in Horizontal Akimbo-form, origin undetermined
Western Burkina Faso, wood, leather, 11⅝"h.

447 Flute in Horizontal Akimbo-form, Marka/Dafing
Western Burkina Faso, wood, cotton cord, 10½"h.



446 / 447 / 448

448 Flute in Horizontal Akimbo-form, origin undetermined
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 12¾"h.
Provenance: William Wright
The Bwa, Bobo and other people west of the Mouhoun River make flutes in the shape of these examples to use during mask performances. The musician holds a finger over each of the holes at the ends of the arms while he blows across the hole at the top. Such objects are used for years, passed from one generation to the next, and are sometimes placed on shrines as a means of communicating with the spirits of the elders who once owned them. CR



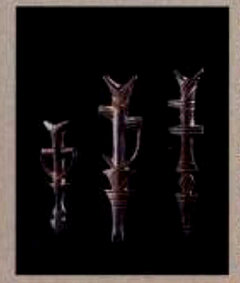
449 / 450 / 451 / 452

449 Straight Bulbous Flute, Nuna?
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, leather, 9⅛"h.
Provenance: William Wright

450 Straight Flute with Knobs, Nuna?
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, leather, 8⅛"h.
Provenance: William Wright

451 Straight Bulbous Flute, Nuna?
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, leather, 10⅝"h.
Provenance: William Wright

452 Straight Flute with Knobs, Nuna?
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, leather, 10"h.
Provenance: William Wright
These four flutes, which either formed a group or are part of a larger group, were said to be Nuna when William Wright purchased them in Burkina Faso early in 1987. It is unusual to find intact sets of flutes. TW



453 / 454 / 455

453 Flute in Horizontal Akimbo-form, origin undetermined
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 6⅝"h.
Provenance: William Wright

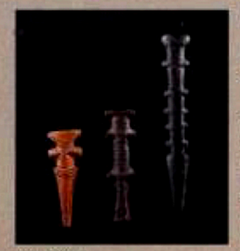
454 Flute in Offset Horizontal Akimbo-form, origin undetermined
Western Burkina Faso, wood, fiber cord, 9⅝"h.
Provenance: William Wright

455 Flute with Multiple Knobs, origin undetermined
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 9½"h.
Provenance: Michael Rhodes

456 Bi-knobbed Flute, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, 3⅞"h.

457 Flute with Multiple Knobs, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, lizard skin, 4⅝"h.

458 Flute with Multiple Knobs, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, 7⅝"h.



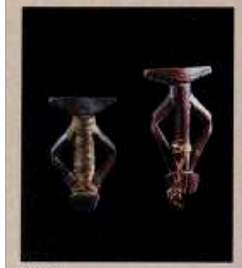
456 / 457 / 458

459 Bulbous Flute, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, 6½"h.

460 Flute in Warthog-form, Mossi
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, 5⅝"h.

459 / 460 / 461

461 Bulbous Flute, Mossi
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, 6⅛"h.
The warthog-shaped flute is common; in fact, though not illustrated here, this collection includes an old example carved in ivory. The telltale warthog canine teeth are rendered on a horizontal plane in the same fashion as those on the large Mossi warthog mask (cat. 100). The nose wrinkles, represented by horizontal lines at the front end of the flute, are of note. These features are also clearly rendered on the Mossi mask. Lastly, there is a subtle size distinction between the knobs representing the two pairs of protuberances on the warthog, verruca, from which its common name is derived, and the first and functional projections. These are hollowed to the central core, contributing to the mechanics of the flute. The warthog mask also displays two of these pairs of verruca. Two is the accurate number associated with the species of warthog, *Phacocoerus aethiopicus*, that inhabits the savannah of Burkina Faso.[187] TW



462 / 463

462 Flute in Diamond Akimbo-form, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, lizard skin, 3⅝"h.

463 Flute in Diamond Akimbo-form, Bwa?
Western Burkina Faso, wood, leather, 4 ½"h.
Whistles and flutes are ubiquitous in Burkina Faso. Almost every people uses them to accompany mask performances. Groups of young men stand near the drums and balafons, each playing his own flute as the mask performs. The flutes are tuned in sets to produce two or three notes which are played alternately and continuously. The sound is loud, piercing, and quite distinctive. Carvers produce these flutes in a range of sizes and styles, but they tend to be sold from village to village so it is quite common to see a flute carved by a Nuna artist being used in a Bwa village. CR

467

467 Oil Lamp with Antelope Head, Nuna?
Southern Burkina Faso, iron, 29 ¼"h.
This is one of the oldest of the many figurative oil lamps that have appeared on the market. The bowl retains some residue from the oil. The antelope head is likely the family's animal totem and serves on the lamp as a guardian. Such lamps would have served either at night or to illuminate interior windowless rooms. TW

468 Comb Necklace Pendant, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, copper alloy, leather, 3⅛"h.
The surface of the brass shows evidence of blood sacrifice. While this is thought to be a utilitarian object, a comb, the spiral elements could be other-world chameleon references. The demilune form has negative, birth-related, cosmic implications. It has been prescribed by a diviner to counteract the consequences surrounding the circumstances of the birth.[168] The comb might also have belonged to a deceased member of a family and have been placed on a shrine to honor the memory of the person, and through sacrifices maintain spirit-world communication. TW

468

469 Pipe with Antelope Head, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, wood, 8 ½"l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

470 Pipe Bowl with Figure, Bwa
Central or Western Burkina Faso, copper alloy, 2 ½"h.
Provenance: Michael Rhodes

471 Pipe Bowl, Kaséna
Southern Burkina Faso, terra-cotta, 3"h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

472 Pipe Bowl with Antelope Head, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, aluminum alloy, 2 ½"h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

473 Pipe Bowl, Kaséna
Southern Burkina Faso, terra-cotta, 2¾"h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele
The small, heavily worn pipe (cat. 469) is beautifully cast in white metal, an aluminum alloy perhaps derived from a mobilette engine. The antelope was the animal sacred to the family that owned the pipe and that provided protection to the family members. The stem was made of wood and was decorated with carved patterns. Bwa and Nuna men continue to use pipes like this one when they relax in the evening after a long day chopping weeds in their fields. CR
Both the form and decoration of the brass pipe with a figure (cat. 470) are nearly identical to the aluminum alloy Bwa pipe bowls and lead to the probable Bwa attribution for the pipe bowl. The variety in form and designs on the terra-cotta bowls (cats. 471 and 473) suggest a southern *gurunsi* origin, one of the Kaséna groups or, perhaps from farther south, the Nankana. TW

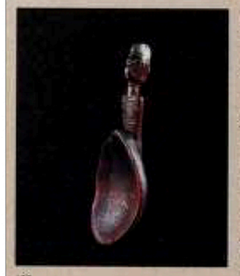
HOUSEHOLD AND UTILITARIAN OBJECTS

466 / 465

SPOONS, LAMPS, COMBS, AND PIPES

464 Spoon/Ladle with Antelope Head, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, 8⅛"l.

465 Spoon/Ladle with Bird's Head, Nuna or Kaséna
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, 7⅝"l.
Provenance: Joseph Herman
The finely carved, elegant wood spoon (cat. 465) was used to ladle the sauce that accompanied meals of millet porridge. The sacred animal of the family was the hornbill, a large bird associated with knowledge of the spirit world. The beautiful leaf shape of the bowl is quite typical of the best of these spoons. The antelope was the protective spirit of the family that owned the spoon on the left. (cat. 464). It was intended magically to change color if it encountered poisoned food. CR



466

466 Spoon/Ladle with Head, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, 5 ½"l.
Provenance: André Blandin
The diamond-shaped mouth with wide lips, the fully developed nostril lobes and elongated head on this spoon are characteristic of one style of Nuna statuary. The mouth is similarly rendered on several objects illustrated here, the small elongate figure (cat. 197) and on two scepters (cats. 254 and 258). TW

469 / 470
471 / 472 / 473

474 / 475 / 476 / 477

DOLLS

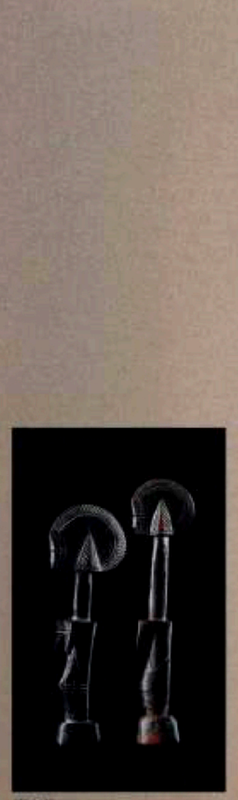
Mossi dolls are a study in variations on a theme developed around an economy of parts, a cylinder representing an armless torso, breasts, a neck of variable length, and a head with detail largely given to the coiffeur, sometimes facial scars, and ears well enough developed to support earrings. Body scarifications appear on the lower torso, the chest, and the neck. A magnificently wide array of styles burgeons from this limited vocabulary.
Dolls served on two levels. The first, as is true for dolls the world over, are toys for girls, which, while playthings, are also obvious pedagogic tools. A doll may also serve an adult as a surrogate baby for a childless, would-be mother. Caring for the doll as she would her own baby, feeding it, carrying it in a cloth wrap when going to market, she believes that a sympathetic magic will occur. If the woman conceives and a baby is born, the doll receives the first drops of milk from the mother. The doll is then carefully tucked away, a cherished object to be passed along to the next generation. Many of the dolls illustrated here have been passed to at least a second generation; some are older still. TW

474–476 Three Scarification Blades, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, iron, largest: 5⅝"h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele

477 Cobbler's Blade, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, iron, 4 ¼"h.
André Blandin avers from in-country queries that the Mossi utilized the three smaller blades on the left (cats. 474–476) for scarifying. He cited the larger blade (cat. 477) as having belonged to a cobbler, who would have used it for cutting leather.[169] TW

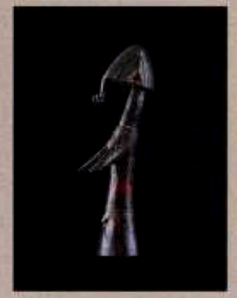
478 Doll, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, Bulsa region, wood, copper alloy, 13⅝"h.

479 Doll, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, Bulsa region, wood, leather, undifferentiated metal, 14⅞"h.



478 / 479

480



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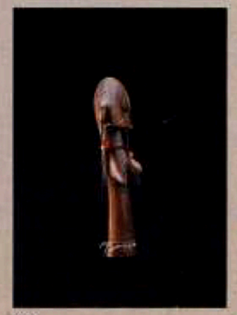


482

483 / 484

480 Doll, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, Bulsa region, wood, copper alloy, 12⅜"h.
Somyogedé Koudougou carved these superb Mossi dolls in the village of Bonam, north of the town of Boulsa, in the 1970s. He frequently sold his dolls in the Boulsa market. His father, Zimwomdya Koudougou, made many dolls of the same style. He died in the early 1970s. Boulsa dolls are larger than others, with a large, disk-shaped head, pendulous breasts, and a protuberant navel. There are a large number of such dolls in collections all over the world. CR
All three dolls are, in my view, by Zimwomdya Koudougou, the father of Somyogedé Koudougou, as two were collected in the early 1970s, by which time they had already developed a fine carbon patina from exposure to smoke in the rafters above the cooking fire and more than a generation of handling. The third (cat. 478) was bought at auction but was collected at an early enough date to have a wrong attribution label on its underside "Doll, Bambara, W. Africa." This "bulsa" doll style, to my eye, represents one of the stellar visions in Burkinabé art. TW

481 Doll with Front Braid, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Kongoussi region, wood, 11⅛"h.
This is one of the finest Mossi dolls in any collection. The backward curve of the spine balances the beautiful sweep of the lines of the neck, chest, and breasts. A little girl in the Mossi town of Kongoussi or in the nearby area once owned this doll. CR
The patination becomes progressively denser from the neck up with the patina on the head and front curl very well developed. This difference in patination may indicate that the doll was once clothed. Annemarie Schweeger-Hefel and Wilhelm Staude illustrated a stylistically very similar doll, which, according to their report, came from Arbinda, an important Kurumba village.[166] This is possible, although the doll may have a different origin. It probably sold at the Arbinda market, 80 miles to the northeast of Kongoussi. TW

482 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Kaya-Barsalogo region, wood, glass beads, plastic beads, taxodont pelecypod, cotton cord, 9"h.

483 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, region undetermined, wood, plastic beads, glass beads, cowrie, metal alloy coin, cotton cord, 10⅛"h.

484 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Kaya-Barsalogo region, wood, leather, glass beads, aluminum, 9 ¾"h.
Provenance: William Wright
Two of these dolls are clearly by the same hand, but one has been laboriously clothed in leather, cicatrices, and hair finely scratched into its surface. Both wear the traditional Mossi crested hairstyle, *gyonfo*, and display a far more understated front curl than cat. 481 above. The composition of the pendant earrings on the doll shown singly includes plastic beads and a freshwater clam. Those on the leather-covered doll are aluminum with a single bead, red on the PR, blue on the PL. Faces, when present on dolls, are generally sketchy in the extreme. The tallest of the three dolls (cat. 483) is unusual, in that it has a relatively well-developed mouth and the remnants of a full nose with hollowed nares but

with no eyes. The parallel lines of scars that frame the face continue across the forehead, forming an oval. Tucked between these surrounding scars and the nose are two diagonally placed feathery cicatrices where one would expect to find the eyes. The metal alloy coin is a 1929 French 25-centime piece. The pendant earring was part of the doll when I purchased it in Ouagadougou in the early 1970s. The coin has subsequently had to be reattached. TW

485 / 486 / 487

485 Doll, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, Ziniaré region, wood, undifferentiated beads, undifferentiated cord, 9⅝" h.

486 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Kaya region, wood, 7¼" h.

487 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Ziniaré region?, wood, 8⅜" h.

488 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Kaya region, wood, 8½" h.

489 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, probably Kaya region, wood, leather, 9½" h.

Two girls' dolls illustrated here, the middle doll above (cat. 486) and the doll to the left here (cat. 488), are from the city of Kaya, northeast of Ouagadougou. The projecting face and unbroken line down the backs are typical of dolls from this town. When a young woman married, she often took her favorite doll with her to the home of her new husband. The very fine, old, and well-used doll (cat. 485, above left) is from the town of Ziniaré, northeast of Ouagadougou. Although the doll is called *biiga*, or "child," it has all the marks of a mature woman, including scars, hairstyle, and long breasts. The similarity to Barbie dolls is obvious. CR

488 / 489

In addition to the unbroken line that curves from the back of the head down the neck and back, dolls from the Kaya region usually display halved, saucer-shaped ears that lie vertically positioned behind the central axis of the head. Dolls from Ziniaré have narrow heads, domed like Kaya dolls but with large, narrow, inverted U-shaped volumes on either side of the head that represent side elements of the coiffeur.[98] Ears of roughly the same shape, but concave with central hollows, lie along the axis of the head, centered along the base line of the lateral parts of the coiffeur. TW

490

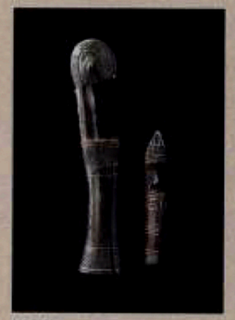
490 Doll with Remnant Frontal Braid, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, region undetermined, wood, 10" h.

491 / 492

491 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Saponé region?, wood, 11" h.

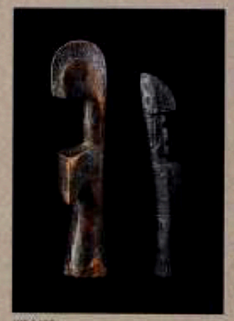
492 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Saponé region?, wood, 9¾" h.

The origins of many styles have not been determined. The head on the doll shown singly (cat. 490) originally had a front curl that rolled counter-clockwise forward from the present break point. The break occurred relatively early in its history as it has been smoothed from much handling and shares the same smoky black patina as the rest of the doll. Both this doll and doll in cat. 483 are by a similar hand. Both have features in common. The wide, rounded volume of their heads is a distinctive shape that, along with the wide zigzag scarifications on their necks and the singularity of the expansive medial hair crests, resemble features of one style of *karan-wemba* (cats. 123, 124, and 192). Both the doll to the left (cat. 491) and the doll to the right (cat. 492) have an expansive disk coiffeur of uniform thickness similar to the doll discussed above (cat. 490). However, on these two dolls, the coiffeur is the dominant volume composing the head. On the doll to the right minuscule facial features are cut into a small slice of the lower front portion of the disk. A mere suggestion of a face is expressed by a narrow horizontal band with diagonal striations that separate the lines representing hair from a thin, featureless strip along the bottom front of the disk. At either side of the head both dolls have distinctive volumes representing braid clusters forming the lateral elements of the traditional Mossi tripartite coiffeur, the *gyonfo*; both are striated to represent hair. Holes on the sides of the doll to the left are the ears. A doll from the C.M. Stanley collection by perhaps the same hand as the doll in cat. 491 is said to have been collected in Saponé, a town south of Ouagadougou.[99] TW



493 / 494

493 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Kaya region?, wood, 12¼" h.



495 / 496

494 Doll, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, Risiam region?, wood, 7" h.

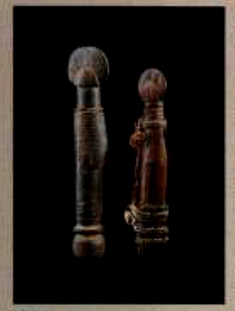
495 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, probably Kaya region, wood, 12⅜" h.

496 Doll, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, Risiam region?, wood, 10¾" h.

497 Doll, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, Risiam region?, wood, 12" h.

Judging from the continuous line down their backs from behind their heads, both the doll to the left (cat. 495) and the doll below left (cat. 497) may be from the Kaya region. The latter, however, has no ears and the former, no breasts and a small knot at the back of its neck. The three dolls with flat front torsos and pointed, angular heads (cats. 494, 496, and 497) and those with narrow columnar bodies and with the small circular heads (cats. 498 and 499) originate, according to Christopher Roy, in the northern Risiam region. Counseled, in the 1970s in Burkina Faso, that the former were from Koupéla and the latter from nearby Zorgho, both very far to the southeast of Risiam, I was readily enough convinced, but Ouagadougou, in those years, abounded with misinformation. TW

497



498 / 499

498 Doll, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, Risiam region, wood, glass beads, undifferentiated cord, 8¾" h.

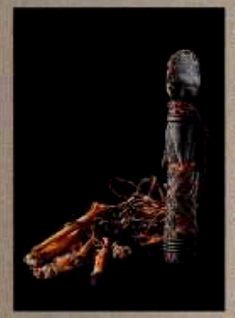
499 Doll, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, Risiam region, wood, cowrie, leather, plastic, 7⅝" h.

500 Doll, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, region undetermined, wood, plastic beads, cotton cord, 6" h.

501 Doll with Frontal Braid, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, Ziniaré/Kaya region?, wood, 8" h.
Provenance: William Hereford

500 / 501

The two dolls above are typical of the style associated with the Risiam area:[100] long, narrow, cylindrical bodies with small, nearly circular heads in profile, and semicircular volumes, laterally placed to represent the side elements of the tripartite *gyonfo*. Facial features are limited to, at most, the suggestion of a mouth. The origin of the shortest of the four dolls (cat. 500) is unknown, but the central hair crest terminates anteriorly in a highly-stylized front braid similar to that seen on cats. 482 and 484. Beneath the braid, a pair of small holes, eyes, or nares, represents a highly-reduced face. The zigzag, exaggerated front curl on the doll to the right defines this style of doll (cat. 501). The combined features would seem to place it in the Kaya/Ziniaré sphere of influence. I am very grateful to Bill Hereford, with whom I lodged on more than one occasion, for he most generously gave me this splendid old doll. TW



502

502 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Ziniaré, wood, leather, bird bones, 7" h.

503

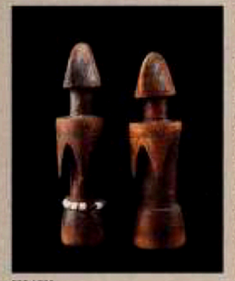
503 Doll, Mossi
North Central Burkina Faso, Kaya, wood, leather, glass beads, metal alloy coin, cotton cord, 7¼" h.

The sheath-like leather coverings were probably achieved by stitching wet leather that was stretched over the doll and allowed to dry and shrink to a tight fit over the entire surface. Both of these skillfully clothed dolls have the same woven design, nested recumbent Vs, although the Kaya doll displays a finer weave. The hollow bones are from birds. They provide an unusual necklace for the Ziniaré doll. At the time of purchase the parure of the doll from Kaya (cat. 503) included the beaded strands at the neck and waist but only one earring. Its pendant coin is a metal alloy, French 5-centime piece, dated 1924. TW

504

504 Doll, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, corncob, leather, undifferentiated cord, polychrome stain, 7⅛" h.

The leather covering is stained red on one side and black on the other. Lines of small black dots on the red field probably represent abdominal scarification. Decorated with interwoven bands and an elaborate necklace of long leather tabs and strands, the doll showcases typical Mossi leatherwork as seen on the scabbards illustrated earlier (cats. 17–19). Most arresting is the emphasis on one aspect of the hairstyle, the front curl, which here projects from the center top of the doll and is tightly wrapped with black thread. TW



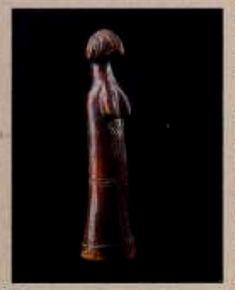
505 / 506

505 Doll, Mossi or Kurumba
North Central Burkina Faso, wood, beads, cotton cord, 7" h.

506 Doll, Mossi or Kurumba
North Central Burkina Faso, wood, 6¾" h.

Parents across all strata of Mossi society purchased dolls to give to their daughters as simple playthings. These old examples are from the small town of Ziniaré, north of Ouagadougou on the road to Kaya. CR

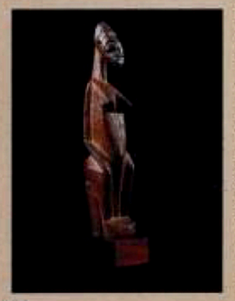
There are differing opinions concerning the origins of various styles of Mossi dolls. Part of the problem lies in the movements of women once they marry. When these two dolls were bought, early in the 1970s, a number in this style appeared simultaneously. It was said that they originated from the area around Bourzanga, in northern Risiam. Annemarie Schweeger-Hefel cites the form as Kurumba.[101] However, Christopher Roy photographed two girls from a village near Yako, far to the southwest, clutching dolls with similarly shaped heads and bases (fig. 30). The central portions of the dolls are not visible so the possible similarities in the distinctive rendering of the torsos cannot be confirmed. The reduced and stylized geometric volumes are covered with fine lines and dotted scarifications. Here again, these dolls illustrate the lack of importance accorded faces; the doll on the left shows no indication of facial features, while that on the right, a minimal pair of eyes and a mouth, indicated by nothing more than two incised dots and a thin horizontal line. TW



507

507 Doll, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, region undetermined, wood, 9" h.

I have seen no other doll (cat. 507) by this hand. Its place of origin is unknown. Although made of wood, the subtle swelling of the abdomen and the transition from shoulders to neck is more like work in clay, as if the artisan had pressed out the surface between fingers and thumb. Here again, the central crest of the *gyonfo* dips over the face in a much reduced reference to a front curl. TW



508

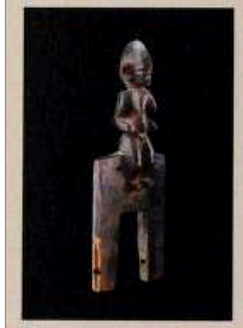
508 Doll, Kurumba?
North Central Burkina Faso?, wood, 9⁵⁄₁₆" h.
Provenance: Joseph Herman

This doll style has, "by tradition," always been referred to as Kurumba, but on no evidence that I have uncovered. Furthermore, Annemarie Schweeger-Hefel, who, from the early 1960s through the 1980s, conducted exhaustive field research on Kurumba material culture, cites a number of dolls from what she considers the Kurumba area but records none in this style.[102] That it has been consistently classified a doll is likewise puzzling, as it is stylistically, let alone formally, unrelated to Mossi dolls. There are a number of examples extant, all by the same hand or workshop, in private and public collections. Collection

of all of them appears to have occurred before the 1970s. Perhaps multiple examples led to the notion that they are dolls but how they came to be associated with Burkina Faso, let alone the Kurumba, we do not know. TW

HEDDLE PULLEYS

All over West Africa weavers use pulleys to suspend the cords that connect the heddles on their looms. The connecting cords run over a small wheel that rotates first clockwise then counterclockwise on a dowel inserted between the two "legs" of the heddle pulley. When one heddle goes up the other descends, forming the space between the warp yarns through which the weft is passed. CR

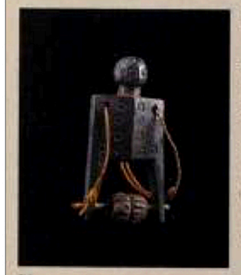

509

509 Heddle Pulley with Seated Female Figure, Winiama
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, 8½" h.

510 Heddle Pulley with Bust, Bwa
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, palm seed (*Raphia vinifera*), 7" h.

511 Heddle Pulley with Female Bust, Bwa
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, cotton cord, palm seed (*Raphia vinifera*), 5½" h.
The Winiama heddle pulley (cat. 509) is superb. The figure is a wonderful example of the style of the Winiama, who live west of the Mouhoun (Black Volta) River north of Boromo. CR
Stylistically, the Winiama pulley is strikingly similar to the standing female figure (cat. 195) and the mask with two figures (cat. 85). All three, if not by the same hand, are from the same workshop. The master carver had a penchant for finely faceted surfaces. While smoothing and rounding is always an option, this sculptor opted instead to leave fine faceting tool marks. This preference is discernible on all three examples cited here as well as on a previously donated pulley on exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The X scarification, *bidaywhe*, on the center of the brow on the female bust (cat. 511) was once specific to certain villages of the southernmost Bwa.[98] Worthy of note is the inclusion of the conical volume belly with its cicatrices. The barrel-shaped roller is the functional part of the heddle pulley and must be durable to support the continual back and forth movement of the cord that positions the heddles. Most pulleys employ a markedly hard palm seed, *Raphia vinifera*, that is imported from the West African coast. The palm seed rollers are retained on four pulleys illustrated in this book. TW

510 / 511


512

512 Heddle Pulley with Head, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, cotton cord, palm seed (*Raphia vinifera*), 6½" h.
The curious incised circles are more deeply carved on the head than on the two sides and front of this pulley. The deep circle carved in the forehead is the beginning of a medial series of five similar elements that end at the bottom of the back of the head. I cannot say whether this is decorative or symbolic. TW

513 / 514

515

516 / 517

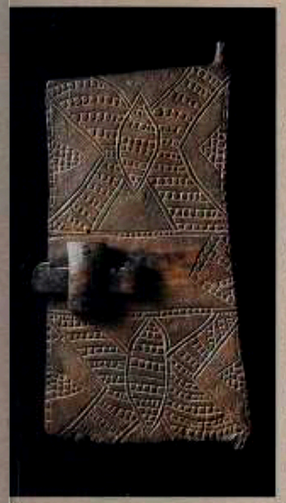
513 Heddle Pulley as a Blacksmith's *kobiay* Mask, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 6" h.

514 Heddle Pulley with a Janus-form Bobo *bolo* Mask, Bobo
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 6¼" h.
I have seen only one other example of a *kobiay* mask pulley. That in itself is amazing, as fine Burkinabé heddle pulleys are exceedingly rare and those depicting masks rarer still. The *kobiay* mask type is found exclusively among the Didiro family blacksmiths of Houndé in southernmost Bwa country. A similar-style Didiro family mask is illustrated in this volume (cat. 135).
Usually, heddle pulleys from Burkina Faso are suspended from the shoulders and not from a hole piercing the neck. This clearly Bobo pulley (cat. 514) is an exception. I cannot say whether this form of suspension is characteristic of Bobo pulleys, which is possible given the Mandé origin of the Bobo. The head on this pulley is typical of a northern-style bolo mask; in this case, it is Janus form, with the two heads nearly identical. TW

515 Heddle Pulley as a Yatenga-style Mask, Mossi
Northwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, 8¾" h.
Provenance: Ambassador Allan Davis, Margaret Plass[197]
The pulley is from the Yatenga region, northwesternmost Mossi country. As indicated by the broken area above the "forehead," a pair of horns originally projected upward in front of the short vertical plaque, as they do on *karanga* masks, the models for this pulley. The upper half has been pyro-blackened with a heated blade. TW

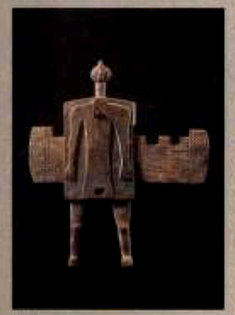
516 Bat-form Heddle Pulley, origin undetermined
Central or Western Burkina Faso, wood, palm seed (*Raphia vinifera*), 5" h.

517 Heddle Pulley with Bird's Head, Tiefo
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 7½" h.
Bird forms are the most common sculpted pulleys in Burkina Faso. Many are from either the Senufo or Senufo-related groups in the southwestern part of the country. This Tiefo pulley (cat. 517) is both larger and more stylized than other bird pulleys. Its surface is blackened from both smoke and handling. The heddle pulley sculpted in the form of a bat (cat. 516) is unusual. Aside from birds, animals are seldom depicted on Burkinabé heddle pulleys. TW

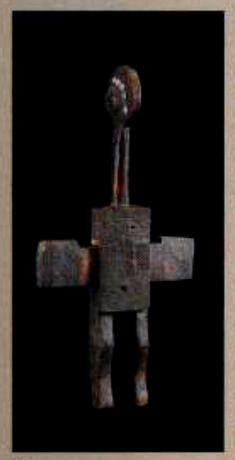

518

DOORS AND DOOR LOCKS

518 Door with Lock, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, Leo region, wood, iron, 48½" h.
Decades ago the doors to homes in Burkina Faso were made of solid broad planks such as this one, with elaborate scars carved into the surface and beautiful wooden locks. The carved patterns were protective; they represented ideas about spiritual protection of life and property. This is a fine example. Now most doors (but not all) are made of a sheet of corrugated tin with a chain and padlock. CR
While the lock "belongs" with this door and in itself shows considerable handling, it has nothing like the age and handling patina of this very old and exceedingly heavy door. Doors of this age, from a single piece of wood, could be helpful tools for establishing dates applying tree ring analysis in conjunction with C14 dating. It is likely center cut and, while cut to fit an opening, one side would be close to the outermost, and therefore most recent, layers of wood. TW


519

519 Door Lock with Figure, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, wood, iron, 14" h.
This weathered, exterior lock is both sculpted in the round and in bas relief. The disproportionately small spherical head is seen on other examples of Mossi figurative sculpture. In contrast to the head, the feet, which on most Burkinabé sculpture are overlarge, are unusually appropriately proportionate. TW


520

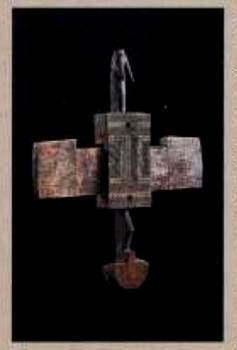
520 Door Lock with Figure, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, Kongoussi region, wood, cowrie, *Abrus precatorius* seeds, bee's wax, 35" h.
This tall lock is twice the height of other locks in this distinctive style. If not for the frontal view of toes and of knees, singular as they are, with vertical notches mirroring the toes, judging from the relationship of the *gyonfo* hair crest to the rest of the coiffeur and the placement of the coiffeur on the head, one would suppose the figure to have its back to the viewer. Both perceptions are correct. The legs are in front view; the head is seen from behind. Although not present on this lock, other examples of smaller locks by the same hand show a distinctive tuft or short braid beneath the back of the head at the top of the neck. This was once popular among married Mossi women. There are a number of examples of this hairstyle on other objects illustrated here: a doll (cat. 487); a figure on a Yatenga *karan-wemba* mask (cat. 192); on two figures from *karan-wemba* masks (cats. 123 and 124); on the figure on a *zazaigo* (cat. 130) and a figurative container (cat. 191). Figures on locks are thought to be spirit-world protective devices. In most Burkinabé cultures the supernatural world is seen as inhabited by various tiers of entities, each with a different relationship to humans. "Genies" are a category of spirit entities that, like the "wee folk" in Ireland, are thought to be occasionally visible to humans. They are described by a number of cultures as being much smaller than human beings and as having many human physical attributes but attributes that may be reversed on "genies." Backward-facing legs is the genie attribute most often cited. Given the strange physical anomalies on this lock and on a smaller example of the same style (cat. 522) it is proposed that these two locks represent a form of protective "genie." In addition to its unusual size, the decorative arc of wax-embedded cowries and single, eye-like placement of a red *Abrus precatorius* seed on either side of the head give reason to believe the lock secured an important door. The wear on the columnar neck is from its use as a gripping handle. TW

521 Standing Figure Door Lock, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, Leo region, wood, 13¾" h.

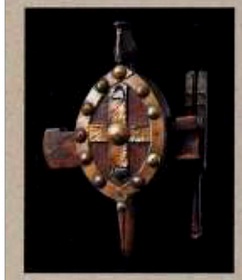
522 Standing Figure Door Lock, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, Kongoussi region, wood, iron, 19½" h.
Provenance: William Wright

521 / 522 / 523

523 Standing Figure Door Lock, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, Dédougou region, wood, 18⅛" h.
Provenance: William Wright
These three locks represent three different Burkinabé cultures. The lock in the middle (cat. 522) is Mossi and probably represents a genie, a type of protective spirit entity discussed above (cat. 520). The flat, nearly rectangular format of the body may be characteristically Mossi. The similarities in the rendering of the head on the door lock to the right (cat. 523) to the sculpted heads on the four-legged stools for women, from Dédougou (cats. 538 and 539), may point to a similar central Bwa origin. Current thought is that the bowed front of the body of a lock in Burkina Faso is common to *gurunsi* locks. Several peoples, Bobo, Lobi and Nuna, have a hairstyle that may be depicted as on this lock, in simple front to back rows (cat. 521). As figurative locks from either of the former have not been identified, it is speculated that the lock to the left is Nuna. TW


524

524 Door Lock with Antelope Head, Mossi
East Central Burkina Faso, wood, iron, 20" h.
The pattern on the surface of this lock (cat. 524) is so similar to that of the very large figurative lock thought to be from Kongoussi (cat. 520) that this lock likely originates from the same workshop. The Kongoussi locks, of which I am aware, also share an approach to key insertion. Locks from Burkina Faso use either wood blocks or metal rods that drop through holes in the body of the lock into slots in the crossbar. All of the Kongoussi locks use metal rods, which the people lift to the "unlocked" position with a long metal key with vertical pegs aligned to fit the holes in the crossbar. The key has a double bend, which allows insertion in a horizontal slot through the top edge at the end of the crossbar and manipulation to lift the metal pegs. Unlike those from Kongoussi and perhaps the surrounding area, most traditional Burkinabé locks open by inserting a straight key horizontally through a vertical opening at the end of the crossbar. Some have a more elaborate key, shaped like a tuning fork, which slips into paired slots as in cat. 525, shown with its key. TW



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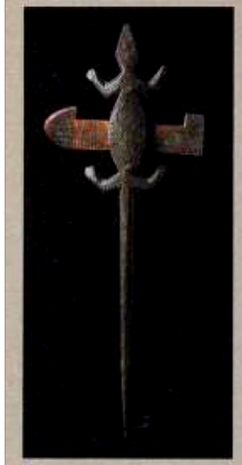

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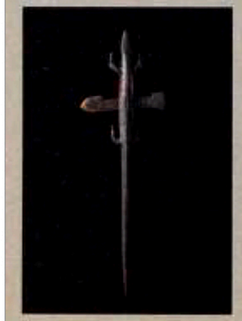

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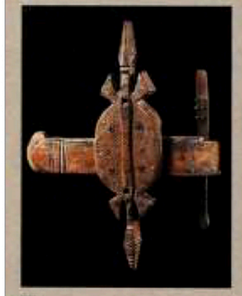


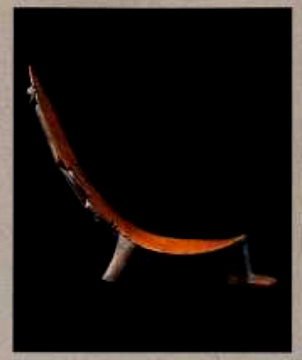
528

525 Turtle-form Door Lock with Key, Dogon
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, copper alloy, iron, 11 ½" h.
The surface of this lock is oiled and polished. It has been protected from weathering and shows no accumulation of dust. The key to this lock has a lovely wear patina. Of note is the head, which is reminiscent of certain Dogon figures. TW

526 Monitor Lizard Door Lock, Samo
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, iron, 52" h.

527 Lizard Door Lock, Samo
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, iron, 35" h.
Provenance: William Wright
Sculpted lizard door locks were once a popular form of lock among the Samo. These lizard locks represent either the large Nile Monitor, *Varanus niloticus*, or the somewhat smaller, Savannah Monitor, *Varanus exanthematicus*. Savannah Monitors, attaining five feet in length and twelve pounds in weight, are long, thin and fast-moving; Nile Monitors are still larger, the largest lizards in Africa. With an inclusive appetite including crocodile eggs and rodents, their presence on locks may reference both their courageous egg-stealing from crocodiles, which enjoy a well-earned reputation as fierce guardians of their nests, and their predatory penchant for mice and rats that are drawn to grain stores. Like most Burkinabé granaries, Samo granaries do not have eaves that afford their doors protection from the weather. As neither of these locks show evidence of weathering, they do not appear to have served on exterior granary doors but rather, protected interior rooms and, judging from the well-developed patinas, rooms that were frequently accessed. These two locks afford an other-world protection that reaches beyond earthly vermin to include the far more threatening malevolence of dark spirit entities. TW

528 Lizard or Turtle Door Lock with Key, Kurumba?
Northwestern Burkina Faso, wood, copper alloy, tin?, iron, 15 ¼" h.
The head on this lock bears similarities to the turtle lock, probably from the Dogon (cat. 525), but at the time of purchase, in Burkina Faso, Kurumba seemed to be the location of origin. The inset brass trefoils and circles are unusual. It is a technique rarely applied in Burkina Faso. Such short legs and a tail that nearly mimics the shape of the head renders almost indeterminable the nature of the animal from which the lock is derived. Whatever its origin, it is a beautifully conceived and realized sculpture. TW



529

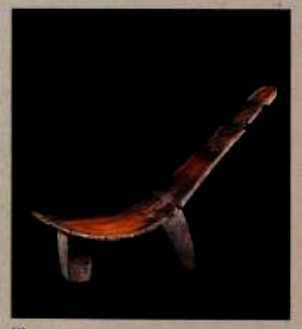
530

CHAIRS AND STOOLS

529 Man's Swept-back Chair with Crocodile and Mask, Nunuma
West Central Burkina Faso, wood, 37" l.
The presence of three legs defines this chair, designed for relaxing, as having belonged to a man. Seats with four legs, designed for sitting while working, belonged to women. Decorative as is the crocodile that so elegantly graces the back of this chair, both it and the mask-like animal head protruding from above it are associated with spirit-world entities that lent protection to the owner. The small mask may be a representation of the *wankr* mask, the principal mask kept on the family altar. Given the degree of workmanship, this chair must have belonged to a family member of considerable wealth and stature. The rendering of the animal head, with its medial ridge and crest, is stylistically more similar to Nunuma masks than to those belonging to the Nuna, the Winiama, or the Bwa. TW

530 Man's Swept-back Chair, Nuna or Bwa
Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, 31" l.
Unlike the previous chair, this example seems surprisingly narrow. However, this is a very popular width. The additional workmanship in the bold, serrated ridge that runs down the back of the chair, would seem to negate the possibility that the choice in width is economy related. TW

531 Man's Swept-back Chair, Bwa or *gurunsi*
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 26 ½" l.



531

Men and women in many villages throughout Burkina Faso gather in the courtyard in front of the family home, as the sun sets, and dinner is prepared. They share a pipe of tobacco, or pass around a few bowls of millet beer, as men recline on comfortable, curved chairs such as this one, playing with their children on their knees. CR
Apart from the sculpted outline, the sole decorative motif is the triangle carved into the surface to form paired bands, alternately spaced, with the upper set inverted relative to the lower set. Each triangle is the same size, shares the same proportions, and is carefully rendered relative to its neighbor. This economy lends the chair a quiet grace. TW

532

532 Man's Swept-back Chair, Nuna?
Southern Burkina Faso, wood, 35 ½" h.
This old chair, discarded after its front leg was broken, may have lain about a compound or been found in an abandoned home. The pointed blade at the top is rarely seen and may be an archaic form. As this was undoubtedly the chair of a man, the front leg was originally a single "foot" and not paired legs, the ill-informed and wanting restoration of a Burkinabé dealer. TW

533

533 Caryatid Stool with Female Figure, Bobo
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 20 ½" h.
Provenance: Alain Dufour
This superb stool features a finely carved figure of a woman with elaborate Bobo scars on her face, chest and abdomen. It may have served as a seat of honor by the man who organized young men's initiations. CR
This stool and the next (cat. 534) are the sole examples of caryatid stools that I have encountered from Burkina Faso. TW

534 Caryatid Stool with Mother and Child, origin undetermined
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 18" h.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele
The smaller figure is clearly female, but the gender of the larger is undefined. Its size, relative to the female figure, and its outstretched protective arms, give it a masculine appearance, but it could also depict a genie protecting the female figure and, by extension, the family. Its visual importance would suggest that the stool belonged to a man, but arguably, the four feet planted on the base could be construed as a female referent. TW

534

535 Man's Portable Three-legged Stool with Paired Heads, Dagara
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 21 ½" l.
Provenance: William Wright

536 Man's Portable Three-legged Stool with Janus Heads, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 22 ½" l.
Provenance: William Wright

537 Man's Portable Three-legged Stool with Head, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 23 ¼" l.
Provenance: William Wright
Lobi men carry three-legged stools such as these when they go to gatherings in the village and especially when they go to the local bars where millet beer is sold. The heads on these stool represent spirits, *wathil*, that protect the owners. The stools also provide physical protection, making handy clubs for owners who fight in the bars, as Lobi men frequently do. CR

535 / 536 / 537

When a Lobi travels beyond his own village limits, the domain protected by the primary spirit of his home village, especially when he traverses areas of the bush between villages, he is vulnerable to attack by malevolent spirits, the *koteé*. According to one informant of Daniela Bognolo,[98] stools are commissioned as protection for the older heads of families during their annual pilgrimage, the *joro*, to the primary patrilinear shrine, the *cokotin*, in the village of origin of their lineage. Apparently, according to the informant, only the elders carry such stools, as the younger Lobi are of no account in the eyes of malevolent *koteé*. The figurative pairs represent the mythic ancestral couples and, therefore, relate to the purpose of the *joro*. According to Piet Meyer, the Janus head stool is likely the work of the Lobi artist Sikire Kambire from Gaoua.[99]

538

538 Woman's Four-legged Stool with Head, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, Dédougou region, wood, 9 ⅝" h.

539

539 Woman's Four-legged Stool with Head, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, Dedougou region, wood, 7 ⅞" h.
Provenance: André Blandin, collected after 1961 in Abidjan by Blandin
These four-legged stools are very common, even today, in Bwa villages, especially in northern Burkina Faso. They are used exclusively by women. All stools with four legs are made for women. All three-legged stools are made for men. The head and neck serve as a handle. Every time a Bwa woman sits to stir the food she is cooking she reaches down and grasps the stool by the neck and deftly slips it beneath her. These stools are, of course, intended to represent a kneeling human figure. CR

540

540 Woman's Four-legged Stool with Opposing Animal Heads, Bwa or Nuna
Southwest Central Burkina Faso, wood, 7 ⅞" h.
Provenance: William Wright
This handsome and commodious stool has a well-developed patina from continuous rubbing on the seat and the two grips and intermittent handling on the legs. TW

541

541 Man's Three-legged Stool with Opposing Heads, Bwa or *gurunsi*
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 11 ⅝" h.
Provenance: Professeur et Madame Jean Bienaymé
The origin of this stool, carved for a man, is uncertain. The head at the fore-end of the seat with its elongate chin is conceived in an unfamiliar style. The paired nares are well enough separated to open the possibility that the long chin is a beak, and the entire head,

a hornbill abstraction. The unbroken facial plane of the antelope at the rear is reminiscent of the miniature Bobo antelope mask (cat. 402) and the massive, square-cut paired back legs are very like those of the large Nuna or Bwa chairs upon which men sit (cat. 531). The legs of both the chair and this stool have a slight outward bow at the back, but are straight in front. This leg shape is quite distinctive. Regrettably the origin of the chair (cat. 531) is uncertain. While it is likely that the Bobo use large swept-back chairs like the *gurunsi* and the Bwa, their use, to my knowledge, has not been documented. The surface of this stool has probably been waxed since leaving Africa. TW

542 / 543

542 Man's Portable Three-legged Bird-form Stool, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 25" l.
Provenance: André Blandin, collected after 1981 in Abidjan by Blandin

543 Man's Portable Three-legged Bird-form Stool, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, wood, 20½" l.
Provenance: Professeur et Madame Jean Bienaymé
Bird stools assume many forms, from a blocky style reminiscent of 1930s National Socialist massive sculpture to delicately arced, curved and rounded forms like these two examples. The stool to the left has an odd, patchily darkened surface that may have been "enhanced" by a zealous dealer. I usually avoid objects that have suffered such an indignity but, in this case, I found the sculptural qualities of the stool too extraordinary not to overlook the shortcoming. The Blandin stool, to the right, is an exceptionally graceful, even rarified, conception. TW

544 Woman's Four-legged Stool in the Form of a Crocodile, Mossi
Central Burkina Faso, wood, 27 9/16" l.
To lighten this otherwise massive stool, the sculptor excavated the underside. A translucent wear patina is developing on the stools upper surface. TW

544

545

546

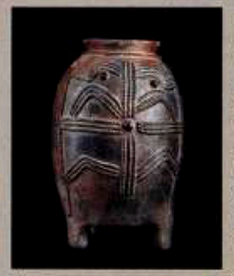
545 Man's Three-legged Stool, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, leather, 27½" l.
This example of a familiar type of a man's three-legged stool is both smaller than most and unusually low to the ground and enjoys an exceptional glossy wear patina. TW

546 Man's Three-legged Bird-form Stool, Bwa?
Western Burkina Faso, wood, 14" h. × 6½" w. × 17" l.
Provenance: Amyas Naegele
The shape of this head is seen on several other seats from small swept-back chairs to a similar, but less robust, bird-form stool. This stool is old and its type may be the precursor of the latter form. TW

TERRA-COTTA VESSELS AND BASKETS

547

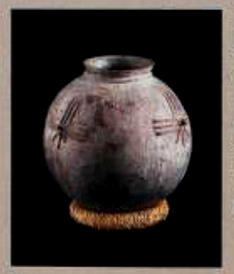
547 Storage Vessel, Nuna
Southern Burkina Faso, terra-cotta, 18⅛" h.
Provenance: William Wright
It is still quite common to find large, beautifully made jars like this one, full of clean, fresh water, in the corner of Nuna, Winiama, and Bwa homes. Almost by definition, there are potters in every village in Burkina Faso, and many of them continue to model large, elegant containers such as this example. The majority of the largest jars are used for brewing millet beer, but those jars quickly become blackened with soot. This fine jar served as a container in a home. CR



548

The great lugs at the sides and the textural contrast between the coarse wavy-line field comprising the lower half of the pot, the highly-polished upper half and the narrow band of deeply pressed angular marks dividing the two fields make for a visual play that is arrestingly tactile to the eye. TW

548 Storage Vessel, Kurumba
North Central Burkina Faso, terra-cotta, 26½" h.
Provenance: William Wright
The center nub represents the navel, from which scarifications radiate. The upper pair of nubbins presumably represent nipples. The pattern is not among the nine recorded by Annemarie Schweeger-Hefel and Wilhelm Staude,[200] but may represent an archaic form or carry its own meaning. To my knowledge this style of pot is only attributed to the Kurumba by hearsay. It, however, almost certainly does originate in northern Burkina Faso and, most likely, somewhere within the geographical area in which Schweeger-Hefel conducted her research. This pot style, of which there are relatively few examples, appeared on the market somewhat later than the core period of her fieldwork. It is possible that the style was narrowly distributed and perhaps overlooked.



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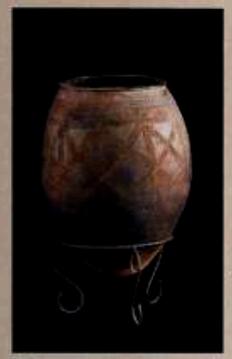

550

549 Spherical Pot with Lipped Mouth, Léla
West Central Burkina Faso, terra-cotta, 16½" h.
Among the Mossi, Léla, Winiama, Nuna, Bwa, and other peoples in Burkina Faso, scarification patterns are applied to bodies and faces as well as to masks, sculpture, pottery, textiles, and even to the walls of houses. The patterns on this pot reproduce exactly the scars that are applied to the abdomen of a woman after she has given birth to her first child. The scars are symbols of fertility and badges of achievement, and were once quite common, although now they are rare. Such marks on pottery refer to the abundance of the contents of the jar. CR
I have chosen to keep the surface as it is and, at the expense of the fine line decoration, not removed the thin detrital layer that coats much of the pot. Places where this clay layer has flaked away offer windows to the hidden detail. TW

551

550 Storage Vessel, Tusyan
Southwestern Burkina Faso, terra-cotta, 30" h.
Provenance: William Wright
Tusyan women are excellent potters, as are the women of most other people in Burkina Faso. This beautiful, large piece is a fine example of the large jars that are used for brewing millet beer. There are very faint, delicate, intricate lines or scars all over the outside of the jar. CR
Herta Haselberger offers line drawings of pots like this example with a narrow lip and similar ornamental patterns and cites their origin as Tusyan.[201] TW

552

551 Lidded Keepsake Pot, Kaséna
Southern Burkina Faso, terra cotta, fiber cord, 9¼" h.
Provenance: William Wright

552 Spherical Pot with Lid, Léla
West Central Burkina Faso, terra-cotta, 13" h.
This fine jar below (cat. 552) was placed on a shrine to hold clean water. The umbilicus and scars are quite typical of shrine pots, but can be found even on pots used everyday in the home. The rectangular opening was cut out with a knife after the jar had been fully formed. This type of lid is unique in West Africa to the Nuna and other peoples of central Burkina Faso. CR
In 1956, 1960, and 1967 Herta Haselberger visited the first wife of the East Kaséna village chief of Po, the *Peo*, and published drawings of the types of pots she saw there.[202] One of the pots resembled the example illustrated here with the series of holes in two arcs (cat. 551). While not specifying the precise function of this pot type, she stated that the pots she saw had ritual functions, including funerary, and that others were prestige objects that contained food or items of value. I am inclined to believe that this type of pot served the latter function, as some of the examples of pots of this type that I bought arrived with the lids loosely held in place by cord. The holes in arcs on the sides of the pots and four groups of paired holes that are set at 45-degree intervals around the mouths (not visible beneath the lid in this photograph) accommodated the cording that secured the lids. The web of cording was precisely woven and, judging from the debris that had accumulated on the pots and the cording, had been in place for some time. Whatever had been contained in the pots had been removed, for the cords had been cut to access the interiors. Only a remnant of cord remained attached to this example. TW

553 / 554

553 Nested Marriage Basket Set, Turka
Southwestern Burkina Faso, Fabedougou, palm raffia, leather, 11" h.

554 Basket with Lid, Bwa
Western Burkina Faso, wood, vegetable fiber, cotton cord, remnant oil base polychrome, 4¼" h.
Provenance: William Wright
The field investigations of Susan E. Cooksey confirmed that the nested baskets were a marriage gift to a Turka bride, rather than the heretofore generally accepted view that they were of Tusyan origin. They were said to contain various spices and later were probably prized as keepsakes.[203] The small basket with a lid (cat. 554) was coiled from its bottom center, where there is the barest evidence of remnant glossy red paint on the interior. It was apparently stored in the kitchen rafters, where it developed its black soot patina. TW

555 Multi-knobbed Pot and Lid, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, terra-cotta, organic material, 14½" h.

556 Pot with Lid *thil blo toultoul*, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, terra-cotta, 10½" h.
Provenance: William Wright

557 Multi-knobbed Pot with Lid, Lobi
Southwestern Burkina Faso, terra-cotta, 15½" h.
Provenance: William Wright
Klaus Schneider illustrates drawings of numerous similar pots, among them an example with a single circle of nubbins on both pot and lid, and cites the name associated with it as *thil blo toultoul*.[204] Pots with nubbins are not, however, exclusive to the Lobi. TW

555 / 556 / 557

NOTES

1 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Meudon, 1987. p. 154.

2 *Art Tribal, Mercredi 2 Juillet 2003 16 h.*, Artcurial, Paris, 2003. pp. 26 and 27, lot number 45.

3 Haselberger, Herta. "Bemerkungen zum Kunsthandwerk in der Republik Haute-Volta: Gourounsi und Altvölker des äussersten Südwestens," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. 92, 2: 171–246, Brunswick, 1969. p. 232, fig. 6.

4 Several years ago I had occasion to ask Myron Echenberg his opinion concerning the ethnic origin of an equestrian figure purported to be from Burkina Faso. He responded that it could not possibly be Bwa or Bobo or any of the smaller groups as no one in those societies could afford horses. Horses, he went on to say, were owned by the elite of organized states such as the Mossi. Myron J. Echenberg, 11/5/03 personal communication.

5 Schneider, Klaus. *Handwerk und materialisierte Kultur der Lobi in Burkina Faso*, Franz Steiner, Stuttgart, 1990. p. 217, fig. 235.

6 Bognolo, Daniela. "Le jeu des fétiches: Signification, usage et rôle des fétiches des population Lobi du Burkina Faso, 2ème Partie," *Arts d'Afrique Noire, no. 76*, pp. 19–28, Arnouville, 1990. pp. 19 and 20.

7 Haselberger, Herta. "Bemerkungen zum Kunsthandwerk in der Republik Haute-Volta: Gourounsi und Altvölker des äussersten Südwestens," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. 92, 2: 171–246, Brunswick, 1969. p. 214.

8 Le Moal, Guy. "Poisons, sorciers et contre-sorcellerie en pays bobo (Haute-Volta)", *Systèmes de pensée en Afrique noire, cahier 1*, Paris, EPHE-CNRS, pp. 78–94, 1975, and, Le Moal, Guy. *Les Bobo. Nature et fonction des masques*, Tervuren, 1999. pp. 94–95.

9 Mamadou Konaté, 4/2/03, Personal communication.

10 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. pp. 252–253 and Kerchache, Jacques. *Sculptures Afrique Asie Océanie Amériques*, Musée du Louvre, Pavillon des Sessions, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris, 2000. pp. 100 and 101.

11 Leiris, Michel, and Jacqueline Delange. *African Art*, The Arts of Mankind. André Malraux and André Parrot (eds.), Golden Press, New York, 1968. p. 282, fig. 317.

12 I have seen published a very similar but more recent example of this mask type, but where, I do not recall.

13 Roy, Christopher D. "African Art in Motion: The Masks of the Nuna People of Burkina Faso." Three videos of masks in performance in 2001–05 in Burkina Faso, West Africa. Two videos in the villages of Savara and Tisse, and one of the annual mask festival at Pouni. Title #207403; Format: DVD-R; Running time: 90 minutes.

14 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. p. 218.

15 Ibid., p. 217.

16 Ibid., p. 226, fig. 185.

17 Leiris, Michel, and Jacqueline Delange. *African Art*, The Arts of Mankind. André Malraux and André Parrot (eds.), Golden Press, New York, 1968. p. 282, fig. 318.

18 Himmelheber, Hans. *Negerkunst und Negerkünstler*, Klinkhardt und Biermann, Brunswick, 1960. p. 81, fig. 69.

19 Bravmann, René A. "Gur and Manding Masquerades in Ghana", *African Arts, vol. XIII*, 1: 44–51, 98, 1979. p. 50.

20 John W. Nunley PhD, The Morton D. May Curator of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, The Saint Louis Art Museum.

21 Nunley, John W. "Sikiler: Transformation of a Sisala Masquerade," *African Arts, vol XI*, 1: 58–64, 92, 1977.

22 Ibid.

23 Malmo Konsthall. *Afrikanskt, Inspirationskalla för den moderna konsten/African Art, A source of inspiration for modern art*, Malmo, 1986. p. 33.

24 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. p. 143.

25 Roure, George. *Animaux Sauvages de Haute-Volta: et des pays voisins*. Ouagadougou, n.d. p. 29.

26 El Hadji Zonon Harouna circa 1974, Personal communication.

27 Segy, Ladislas. *Masks of Black Africa*, Dover Publications, New York, 1976. fig. 105.

28 Of the three with a truncated central tab-like plank, two have a figure mounted on the tab, one belonging to Allan Stone the other to myself. The third is missing its original attached element and it, too, is in my collection. The fourth, the monoxylic example, was offered at auction in 2003 (*Art Tribal, Mercredi 2 Juillet 2003 16 h.*, Artcurial, Paris, 2003. p. 28, lot number 47.)

29 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. p. 370.

30 Ibid., p. 119, fig. 86.

31 Albert F. Gordon, Tribal Arts Gallery, New York, 1970s.

32 Roy, Christopher D. "Mossi Zazaido," *African Arts*, vol. XIII, no. 3: 42–47, 92, 1980.

33 Ibid., p. 126, fig. 94.

34 Schweeger-Hefel, Annemarie & Wilhelm Staude. *Die Korumba von Lurum. Monographie eines Volkes aus Obervolta (Westafrika)*. Vienna: Schendel, 1972. p. 197, fig. 86 a & b; pp. 140 & 141, fig. 33d: full page group photo of Arbinda mask house with *adones*, hyens and a mask similar to the subject mask, Abb. 98.

35 Hanna-Vergara, Emily G. *Masks of Leaves and Wood Among the Bwa of Burkina Faso*, Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1996.

36 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. p. 274, fig. 232

37 Ibid., p. 268.

38 Huet, Michel. *The Dance, Art and Ritual of Africa*, Pantheon Books, 1978 [Originally: *Danses d'Afrique* by Société Nouvelle des Editions du Chêne, Paris, 1978]. p. 162.

39 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. p. 272.

40 Zwernemann, Jürgen. "Masken der Bobo-Ule und Nuna im Hamburgischen Museum für Völkerkunde," *Mitteilungen aus dem Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg*, Band 8: 45–83, 1978. p. 55, fig. 6.

41 The accession information associated with this mask at The Minneapolis Institute of Arts includes no information except the donor's name and date of the donation. Though I have never examined the mask first hand, its surface has always appeared to me to be of similar fragility and age as that of the butterfly illustrated here.

42 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. pp. 276–278.

43 Zwernemann, Jürgen. "Masken der Bobo-Ule und Nuna im Hamburgischen Museum für Völkerkunde," *Mitteilungen aus dem Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg*, Band 8: 45–83, 1978. p. 55, fig. 6.

44 Kamer, Henri. *Haute Volta*. Brussels, A. de Rache, 1973. p. 125.

45 *Bienvenue en Haute Volta*, 1972.

46 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. pp. 276–278.

47 Hanna-Vergara, Emily G. *Masks of Leaves and Wood Among the Bwa of Burkina Faso*, Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1996. p. 176.

48 Ibid., pp. 161/162.

49 Ibid., p. 159.

50 Ibid., pp. 160–161.

51 Ibid., p. 157.

52 Kamer, Henri. *Haute Volta*, A. de Rache, Brussels, 1973. p. 168, fig 108.

53 Blegna, Domba. *Les masques dans la société marka de Fobiri et ses environs: origines, culte, art*. (Etudes sur l'histoire et l'archéologie du Burkina Faso, volume 2) Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1990. pp. 113–114.

54 According to Michel Izard, a small pocket of people, the Samoro, living to the southwest of the Samo, speak the dialect of the southernmost Samo. An ethnic group far to the East, the Bisa, in south Central Burkina Faso, is closely related to the Samo both culturally and linguistically. Farther still, in Nigeria, the Busa are a population with close affinities to the Samo/Samoro/Bisa of Burkina Faso. The recognition of what may once have been a broad Mandé swath, raises the possibility that the entire area was Mandé prior to either the arrival or the evolution of voltaic speaking groups. From: Izard, Michel. "Introduction à l'histoire des royaumes Mossi", tome 1 & tome 2, *Recherches Voltaïques* 12 & 13, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique/Centre Voltaïque de la Recherche Scientifique (C.N.R.S./C.V.R.S.), Paris and Ouagadougou, 1970. p. 15.

55 The John and Dominique de Menil Collection … *The John and Dominique de Menil Collection*, The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, 1962. Fig. 27.; The Vandertrate piece remains, I believe, unpublished.

56 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. pp. 106 and 107.

57 Izard, Michel. "Introduction a l'histoire des royaumes Mossi", tome 1 & tome 2, *Recherches Voltaïques* 12 & 13, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique/Centre Voltaïque de la Recherche Scientifique (C.N.R.S./C.V.R.S.), Paris and Ouagadougou, 1970. p. 15.

58 Françoise Heritè, Personal communication, Paris, 1978 or 1979.

59 Hanna-Vergara, Emily G. *Masks of Leaves and Wood Among the Bwa of Burkina Faso*, Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1996. pp. 233–239 and Kamer, Henri. *Haute Volta*, Brussels, A. de Rache, 1973. p. 104, fig. 68.

60 Le Moal, Guy. *Les Bobo. Nature et fonction des masques*, Tervuren, 1999. pp. 149–152.

61 Ibid., p. 142.

62 Several years ago I had occasion to ask Myron Echenberg his opinion concerning the ethnic origin of an equestrian figure purported to be from Burkina Faso. He responded that it could not possibly be Bwa of Bobo or any of the smaller groups as no one in those societies could have afforded horses. Horses, he went on to say, were owned by the elite of organized states such as the Mossi. Myron J. Echenberg, 11/5/03 personal communication.

63 Le Moal, Guy. *Les Bobo. Nature et fonction des masques*, Tervuren, 1999. p. 154.

64 Jaquinod, F. "Les Bolon," *Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N.* series B, 25 (1–2): 134–144, 1963.

65 Le Moal, Guy. *Les Bobo. Nature et fonction des masques*, Paris, Travaux et documents de l'ORSTOM, no. 121, 1980, p. 221.

66 Capron, Jean. *Communautés Villageoises Bwa, Mali–Haute Volta*, t. 1, fasc. 1 (Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, 9) Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1973. pp. 253 and 254, plate VI.

67 Bravmann, René A. "Gyinna-Gyinna: Making the Djinn Manifest," *African Arts*, vol. X, no. 3: 46–52, 87, 1977.

68 Le Moal, Guy. *Les Bobo. Nature et fonction des masques*, Paris, Travaux et documents de l'ORSTOM, no. 121, 1980, pp. 162 and 243–244.

69 Hébert, Jean. "Les Noms en pays toussian," *Notes Africaines* 84: 110–113, 1959. p. 113.

70 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. p. 365, fig. 314.

71 Ibid., p. 123.

72 *Arts Primitifs. Collection Vérité*, Juin 17–18, 2006, Paris Hotel Drouot, Paris, 2006. p. 52.

73 Sedogo, Vincent. "les scarifications ethniques au Burkina Faso", octobre–décembre 2003, Manuscript, (SIT et CCFGM), 2003. p. 40. Vincent Sedogo, personal communication 6/19/06: "J'ai pu me renseigner au sujet du si-linga. Il s'agit d'un rite qui se termine par une cérémonie d'incision des membres y ayant pris part. Elle se conrordtise par des incisions sur le corps (à l'image du corps de la statuette photographiée). Il s'agit bien d'une pièce de l'aire culturelle des Sukomse. Ces populations sont considérées comme les autochtones du centre et de l'ouest du pays des Moose. Ce qui correspond à la zone d'occupation des taolense, c'est-à-dire des occpuants de l'ouest dont l'autre caractéristique et la cicatrice fontale ou worbo. Il y a donc combinaison des deux types d'incisions. Il n'est donc pas impossible que la pièce vienne de cette région."

74 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. pp. 252–253.

75 Kerchache, Jacques. *Sculptures Afrique Asie Océanie Amériques*, Musée du Louvre, Pavillon des Sessions, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris, 2000. pp. 101 and 102.

76 Triande, Toumani. *Masques et Sculptures voltaïques. Exposé au premier festival culturel Panafricain, Alger*, Ouagadougou, 1969. p. 30.

77 Jürgen Zwernemann illustrated several examples of Bwa female statues (referred to with regional variations as *Mwiha*, *Muiha* or *Nuiha*) and described them as central to an annual Bwa purification ceremony. (Zwernemann, Jürgen. "Zur figürlichen Plastik der Bwa," *Tribus*, pp. 149–152, 11, November, 1962.) The only photograph I have seen of the ceremony sets the figure in front of a broad arc of two rows of seated masquerades wearing their masks. Two long sticks, one straight the other with symmetric ripples and a crude scepter lashed to it, are placed in front of the *Muiha*. To the figures right there appears to be a half gourd or rock covered with white feathers from an apparently recent sacrafice. To the figure's left is an unknown object vaguely like partial calabashes attached to either end of one or several sticks. (See illustration 29).

78 For an example of an old and superb Bwa monkey mask see lot 176, Christie's Sale, Paris, June 7, 2005.

79 Such blooms can be temporarily reversed and the original black surface regained by the judicious application of heat from a hair dryer. The bloom will eventually return. There does not seem to be an acceptable method of permanently removing the material.

80 Hanna-Vergara, Emily G. *Masks of Leaves and Wood Among the Bwa of Burkina Faso*, Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1996.

81 Ibid., p. 234, fig. 30.

82 Guilhem, M. & Hébert, R.P. "Une 'noblesse' héréditaire en pays Toussian: les devins," *Notes Africaines*, no. 104: 97–106, 1964. p. 101.

83 Capron, Jean. *Communautés Villageois Bwa, Mali–Haute Volta*, t. 1, fasc. 1 (Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, 9) Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1973. p. 253.

84 Bognolo, Daniela. "Le jeu des fétiches: Signification, usage et rôle des fétiches des populations Lobi du Burkina Faso, 2ème Partie," *Arts d'Afrique Noire*, no. 76, pp. 19–28, Arnouville, 1990. p. 20, fig. 21.

85 Bognolo, Daniela. "Le jeu des fétiches: Signification, usage et rôle des fétiches des population Lobi du Burkina Faso, 1ère Partie," *Arts d'Afrique Noire*, no. 75, pp. 21–31, Arnouville, 1990. "Le jeu des fétiches: Signification, usage et rôle des fétiches des population Lobi du Burkina Faso, 2ème Partie," *Arts d'Afrique Noire*, no. 76, pp. 19–28, Arnouville, 1990.

86 Meyer, Piet. *Kunst und Religion der Lobi*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1981. p. 116, figs. 141 and 142.

87 Bognolo, Daniela. "Le jeu des fétiches: Signification, usage et rôle des fétiches des populations Lobi du Burkina Faso, 2ème Partie," *Arts d'Afrique Noire*, no. 76, pp. 19–28, Arnouville, 1990. p. 19.

88 Bognolo, Daniela. "Le jeu des fétiches: Signification, usage et rôle des fétiches des populations Lobi du Burkina Faso, 1ère Partie," *Arts d'Afrique Noire*, no. 75, pp. 21–31, Arnouville, 1990. p. 29.

89 Meyer, Piet. *Kunst und Religion der Lobi*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1981. p. 132.

90 Bognolo, Daniela. "Le jeu des fétiches: Signification, usage et rôle des fétiches des populations Lobi du Burkina Faso, 2ème Partie," *Arts d'Afrique Noire*, no. 76, pp. 19–28, Arnouville, 1990. p. 19.

91 Bognolo, Daniela. "Le jeu des fétiches: Signification, usage et rôle des fétiches des populations Lobi du Burkina Faso, 1ère Partie," *Arts d'Afrique Noire*, no. 75, pp. 21–31, Arnouville, 1990. p. 29.

92 Ibid., pp. 19–28, Arnouville, 1990. p. 20.

93 Michael Rhodes, Personal communication 2002/2003.

94 Susan Cooksey, May 26, 2006, personal communication.

95 Haselberger, Herta. "Bemerkungen zum Kunsthandwerk in der Republik Haute-Volta: Gourounsi und Altvölker des äussersten Südwesters," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. 92, 2: 171–246, Brunswick, 1969. p. 200.

96 Bravmann, René. *The Poetry Of Form, the Hans and Thelma Lehmann Collection of African Art*, University of Washington Museum, Seattle, 1982.

97 Guilhem, M. & Hébert, R.P. "Une 'noblesse' héréditaire en pays Toussian: les devins," *Notes Africaines*, No. 104: 97–106, 1964. p. 100.

98 Ibid., p. 101.

99 Henri Labouret published an image of a market place shrine with figures similarly attached to a wood pole, thrust into the ground before the shrine. Labouret, Henri. "Les tribus du rameau Lobi," *Université de Paris, Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie*, XV. Paris, 1931. Plate XXVI, fig. 3.

100 Roy, Christopher D. *The Art Of The Upper Volta Rivers*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin (eds.), Paris, 1987. p. 249.

101 Schneider, Klaus. *Handwerk und materialisierte Kultur der Lobi in Burkina Faso*. Franz Steiner, Stuttgart, 1990. pp. 222 and 232, figs. 129 and 130.

102 Meyer, Piet. *Kunst und Religion der Lobi*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1981. p. 164, fig. 221.

103 Blandin, André. *"Fer Noire" d'Afrique de l'Ouest*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 119, fig. 4.

104 Meyer, Piet. *Kunst und Religion der Lobi*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1981. p. 120, figs. 150 and 151.

105 Bognolo, Daniela. "Le jeu des fétiches: Signification, usage et rôle des fétisches des population Lobi du Burkina Faso, 2ème Partie," *Arts d'Afrique Noire*, no. 76, pp. 19–28, Arnouville, 1990. pp. 19 and 20.

106 Bravmann, René. *The Poetry Of Form, the Hans and Thelma Lehmann Collection of African Art*, University of Washington Museum, Seattle, 1982.

107 Le Moal, Guy. *Les Bobo. Nature et fonction des masques*, Tervuren, 1999. pp. 260–262.

108 McClusky, Pamela. *African Masks and Muses: Selections of African Art in the Seattle Art Museum*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, 1977. fig. 8.

109 Triande, Toumani. *Masques et Sculptures voltaïques. Exposé au premier festival culturel Panafricain, Alger*, Ouagadougou, 1969. p. 28.

110 Blegna, Domba. "Les masques dans la société marka de Fobiri et ses environs: origins, culte art." (*Etudes sur l'histoire et l'archéologie du Burkina Faso*, volume 2), Franz Steiner, Stuttgart, 1990. pp. 102 and 103.

111 Capron, Jean. "Communautes Villageois Bwa, Mali–Haute Volta", t. 1, fasc. 1 (*Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie*, 9), Institut d'Ethnologie, Paris, 1973. Cover.

112 La Rime et le Raison… *La Rime et le Raison: Les Collections Méné (Houston, New York)*, Galeries nationals du Grand Palais, Paris; Ministère de la culture; Éditions de la Réunion des Musées nationaux, Paris, 1984. p. 265, cat. 368 and p. 371.

113 Trost, Franz. *Ethnoarchaologie in Sudwest-Burkina Faso. I. Das Fundmaterial*, Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt Graz, 1993. p. 126, fig. 22.

114 Haselberger, Herta. "Bemerkungen zum Kunsthandwerk in der Republik Haute-Volta: Gourounsi und Altvölker des äussersten Südwesten," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. 92, 2: 171–246, Brunswick, 1969. pp. 226, fig. 75 and 227, fig. 45.

115 Blandin, André. *"Fer Noire" d'Afrique de l'Ouest*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 107, fig. 2.

116 To paraphrase Le Moal's description: The *kabore* was carried by several different fiber masks, both *yelekwine gwarama* and *noluru gwarama* during part of second stage initiations. These masks are robustly costumed in coarse fiber extracted from the *tebe* tree, a distinguishing aspect of all *gwala* masks, the mask type of which these two masks are variants. The head covers are like coarse sacs of vertically oriented fiber. *Gwala* are one of, if not the earliest, mask types. They are centered around the cult of "Dwo of Patamoso" prevalent among the *Syekoma* Bobo in the central Bobo area. The *gwala* mask *yelekwine gwarama* came into being at Dyotala and has been adopted by the villages of Kurumani, Fini, Zokoema, Sama, Badema and those of Kibe-Yeletura-Kokoroba and Silekoro. *noluru gwarama* is similar to *yelekwine gwarama* and seems to be from Kurumani. At first, armed only with a crop, *yelekwine gwarama* appears before the elders and the second stage initiates, the *yelele*. He applies one brutal strike of the crop to each of the elders, an extraordinary expression of the overwhelming power given these masks. The mask then briefly enters a house and re-emerge carrying a heavy rod on one shoulder and the *kebore* casses-tete. With the latter he beats the ground three times, violently scratches at the ground, then hurls the club towards the center of the village. A *yelele* recovers it and throws it back to the mask who catches it on the fly. (Le Moal, Guy. *Les Bobo. Nature et fonction des masques*, Travaux et documents de l'ORSTOM, no. 121, Paris, 1980, pp. 204, 251 and 422.)

117 Labouret, Henri. *Les tribus du rameau Lobi*, Université de Paris, Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie. XV.; Paris, 1931. Plate VIII, fig. 6.

118 Blandin, André. *"Fer Noire" d'Afrique de l'Ouest*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 106, fig. 1.

119 Le Moal, Guy. *Les Bobo. Nature et fonction des masques*, Tervuren, 1999. p. 78, fig. 5 and p. 79.

120 Blandin, André. *"Fer Noire" d'Afrique de l'Ouest*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 105, fig. 1

121 Ibid., p. 106, fig. 3.

122 Blandin, André. *Afriques de L'ouest, Bronzes et Autres Allages*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 47, figs. 1 and 2.

123 Schweegee-Hefel, Annemarie & Wilhelm Staude. *Die Korumba von Lurum. Monographie eines Volkes aus Obervolta (Westafrika)*. Vienna: Schendel, 1972. p. 421, fig. 208.

124 Blandin, André. *Afriques de L'ouest, Bronzes et Autres Allages*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 80.

125 Haselberger, Herta. "Bemerkungen zum Kunsthandwerk in der Republik Haute-Volta: Gourounsi und Altvölker des äussersten Südwestens," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. 92, 2: 171–246, Brunswick, 1969. pp. 207 and 245, fig. 43

126 Blandin, André. *Afriques de L'ouest, Bronzes et Autres Allages*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 57.

127 Père, Madeleine. *Le royaume gan d'obiré. Introduction à l'histoire et à anthropologie Burkina Faso*, Editions Sépia, Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, 2004. p. 207 and 257, illus. 43.

128 Haselberger, Herta. "Bemerkungen zum Kunsthandwerk in der Republik Haute-Volta: Gourounsi und Altvölker des äussersten Südwesten," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. 92, 2: 171–246, Brunswick, 1969. p. 174.

129 Blandin, André. *Afriques de L'ouest, Bronzes et Autres Allages*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 59, fig. 1

130 Père, Madeleine. *Le royaume gan d'obiré, Introduction à l'histoire et à anthropologie Burkina Faso*, Editions Sépia, Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, 2004. p. 206.

131 Le Moal, Guy. "Naissance et Rites d'Identification: Les Objets *sabi na fré*," *Archiv für Völkerkunde*, 40, p. 75–92, Vienna, 1986. pp. 84–85.

132 Le Moal, Guy. "Poisons, sorciers et contre-sorcellerie en pays bobo (Haute-Volta)", *Systèmes de pensée en Afrique noire*, cahier 1, Paris, EPHE-CNRS, pp. 78–94, 1975. Le Moal, Guy. *Les Bobo. Nature et fonction des masques*, Tervuren, 1999. pp. 94–95

133 Père, Madeleine. *Le royaume gan d'obiré, Introduction à l'histoire et à anthropologie Burkina Faso*, Editions Sépia, Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, 2004. p. 208, Plate IX.

134 Ibid., p. 33.

135 Ibid., p. 205.

136 Coquet, Michèle and Regis, Luc. "Mythes et scarifications: Description d'un système de signification/d'une forme d'engagement plastique", *Res* 7/8, pp. 70–101, 1984, and Le Moal, Guy. "Naissance et Rites d'Identification: Les Objets *sabi na fré*," *Archiv für Völkerkunde*, 40, p. 75–92, Vienna, 1986.

137 Dekeyser, P.L., Condamin, M. and Derivot, J. "Une centaine d'erreurs et d'approximations relatives à la faune Ouest-Africaine", *Notes Africaines* 87, pp. 92–99, 1960. p. 93.

138 Capron, Jean. *Communautés Villageoises Bwa, Mali–Haute Volta*, t. 1, fasc. 1 (Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, 9) Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1973. pp. 325/326, plate VIII.

139 Le Moal, Guy. "Naissance et Rites d'Identification: Les Objets *sabi na fré*," *Archiv für Völkerkunde*, 40, p. 75–92, Vienna, 1986. p. 85.

140 Ibid., p. 91.

141 Blaise, Frère. "La tortue 'sin' chez les Tussian," Notes Africaines, No. 70: 43, 1956. p. 43.

142 Père, Madeleine. *Le royaume gan d'obiré. Introduction à l'histoire et à anthropologie Burkina Faso*, Editions Sépia, Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, 2004. p. 207, plate VII.

143 Ibid., p. 200.

144 Blaise, Frère. "La tortue 'sin' chez les Tussian," Notes Africaines, No. 70: 43, 1956. p. 43.

145 Blandin, André. *"Fer Noire" d'Afrique de l'Ouest*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 120, fig. 4.

146 Blandin, André. *Afriques de L'ouest, Bronzes et Autres Allages*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 100, figs. 1–4.

147 Blandin, André. *Afriques de L'ouest, Bronzes et Autres Allages*, Marignane, France, 1988. p. 47, figs. 3–5.

148 Haselberger, Herta. "Bemerkungen zum Kunsthandwerk in der Republik Haute-Volta: Gourounsi und Altvölker des äussersten Südwestens," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. 92, 2: 171–246, Brunswick, 1969. pp. 206 and 217.

149 Hébert, Jean. "Les Noms en pays toussian," *Notes Africaines* 84: 110–113, 1959.

150 The aluminum example also belongs to this collection but, with an eye to book length, was not included.

151 Haselberger, Herta. "Bemerkungen zum Kunsthandwerk in der Republik Haute-Volta: Gourounsi und Altvölker des äussersten Südwestens," Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie, vol. 92, 2: 171–246, Brunswick, 1969. p. 217.

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GLOSSARY

balinga: A Mossi mask that represents a Fulani woman, used only in the southwest Ouagadougou Kingdom.

barafo: Masks among the Dafing people.

biga: Mooré for "child" or "baby" the name given by Mossi children to their dolls.

Bisa: A Mandé speaking people living in south central Burkina Faso. They are closely related to the Samo but apparently have no masking tradition.

Blaise Campaore: Current head of state in Burkina Faso, a Mossi and former military officer from Ziniaré.

Bobo: A large group of people in western Burkina Faso, who speak a Mande language.

Bobo-Dioulasso: The second city of Burkina Faso, in the west, once dominated by a Bobo population, now heavily mixed. Also the former colonial capital.

Bobo-Fing: A large ethnic group in the west, around Bobo Dioulasso, north into Mali. A Mande-language speaking people. See "Bobo", the more correct appellation.

Bole (sing. *bolo*): Entertainment masks among the Bobo.

Bolon: A Mandé speaking people lying in several pockets immediately west of the Bobo both with their own stylistic tradition and borrowed styles from their Bobo neighbors.

Bondé: One of three important families in the Bwa village of Boni, a family that uses wooden masks.

Boni: A Bwa town between Boromo and Houndé, in which large numbers of wooden and leaf masks appear each year from March to May.

borebe: The carved wooden figures that represent spirits among the Lobi people.

Boulsa: A large town in the far eastern Mossi area.

Burkinabé: The many people who live in Burkina Faso.

Bwa: plural Bwaba: The Bwa people, in central Burkina Faso. They speak a Voltaic language.

Bwamu: The language of the Bwa people.

Ceiba pentandra: The large tropical tree whose wood is used for carving. Also the "tree of life" among many people in Africa and Central America.

chapalo: A mildly alcoholic drink brewed by Bwa and Winiama women from millet.

chiwara kun: Antelope crest masks among the Bamana people in Mali. These may be the source of the zazaido crests used by some Mossi.

daba: a hoe for tilling, As an object vital to food production, it usually has a strong spiritual content.

Dafing: An important Mande-speaking people in north-central Burkina Faso. Their masks are a blend of Mande and Voltaic styles.

Dagari: A people in the southwest, between the Lobi and the Bwa, famous for their architecture and carved stools.

Dagomba: A people in northern Ghana and an important kingdom, whence the Mossi invaded the valleys of the Volta Rivers in 1500 AD.

Dédougou: A large Bwa/Samo/Nuna town in central Burkina Faso, the site of the annual FESTIMA mask festival.

Dioula: A people and a language in the area around Bobo Dioulasso. The Dioula or Jula are important merchants, and their language is one of the most important common languages in Burkina Faso and Mali.

Dogon: A Voltaic language speaking people who fled the Mossi invasions in 1500 and moved to the cliffs of Bandiagara, where their descendants now live.

Dwo: The Bwa God of springtime and the rebirth of life with the first rains of the year.

Fada N'Gurma: A large Gurmantche town in eastern Burkina Faso.

FESPACO: The Festival pan-africain du cinema, or Pan-African Film Festival held in odd-numbered years in Ouagadougou.

Fulani: A large and very powerful group of people in northern Burkina Faso and across west Africa who specialize in animal husbandry. Also called Peul.

Fulfulde: The language of the Fulani, also called Peullar.

fulsé: The Moore name for the Kurumba people in northern Burkina Faso.

Gaoua: A large town in far southwestern Burkina Faso in the midst of the Lobi area.

Gnoumou: One of two families in the village of Boni who use wooden masks.

griots: Musicians who provide accompaniment and to a great extent direct mask performances in Burkina Faso, and who are famous as preservers of oral histories throughout west Africa.

Gurmantche: A large ethnic group who occupy most of eastern Burkina Faso.

gurunsi: Several related peoples who live in central Burkina Faso, including the Nuna, Nunuma, Winiama, Léla, Sisala and others. The earliest inhabitants of the region.

gyonfo: The sagital crest of hair that was once common among most people in west Africa, both male and female.

Hibiscus cannabinus: Dah, hemp, a cultivated plant that provides strong fibers used for making mask costumes.

hornbo: The sacred mask of the smiths in central Burkina Faso. It includes a crest and is sometimes referred to as a rooster.

Jula: See Dioula above.

kuwo: The smith class among the Bwa.

Kampti: The second largest town in Lobi country, to the south of Gaoua.

karanga: The name used for a mask among the Mossi in Yatenga.

karan-wemba: A mask used to honor an elderly woman (*wemba*).

Kassena: A small group of people in southern Burkina Faso and northern Ghana, famous for their elaborately decorated architecture.

katré: The hyena, a protective spirit of a Mossi clan east of Yako.

Kaya: An important Mossi city in the northeast Mossi area, on the road from Ouagadougou to Dori.

kédiweh: The "one curved horn" mask of the Winiama in the town of Ouri.

kibsi: The Moore name for the Dogon, many of who fled ahead of the Mossi invasion of 1500 AD into the Bandiagara cliffs.

kobiay: The rooster mask of Bwa smiths.

kobre: A Saturn-shaped bracelet once worn by the wives of Mossi chiefs.

Komo: The secret anti-witchcraft society of the northern Senufo people of western Burkina Faso.

Komoé: An important river in western Burkina Faso.

Konate: A smith family in Ouri, in central Burkina Faso that carves masks in several local styles.

Kongoussi: A large Mossi town in north-central Burkina Faso.

Koudougou: A city in the western Mossi area.

Kumi: An ancient Bobo village west of Bobo-Dioulasso, famous for two-storey adobe architecture.

Kurumba: A group of people who live north of the Mossi and south of the Sahara in far northern Burkina Faso.

Lamien: An important founding family in the Bwa village of Dossi.

Léla: A small *gurunsi* people north and west of Koudougou.

liuli: see *wan-liuli*

Lobi: A large group of people in the south of Burkina Faso and northern Ghana, famous for their spirit figures.

lunuya: In the Bwa village of Boni, the dwarf.

Mamy Wata: A female spirit of water, wealth, and prosperity that originated along the Atlantic coast of Africa.

Mandé: A large language family, including the Bamana, Marka, Manding, Mande and other peoples in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Liberia.

Marka Dafing: A Mande language people who live in northern Burkina Faso.

Mogho Naba: The Emperor of the Mossi people, literally "chief of the world."

molo: The sacred smith mask among the Bobo people.

Mooré: The language of the Mossi people, very closely related to the languages of northern Ghana, and to the language of the Dogon, in Mali.

Mossi: The largest ethnic group in Burkina Faso, they speak Moore. They are a very heterogeneous people.

Mouhoun: Formerly the Black Volta River, flows first northeast, then south into Ghana, separating the Lobi, Bwa, Bobo, and gurunsi.

Naba: The Moore word for a chief.

Nakanbe: Formerly the White Volta, flows north to south across the Mossi plateau into Ghana.

nakomsé: (sing. *nakiga*) The ruler class among the Mossi, descendants of the horsemen who founded the Mossi states in 1500 AD.

nanamsé: "Children of the chief," the relatives of the ruling elite in Mossi country.

Naniebon: An important clan and neighborhood in the Winiama village of Ouri.

na-poosum "greet the chief": The annual ceremony at which all the chief's subjects pay their respects to him and his ancestors.

Nazinon (Red Volta) River: One of three main branches of the rivers that in Ghana are still called the Volta River.

nieniegue: Scarred Bwa, the southern Bwa in Boni, Dossi, Pa and Bagassi who once wore very elaborate facial scars.

Nuna: The northern portion of an ethnic group who are called the Nunuma in the south. These are both gurunsi people, related to the Winiama and Kassena. In the past the differences between them have not been noted, but the styles of masks each carves is quite unique. The Nuna live north of the highway between Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, and for the most part west of the Mouhoun.

Nuni: The language of the Nuna people in central Burkina Faso.

nwenke (sing. *nwenka*): One of the sacred masks used in initiations by Bobo smiths, with a long trapezoidal face.

nyaka (Gazella rufifrons): A small antelope frequently represented on masks in Burkina Faso, especially among the Mossi.

nyanga: The antelope mask used by the Bobo.

nyogsen (sing. *nyoga*): Mossi people, brass casters, a sub specialty of Mossi smiths.

nyonyose: The old ones, the very large portion of the Mossi people who are descended from the first inhabitants. The nyonyose hold a great deal of spiritual power, and make and use masks to represent spirits.

Ouagadougou: The capital and largest city in Burkina Faso. Ouagadougou was the capital of the Mossi until independence, when it became the national capital. Its population is now over one million.

Ouahigouya: A large and important city in northwest Mossi area. The population was once heavily Mossi, but other people have taken up residence. Ouahigouya is the capital of Yatenga.

Ouedraogo: The most common Mossi name among the *nakomse* political leadership. From *ouidi*-"horse" and *raogo*-"male." See "Riale" and "Yennenga" below.

Pa: A large Bwa town between Boromo and Boni, where the highway turns south to Diebougou and Gaoua. Famous for large plank masks.

Pentobé: The Northern Tusyan

Riale: In Mossi oral history, the hunter who saved Princess Yennenga from her runaway stallion and fathered her son Ouedraogo.

Risiam: The Risiam Kingdom of northern Mossi country is centered around Kongoussi. Masks in this area have convex faces. Most of the *nyonyose* in the area are descended from ancient Kurumba peoples.

Samo: A group of people to the northwest of the Mossi, who have a strong joking relationship with the Mossi (parente de plaisanterie). They are avid wrestlers, and excel in the traditional sport called *la lutte*.

satimbe: The Dogon mask that represents a senior woman called *yasigine* who is the only woman in the community who has witnessed two of the *sigui* ceremonies held every sixty years.

saya: The smiths in Mossi society. Their chief is the *saya naba*.

Senufo: A very diverse group of peoples in northern Ivory Coast, southern Mali, and western Burkina Faso. The Senufo in Ivory Coast have been extensively studied by several scholars. The northern Senufo or Tagwara, and the Senufo around Orodara, or Tusyan, have been studied only recently.

Shea butter: A rich, fatty margarine made from the fruit of the Shea nut or Butyrospermum parkii, in turn named after the great Scots explorer Mungo Park.

Sisala: A *gurunsi* people on the border area between southern Burkina Faso and northern Ghana.

Soninké: marka people who live north of burkina faso in mali.

soser: Patterns of avoidance among the Lobi people, the rules for the ethical and moral conduct of life established by the spirits, *thil*.

Su: The mask spirit of the Nuna people.

sukwaba: (*sukomcé*, in the plural). A powerful and very secretive mask association in southwest Mossi country. They use small cap masks covered with red, white and black patterns and worn with thick hemp costumes.

Syemu: Peoples from southwestern Burkina Faso who are closely related to the Tusyan and particularly noted for their metal work.

syenkele: (also *syékele*) A sacred mask of the Bobo people, associated with Farmers. It has a long, trapezoidal face and often a large plank above the face.

tengabisi: The large group of Mossi who lived in the area before the nakmse conquest of 1500 AD. Among the *tengabisi* are the *nyonyose*, farmers, *saya*, smiths, *sukomse*, mask association and others.

thil, (pl. thila): Spirits among the Lobi that watch over their followers and that are represented by carved wood and modeled clay figures.

Thomas Sankara: Former head of state of Burkina Faso, took political power in a coup d'etat in 1984 and was subsequently murdered in 1987.

Tia-tiou: Earth priests among the Nuna people in central Burkina Faso. They are responsible for sacrifices to the land.

trypanosomiasis: Sleeping sickness, spread by the bite of tse-tse flies.

Tusyan: A group of people around Toussiana in southwest Burkina Faso famous for rectangular plank masks used in initiation and for small cast brass pieces used in divination.

Upper Volta: The former name of the country now called Burkina Faso. The name referred to the fact that it lay at the headwaters of the Volta Rivers. The Volta is from the Portuguese for "turn around" *revolta*, because in the 15th century Portuguese sailors grew afraid and forced their captains to turn around at the mouth of the river in southern Ghana, and sail back to Portugal.

Voltaic: The name of a group of people and their languages in northern Ghana and central Burkina Faso. A culture area distinct from the Mande to the west and the Akan to the south.

Wango (pl. wando): The Moore word for mask in the southwest Mossi area, especially among the *sukomse*.

wanki: Sacred masks among the Winiama. These old masks are usually kept safe in the bedrooms of their elderly male owners, and never appear in public performances.

wan-liuli: Bird masks among the Mossi in the southwest area around Ouagadougou. This is actually a type of mask, similar to the entertainment masks of the Winiama, that can appear in public, while more ancient, sacred masks remain hidden.

Win: The Southern Tusyan

Winiama: A small but culturally important group of people north of Boromo, in the towns of Oulo and Ouri, and elsewhere, who use masks that are somewhat more abstract than those of their Nuna neighbors.

Winié: The language of the Winiama, a Voltaic language.

Wuro: the creator God among the Bobo and the Bwa.

yaaba soore: Moore phrase that means "the path of the ancestors." Painted as a zig zag line on masks and other surfaces.

Yamba Ouedraogo: A Mossi artist in the village of Kwaltangen in the mid–1970s who specialized in carving zazaido crests.

Yancé: A very small people in southeast Burkina Faso near the Bisa.

Yarsé: Mossi traders, exclusively Moslem.

Yatenga: The second largest Mossi state, north of Ouagadougou, around its capital, Ouahigouya. The ceremonial capital is actually Gourcy, to the south of Ouahigouya. This is an area that was inhabited by the Dogon before 1500 AD.

Yennenga: A female culture hero, said to have been a princes of the royal house in Dagomba, who fled her father's home and rode north where she met Riale, a hunter. Their son Ouedraogo became the first Mossi ruler.

Yi: The Nuna creator God.

zazaido: Mossi head crests carved in Kwaltangen and a few other towns in the north, with antelope heads and other small figures.

Ziniaré: A large Mossi town on the road from Ouagadougou to Kaya. The home of Blaise Campaore, and the town where a very distinctive style of Mossi dolls is carved.

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Front cover: Buffalo mask, cat. 67, Winiama or Bwa

Back cover: Standing Female Figure, cat. 1, Mossi nakomsé

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The map on pp. 24f. was designed by Charles de Meut, Brussels

The Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication data is available; British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data: a catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library; Deutsche Bibliothek holds a record of this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographical data can be found under: http://dnb.ddb.de

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Königinstrasse 9, 80539 Munich
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Preface translated from the German by John W. Gabriel, Worpswede

Chief Editor: Regina M. Walker Wheelock
Project Coordination: Peter Stepan
Design, layout and typesetting: WIGEL, Munich
Origination: Reproline Genceller, Munich
Printing and binding: Passavia Druckservice, Passau

Printed in Germany on acid-free paper

ISBN 978-3-7913-3514-8

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ROY, CHRISTOPHER D.
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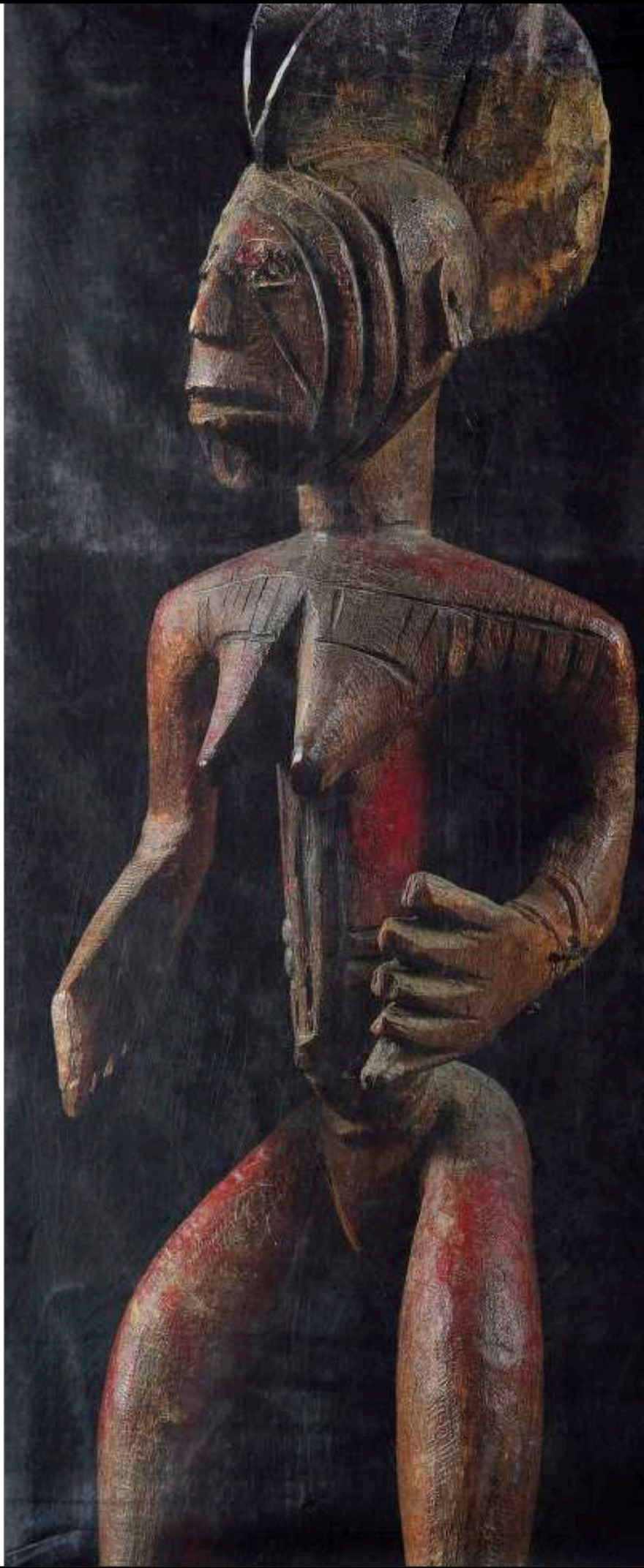

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