

## ch. 49: african art and global trade (first half)

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- foreign trade began to change the societies of africa
  - connecting african cultures to europe and asia
- the beginnings of slavery

### foreign exports and local art: the sapi

- the sapi were the first west africans to encounter european sailing vessels
- began with mostly sculpted elephant ivory
- portugese people were commissioning sapi artists to sculp luxury items out of ivory
  - lidded bowls were one of the most popular things
    - known as salt cellars
    - salt was an expensive commodity
    - salt cellars were displayed on the tables of the rich
    - the sapi had little to no use for these items, they were made completely for export
    - they were generally very intricate, not just simple bowls or dishes
    - one fairly complete example:
      - is about 6 inches across
      - weighs about 3 pounds empty
      - has most of the container in a sphere on top
        - surrounded by seated figures underneath it
          - four of them are sapi women, and four of them are portugese men
          - scarification is across the chests and torsos of the female figures
      - contains references to the portugese violence on the sapi
        - by the time this work was made, portugese men had already abducted sapi women
- the sapi stopped exporting their artworks to europe by the middle of the sixteenth century
  - because of all the violence that they experienced from them
- stone carvings and sculptures were made by populations farther inland than the sapi
  - populations such as the temne and kissi
  - one of these stone carvings, in the british museum, shows a figure in a reclined position
    - there are markings across their torso, lines
      - these lines could be twisted ropes or scarification patterns
      - this piece is thought to be made by a sapi before 1550
    - stone carvings like these are displayed at funerals of distiguished leaders in temne and kissi communities still today
    - this particular carving might be a subject lying at his own funeral

### art of kongo and allada

- portugese explorers sailed farther south arriving at the mouth of the kongo river
- the supreme ruler of the kongo polity is the manikongo
  - portugese regarded him as a monarch like their own
  - the manikongo sent gifts to leaders in europe

- ivory horns
    - instruments made out of elephant tusks
  - elaborate woven baskets
  - textiles
    - mats, cushions, table coverings
- gifts from allada
  - the king of allada gave a collection of items to a young german merchant
    - several ivory castings from the kingdom of owo
    - two pieces of clothing that were worn by the king of allada
      - with very long sleeves
      - dyed in indigo
      - these robes are the only garmets from africa from this time period that we know about
- divination tray from allada
  - also given by the king of allada
  - tied to the religious practices of the yoruba
  - this type of tray is still used in africa
  - this specific tray was used by the king of allada
  - in the top center, has a bearded face with three gourds above it
    - this being represents disorder and confusion
  - the tray was used by a diviner, who the king would consult about problems he faces
    - the diviner would toss a palm fruit into the center, and take note of where it rolls
    - the diviner would then read the markings and refer the king to a proverb based on it
    - the proverb would help the king make his decision
  - there are animals and other figures around the edge of the tray
    - these brought the whole world's experiences into the consultation
  - this tray was described by the european buyer as "an implement used in satanic rituals"

## clothing and formal analysis

- what can we see in this robe in a museum?
  - geometric shapes
  - lots of lines
  - dyed in indigo
  - rows of arranged triangles
- what could we see if it were on a mannequin?
  - how it fits the human body
  - probably other similarly worn clothing as part of an outfit
- this section basically says that we cant actually see how this robe originally was long long ago
  - it is stuck out of the sun in a museum
  - either framed on a wall or worn by a mannequin
    - either way, we can't see how it moves
  - we don't know exactly how it would have been worn
  - what other clothes would be worn with it
    - accesories
    - a visual ensemble, as the book states

## terms

- scarification - basically scar tattoos