

The Ivory Coast, the unexpected modern side



*In the political and economic capitals, the Ivorian dream of the 1970s and 1980s has come true: a country that has managed to rival western world capitals in terms of architecture and size of buildings. The “plateau” (the City District) of **Abidjan** with its modern buildings and its skyscrapers is growing so fast that land must be continually extorted from the Ebrié Lagoon. In **Yamoussoukro** there is the largest Christian building in the world, yet, when driving in its wide boulevards, trying to avoid pot holes, what strikes our imagination most is the feeling of emptiness surrounding what has become a bygone dream.*

... and the other side of everyday life





A rare example of Iron Age technique



The Ivory Coast, the Baulé

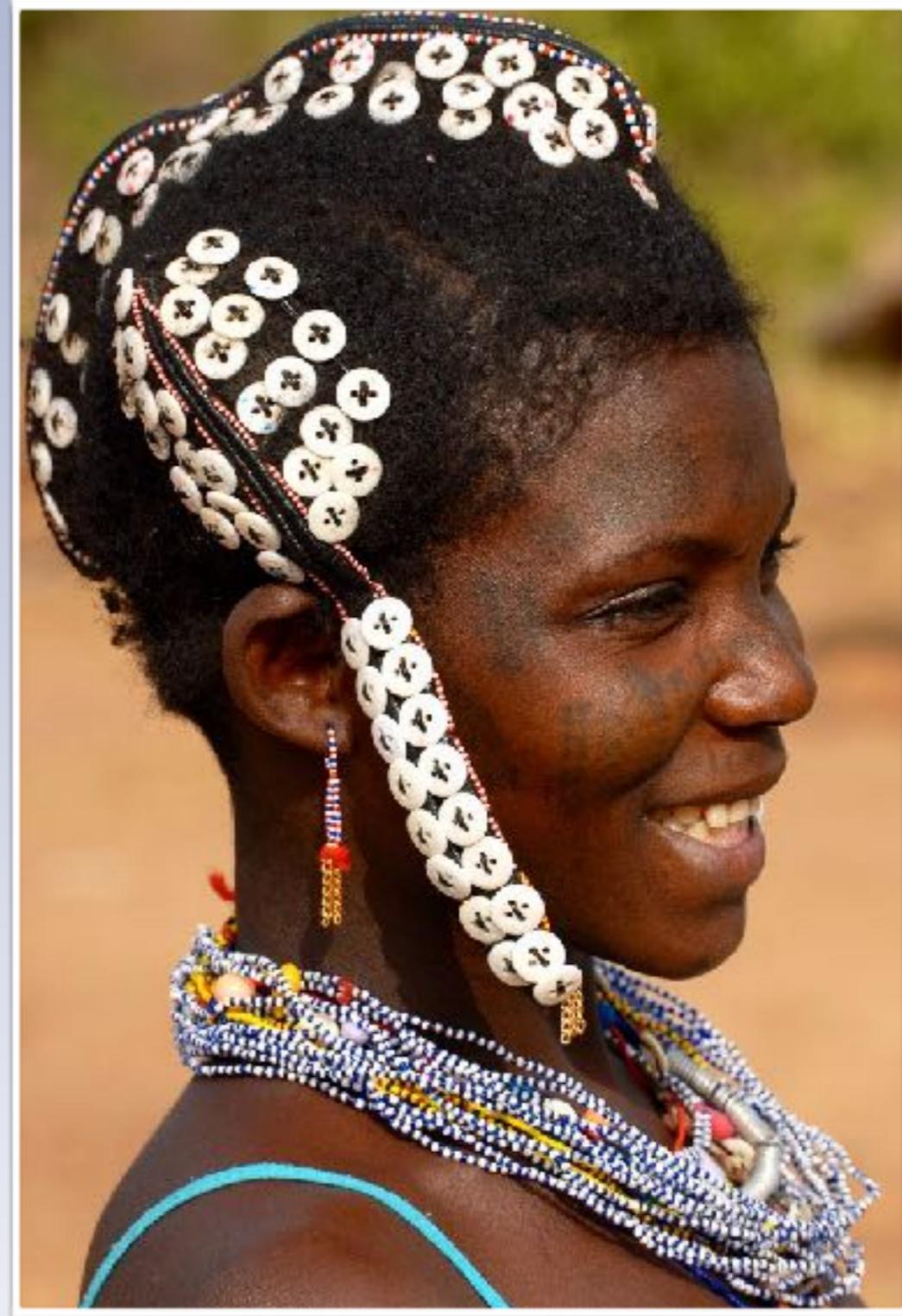


The Baulé, a tribe of the Akan lineage originating from Ghana, share the same complex social hierarchy of their cousins, the Ashanti, however they have also expanded their cultural traditions by taking cues from their neighbours, the Wan. The dance of the **Goli mask** (round-shaped and surmounted by two horns) can be performed for entertainment or for the funeral of a high rank individual. Celebrating peace and joy, the participants sing, dance and drink palm wine.

The Ivory Coast, the Peul



When you encounter **Fulani or Peul** semi nomadic herders they seem to come from nowhere and head nowhere. They can be easily recognized by their proud posture, the walking stick carried over their shoulders, the water bottle hanging around their neck and the machete that men always carry with them. Women and children generally inhabit typical conical straw huts in small settlements and wear beautifully coloured fabrics and unique tribal jewelry around their neck and in their hair. Accustomed to a hard life and to its simple joys, they look perfectly fine with the little they carry. The Peul are indeed the real gentlemen of these endless savannahs.



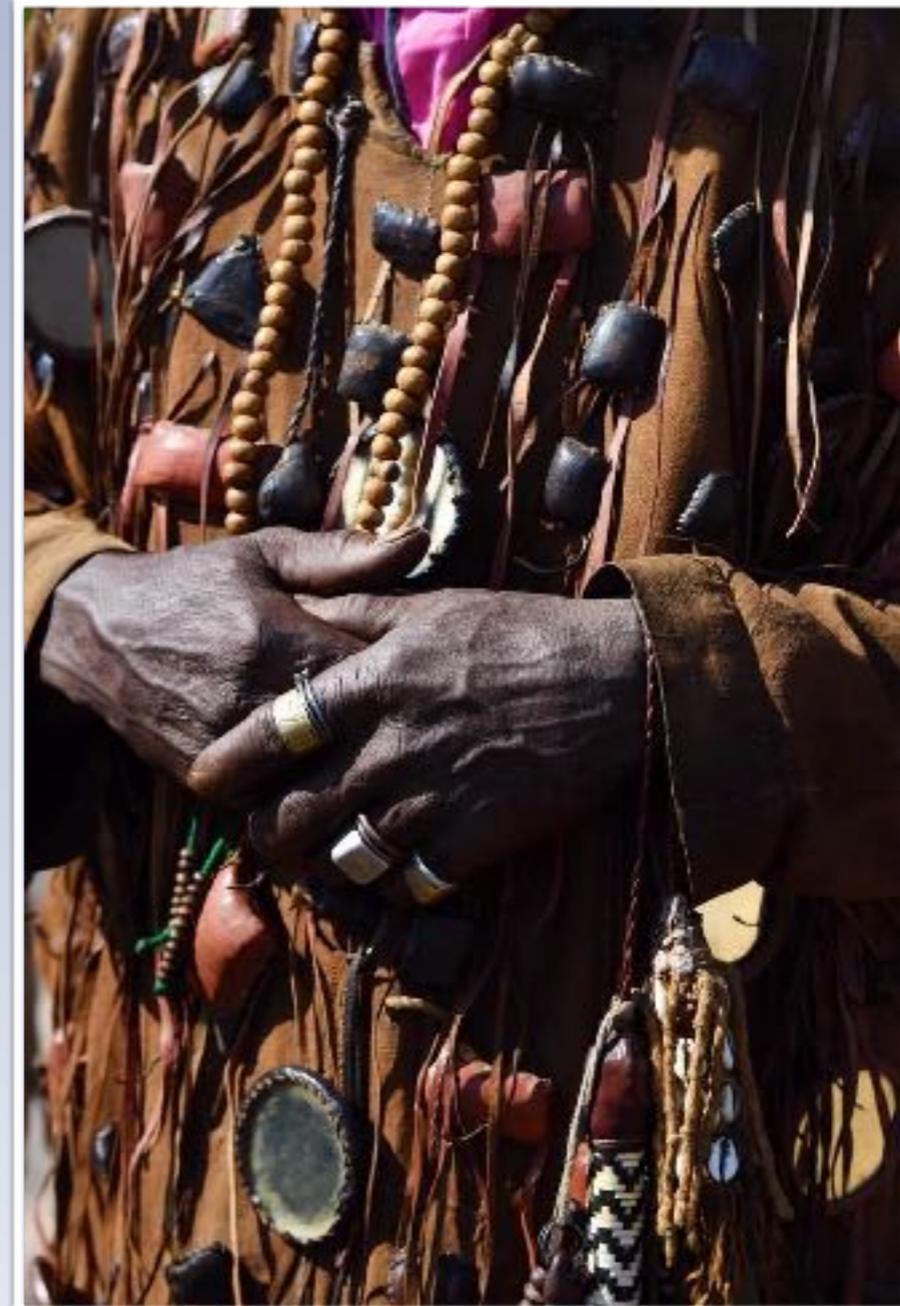
The Ivory Coast, the Senufo



Korhogo, whose history dates back to the 13th century, is the capital of **the Senufo**, a tribe that has produced some of the greatest artworks of Africa and has inspired modern artists like Pablo Picasso. They are also well renowned for their complex and long initiation rites - in particular, the **dance of the virgin girls** marks the end of the first stage of initiation. The most spectacular mask dance of the Senufo is the **panther dance**.

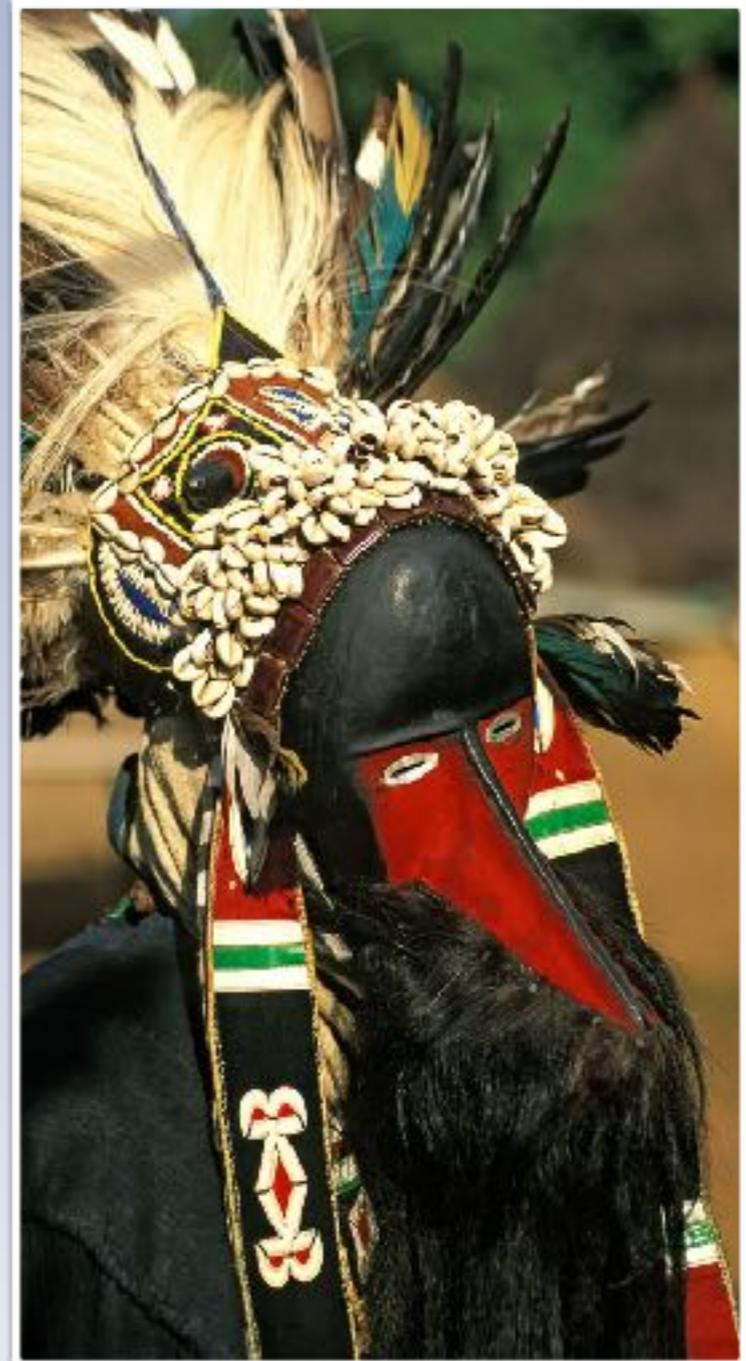


The Ivory Coast, sacred warriors



*The Dozo are the initiated hunters of **the Malinké** tribe, descendants of the old Mali Empire. This lineage continues to get unabated respect for their courage and perfect knowledge of the territory and the people - their mystic powers are passed on through a long initiation process. Today they are a sort of local police, mediators of disputes and of course great healers.*

The Ivory Coast, the Dan Yacuba





The echoes of tam-tams and the shouts of the initiated tell the masks it is time to leave the sacred forest

The Ivory Coast, the Guéré



Drums announce the incredible performance of the “jongleurs” where the young initiated girls carry out an incredible acrobatic dance - an ancient tradition almost vanished ...

... masks, masks and more masks



*In the cosmogony of the **Guéré**, the creator god communicates with humans only through its intermediaries, the masks - secretly hidden in the forest, the place of passage between the human and the magic dimensions. During the dance the distance between the two worlds disappears, the cosmic and the social orders are restored and gratitude is expressed to the gods and the ancestors.*

