

Burkina art and performance bibliography  
by Christopher D. Roy  
The University of Iowa

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The art of the many peoples of Burkina Faso is quite exceptional in West Africa: relatively few Burkinabes have converted to Islam or Christianity, and the impact of tourism on the performances in which art appears has done relatively little to alter the importance of art to the lives of the people who use it. It is still quite possible for visitors to rural communities to attend events such as funerals or initiations at which masks appear, to witness contemporary political events at which figures are used by chiefs, and to watch pottery made and fired, of textiles woven of cotton.

I do not suggest that nothing has changed in Burkina in the past century, or that Islam and Christianity have not had an impact. What I mean is that the culture of the country remains rich, especially in contrast to countries where Christianity and Islam have completely replaced “traditional” culture.

This bibliography is about art and performance in Burkina Faso. By art I mean the things that people make to express their most fundamental and sometimes ancient ideas about themselves and the world in which they live, especially the spirit world. By performance I mean the way these objects are handled or worn when they appear in rural villages, or in a contemporary political context. The art I am describing is “contemporary” art, that is, it is art that is still being used by people in many villages all across the country. The word “contemporary” has been appropriated by scholars who are interested in the work of artists who have been academically trained, and who sell their work in galleries or show it in museums. I do not accept this definition, because it implies that the art in rural villages where I study has either disappeared, or is no longer relevant. This is far from the truth. Everything I describe here is contemporary. Much of the art of Burkina Faso takes the form of masks, and masks are used in performances. Many of the sources that I cite describe performances as well as the objects. The early colonial descriptions of masks also

describe performance, as do the studies of French and American scholars in the past fifty years. The sole exceptions are the catalog notes of art dealers, collectors and curators, who often leave out any mention of performance. I am very much of the opinion that the word "mask" includes not only the carved wooden portion, but also the fiber or leaf costume, the performance, and the music. I do not include here the performances of theatrical groups, nor do I include descriptions of such dance groups as the *warba* dancers, who are rarely mentioned in the literature.

It is truly astonishing how many scholars who should know better continue to insist that Africans don't make art, because what they make is "functional", is used in everyday life. It is clear that these scholars fail to understand that all art is used in everyday life, and that African art in particular is useful in understanding what every day life means. The art of France, Germany, Italy, England, and the United States are just as functional, and just as integrated in the lives of the people who make and use it as is the art of Africa. The elaborate labels attached to walls next to paintings and sculpture in Western museums make it perfectly clear how important context and social history are to the understanding art. Western scholars insist that what African artists carve and use does not meet the definition of art. In fact, by a much less Eurocentric measure, it is Europeans and Americans who don't understand the definition of art. Scholars persist in pretending that Africans don't have a word in their languages for "art" when in fact it is we in the West who do not have a word for "art."

There is the issue of the language in which research is carried out. All of the early scholars used local interpreters to translate into French. The great French scholars Guy Le Moal and Jean Capron learned the languages of the Bobo and the Bwa respectively over the decades that they worked among these people. The great historian of the Mossi, Michel Izard, spoke and understood Mooré, but nevertheless worked with a translator. It is quite obvious that the younger scholars from Burkina Faso who have been publishing in the last two or three decades speak the local language as well as French. When a scholar from a Senufo village studies the Senufo, the results are usually quite important. Thanks to training in the American Peace Corps, as well as substantial periods of time in the country, some of the American scholars speak Mooré or the other languages of the people of Burkina.

It is a little bit surprising that I have been asked to write about art and performance in Burkina Faso, rather than about art and performance among the Voltaic peoples. Apparently Oxford University press has decided that contemporary political boundaries are a good way to organize scholarly research. Otherwise the Dogon people are as "Voltaic" as are the Mossi or the Bwa. The scholarship on the Dogon is so enormous that it merits an essay all by itself. Although there are many Dogon people living in Burkina Faso now, all of the scholars who have studied them have worked in Mali.

#### Colonial period scholars

In the first group are studies by French colonial officers and researchers before independence in 1960. These include Louis Tauxier, Henri Labouret, Guy Le Moal, Michel Izard, Jean Capron, and others. The earliest colonial anthropologists were interested in documenting the peoples of Burkina Faso in an effort to support the colonial French government. These early reports are clear, thorough, and informative. Tauxier's books about Burkina Faso remain today some of the most important sources on what the peoples of Burkina Faso were like a century ago. None of these studies is focused exclusively on art. They are all much broader descriptions of a group of people, in which a single chapter may be devoted to art, or in some cases, art is only mentioned

in passing. Nevertheless I include these publications because it is impossible to understand the cultural riches of Burkina Faso without reading them.

The second group includes scholars from Burkina Faso before independence. Most prominent among these is Dim Delobsom, but it also includes such people as Elois Kafando. These were all educated people who documented the lives in what was then Upper Volta, and whose work were either published or deposited in government archives or libraries.

Scholars of History: The following citations are works by these early European scholars writing well before 1960.

A.A.Y. Dim Delobsom was a Mossi, educated in French Christian mission schools, who wrote prolifically about both political and spiritual subjects in the 1930s. His books and articles are very detailed and informative. He occasionally inserts Christian dogma in his studies, but he cast light on many esoteric and secret Mossi "traditions." His most famous book is *l'Empire du Mogho-Naba* (1933). He went too far in *"Les Secrets Des Sorciers Noirs"* (1934) and it is rumored he was poisoned.

Delobsom, A. A. Dim. *l'Empire du Mogho-Naba*. Paris: Domat-Montchrestien, 1933.

Delobsom was a very important native Mossi scholar in the 1930s. He was very well-educated, was privy to lots of important data about art and life among the Mossi people, and for a short period of time he published quite prolifically. This book is about the politics of the Mossi people. There are rumors that Delobsom was warned not to publish some of this data because it was secret, and when he refused he was poisoned.

Delobsom, A. A. Dim. "Les Nioniosse De Goupana (Ouagadougou)." *Outre-Mer, Revue Generale de Colonisation* 1, no. 4 (1929): 419-46

The nioniossé comprise the conquered spiritual class in Mossi society, ruled over by the nakomsé invaders from Dagomba. Delobsom draws the distinction between the two strata of Mossi society, and provides a detailed description of the people who make and use masks to represent the spiritual beings that control their lives.

Delobsom, A. A. Dim. *Les Secrets des sorciers noirs*. Paris: Nourry, 1934.

This was the book that got Delobsom into trouble with his much more traditional peers in Burkina Faso in the 1930s. He told too many secrets about the spiritual life of the Mossi. Delobsom was a member of the nakomsé political elite in Mossi society, and surely the nioniossé resented his research and publications.

Delobsom, A. A. Dim. "Les Procèdes Divinatoires Des Bagba (Devins) Au Mossi." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 43 (1933): 182-212.

Delobsom describes in detail the divination techniques used by the Mossi diviners called baga in the singular and bagba in the plural. Not only is the process itself an artform, but the costumes worn by the diviners are quite elaborate and impressive. The artist Fritz

Nansen, who accompanied Leo Frobenius to Burkina Faso in 1907, did a beautiful watercolor of one of these diviners in his costume.

**Leo Frobenius** visited Burkina Faso in 1907 on a trip to Cameroon. Of course at the time both Togo and Cameroon were German colonies. Frobenius followed the trail from Dogon country through Yako and Ouagadougou to Togo, and photographed several interesting performances. Leo Frobenius was a German scholar/explorer/adventurer/collector who traveled across vast areas of Africa in the period before and after World War I. He visited the former German colonies in Africa many times until 1918 when Germany was stripped of her colonies. He wrote prolifically about the African peoples that he met. His books are illustrated with images of culture, art and performance all across Africa. He was very unpopular with the British and the French, because he actively sought alliances between Germany and African countries before 1918. The Frobenius Institute in Frankfurt–am–Main is a trove of documents on Burkina in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The artist Fritz Nansen accompanied Frobenius and made hundreds of wonderful sketches of people, buildings, artists at work, masks in performance, and royal art. He actually entered some royal tombs and sketched their layouts. He published some of these materials in “Das Sterbende Afrika” in 1923, in which appear two excellent photos of masks in Ouahigouya, in the north, and in Ouagadougou, in the south. This was key in the very early stages of my research on Mossi masks. He also collected art wherever he went which are now in the museums of many of the great museums in Germany.

Frobenius, Leo. *Das sterbende Afrika*. Munich: O.C. Recht: 1923.

This is one of the many books that Leo Frobenius wrote about his travels in Africa. As the title suggests Frobenius was convinced that the rich cultures that he encountered would quickly disappear. Fortunately, African cultures have changed but have not disappeared. This book had an important impact on my study of the Mossi because it includes two photographs of Mossi masks both in the north and in the south that Frobenius took in 1907. Fritz Nansen, an artist who accompanied

**Henri Labouret** was a French colonial officer both in Burkina Faso and in Ivory Coast in the early 1930s. He published a major study of the Lobi, in which she unfortunately lumped together large numbers of people who are only distantly related to the Lobi. Four decades his book “Les tribus du rameau lobi” was the only source on information about these people. That situation has changed with publications by postindependence scholars. Labouret participated in the suppression of the Lobi people, including the introduction of the use of machine guns and poison gas.

Labouret, Henri. *Les tribus du rameau Lobi*. Paris: Institut d'ethnologie, 1931.

For decades this was the book that every scholar went to to find information about the Lobi people. The most common criticism of the book is that he lumps together way too many people and calls them "Lobi." He does not differentiate between the various diverse peoples who live in the region: Birifor, Dian, Dorossié, Gan, Lobi, and Teguessié. Labouret caused much confusion when he commissioned a carver to create masks in the style of the Baule people who live far to the south in Ivory Coast. He is also notorious for introducing the idea of chemical warfare in an effort to subdue the Lobi.

**Lucien Marc** was a colonial officer very early in the 20th century who published a dissertation on the Mossi people early in the history of French colonial power in what was then French West Africa. His small dissertation is extremely informative and useful about all aspects of Mossi life before the first world war.

Marc, Lucien. *Le pays mossi*. Paris: Larose, 1909.

This is a very early study of the Mossi people. It was published as a doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne in 1909. The author describes the daily life of the Mossi people, their economy, their relations with the French colonials, the different peoples who make up the Mossi states, the stories of the origin and history of the Mossi empire and their social and political life. In contrast to most other early studies, the author mentions art, especially the use of carved figures at funerals.

**Louis Tauxier** was a French colonial officer who published extensively on all of the peoples of Burkina Faso, as well as on the Bamana people in Mali, and several peoples in Ivory Coast. Tauxier joined the colonial service in 1905. His first station was in Guinea and resulted in a publication on the peoples of that country. He was posted to upper Volta in 1908. He was the *commandant du cercle* in Ouahigouya from 1913 - 1916. In 1917 he was appointed chief administrator in the city of Kayes, in western Mali. In the same year his monumental study of the people of northern Burkina was published. He was chief administrator in the city of Bondoukou in Ivory Coast from 1918 to 1920. Tauxier finally returned to France permanently in 1927. Many of his most important studies were published in the 1930s. His studies of the peoples of northern and southern Burkina Faso provide by far the most extensive and accurate descriptions of these people a century ago. He was a superb observer, and recorded the lives of all of these people in minute detail. His most useful book is "Le noir du Yatenga," which focuses on the Fulani and Mossi people in northern Burkina Faso, but his "Noir du Sudan" is more extensive and describes the lives of the Bwa (Bwaba) people, the Nuna and Winiama, and others. Tauxier was a brilliant scholar, and his publications are indispensable to anyone who writes about the peoples and history of Burkina Faso. Of course Burkina Faso has changed enormously since 1912, but his studies provide a very valuable source of comparison.

Tauxier, Louis *Le Noir du Yatenga: Mossis, Nionioissés, Samos, Yarsés, Silmi-Mossis, Peuls*. Paris: Larose, 1917.

This monumental early colonial work was written by one of the most prominent French ethnographers of West Africa. Tauxier describes in great detail the politics, religion, dress, history, and every other aspect of the lives of the people of what is now northern Burkina Faso. He even mentioned art and performance briefly. Tauxier's work is a very useful and accurate document of life among these people a century ago. The book is very difficult to find except online.

Tauxier, Louis *Le noir du Soudan; pays Mossi et Gourounsi; Documents et analyses*. Paris: Émile Larose, 1912.

This is a very important early colonial ethnography of the southern Mossi people and of their neighbors to the south and southwest, who were then called the "Gurunsi." These

same people are now better known as Nunuma, Bwa, Bobo, Lela, Sisala, and Kassena. Although this is now completely out of date as a document of contemporary life is a very useful document of life in this part of Africa a century ago.

### **The modern Pathfinders:**

There is a very large group of French scholars, and one single American scholar, who should be described as the pathfinders in the study of art and performance in Burkina Faso. In the case of the French scholars these are people who began their research before independence, and who had played important roles in the scholarship on Burkina Faso before 1960, but then who remained in the country and continue to carry out significant research after 1960. Each of the French scholars spent months and even years in villages and communities around the country, and then published enormously important studies, always in the French language. Elliott Skinner spent much less time in Burkina Faso, but his book on the development of Mossi political systems ranks in importance with the work of such people as Michelle Izard.

There are two questions which have repeatedly caused confusion among students of the art of Burkina Faso: who are the Bwa people, and who are the nyonyosé people? In most of the older literature on African art, objects that are covered with red white and black geometric patterns are mistakenly attributed to the Bobo people. This is because the first French to arrive in Burkina Faso depended on Jula interpreters to identify the different peoples they encountered. The Jula interpreters use the same name – Bobo -- to describe both the Mande language family speaking Bobo people around the city of Bobo Dioulasso, and the Voltaic speaking Bwa, who live to the east, closer to the Black Volta River. In many ways the two people appear similar because the Bwa have made a concerted effort to emulate their Bobo neighbors. However they speak unrelated languages and their art is very different indeed. Bobo art is best illustrated by the brilliant studies of Guy Le Moal. Bwa art has been amply illustrated in many recent studies, including two catalogs of art from Burkina Faso published in 1987, and in 1997. Although the difference between these people is clear to anyone who bothers to read, numerous .com sites and dealers continue to make the same mistake and publish misleading exhibition catalogs.

The second issue is the identity of the nyonyosé. Much of the blame for this must be placed on the Austrian scholar Annemarie Schweeger-Hefel. She and her partner Wilhelm Staude brilliantly studied the Kurumba people in the far north. Their failing came when they defined the nyonyosé as a group of people separate and independent from the Mossi. In fact all nyonyosé are part of larger Mossi communities. They represent the large populations of farmers who were conquered in about 1500 by the invading cavalry from the south. The mixture of the nyonyosé with the nakomsé invaders resulted in a new society called Mossi. All nyonyosé are Mossi but not all Mossi are nyonyosé. Fortunately, so few people have read Schweeger-Hefel's publications that this misunderstanding has not become widespread in the communities of Anglophone and Francophone scholars.

**Jean Capron** (1929-2014) was a French ethnographer who began to study the northern Bwa people well before independence in 1960. He worked for many years for the CNRS. Many of the people he studied now live in what is modern Mali. His excellent book describes the Bwa people and villages in enormous detail, but with very little mention of any kind of art. In fact the only masks made in the villages where he worked were leaf masks. When I met him in 1983 he told

me that it was only the southern Bwaba who use masks of wood, and that the masks of leaves in the north that he knew never appeared at funerals. He was devoted to the Bwa people in the villages where he lived, in great part because of their democratic institutions. He was awarded a Doctorat d'Etat in 1988. He taught at the University of Ouagadougou, and the University of Niamey. I vividly remember a conversation I had with him in 1983 when he described the devastating impact of the cultivation of cotton on Bwa communities. Bwa farmers had been accustomed to farming together as groups in cooperation, and the French system of individual payments to farmers for cotton destroyed that.

Capron, Jean. *Communautés villageoises bwa: Mali, Haute Volta*. Paris: Institut d'ethnologie, 1973.

This is the definitive study of the Bwa people of central Burkina and southern Mali. The research was carried out in the last decade before independence in 1960. It mentions leaf masks in the north where the author did his research, but does not mention the wooden masks from the southern area, for which the Bwa people are better known. This is the starting point for any study of the Bwa people.

**Michel Izard** (1931-2012) was a French anthropologist and ethnologist. He was Emeritus Research Director at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), and was a member of the Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale (College de France, EHESS, Paris) since its founding in 1960 by Claude Lévi-Strauss. The focus of his research was on the social and political history of the Mossi people of Burkina Faso. He was particularly interested in the history of the mostly kingdoms before the arrival of the French at the end of the 19th century. He paid particular attention to the balance between the political class descended from the invading cavalrymen from the south, and the spiritual class made up of the farmers who had lived in the region for millennia. He was an astonishingly prolific scholar, who made an enormous contribution to the understanding of the history of the Mossi people.

Izard Michel *Moogo : l'émergence d'un espace étatique ouest-africain au XVIe siècle*. Paris: Karthala, 2003

By the most respected Francophone scholar of the history of Burkina Faso. The study focuses on the political history of the kingdoms of Yatenga and Oubritenga, which are the northernmost and the southernmost of the Mossi kingdoms. It includes a detailed chronology of the rulers of these states, the relationship between the Mossi states and neighboring peoples, and the importance of the contrast between political and spiritual life among the Mossi.

Izard Michel *Le Yatenga précolonial : un ancien royaume du Burkina*. Paris : Karthala, 1985.

Describes the long history of the Mossi kingdom of Yatenga from the early 16th century to the first decade of the 20th century, including the violent civil war that took place between two political factions, starting with battles against neighboring states and ending with a peace imposed by the French in 1912. A brilliant example of the importance of oral histories in reconstructing the history of Africa.

Izard Michel *Introduction a l'histoire des royaumes mossi*. Paris: College de France, Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale, 1970.

This is a key and essential study of the history of the Mossi people. The author is the most respected Francophone source on Mossi history. He devotes chapters to the establishment of the Mossi kingdoms, early descriptions of the Mossi in Arabic manuscripts, the kingdom of Ouagadougou, the great kingdom of Yatanga in the north, and the situation of the Mossi states of the French conquest in 1896.

Izard Michel *Contribution a l'histoire des royaumes mossi* 2 vols. Recherches voltaïques 12–13. Paris Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1970.

In 1970 this became the key and essential history of the Mossi Empire from 1500 to 1960 (independence). I consulted this frequently in my own research in an effort to place Mossi art in a historical context. Izard has updated his work with much more recent publications, including his 1990 "Gens du pouvoir, gens de la terre" (1980). There is now a generation of well-trained Mossi historians who have made important contributions to the study of Mossi history.

Izard Françoise editor *Colloque sur les cultures voltaïques 8*. Ouagadougou/Paris: Recherches voltaïques, 1965.

Very distinguished participants in this colloquium included Meyer Fortes, Michel Izard, Guy Le Moal, Robert Pageard, Jean Rouch, Annemarie Schweeger-Hefel, and others. Each participant presented a paper, and then was questioned by one of the other scholars who attended. The text consists of a dialogue between presenter and observer, and the result is one of the most important discussions of the culture of what is now Burkina Faso.

Izard, Michel. *Gens du pouvoir, gens de la terre : les institutions politiques de l'ancien royaume du Yatenga*. New York : Cambridge University Press, 1985

Michel Izard is among the great French scholars of the history of Burkina Faso. He has been studying the Mossi people for decades, and the result is an enormous volume of outstanding scholarship without which no one can consider beginning research on any aspect of Mossi life and art. He quite correctly and accurately draws the distinctions and connections between the ruling class and the spiritual class in Mossi communities.

Lallemand Suzanne. "Symbolisme des poupées et acceptation de la maternité chez les Mossi" *Objets et mondes* (1973) 13 (4): 235-246.

An extremely detailed and informative description of the small carved wooden figures that little Mossi girls use as toys, and which have been widely collected by Westerners for decades. The author has written extensively about Mossi women's issues. Based on extensive research in Burkina Faso. The author also writes about pregnancy and childcare in Madagascar, and about magical practices across Black Africa.

**Guy Le Moal** (1924-2010) played an enormously important role in the history of scholarship in Burkina Faso. He was trained in France as a dedicated structuralist, He first went to what was then Haute-Volta in the 1950s to become the first director of the IFAN (Institut français d'Afrique noir). He apparently spent the first years in Burkina traveling on horseback from village to village all over the country, making note of which peoples lived in what villages. The result was the first comprehensive map of the different peoples or ethnic groups of Upper Volta. All such maps made in the decades since his survey are based on his original work. During this period he became interested in the Bobo people who live around the city of Bobo-Dioulasso and to the north. He settled in the village of Kurumani, where he carried out research on the role of masks in initiations among the Bobo people. His first major book on Bobo masks was based on his dissertation, and is a seminal study of African art. He also produced a number of very useful and informative films that are now available through the CNRS in Paris. In terms of scholarship he has been my hero and model for almost forty years. I only met him once, when I visited him in Kouroumani in 1984. He and I shared a lunch of coq au vin and a very nice red Bordeaux served on a linen tablecloth by his "boy/cuisinier" beneath an enormous mango tree in the village.

Le Moal, Guy. *Les Bobo: Nature et fonction des masques*. Paris : ORSTOM, 1980.

Guy Le Moal's magnum opus is easily the most important study of the art of the Bobo people of Western Burkina Faso, and among the most important of all studies of art in Burkina. This was the text of his doctoral dissertation on Bobo masks. The subject are the real Bobo people, or Bobo-Fing. The text is very dense, very structuralist, and it is very complete. An exhaustive in-depth study of masks in initiation.

Le Moal, Guy. *Masques Bobo : vie, formes et couleurs*. Paris : Biro, 2008.

This is much more recent and much more accessible than "Les Bobo:Nature et fonction des masques(1980)." It clearly was written for students, curators, and collectors of African art. It includes numerous beautiful color photographs of all of the many different kinds of Bobo masks, and a shorter, very interesting chapter on the art of the Bolon people.

**Guy LE MOAL. Notes sur les populations Bobo, IFAN, serie B XIX 3-4, 1957. Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire. Série B, Sciences humaines. 19 (3-4) juillet-octobre 1957, pages 418-430. 957**

**Madeleine Père** (1923-2002) devoted fifty years of her life to understanding the Lobi people. She was born in Burgundy in 1923, and joined the order of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary in 1945. She began research in the Gaoua region in 1961. She organized a program of training for women and girls, and was surprised by Lobi resistance to change. She discovered that this was in great part a result of the violence of the confrontation with French colonial power in the early 1900s. Père followed her study of the Lobi by intensive research of the nearby Gan. She was able to secure funding for the construction of seven primary schools in the area. With financial support from UNESCO she was able to organize, starting in 1990, a museum of the cultures of southwest Burkina in Gaoua. In the last ten years of her life she generously opened the doors of her home to many scholars who carried out research in the region.

Père Madeleine *Les Lobi: Tradition et changement*. 1988: Siloë.

This is an extremely important ethnography of the Lobi people, published by one of the most notable of Lobi scholars. It is extremely detailed, very carefully done, and essential for anyone who hopes to understand the Lobi and neighboring peoples. The author collected many of the Lobi objects that are currently on display in the museum in Gaoua. There are very extensive and detailed indexes of names, places, people, and detailed maps and bibliography.

**Elliott P. Skinner** had been a distinguished professor of history in the early 60s when John F. Kennedy was elected president. In 1972 Skinner became the first African-American department chair at Columbia and was the first African-American to be awarded tenure at Columbia University. This was a period when many West African countries were achieving independence. There were arguments about the ability of African citizens to govern themselves. Skinner had earned an MA and PhD degrees at Columbia University. He was a professor at Columbia when President Lyndon Johnson appointed him the second American ambassador to Upper Volta, with the assignment to document the fact that Africans had had functioning political systems going back many centuries and were quite capable of governing themselves. The result was Skinner's brilliant book "The Mossi of the Upper Volta: The Political Development of an African People." Skinner learned to speak Mooré during his time in Upper Volta. This book is still widely read by scholars of history as a model of political history of ancient African kingdoms. The book has of course been translated into French and reprinted many times. In subsequent years Skinner also wrote a history of the development of the capital city, Ouagadougou.

Skinner Elliott Percival. *The Mossi of the Upper Volta; the Political Development of a Sudanese people*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964.

Elliott Skinner was the most important English speaking scholar of Mossi history. He was a very distinguished professor of history at several American universities. In 1960 Pres. John Kennedy appointed him as the first American ambassador to the independent Upper Volta. He wrote this book to show evidence that African peoples were quite capable of governing themselves.

**The following scholars carried out all of their research and published following independence in 1960. If Louis Tauxier belongs to the first generation, and Guy Le Moal belongs to the second-generation, then these people belong to the third generation.**

**Daniela Bognolo** (b. 1946) is a retired professor of fine arts at the Institute of African Worlds in Paris. She is also closely affiliated with the Mueller collection in Geneva. She is a member of the School for Higher Studies (EPHE) and the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) in Paris. Her study of the Lobi and their sacred shrine received high praise from a committee that included Michel Cartry, Michele Coquet, and Guy Le Moal. She is an expert in African religion and the anthropology of art. She has carried out research in Burkina Faso since 1979. Bognolo spent many years studying the Lobi people, and more recently has turned to the Tussian who live in the Southwest. Her research focuses on the ceremonial processes associated with the construction of collective memory. She is particularly interested in what it is about African sculpture that allows it to communicate important ideas. She has completed a study of the styles of more than 150 Lobi sculptors.

Bognolo Daniela. "Djéto! Fais attention! : le "chemin de la sculpture" chez les Lobi du Burkina Faso." *Journal des africanistes*. 67 (1) 1997: 123-133.

This is a detailed article about the apprenticeship system by which a carver passes his style onto the next generation. There is considerable prestige associated with each of the master carvers in Lobi country, a prestige that can be passed on through apprentices. The author cites the names of particular artists and describes their careers and development of their styles.

Bognolo, Daniela. "Le jeu des fétiches : signification, usage et rôle des fétiches des populations Lobi du Burkina Faso." *Arts d'Afrique noire*. No. 75, Fall 1990.

Bognolo has done extensive research over thirty years among the Lobi people (and others) of southwest Burkina Faso. This article is a detailed in-depth discussion of the ways that protective spirits are embodied by magical power objects which Bognolo describes as "fétiches." For those who do not read French, she revisits the same questions in her recent book "Lobi" which has been published both in French and English versions.

Bognolo, Daniela. *Lobi*. Milan: 5 Continents, 2007.

There has been a lot of literature on the Lobi and Lobi art. Some of it is well documented and based on careful research, some of it is rather vague and unhelpful. This very helpful book focuses on both individual artists styles and regional styles. The author spent a great deal of time visiting Lobi shrines and artists collecting objects for the museum in Gaoua, and so she gained first-hand knowledge of who had carved what and where.

Bognolo, Daniela. "Le Musée Provincial du Poni au Burkina Faso" *Arts d'Afrique noire*. No. 78, summer 1991 : 9-12.

This is a very short article about the renovation in 1990 of an old colonial building in Gaoua and the installation of a large collection of Lobi artifacts and sculpture collected by Madeleine Pere and Daniela Bognolo. This is an excellent example of the creation of small local museums in various parts of Burkina Faso intended to preserve the cultural heritage of the local peoples.

Bognolo, Daniela. "La représentation de l'invisible au Burkina Faso." *Arts d'Afrique*. Falgayrettes-Leveau, Christiane, ed.. Pages 154-177, 327-328. Paris: Gallimard : 2000

The author expounds on theories of Lobi death and spirituality, of carving and apprenticeship, a description of sculptural styles and workshops, of illness and curing.

Bognolo, Daniela. "Tussian mask and Nuna figure." *A legacy of collecting : African and Oceanic art from the Barbier-Mueller Museum*. Geneva: 2009.

These are two short essays on art from Burkina Faso in a larger book published in Geneva on the Barbier-Mueller collection. Bognolo writes about the very famous southern Nuna figure which is a twin to one in the Louvre, and also about the Tussian mask. She

makes use of earlier scholars' work and produces a very concise and direct essay on each of these objects.

Bognolo Daniela "Histoire d'un doute : la femme à tête rasée chez les Lobi du Burkina Faso." *A Parures de tête = Hairstyles and headdresses*. Paris: Musée Dapper, 2003

This is an extremely informative essay on the complex and profound meanings of head shaving among the Lobi, especially among Lobi women. The head is shaved following the death of a spouse but before the first funeral. Similarly the heads of children who are ill are shaved to protect them against malevolent spirits. Finally head shaving is part of initiation. Illustrated with beautiful images of important Lobi sculpture.

Bognolo Daniela. "Art Lobi: Les styles et ses maîtres," *Les maîtres de la sculpture de Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: Barbier Mueller, 2015

Bognolo's essay focuses on the development of styles, the geographical origins of styles, and the styles of individual artists among the Lobi in southwest Burkina. Her essay appears in a book dedicated to the styles of artists in the Ivory Coast. Her work is based on years in Lobi country devoted to gathering objects for the museum in Gaoua which was founded by Madeleine Pere. Although most of the essay is devoted to formal aspects.

Bonnet Doris. "Biographie et Travaux de Louis Tauxier." *Journal des Africanistes*, 54(2):107-113 (1984).

This is a very helpful biography of one of the great colonial period scholars of the peoples and cultures of Burkina Faso. This biography also provides fascinating information about the recruitment and training of colonial officers by the French government. It would be fascinating to read a book about the scholars who served as colonial officers in both French-speaking and English-speaking West Africa in the years before independence.

Bosc, Julien. "Les sculpteurs et leurs génies : approche ethno-esthétique de la statuaire lobi." *L'Homme*. 151: 75-100. 1999,

In contemplating two works of sculpture, one by Alberto Giacometti, the other by the Lobi artist Tyohpté Palé, the author revives the discussion of what motivates the artist to create, what is going on in his head in the process of conceiving a work of art. Based on four visits of three months each to Lobi country in the 1990s. The author questions ideas of beauty and quality among Westerners and among the Lobi. For the Lobi a sculpture must be as beautiful as possible. Such quality objects

Bourdier and Minh-ha Trinh T. Minh-ha. *African spaces : designs for living in Upper Volta*. New York : Africana Pub. Co., 1985.

"African Spaces" is packed with beautiful drawings, plans and elevations of the rural homes of the many peoples of Burkina Faso. The book is an important work of art in itself.. The data that accompanies the drawings is quite useful, detailed, and accurate.

Brisset, Claire. [et al.] ; *Biga : poupées de fertilité mossi*. Paris : Galerie Flak , 2007.

An exhibition catalogue devoted to the small carved wooden figures with which Mossi children play, The book focuses almost as much on the condition of children in Burkina Faso as on the small wooden dolls. A number of excellent scholars have written useful essays based on the literature to date, and more importantly on numerous interviews with people in Burkina Faso. The book is lavishly illustrated with color photos both of the dolls and of children.

Coquet Michele. "Une esthetique du fetiche." *Systemes de pensée en Afrique noire* Paris: Ecole pratique des hauts etudes, 1987.

The author makes the case that power objects ("fetishes") in Africa have a particular form or aesthetic, including portable power objects which people wear. Her particular focus is on the Bwa people of central Burkina Faso, but she also describes nkisi power figures from the Kingdom of the Kongo. This is very much the idea that the late Arnold Rubin proposed in "African Accumulative Sculpture" (New York, Pace, 1974).

Coquet Michele "Contradictory images : Bwaba leaf masks and fibre masks with carved heads." Arnaut, Karel. *Re-visions: new perspectives on the African collections of the Horniman Museum*. Chapter 9, pages 143-157. London: Horniman Museum and Gardens; Coimbra: Museu Antropológico da Universidade de Coimbra, London: Horniman, 2000

A very concise and clear description of the leaf masks, and wood masks with fiber costumes, made by the Bwaba people in central Burkina Faso. She describes in detail the celebrations throughout the year at which masks appear. She distinguishes the characteristics of the wood masks and the masks of leaves. She writes about the Bwa plank mask in the collection of the Horniman Museum in London.

Eliard, Stephane. *L'art contemporain au Burkina Faso Series Les arts d'ailleurs*. Paris : 2002

Many scholars have been writing about the "traditional" religious art of Burkina for decades, but very few have focused on the lively "contemporary" art in the cities. This book addresses the difficulties and achievements of artists who are self-taught or trained academically and show their work in the cities. The author illustrates the work of sixteen such artists who work in painting, sculpture, and mixed media, with very good color illustrations.

Ferreol Emanuelle "Le travail de bronze à Ouagadougou : essai pour une approche historique." *Burkina Faso, cents ans d'histoire, 1895-1995: actes du premier colloque international sur l'histoire du Burkina, Ouagadougou, 12-17, décembre 1996. Volume 2, pages 2111-2139*. Paris: Editions Editions Karthala-P.U.O., 1999

A through study of the origins and history of the brass casters of Ouagadougou, who have manufactured first horse equipment (tack) for centuries and later small figures for sale to tourists. The first half is devoted to methodology, the second to a very informative

description of the origins of the three families that cast brass to the decline of horse equipment early in the 20th century, to external and internal influences, even the impact of Sankara, SIAO and FESPACO.

Forster, Till. *Skulptur in Westafrika : Masken und Figuren aus Burkina Faso: Sammlung "Burkina Faso" aus dem Morat-Institut für Kunst und Wissenschaft*, Freiburg: 1995.

The author publishes principally on the Senufo people, and has done substantial research in Ivory Coast, Mali, and Burkina Faso. This is the catalog of a German collection of art from Burkina Faso that was displayed in three German cities. All of the objects are illustrated in color, accompanied by numerous color photographs by several scholars of the art of Burkina Faso. This is the best German language source on the art of Burkina Faso.

Massa, Gabriel. "Masques animaux : sauvages : volants." *Masques animaux : d'Afrique de l'Ouest*. Saint-Maur: Sépia, 1995. Pages 73-93.

Gabriel Massa focuses on representations of animals in West African art. He has a particular interest in masks from Burkina Faso, and illustrates a large number of objects from the Mossi people, the Bwa people, the Bobo, the Nuna and Winiama people. The masks represent hornbills, roosters, storks, Ibis, and butterflies. His text describes the meanings of these objects as representations of spiritual beings.

Massa Gabriel. *Sculptures des trois voltas: Bobo, Bwa, Lobi, Mossi, Gurunsi*.

Societe des amateurs de l'art Africain. 2001 Saint-Maur: Sépia,

This is an extremely well done, lavish catalogue of an exhibition of art from Burkina Faso organized by the friends of African art in France. The objects come from a large number of private collections and were carefully selected by Gabriel Massa, who was a professor of medieval history at the Sorbonne. Although Massa did do research in Burkina Faso, the bulk of the scholarship is from sources that he consulted and which he lists in the bibliography. The quality of the text is extremely high.

Meurer, Leonhard, Eloi Kafando. "Kinderpèuppchen de Mossi in Obervolta." *Tribus* I Bd. 13, 1964, pages 25-30. 1964 Stuttgart

This was the earliest of all of the descriptions of Mossi dolls. Kafando was a Mossi teacher in Koupéla, and served as Meurer's informant about the use and function of the small carved wooden figures which are ubiquitous in Mossi country. These are toys used by little girls play with them just as little girls in our own culture play with their dolls. Meurer talks about the different patinas that results either from typical abuse, or loving care.

Michèle Coquet and Luc Regis "Du corps au sens : les scarifications bwaba." *Res : anthropology and aesthetics*. Vol. 7-8, spring- autumn 1984, pages 70-101. 1984 Cambridge, MA

This is a fascinating study of the graphic patterns that the southern Bwa people apply both to their own bodies and to the masks that appear in religious celebrations. Bwa men

and women learn the meanings of these scarification patterns and designs carved into wood over many years with increasing and more sophisticated knowledge of the spirit world. These patterns represent the religious laws for ethical behavior in the community.

#### FRENCH and AUSTRIAN scholars

Schweeger-Hefel, Annemarie. *Kult und Kunst der Kurumba : Westafrika*. Museum für Völkerkunde (Austria) Wien : Vienna, 1965.

A very compact and concise analysis of the Kurumba people in the far northern part of Burkina Faso. The information is based on three research trips made to Burkina Faso by Schweeger Hefel in 1961, 1962, and 1965. Chapters include a definition of Kurumba, a description of political leadership, a description of what she calls "rainmakers," religion, sculpture, the lives of women, craft activities including weaving, and the work of the smith.

Schweeger-Hefel, Annemarie. "Approches historiques des nyonyose en Haute Volta." *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* vol 108 (1) pp. 79-93 1983

Schweeger Hefel worked in the village of Lurum, in the extreme northern part of Mossi country on the border with the Kurumba people. She and her colleague Wilhelm Staude collected oral histories about the political and religious leadership of the community. The village was a Mossi community, divided between the nyonyose descendants of the spiritual class, and the nakomsé members of the political class.

Schweeger-Hefel, Annemarie. *Masken und Mythen : Sozialstrukturen der Nyonyosi und Sikomse in Obervolta*. Wien: A. Schendl 1980

This is a monumental text based on a lifetime's research among the nyonyosé segment of Mossi society close to the area occupied by the Kurumba. All of the nyonyosé whom Schweeger-Hefel describes in the book are the descendants of the ancient Kurumba population in the area before the founding of the Mossi states in 1500.

Schweeger-Hefel, Annemarie. *Die Kurumba von Lurum. Monographie eines Volkes aus Obervolta*. Wien : Schendl: 1973

Schweeger-Hefel and her partner Wilhelm Staude studied the Kurumba people in extreme northern Burkina Faso for many years in the 1960s and 70s. Their work among the Kurumba documents very accurately and in enormous detail this important group of people. She devotes a lengthy chapter to Kurumba art, especially to a comparison of Kurumba to Mossi and Dogon art.

Vinel, Virginie. "Etre et devenir Sikoomse: Identité et initiation en pays moaaga (Burkina-Faso)." *Cahiers d'études africains* 40 (158): 257-79. 2000

One of the most important essays on art and life of the Mossi people published in the past two decades. The author has carried out considerable research among the

Sikoomse. These are among the most secretive and conservative people in Burkina Faso, and they are the most prolific users of masks in southwest Mossi country. Most of this research was carried out in the area around the city of Koudougou (Kudugu).

Voltz, Michel. *Le langage des masques chez les bwaba et les gurunsi de Haute-Volta* Ouagadougou: The University of Ouagadougou, 1976.

Michel Voltz was a French volunteer in Burkina Faso in the mid to late 1970s who taught briefly at the University of Ouagadougou. He carried out research among the Nuna and the Bwa people of central Burkina Faso, and wrote a thesis in which he discussed the red white and black geometric patterns that cover the masks of these people. He concluded that they were symbols in a secret initiatory language.

### **Post independence scholars Burkinabe scholarship:**

The third group includes scholars from Burkina Faso since independence in 1960. Prominent among these are Boureima Diamitani, Nao Oumarou, Marc Coulibaly, Roger Somé. These scholars have all been trained either in Burkina Faso at the excellent universities established after independence, or in French or American universities. The result is that their work mirrors the particular disciplines and countries in which they were trained. The scholars trained in France tend to be vastly more structuralist than are the scholars trained in the United States. Some of the scholars trained at the University of Ouagadougou clearly are capable of taking a look at the methodologies of Europe and America and choosing the methodologies that they find useful.

There have been excellent scholars doing research about Burkina Faso since the early part of the 20th century. A.A. Y. Delobsom is the most obvious example. However the bulk of research on art and performance in Burkina Faso by Burkinabé's as been carried out in the past fifty years. Such research is not easy for most Burkinabé scholars because of a lack of funding, and because of difficulties with access to published scholarship and to the Internet. When these scholars are able to travel abroad, they spend a lot of time visiting important libraries, and a lot of time on the Internet finding materials that are very slow to download at home in Ouagadougou. It is very difficult for most Burkinabé scholars to get the funding to travel to rural villages and to stay there for weeks or months or even years. Many of them have important jobs as teachers in the big cities, and it is difficult for them to get away from their teaching duties. Some of these problems could be solved if Western scholars consistently worked in partnerships with Burkinabé scholars, allowing both of them the opportunity to carry out research. Some foreign scholars have made an effort to deposit their publications in the library at the University of Ouagadougou, but occasionally those publications disappear from the library. There is also the problem of cross-pollination: one reads material in any of the several languages of scholarship, and the data begins to sound more and more familiar. Far too often one scholar has made use of material in a foreign language, and not cited the source, and so the same ideas become repeated over and over and become reinforced. Frequent repetition makes the data sound dependable, as if several scholars had discovered the same ideas.

**Boureima Diamitani** is currently director of the West African Museum program in Ouagadougou. He has a degree in architecture from a French university, and a PhD in art history from the University of Iowa. He has been extremely active in the cultural affairs of Burkina Faso

for three decades. He has served as Dir. of cultural affairs, and was instrumental in the creation of museums in the western part of Burkina Faso. His village of birth is a Senufo village in the far western part of Burkina Faso, where senior men still belong to a society called Komo. His own father was a high-ranking member of Komo. As a result he has been able to study Komo in depth, in contrast to other parts of West Africa where as a result of the importance of Islam, Komo has almost disappeared.

**Oumarou Nao** was born and raised in a Nuna village in the south-central Burkina Faso. He studied in Ouagadougou and then received a PhD in art history at the University of Paris I. he has been deeply involved in cultural affairs in Burkina Faso for almost three decades, and has served as director of cultural affairs. He has written about the Nuna people and their art, about the art of the Mossi, especially masks and brass casting, and to a lesser extent about the art of Bwa people.

**The following citations are works by these important Burkinabe scholars published in the past thirty to forty years. Generally, these are "insiders" studies:**

Coulibaly, Marc. *Protection des communautés et des individus Traversée des mondes: Arts médecine en Afrique: Rites de guérison et purification par les masques en Burkina Faso.* Lausanne: Verdan, 2001

How masks perform to cure afflictions, with an emphasis on the masks of the Bwa people of central Burkina Faso. A detailed description of the religion of Do among the Bwa, represented by masks of leaves called loponou. At the end of the harvest season masks appear to purify the village, initiate young men and women, and to celebrate funerals. Village purification is intended to prevent disease, including mental disease.

Diamitani Boureima *Identities, Komo societies, and art among the Tagwa-Senufo of Burkina Faso.* PhD dissertation, Iowa City: Univ of Iowa, 1999.

Diamitani is a Senufo scholar who has been a prominent figure in the cultural administration in Burkina Faso for three decades. He describes the famous Komo association among the northern Senufo, particularly in and around his home village of Sayaga. He makes it quite clear that Komo is an international association which continues to thrive in western Burkina Faso, although it has largely disappeared in countries with large Muslim populations.

Diamitani, Boureima. "Observing Komo among Tagwa people in Burkina Faso : a Burkinabe art historian's View " *African arts.* 41 (3) autumn 2008, pages 14-25. Los Angeles, 2008

The author writes about the very powerful secret society of Komo in his home village of Sayaga, a Senufo village in far western Burkina Faso. He makes the case that there are many details of Komo that are only available to an insider, and some that are so secret that even a native speaker and insider can never learn.

Milogo, Antoine K. and Lassina Koté "Archéologie du Burkina Faso." Vernet, Robert, ed. *Archéologie en Afrique de l'Ouest: Sahara et Sahel.* Pages 5-70. Saint-Maur, France: 2000.

This is a collection of essays by archaeologists in Mali, Senegal, Niger, and Mauritania. The first and longest chapter is devoted to archaeology in Burkina Faso. The essays focus on archaeological discoveries in Burkina Faso in the past twenty years. The most important for the study of art is the section on iron smelting.

Madiéga, Georges and Oumarou Nao. *Burkina Faso, cent ans d'histoire, 1895-1995: actes du premier colloque international sur l'histoire du Burkina*. Ouagadougou, 12-17 décembre 1996. Paris : Editions Karthala. 1999.

An enormous two-volume document of an interdisciplinary conference in Ouagadougou in 1996 with some eighty-five participants, almost all from the school of liberal arts at the University of Ouagadougou, all in French, one from Illinois, one from Germany, several from France. There were three papers about art, two of them about the bronzes cast by the Mossi, one about art under Sankara.

Until about 1985 there was very little interest in art history at the University of Ouagadougou. Classes were not offered, and so Nao Oumarou traveled to Paris to study at the Sorbonne under Jean Devisse, a medieval historian who also wrote about Africa. Nao focuses on masking traditions among the Nuna people, including in his home village, and the Mossi people, who are included in his doctoral dissertation. Study of art history at a French university concentrates heavily on formal characteristics of the sculpture. Questions of political or religious context are generally reserved for the study of anthropology. Nao has been deeply involved in cultural affairs in the government of Burkina Faso. Another Burkinabé traveled to the US in 1991 to study art history at the University of Iowa. Boureima Diamitani grew up in a Senufo village in far western Burkina Faso. American art history is much more open to interdisciplinary studies that include both questions of style, and interest in art in social context. Diamitani has studied the Komo society among the Senufo, a secret society that has attracted attention in Mali, where because of Islam, the society is virtually extinct. The organization is still strong in many northern Senufo villages. Diamitani was for many years deeply involved in cultural affairs in Burkina, and is currently director of the West African Museums Programme.

Nao, Oumarou. "La statuaire funéraire des souverains moosé de Ouagadougou : fondements." *Burkina Faso, cents ans d'histoire, 1895-1995: actes du premier colloque international sur l'histoire du Burkina*, Ouagadougou, 12-17, décembre 1996. Volume 2, pages 2091-2109. 1999. Paris: Editions Karthala / l'ORSTOM. 1999

Nao describes the sacred cast brass and silver figures of Mossi emperors going back to the end of the 15th century, which are stored near the sacred tombs in the village of Loumbila, outside of Ouagadougou. He makes the case that it would be almost impossible to collect and store such objects in a museum because they are so sacred and secret. He describes the figures in detail, in much the same fashion as earlier French and American scholars have done.

Nao, Oumarou. *Le masque à lame chez les Moose, les Numa et les Bwaba* [microform] 1984 Paris

An excellent doctoral dissertation about the vertical plant masks of the Mossi people, the Nuna, and the Bwa people. The author was born and raised in a Nuna village in central Burkina Faso and so he qualifies as an "insider." He makes the case that both the Bwa people in the Mossi people acquired and adopted plank masks from their neighbors the Nuna at least a century ago, and in fact he is correct.

Nao, Oumarou. *Bronze statuettes of central Moogo, Ouagadougou : artistic and historical dimensions and museographic problems*. Daniel, ed. *Museums and history in West Africa*. Pages 40-45 Washington, DC: 2000.

Nao describes in English the cast brass and silver figures of Mossi emperors going back to the end of the 15th century, which are stored near the sacred tombs in the village of Loumbila, outside of Ouagadougou. He makes the case that it would be almost impossible to collect and store such objects in a museum because they are so secret. He describes the figures in detail, in much the same fashion as earlier French and American scholars have done.

Somé, Roger. *Art africain et esthétique occidentale : la statuaire lobi et dagara au Burkina Faso*. Paris : L'Harmattan, 1998.

The author is of course a Burkinabé, and so the book qualifies as one of the very few studies of Lobi art published by a scholar from Burkina Faso. There are two detailed and lengthy chapters about sculpture in particular, and two chapters on methodology and theory. He dwells at great length on questions of what is authentic, what is art, and how has the west received African art.

Pacéré, Titinga Frédéric. *Funerailles et rites des morts chez les Mossé : (les coutumes de Manéga)* Ouagadougou : Pacéré, 1988.

Maitre (attorney) Titinga Pacere is on a mission to record and preserve many of the ancient " traditions" of the Mossi people. He hosts a radio show in Ouagadougou to which large numbers of the population listen avidly. This small book describes in great detail all of the observances that surround the death and burial of a Mossi king in Pacere's village of Manega. He describes all aspects of the funeral, especially the music provided by the King's drummers.

Pacéré, Titinga Frédéric. *L'artisan du Burkina*. Ouagadougou

Titinga Pacere is by far the most respected and distinguished attorney in Burkina Faso. He is dedicated to documenting the cultural history of the Mossi people, and has written several books that he self published. He has established and maintained a museum Mossi culture in his home village of Manega, 40 km north of Ouagadougou. This book describes the many craft techniques or production techniques that are used by Mossi artists.

Pacéré, Titinga Frédéric *Dim Delobsom: l'homme et l'oeuvre* Ouagadougou: Pacéré, 1988

Curious about a Mossi scholar who passed away seventy years ago, Titinga Pacere carried out careful research, especially interviews with Delobsom's family, about the man and his work. Delobsom passed away at the age of 45, with rumors that he had been poisoned because of his publication of Mossi political and spiritual secrets. Pacere was himself warned against digging too deep. Like all of Pacéré's work, this is detailed, informative, but also very descriptive.

Pacéré, Titinga Frédéric *Le langage des tam-tams et des masques en Afrique (bendrologie) : une littérature*. Paris: Harmattan, 1991

Maitre Pacere quite correctly points out that the drums that Mossi musicians use are able to play phrases from the Mossi language. The language is tonal and so the drums reproduce the total patterns of the phrases. The drums are always played to accompany the performances of masks in Mossi villages, including in Pacere's own family villages Toeghin and Manega.

Sanou, Salaka "The private Musée de la Bendrologie, Manéga." Ardouin, Claude Daniel, ed. *Museums and history in West Africa*. Pages 62-66. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press; Oxford: James Currey, 2000

A brief but very informative history of the private museum of Mossi culture in the small village of Manega, about 50 km north of Ouagadougou. The museum was founded and is sustained by the prominent attorney Titinga Frederic Pacere. Collections include a variety of Mossi masks, musical instruments, brass figures, carved figures, and other important cultural objects. There is also a wonderful display of architecture from Burkina Faso.

Somé Roger "Les expéditions scientifiques françaises en Afrique et la collecte des objets d'art." *Burkina Faso, cents ans d'histoire: actes du premier colloque international sur l'histoire du Burkina* Volume 1, pages 132-142 Paris: Editions Karthala / l'ORSTOM. 1999

The author evaluates French colonial attitudes toward collecting sacred objects from the colonized peoples. He discusses both the French mission across Africa led by Marcel Griaule in the 1930s, and the collecting by colonial officers such as Henri Labouret among the Lobi people. He describes the justifications the French used for collecting these objects and the contrast with modern ideas about the importance and value of cultural patrimony.

Somé Roger "La statuaire lobi et dagara du Burkina Faso, question d'esthétique." *Images d'Afrique et sciences sociales : les pays lobi, birifor et dagara (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire et Ghana) : actes du colloque de Ouagadougou, 10-15 décembre 1990*. Pages 398-411, 547-563. 1993 Paris : Editions Karthala / l'ORSTOM, 1993

This is a very useful book because it represents the point of view or position of a Burkinabé scholar, Somé provides the only comparative analysis of context, function, and significance for Lobi and Dagara figures. The formal differences between bateba and kpin-daa are obvious, but not for bateba among the Lobi and Dagara. Unfortunately, he does not address this in detail. He focuses upon contextual issues and does a good job of it.

Somé, Roger. "Les bètibè, art et pouvoir chez les Lobi et les Dagara du sud-ouest du Burkina Faso." *Anthropologie de l'art : formes et significations : arts de l'Afrique, de l'Amérique et du Pacifique*. Pages 137-151. Paris: ORSTOM, 1989

This is an excellent brief essay on the exercise of leadership power in the community. The author points out that colonial scholars classified these people as "acephalous" -- without political leaders. He then shows that authority and leadership are provided by the spirits and the religious specialists in the community. These people follow the laws of God, not the laws of man. Very clear, very concise, very much to the point, and very accurate.

Traoré, Sidi and Margriet Reinders *La tenue traditionnelle au Burkina Faso* Imprimerie du Progres, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères aux Pays-Bas: 2005 Ouagadougou.

A detailed description of the various kinds of clothing used by men and women throughout Burkina Faso, including a history of traditional clothing, weaving techniques, clothing types by ethnic group and exhibitions of clothing at the national Museum in Ouagadougou. This is by far the most complete and extensive discussion of clothing in Burkina Faso.

Triande, Toumaini. *Masques et sculptures voltaïques : exposé au premier festival culturel panafricain*. All-African Cultural Festival. (1st : 1969 : Algiers, Algeria). Ouagadougou: 1969

This is the catalog of an exhibition that museum director Triande organized in the late 1960s and that traveled to Algiers. It highlights most of the important objects in the collection of the national Museum, none of which are in the museum now. It is possible that the objects never returned to Ouagadougou from Algiers: they are now missing.

### **European scholars**

The fourth group includes European scholars following independence in 1960. This group includes Annemarie Schweeger-Hefel, Madeleine Pere, Piet Meier, Michele Coquet, Til Forster, Daniela Bognolo. These people were all trained as anthropologists, historians, or art historians and bring the particular methodologies of those disciplines to bear in their publications. They are all trained as scholars and as a result their work is very informative.

Throughout the history of scholarship of art in Burkina Faso there is an unfortunate tendency to focus on literature only in one's own language. Francophone scholars tend to write for audiences in France or Burkina Faso, while Anglophone scholars write only for British or American publications. Happily there are exceptions, especially when a scholar whose first language is German publishes in French, or when an Anglophone scholar publishes both in French and English side-by-side. There have been several conferences held either in France or in Burkina Faso that do not include contributions by Anglophone scholars in their proceedings. This is not because those scholars cannot read or write French: quite the contrary they would never dream of doing research in Burkina Faso unless they were fluent in French. Perhaps the Francophone scholars are afraid the Anglophones will disagree with them.

Another unfortunate issue in the historiography of art and performance is the schism between the French and American approaches to art history. French universities take a very formalistic approach to art history and leave the study of art in social context to anthropologists. Similarly, African art is not taught in art history departments in Britain, but only in anthropology programs. Many of the publications by younger Burkinabe scholars trained in France are so focused on formal properties that they neglect to tell us why these objects were made, why they look the way they do, how they were used, and why were they important. American scholars of art history draw on both anthropology, history, and art history for their methodologies. Some Burkinabe scholars of recent generations have been trained in America, and so their approach is rather more balanced than is the approach of scholars trained in France. Few British scholars have published on art and performance in Burkina.

It should not be surprising that the scholarship on art and performance in Burkina Faso breaks down into studies by Anglophone and Francophone scholars. The Anglophone scholars include the very few Americans who read and write French, and who have had a long-time interest in Burkina Faso. The Francophone scholars include both the French themselves, and Burkinabés. Early French colonial scholars of Burkina Faso made a huge contribution through the colonial period studies that they carried out of different peoples in the colony and their way of life. These scholars include Louis Tauxier on Yatenga and southern Burkina, Michel Izard on Mossi history, Guy Le Moal on Bobo masks, Jean Capron on the Bwa people in general, and Madeleine Pere on the Lobi. Of these only Le Moal made art, specifically masks, the major focus of his work. The work of all of these scholars is extremely important, and no one should study any aspect of life in Burkina Faso until they have read them.

The major Anglophone scholars of art and performance in Burkina Faso begin with Elliott Skinner's famous book on Mossi political history to understand the development of kingship among the Mossi. They also include Christopher Roy (Mossi, Bwa, Winiama) and his students, including Cory Gundlach (Lobi), Susan Cooksey (Tussian), Boureima Diamitani (Senufo), Emily Vergara (Bwa).

There are several important scholars of art and performance in Burkina who are neither French nor American: Daniela Bognolo is Italian, although she has worked in France for years and published in French and English. Til Forster is German, and the great explorer/adventurer/scholar Leo Frobenius was German. Piet Meier's (Swiss) Lobi catalogue was published only in German, but there are English translations easily available on the Internet.

**Piet Meier:** For many years scholars depended on old colonial texts such as Henri Labouret's for information about Lobi art. Then in the late 1970s the scholar Piet Meier carried out extensive in-depth research in Lobi country which was published in an exhibition catalogue for the Rietberg Museum in Zürich. Meier spent six months between 1967 and 77 doing ethnology research about Lobi divination, mostly in the village of Wourbira. This catalog then became the most dependable source for decades until the more recent publications of Daniela Bognolo. Meier's research cleared up many difficult questions about who made Lobi art, how it was used, where was it used, and what did it mean. *Kunst und Religion der Lobi* remains one of the most respected and useful sources on Lobi sculpture.

**Michèle Coquet** (b. 1956) is full professor of anthropology of art in Paris at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and member of the Institut Interdisciplinaire d'Anthropologie du Contemporain (IIAC). Having first studied fine arts and art history, she chose ethnology and anthropology. She then studied the function and the use of images and art in African societies in rural areas. From a comparative standpoint, her most recent publications associate anthropological thought with research in art history concerning some essential notions of the theory of image in the Western world (as prototype, resemblance, model...) In her current work, she is interested in studying physical properties of objects (forms, materials, colors, sounds, smells), the part played by the sensorial experience in the production of forms, the process of creation in African and European societies.

**The following citations are works by these important French, German and Italian scholars:**

Antongini, Giovanna and Tito Spini, "Les gens de l'hippopotame" *Actes du colloque de Ouagadougou, 10-15 décembre 1990. Pages 346-359.* Paris: Editions Karthala: Editions l'ORSTOM, 1993

An indispensable description of Lobi religious thought based on research begun in 1977. The authors describe seven earthen shrines in the shape of a hippopotamus. Through interviews with elders they explain the association of the hippo to the Black Volta River and to initiation. They carefully analyze every detail of the shrines. This and Piet Meier's study in German radically expanded our understanding of Lobi art.

De Combes Michel *The Magic of the Mask: The Bolon* South Africa: Stonegate, 2014

The author is a photographer, not a trained scholar, but he does a very creditable job of documenting the art and life of the Bolon. This Mande people live on the border with Mali, and are much more closely associated with other people in Mali than with the Voltaic speakers in central Burkina. Guy Le Moal also describes Bolon art in his 2008 book on the Bobo.

Meier, Piet. *Kunst und Religion der Lobi.* Zürich : Museum Rietberg 1981.

When it was published in 1981 this catalog of Lobi objects from collections all over the world completely changed the understanding of Lobi sculpture. The author had done high-quality field research in southwest Burkina Faso, and working in conjunction with the Rietberg Museum in Zürich, organized an excellent exhibition of Lobi sculpture. The photographs are of outstanding quality.

Rupley, Lawrence Lamissa Bangali Boureima Diamitani. *Historical Dictionary of Burkina Faso* Plymouth UK: Scarecrow Press, 2013

An extremely helpful alphabetical compendium of names, dates, and events in Burkina Faso since before independence. Very short biographies of the key actors in the history of the country. Lists of the many ethnic groups of the country, descriptions of various government offices, accounts of the events surrounding changes in government. Descriptions of cities and towns, and of geographical features.

**American Scholars: The following citations are works by important American, scholars published in the past thirty to forty years. These are by scholars who spent extended periods of time carrying out research in rural communities:**

**Susan Cooksey** began her study of African art at the University of Florida in Gainesville. She then moved to the University of Iowa where she completed a PhD in art history. She carried out research in Burkina Faso in the extreme southwest area of the country, near the city of Bonfora. Her dissertation and subsequent publications concern the use of figures in divination by the peoples in southwest Burkina Faso. She is currently curator of African art at the Harn Museum at the University of Florida.

Cooksey, Susan. *Iron staffs in the crossroads: art and divination in Toussiana*, Ann Arbor, Mich. : UMI Dissertation Services, 2004 .

This dissertation examines arts associated with multiple divination systems in Toussiana, Burkina Faso. It examines the history of these systems, interaction of diviners, and material and performative arts in their practices.

Gundlach Cory Keith. *The River and the Shrine: Lobi Art and Sense of Place in Southwest Burkina Faso* Thesis M.A. The University of Iowa: 2012.

Based on a close and thorough reading of the research to date, and on three research trips to visit the Lobi, the author analyzes the stereotypes of Lobi history and society and makes an excellent study of their religious beliefs and sculptural creativity. He analyzes early colonial literature in light of discoveries about the violence of French colonialism, and compares and contrasts the conclusions of a large number of scholars over the past four decades.

**Christopher Roy** (b. 1947) is professor of African art history at the University of Iowa. He first visited Burkina Faso in 1970 as an American Peace Corps volunteer. Through his Peace Corps work he became immersed in the art of Burkina Faso and he received a PhD in art history at Indiana University in 1979 with a thesis on Mossi masks. He has continued to study the cultural creativity of many peoples of Burkina Faso for forty-five years. He has published extensively in three books and many articles on the art of Burkina Faso. The first book, "Art of the Upper Volta the Rivers" attempted to cover all of the many peoples in Burkina who create masks and figures. His second large book, "Land of Flying Masks" focused on one important private collection of art from Burkina Faso. This particular book was lavishly illustrated with color photographs. His third book dedicated just to Burkina Faso is titled "Mossi: Diversity in the Art of West African People". In addition he has produced a body of twenty-six videos, available free of charge, on YouTube about art and life in Burkina Faso. He also created a very large and comprehensive website titled "Art and Life in Africa" which is much broader in scope but includes substantial material on the art of Burkina Faso.

Roy, Christopher D.. *Mossi masks and crests* . University Microfilms International. Ann Arbor, 1979.

The author's doctoral dissertation completed in 1979, and based on research carried out in 1976 and 77. The author traveled through a large number of communities and spoke

with the elders, and attended mask performances. The Mossi people carve masks in several different styles which are quite easily distinguished, and which reflect the geographical distribution of the peoples who were conquered in 1500 to form the Mossi kingdoms.

Roy, Christopher D. *Mossi: Diversity in the Art of a West African People*, Milan 5: Continents, 2015.

This is the only monograph devoted to the art of the Mossi people. The author has been studying Mossi art for forty-five years. He makes the case that art objects such as masks and figures can be important documents in understanding the historical development of an African people. It includes extensive study of religious art, political art, children's dolls, dance crests, and other important art forms.

Roy, Christopher D. . *Land of Flying Masks: Art and Culture of Burkina Faso*. Munich: Prestel, 2007.

This is the catalog of a private American collection of art from Burkina Faso. It is a lavish publication with all photographs in full-color. It documents very completely all of the many art forms created by the many peoples of Burkina Faso. It is a good testament to what the national collection in Ouagadougou could have been and should have been. The author has been doing research on the arts of the peoples of Burkina Faso since 1970.

Roy, Christopher D. *Art of the Upper Volta Rivers* Meudon: Chaffin, 1987.

Until 1987 there were numerous small catalogs of the collections of individual art dealers and private collectors in Europe and America of art from Burkina Faso. This was the first book-length, comprehensive view of the art of the country based on scholarly field research. It is unfortunately out-of-print and difficult to find and as a result quite expensive. It is available online.

Roy, Christopher D. "Burkina Faso," *Berg encyclopedia of world dress and fashion*. Volume 1: Africa. Oxford: Berg, 2010.

Christopher Roy has written in detail about the dress in costume of the peoples of Burkina Faso up until the present. He has focused on the Mossi people, who comprise the majority population. He mentions the distinctive kinds of costume that distinguishes the ruling political class, from the spiritual class. he mentions many kinds of dress that were popular before independence but have since disappeared.

Roy Christopher D. "Forme et signification des masques mossi = Form and meaning of Mossi masks." *Arts d'Afrique noire*. no. 48, winter 1983, pages 9-23  
Arnouville: 1983,

Aware that much of his audience with interest in the arts of Burkina Faso are Francophone, Christopher Roy published a detailed description in French of the many different styles of masks of the Mossi people, and how those objects were used to honor

the spirits of nature in the Mossi environment. This is a good example of the social history of African art that is in favor with American scholars.

Roy Christopher D. "Forme et signification des masques mossi = Form and meaning of Mossi masks." *Arts d'Afrique noire*. No. 49, printemps 1984, pages 11-22. Arnouville, France: 1984.

Based on his doctoral dissertation research, the author describes the several different styles of masks made by the Mossi people, and discusses the ways they are used in rural villages. There are several different Mossi styles that correspond to the several different peoples who were conquered and subjugated by the invading horsemen from the south in 1500 CE.

Roy, Christopher D. "The laws of man and the laws of God : graphic patterns in Voltaic art." *Baessler-Archiv*. NF 47 (1) 1999, pages 223-258. Berlin: 1999

Baessler-Archiv has been an important source of scholarship on Africa and African art for decades, but recently relatively few American or French scholars have made use of it. This essay discusses the graphic patterns that are carved into the surfaces of most of the masks of Burkina Faso, and describes their meanings as symbols in secret languages that young people learn at initiation.

Roy, Christopher D. "Mossi chiefs' figures." *African arts*. 15 (4), August 1982, pages 52-59, 90-91. Los Angeles: 1982.

Christopher Roy learned the language of the Mossi people as a Peace Corps volunteer from 1970 to 1972, and then made use of his knowledge to study the political and spiritual art of the major population of Burkina Faso. This essay describes the political art of the ruling class, which takes the form of carved wooden figures, wooden house posts, and equipment for horses.

Roy, Christopher D. "Mossi dolls" *African arts*. 14 (4), August 1981, pages 47-51, 88. Los Angeles: 1981

For decades collectors of African art have purchased the small wooden figures that are used as toys by young Mossi girls. Based on field research in Burkina Faso over almost 50 years, the author places these small figures in the context of the Mossi family. He describes their carving, their purchase by parents in local markets, their use by little girls as simple toys, and their occasional use by grown women as sympathetic aides to conception.

Roy, Christopher D. "Mossi mask styles.." *Iowa studies in African art*. School of Art and Art History, The University of Iowa, volume 1, 1984, pages 45-66. Iowa City, Iowa: 1984.

Text of a lecture presented at the University of Iowa conference. The author makes the case that the various mask styles created by the Mossi people of Burkina Faso are relics of the ancient patterns of population throughout the region before it was conquered by the invading horsemen from the south who created the Mossi Empire. In this case art objects become a primary document in understanding the history of a group of people.

Roy, Christopher D. "Mossi pottery forming and firing." *Man does not go naked : Textilien und Handwerk aus afrikanischen und anderen Ländern* Basel, Switzerland: 1989.

A detailed discussion of the four techniques used by female potters among the Mossi people. Based on the author's field research in Burkina Faso and on his master's thesis at Indiana University. Techniques include the concave mold, convex mold, direct pull, and coiling.

Roy, Christopher D. "Mossi weaving," *African arts*. 15 (3), May 1982, pages 48-53, 91-92. Los Angeles: 1982.

Weaving cotton textiles has been an important art form among the Mossi people for centuries. Men weave strips on narrow-warp, horizontal looms and then sew the strips together edge to edge to form a full textile. Large roles of these cotton strips were a major export to the forest regions to the south for centuries at a time when the Akan peoples of Ghana did not use cotton. The weaving industry was controlled by a group of traders called the yarsé.

Roy, Christopher D. "Mossi zazaido" *African arts*. 13 (3) May 1980, pages 42-47, 92

In some areas of northern Mossi country men wear small wooden crests on top of the head in dances that honor deceased elders in the community. These performers constitute an association that works for the benefit of the community. The crests are called zazaido, and are well known in collections of African art in Europe and America. The author describes the work of a carver named Yamba Ouedraogo.

Roy, Christopher D. "The spread of mask styles in the Black Volta basin." *African arts*. 20 (4), August 1987, pages 40-47, 89-90. Los Angeles

This essay makes the strong case that the peoples of what is now Burkina Faso create art that shares common style characteristics, especially the use of red white and black graphic patterns, because they are culturally related. The earliest sources of this style are the so-called "gurunsi" peoples in the south central portion of the country, whence the style spread westward to the Bwa, and eastward to the Mossi.

Roy Christopher D. "West African pottery forming and firing." *Mundus Africanus: ethnologische Streifzüge durch sieben Jahrtausende afrikanischer Geschichte: festschrift für Karl-Ferdinand Schaedler zum 70. Geburtstag*, Pages 123-145. Rahden: Leidorf, 2000

The author began to study pottery in West Africa in 1970 when he served as a Peace Corps volunteer in charge of the pottery section at the national arts center in Ouagadougou. He proposes that all of the peoples in West Africa use a common repertoire of techniques to form pottery, including the concave mold technique, the convex mold technique, the direct pulled technique, and the coiling technique.

Skougstad Norman *Traditional Sculpture from Upper Volta*. The African-American Institute. New York: 1978.

This is the catalog of a groundbreaking exhibition in 1978 of art from Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) at the African-American Institute in New York. The author, Norman Skougstad, served two terms in the Peace Corps in Burkina Faso and carried out original field research from 1972 to 1974 among the Nuna people southwest of Ouagadougou.

#### [Dealers, Collectors, and Curators of art from Burkina Faso:](#)

Dealers, collectors and curators generally are forced to make use of other peoples' scholarship. It is true that most curators are trained scholars and carry out their own research in Africa, but this research is usually narrow enough that they must depend on other people's work when they stray outside their own field. Dealers, collectors and curators are secondhand sources, and so people rarely cite their work or publications. However, all of that being said, they often have a profound influence on the public understanding of African art and performance. Their publications are usually the ones that are most frequently seen by the public, and so they must be considered carefully. The catalogue of art from Burkina Faso that was published decades ago by Henri Kamer had a serious impact on the field, because it was widely read and became a source for both images and for data. The catalogue published in the Netherlands in 1980 did not, I hope, have much impact, because it was clear that the authors had not done their research in Burkina Faso. One of the best developments in the past 30 years has been the number of curators who solicit contributions from the scholars in the particular area to write about objects. The result is very helpful, very accurate, in-depth information about individual objects.

Henri Kamer was a famous and even notorious French art dealer who collected large quantities of extremely important sculpture from all over Africa, including from Burkina Faso. For many years his gallery in Paris was one of the most important for the sale of African art. He worked with Toumani Triandé to collect some outstanding objects that are now in both public and private collections in Europe. He published a catalog of art from Upper Volta which for some time was an informative guide to the different styles and types of objects in the country.

Toumani Triandé began his career as the research assistant for Guy Le Moal. At independence in 1960 he was appointed director of the national Art Museum, which was then housed in the old IFAN building and subsequently was moved to the Hotel Independence closer to the center of town. Le Moal confided in me in 1984 that he feared that Triandé would dispose of the collection that Le Moal had deposited at the IFAN offices. Triandé was a devout Muslim who considered spiritual art to be profane. From perhaps the middle 1980s until his death, he hired artists from rural neighborhoods to copy the objects in the museum, and then sold the originals to European art dealers.

Bonnefoy, Maurice. *Art of Upper Volta from the collection of Maurice Bonnefoy*  
University Art Museum, Michener Galleries, Harry Ransom Center, Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1976

This is one of the very first catalogs that attempted to cover the sculpture of all of the peoples of Burkina Faso (then Upper Volta). All of the objects come from a single French collection, and are of very high quality. Many of the attributions are incorrect, only because in 1976 major research on these different peoples was only beginning. All of the objects made by the Bwa people are mistakenly titled "Bobo- Oulé."

Dagan, Esther. *Man and his vision : the traditional wood sculpture of Burkina Faso*  
*L'homme et sa vision de la nature : la sculpture traditionnelle sur bois du Burkina- Faso*. Québec:  
Galerie Amrad, 1987

Esther Dagan was an art dealer in Québec, Canada. She published this heavily illustrated text, based on objects in her collection. Unfortunately some of the objects were of lesser quality, and the text was sometimes inaccurate. The late author then made a substantial contribution by donating her interesting collection to the Royal Ontario Museum.

Dufour, Alain. *Masques du burkina faso*. Galerie Afrique Alain Dufour 1995 Paris

A small catalog by French art dealer of masks from Burkina Faso, demonstrates the tremendous variety of forms produced by the peoples of Burkina Faso including the Mossi, Bwa, Nuna, and the Marka. The quality of the objects is very high, and the photographs are excellent, but unfortunately there is very little text. The attributions are based on Christopher Roy's "Art of the Upper Volta Rivers" (1987).

**William Fagg** is considered by many scholars to be the father of the study of African art history. He was trained as a classicist and served for decades as the keeper of African antiquities in the British Museum in London. Sometime in the early 1970s he traveled to Ouagadougou to meet Toumani Triande, who provided him with a great deal of misinformation about the art and artists of Burkina Faso. Among other erroneous statements he published, he said that the Mossi have become Muslim and no longer make art. This statement was my motivation for carrying out all of my research over the past forty-five years. Fagg also made damaging statements about the Kurumba people and their famous antelope masks.

Fagg, William. Tribes and Forms in African Art

Fagg was an expert on the Yoruba people, not on the people of Burkina Faso. He visited Ouagadougou in the 1970s to consult with the museum director Toumani Triande. Later, as a result of his conversation with Triande, he wrote that all of the Mossi are Muslim and no longer make art. This was, of course, completely incorrect. The Mossi continue to make and use art in most of their villages.

Goy, Bertrand, Max Itzikovitz. "Gan." *Bronzes d'Afrique: de la Volta au Bandama Pages 159-185*. Saint-Maur: 2012.

Very few scholars or collectors understand how rich the brass casting industry in Burkina Faso has been over the centuries. Among the most brilliant are the very abstract cast brass ornaments of the Gan people who live in the far southwest. The volume discusses bronzes from a large number of peoples from West Africa, but the focus of this chapter is on the very unusual, very abstract, and visually striking bronzes of the Gan.

Kamer, Henri. *Haute Volta*. Sobepa and Commission des communautés europeennes et du Credit communal de Belgique. Studio 44, Passage 44, 1973

This is the catalog of an exhibition of art from Burkina Faso that was mounted by the notorious French art dealer Henri Kamer in 1973. The introduction is by Toumani Triande. The data is not significant but the photographs are important documents of the sorts of objects that were leaving Burkina in the 1970s. Triande worked hand- in-glove with Kamer to approve the export of some of the most important (to western collectors) pieces ever carved in Burkina Faso.

Katsouros, Floros. *Lobi -- Figuren: chefs d'oeuvre und Kultobjecte Ethnographika*, 2013.

A self published comprehensive catalog of the enormous Katsouros collection of Lobi sculpture. The book is lavishly illustrated in color, but with almost no text, except for the catalog notes at the end on each object. These notes provide provenance, dimensions, and contextual information gleaned from scholarly publications. The photographs are excellent, and the notes on provenance are very helpful.

Kerchache, Jacques. *Les Lobi*. text by Jean Dominique Rey. Paris: Galerie Kerchache, 1974

The catalog of a small exhibition of Lobi sculpture in the gallery of the famous Parisian dealer Jacques Kerchache. The catalog is most notable for numerous photographs of the famous Lobi figure which was described as "The Captive". This has become one of the most frequently published Lobi figures in the world. It turns out that it does not represent a captive, but a person in mourning at the funeral of a loved one.

les Amities Franco-Burkinabé. *Nature, art et culture au Burkina Faso*. Paris: Harmattan, 2009

This is neither a beautiful art book, nor a profound work of scholarship, but it is a very important descriptive document of all of the many forms of art and craft in Burkina Faso. Subjects include brass casting, wax resist batiks, pottery, basket making, weaving, pyro-engraving of leather, architecture, music, song and dance, cooking, and even some basic information about the climate and wild animals of Burkina Faso. This is clearly intended to be very helpful to visitors to the country,

Scanzi, Giovanni Franco. *L'art traditionnel Lobi*. English translation by Marianne Jouan-Cross, and David Cross. Bergamo, Italy: 1993

This is a large, lavishly illustrated art book on Lobi sculpture. The objects are of high quality and the images are excellent. The text is negligible. Each object is accompanied with brief notes including dimensions and the Lobi name for the spirit, which seem to have been gleaned from the exhibition catalogue by Piet Meier (1981). There are no citations in the text, which is limited to superficial statements about composition. There is a brief bibliography.

Segy, Ladislas. "The Mossi doll : an archetypal fertility figure" *Tribus*. No. 21: pages 35-68. Stuttgart: 1972

Perhaps the most inaccurate document ever written about Mossi sculpture. The essay is based on pure speculation, with no supporting evidence. It would not bear mentioning had not so many authors cited it in the past. The author wrote copiously about African art, and his scholarship was uniformly flawed.

van Ham, Laurent and Robert van Dijk. *Afrikaanse Kunst uit Opper Volta = African art from the Upper-Volta* Rotterdam: R. Schuurman, 1980.

This very flawed catalog draws heavily on the scholarship of the French ethnographer Louis Tauxier, almost a century ago. While the text is completely outdated, it is also written with errors of all kinds. The quality of the objects that are illustrated is very questionable, and the book is to be avoided at all costs as a source of accurate data.

## Film and video

### FESPACO

Burkinabe film: The vast and important topic of film and video in contemporary Burkina Faso warrants an extensive essay all by itself. The important Festival Pan-Africain du Cinema got started in Ouagadougou in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It has since grown into the most important film Festival in West Africa. It is held every two years, and a large number of African filmmakers including those from Burkina Faso submit their films to be judged and awarded prizes.

### French film and video:

Guy Le Moal produced several important and very useful films about the Bobo people in Western Burkina Faso through the 1960s and 1970s. These are available online through the CNRS in Paris. The quality of the image is excellent, and the quality of the scholarship that went into the films is also excellent. The majority of his films deal with the masks of leaves, fibers, and wood for which the Bobo people are famous.

Le Moal, Guy. *Yele Danga*. 16 mm. film CNRS. Ivry-sur Seine: 1966

A fascinating film done in 1966, when the technology was difficult and required separate sound recording. The subject is the initiation of young men in a Bobo village, when a large number of masks made of hemp fiber appear to represent the spirits that protect the village, and that oversee the process of initiation. The Kele masks appear, masks that are very sacred and appear only for initiations. All of these masks represent Dwo, the son of the creator God.

Le Moal, Guy. *Le Grand Masque Molo*. video CNRS Ivry-sur Seine: 1968.

In the village of Silenkoro the Samu smiths carve a large Molo mask for the Traore family. Cutting the tree, sacrifices to ask forgiveness from the spirit of the tree.

Careful measuring of dimensions. The carvers use adzes and axes to mark out the large sections and then remove the wood in between taking advantage of the grain. Piercing the eyes of the mask makes it sacred and gives it life. The visual quality is very high.

Le Moal Guy. *Les Masques de feuilles (Bobo people, Burkina Faso)*

[video CNRS Ivry-sur-Seine: 1961. \( http://videotheque.cnrs.fr/index.php?urlaction=doc&id\\_doc=448&rang=5 \)](http://videotheque.cnrs.fr/index.php?urlaction=doc&id_doc=448&rang=5)

During the dry season the men of the Bobo village of Kurumani in western Burkina Faso shape masks of fibers and of leaves which play a major role in the initiation of young men and boys. There is a section on the fabrication of leaf masks by young boys in imitation of their elders. Adult men go out into the wilderness to fashion masks made of wild growing leaves. Fiber masks are made of the bark of a sacred tree. All of these are used during the initiations of young men.

Le Moal, Guy. *Yele Danga* (video CNRS) Guy Le Moal, CNRS AV. 1966 Paris

The film documents a variety of religious activities including initiation, possession dances, divination, and sacrifices in a Bobo village, and in a shorter section in a neighboring Bolon village. There are numerous scenes of masks made of fibers, called kele, in performance. The quality of the images is outstanding, especially considering that this was done on 16mm film fifty years ago.

**Jean Rouch** is quite deservedly considered the major documentary film maker in West Africa. He is best known for several films that he produced in Niger, where he often worked, but also in Burkina Faso, where he filmed the celebrations that surrounded the death in 1947 of the Emperor of the Mossi, and the enthronement of his successor. From 1947 to 1954 he produced a number of films about the Dogon people in Mali. From 1967 to 1973 he produced seven films on the Sigui ceremony of the Dogon people. In 1957 he produced "Moro Naba" about the death of the Emperor of the Mossi in the installment of his successor.

Rouch, Jean, 1957, *Moro Naba*, Paris, (video) CNRS

The greatest of all French documentary filmmakers was Jean Rouch, who is most famous for his films of West Africa, including "Jaguar," (1955) and "Les maitres fous." (1955). In 1957 he documented the celebrations that accompanied the death of the Mossi Emperor Kom, and the installation of his successor, Naba Kougri. The film details all of the events and is an extremely useful document.

[American video:](#)

**Christopher Roy** has taken advantage of the consumer revolution in videography that has resulted from the production of inexpensive high-quality digital video cameras since 1995. He has produced 26 videos about Burkina Faso, that vary from broad views of mask performances by all of the peoples of Burkina, a video on daily life in a village in Burkina Faso, and a video on how potters in Burkina Faso form and fire their pottery. He has also made videos of performances by diviners in northern Mossi country, and of the production of smelting iron by smiths in a small town in the north. He works closely with several Burkinabe videographers whom he has trained and given good quality video cameras. These people are all identified in the credits of his videos, which are available online, especially on YouTube.

Roy Christopher D.

*African art in motion: the masks of the Nuna people of Burkina* Createspace Seattle: 1999.  
[videorecording]

The Nuna people who live in the small village of Sawara, not far from the Black Volta River, use masks covered with red white and black graphic patterns to honor the spirits of the wilderness that watch over them and their families. The performances are quite spectacular. The butterfly mask has enormous broad wings that flash in the sunlight as the performer twists and turns the mask about his head. Filmed in the village in 1999.

Roy, Christopher D. *African Sculpture: Carving a Wooden Mask, Shaping a mask of Leaves*. Seattle: CreateSpace[videorecording]

The video was made in a Bwa village in central Burkina Faso. A sculptor travels out into the wilderness to cut down a large tree, then measures the proportions and cuts away excess material. He returns to his workshop where he completes his work carving a crocodile mask. In the same village, families who use masks made of leaves go out into the wilderness where they cover the performer's body with vines and then with a thick layer of green leaves to represent the God of the wilderness.

Roy, Christopher D. *The dance of the spirits: a funeral in the village of Oulo*. Seattle: Createspace[videorecording]

All of the old traditional masks from the Winiama village of Ouri walk along the dirt road to the neighboring village of Oulo to attend a funeral for an elder who had been born and raised in Ouri. Arriving in Oulo, each mask performs in front of the family's sacred shrine to the spirits of the wilderness, and then performs in public, reenacting the encounters between the spiritual characters and the ancestors of the family.

Roy, Christopher D. *Speaking with God: a Mossi Baga diviner in Burkina Faso*. Seattle: Createspace[videorecording]

Many rural towns in Burkina Faso continue to enjoy the performances of traditional diviners. This video shows the spectacular performance of the diviner in the town of Dablo, when he wears a very elaborate and colorful costume made of leather and cowry shells. The video also shows the same diviner casting very large cowry shells at home as he consults with the client. This was filmed in the small Mossi village of Dablo from 2007 to 2012.

Roy, Christopher D. *Winiama masks from the village of Ouri, Burkina Faso* Seattle: CreateSpace, 2006 [videorecording].

This hour-long video was made in 2007, and documents a performance of masks in the Winiama village of Ouri. A large number of masks represent the spirits of the community which watch over the village and protect the people from disaster, disease, and accident. Each of these spirit characters has a particular role to play in the lives of the village, and each performance is unique to that character.

Roy, Christopher D. *Yaaba Soore: continuity and change in Mossi art*. Seattle :CreateSpace, 2011 [videorecording].

This video documents changes that have taken place in the performance of Mossi masks over the past forty years. The author made films of Mossi art in the middle 1970s, and then has upgraded them using digital equipment in the past decade.

The video shows the masks and performance complete with their costumes, music, dance, and audience participation. These were all filmed in remote rural towns and villages during actual religious celebrations.

## Bibliography

Niang, Amy. *Aspects of Mossi History: A Bibliography*. Electronic Journal of Africana Bibliography 13: 1-51, 2012

This is the most complete and detailed current bibliography of the scholarship on the Mossi people. The scholar is from Senegal, and received a PhD at the University of Edinburgh. She is a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand. The bibliography is online and downloadable: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/ejab/vol13/iss1/1>

## Websites

The revolution in information accessibility in the past 30 years has had a tremendous impact on the distribution of scholarship about Burkina Faso. There are dozens of websites based in Burkina Faso, France, Germany, and the United States, on the culture of Burkina Faso. Many of these are purely commercial, and are of little value except merchants of tourist art. Others are very carefully organized, and are based on excellent data, and these are very valuable to visitors to the country and to scholars. Although Wikipedia has had a rather marginal reputation in the past because anyone in principle could make changes to it, it is in fact very useful, and usually is accurate. Its biggest drawback is that it often is aimed at a popular audience, and so it perpetuates lots of the clichés and half-truths about the history and culture of Burkina. In striking contrast, the website of the Frobenius Institute in Frankfurt is extremely helpful, and is a treasure trove of wonderful material including photos and drawings from Burkina in the first decade of the 20th century. There is a great deal of sculpture in the collection of the SMA fathers in Tenafly, New Jersey, much of it donated by Thomas Wheelock. The web-based visual database ArtStor catalogs 7000 downloadable photographs taken by Christopher Roy and other scholars who have worked in Burkina Faso. The art and life in Africa website at the University of Iowa has extensive information about the religion, history, and culture of Burkina Faso, and basic information about many of the different peoples of the country: much of this data has then been pirated time after time by commercial websites that sometimes give credit but more often do not. Finally, the "Art of Burkina Faso" website documents the large number of objects that were once in the collection of the Museum in Ouagadougou, and have since disappeared. It also has direct connections to other websites in several countries on art and performance in Burkina Faso.

Art of Burkina Faso <http://www.artofburkinafaso.com/>

This is a private website with a large number of photographs, especially photographs of objects that have disappeared from the national Museum in Ouagadougou since about 1980.

Videos of Art and Life in Burkina Faso: <https://www.youtube.com/user/CDROYburkina>  
Twenty six videos ranging in length from half an hour to an hour and a quarter, with a strong emphasis on masks in performance and on rural technology.

Frankfurt Frobenius Institute: <http://www.frobenius-institut.de/en/>  
Image database: <http://www.frobenius-institut.de/en/collections-and-archives/image-database/image-database>  
This is a very complete and detailed database of photographs, paintings, sketches, and documents from the travels of Leo Frobenius in Burkina and other parts of Africa largely before WWI.

SMA fathers <http://smafathers.org/museum/burkina-faso-from-case-i-to-v/>  
This site features a large number of art objects from Burkina donated to the religious organization by a private collector. The quality of the objects is high.

ArtStor: <http://www.artstor.org/>  
A massive visual database of art and art objects including 7000 photographs of art and performance in Burkina Faso.

Africa.Com <http://www.africa.com/countries/burkina-faso/>  
Museums in Burkina: <http://www.africa.com/countries/burkina-faso/museum-guide/>  
Afripedia: <http://www.africa.com/countries/burkina-faso/afripedia/>

FESTIMA: <http://www.festima.org/>  
Information about the biennial Festival of Masks in the rural city of Dedougou. List of hotels, program of events, directions by road, and schedule.

Government of Burkina Faso <http://www.gouvernement.gov.bf/>

French embassy Burkina Faso <http://www.ambafrance-bf.org/>

Aspects of Mossi History: A Bibliography: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/ejab/vol13/iss1/1>  
By far the most recent and complete bibliography of the Mossi people and their history.

Grove Art Online [http://www.oxfordartonline.com/public/book/oao\\_gao](http://www.oxfordartonline.com/public/book/oao_gao)

Burkina Faso Wikipedia [http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Burkina\\_Faso](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Burkina_Faso)

Mossi people Wikipedia [http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Mossi\\_people](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Mossi_people)

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Lobi people Wikipedia [http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Lobi\\_people](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Lobi_people)