Case 6-Mali-Dogon-Wedding of Nommo and Nyerum on a crocodile prowed pirogue-Bronze-19th c



Fig. 1. Mali-Dogon-Wedding Party of Nommo and Nyerum on a crocodile-prowed pirogue-Bronze-19th c

**Case no.: 6**

**Accession Number:**

**Formal Label:** Mali-Dogon-Wedding Party of Nommo and Nyerum on a crocodile-prowed pirogue-Bronze-19th c

**Display Description:**

The benevolent crocodile totem on the prow of this pirogue protects dual wedding couples (Nyerum and Nommo) on their honeymoon journey on the Cosmic River. This is an example of obtuse Dogon metaphoric cosmology. Water spirits (*Nommo*) were, in fact, considered to be the ancestors of the autochthonous people still living in the Bandiagara Escarpment, i.e., the Tellem.They were called "Binu" which was a personal, familial nick-name, because they were, in fact, ancestors of the Dogon family.

**LC Classification:** DT551.42

**Date or Time Horizon:** 19th c

**Geographical Area:** site of Djenné-Djeno, Mali, on the flood plain of the Bani River,3 km (1.9 mi) s of modern town.

**Map:**

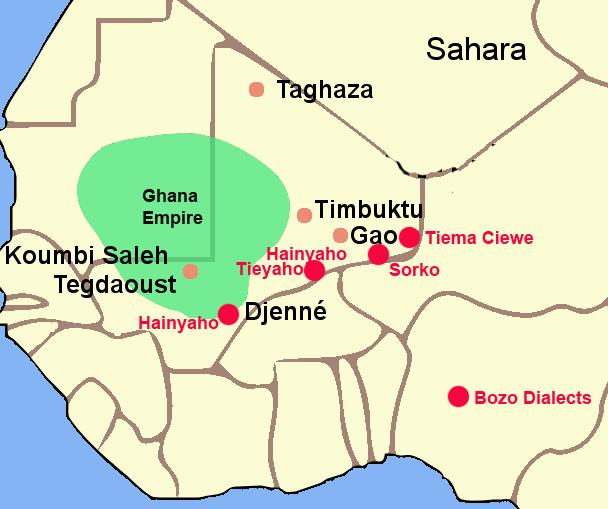


Fig. 3. The Ghana Empire 1000-1400 CE showing the ethnolinguistic groups along the Niger River. After <https://i.pinimg.com/564x/c6/a7/9b/c6a79b7443105f363ff965ebf420b7fd.jpg>



Fig. 4. Trade routes of the Western Sahara c. 1000-1500. Goldfields are indicated by light brown shading. After https://i.pinimg.com/564x/69/15/ce/6915ce6f4fd34025787fe59bd44f9eae.jpg

This trade resulted in an increasing surplus that helped expand urban centers such as Gao, Timbuktu and Djenné.

**GPS coordinates:** Djenné-Djeno, Mali: [13°53′26″N 4°32′25″W](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Djenn%C3%A9-Djenno&params=13_53_26_N_4_32_25_W_region:ML_type:landmark_source:dewiki)

**Cultural Affiliation:** Dogon

**Medium:** Bronze

**Dimensions:**

**Weight:**

**Condition: original**

**Provenance:** Djenné-Djeno, Mali:

**Discussion:**

An ancient Dogon myth of the world before the appearance of death described elders as becoming too old. When they reached this age they would change themselves into a large water being, a Nommo, like a crocodile/ Then they would dwell in ponds and rivers and begin a new life, helping maintain the source of water for their descendants. Meanwhile, Nyerum, the female counterpart and Cosmic consort of Nommo would enforce the social responsibilities of the Dogon People for protecting the water sources that Nommo has created.

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