

Examining the Technology and Craft of Wood Carving in Isagira–Elete town, Lagos

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Abstract

Craft is an ancient art practices and expression in Nigeria, and Africa at large. It is either the result of artist achievement or satisfying some utilities and functional purposes. A geographical location, occupation, and cultural background determine the craft production of such area or community in most cases. Therefore, this paper focuses on technology and craft of wood carving (TCWC) in Ìṣágìrà-Elete town, riverine (ẹ̀yìn ọ̀sà) area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The paper aim to revive TCWC with modern digital technology and develop afforestation for easy access to timbers for carving. It is based on technology of utilitarian and functional objects; mainly boats/canoes and paddles carving. Although, other objects are being carved too, but not as common as canoe and paddle, they include: ogosi, korope or ponkele (these trio are crab trap), gelede mask among others. The boats/canoes and paddles are carved for daily activities of the riverine dwellers especially in Ìṣágìrà-Elete town. The carving technology of a boat/canoe and paddle involves various dimensions with different woods, especially water friendly wood and physical technological tools and materials. Based on that, Egestrom theory of activity (ETA) is applied in this study. Data were collected through semi-structured interview and observation of five participants as methodology of the study, and analysed based on the responses of the participants, being a qualitative research design. The findings show that there are no ticks or rain forest anymore to get big trees (timbers) to carve canoe as a result of deforestation and civilisation. The findings also indicate that technology has caused laziness in the attitude of the people, as nobody is ready to use energy on carving canoe instead they buy plank at sawmill for carpenter to construct the canoe which is easier. Aside, fire wood fetching and production of charcoal as traditional occupation of the riverine dwellers (àwọ̀n ọ̀mọ ẹ̀yìn ọ̀sà) is phasing out boat/canoe carving. Based on this, conclusion was drawn and recommendations were made to revive the craft of canoe and paddle carving (CCPC) in Ìṣágìrà-Elete town, riverine (ẹ̀yìn ọ̀sà) area of Oto-Awori LCDA, Ojo Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria, and Africa at large.

Keywords canoe and paddle carving, isagira-elete, riverine (ẹ̀yìn ọ̀sà) technology, wood carving

Introduction

Carving is one of the oldest means of expression and record keeping in Nigeria and Africa at large. It is a three dimensional arts that require a lot of stamina, endurance, strength and energy. It is also one of the basic branches of fine art and technique of sculpture. Carving is a process that involves cutting, subtracting or

chipping off the unwanted or insignificant area with chisels and gauges from a solid object be it wood, plywood stone, soap, calabash, ivory, thorn, horn among others to create a definite and recognisable form or shape (Adepegba, 1995; Ibrahim-Banjoko, 2009; Ocvirk, 2009; Brown, 2010; Oyedun, 2013). Wood is one of the commonest and most widely used material/medium by both sculptor and artisans in Nigeria specifically, African largely and the rest of world in general. It is composed of cellulose, lignin, grains and other minor materials in their relative proportion. Carving in wood is one of the oldest forms of art but because of the availability of the raw materials (wood) in Africa, though it is more prone to destruction and decay than stone, fewer early specimen has survived (Adepegba, 1995; Awofisayo, Sanni, Ajayi, and Olufowobi, 2017). Adepegba and Awofisayo et al. affirm further that wood carving is a popular art in Nigeria especially in the forest regions below the savannah of Africa; south (south-west, south-south and south-east) where wood in variety of species abound due to rain or thick forest. Among the varieties of objects carved are house posts, door panels and canoe or boat and almost all door panels are in relief while most modern carvings are free standing (Adepegba, 1995; Ibrahim-Banjoko, 2009).

Rationale for the Study

The craft of wood carving has always been West African's pride in utility and documentation of facts and epochs. Reason is that the region is blessed with rain forest and this makes wood carving traditional occupation of the countries within the region which Nigeria is one. Meanwhile, there seems to be few carving objects as the carvers are also reduced. Therefore, this study examines the technology and craft of wood carving in Isagira-Elete town, riverine (eyin osa) area of Oto-Awori LCDA, Lagos State, Nigeria, to revive TCWC with modern digital technology and develop afforestation for easy access to timbers for carving. It indicates the types of wood and process of wood carving (canoe carving), different equipment, tools and materials for wood carving, the general function of wood carving and challenges involved. The study also encourages the effective practice of canoe carving as aspect of wood carving in Isagira-Elete town and the riverine area (èyin òsà) at large, since it seems to be more durable than canoe construction.

Research Questions

This study finds answer to the following questions: To what extent do you understand the craft of wood carving in the riverine (èyin òsà) area of Oto-Awori LCDA? What is the significance of canoe carving to Isagira-Elete town and riverine (eyin osa) communities in Oto-Awori LCDA? Of what relevance is physical technology to canoe carving in Isagira-Elete town? What challenges do canoe

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carving encounter in Isagira-Elete town and eyin osa generally in the present dispensation? Is there way forward to the craft of canoe carving in Isagira-Elete town and other riverine dwellers?

Theoretical Framework

Engestrom's theory of activity (ETA) is a theory of actions, which are intentional and carried out through a series of routinised and automated operations, are mediated by tools, which can be material (e.g. books, computers, machinery, etc.) or psychological (e.g. language, sign systems, models, etc.). Engestrom's (1987) notion of activity systems is an expansion of Leontiev's (1978) triadic model: subject–tools–object (Fig. 2). It now includes the community, composed of participants sharing the same object or motive, as well as the rules and division of labor governing the community and mediating the individual and collective actions carried out by the participants (Engestrom, 1987).



Fig. 1: Logs of wood (Ajayi, 2020).

The ETA formulated in 1996, according to Morf & Weber (2000) is a framework based on the idea that activity and doing is primary and precedes thinking. It also explained that goals, images, cognitive models, intentions, and abstract notions grow out of people doing things. This theory is seen as a practical framework which can be used to underpin the complex and dynamic problems of human research and practice. It is recognised as an educational activities theory that is holistically rich in terms of understanding how people do things together with the assistance of technological tools (TTs) in an intricate and dynamic environment (Crawford & Hasan, 2006). This theory adopted the learning technology as the tools in the community; Isagira-Elete town (eyin osa), the subject was the indigenes and

the object was the purpose of activity, and the desired outcome is the result of indigenes creativity in artistic carvings/constructs of canoe.

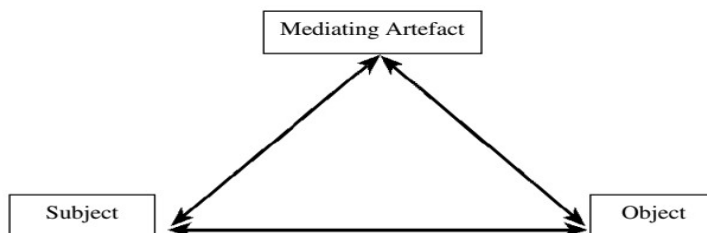


Fig. 2: Engeström's theory of activity (ETA)

The analysis of activity systems (Engeström, 1987, 1999) conceptualising the activities relating to carving can help us to understand these activities as they unfold (Kirkup & Kirkwood, 2005, p. 189). In particular, it enables us to understand the underlying systemic tensions that manifest themselves through energetic contact with wood, by breaking it down, due to non-adoption of digital technology. In the present study the activity systems in Isagira-Elete town, riverine (eyin osa) gave us an idea of whether the physical technology of wood carving in the community is accepted or rejected.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach which refers to an in-depth descriptive study of the phenomenon with data drawn from interviews and focus groups discussion. The method involves the collection of data from participants who have experienced a certain phenomenon and then compile a description of the essence of the experience (Creswell 2006). Qualitative research was used to conceptualise the behaviours of the art indigene of Isagira-Elete town in order to describe the phenomenon under investigation. Data collection is the procedure of gathering and measuring information related to the variables. Due to the nature of qualitative research, data were collected usually from smaller group through semi-structured interviews, and observation which were audio recorded and transcribed.

Conceptual Framework: Concept of Technology

Technology is simply the process of doing things with either simple or sophisticated machines. Fundamentally, the word technology was coined out from two Greek words "techne" and "logos". The techne means art or craft and logos means word or speech. The two words put together mean art or craft of word (Oloidi, 2011).

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Technology is the branch of knowledge that deals with the creation and use of technical means and their interrelation with life, society, and the environment, drawing upon such subject as industrial arts, engineering, applied science, and pure science (www.dictionary.com 2021). The web dictionary states further that “it is also the application of practical knowledge in art, science, engineering etc. technical nomenclature, a scientific or industrial process, invention with method and materials of producing objects”.

Gek (2014) cited in Ayeni, Olufemi, and Adesola, (2018) opines that technology is the scientific knowledge used in practical ways to meet and satisfy human needs and comforts. Technology can also be used to refer to a collection of techniques. In this context, it is the current state of humanity’s knowledge, skills, usage (methods), and tools of how to combine resources and facilities to produce desired products to solve problems (teaching and learning of Arts problems), fulfil needs, or satisfy wants; it includes technical methods, processes, techniques, tools, and raw materials (Borgmann, 2006).

The above definitions indicate that technology is not just the knowledge of science and computer or drawing, painting and sculpture; rather ways of doing things practically that require expertise. In fact, all objects around us in our daily lives are products of different technological advancement that have developed over the century of our existence. We have transformed natural resources to make tools and machines that make our lives easier, satisfy our curiosity and desire to excel. Therefore, technology can be craft which is still under Arts. It is obvious that technology is central to all disciplines and it is inevitable in art; it cuts across all human endeavours. Currently the efficiency of mankind is intricately tied to technology, whether in design, construction, advertisement, branding, animation, instruction, preservation, development, advancement, improvement, renovation, improvisation, or innovation.

Types of Technology (ToT)

There are different views regarding the types of technology existing in society and hence technology is defined in many ways. Scribd (2021) states ToT as communication technology; construction technology; assistive technology; medical technology; information technology; entertainment technology; business technology; and educational technology. Likewise, Phillips (2017) in Ajayi (2018 p: 107-108) specifically affirms ToT as science technology; physical technology; and information technology. But for the purpose of this study, we will limit ourselves to physical technology and information technology of Phillips. According to Phillips (2017) physical technology deals with all tools, machinery and gadgets used both in industries and by consumers. This includes anything, from a simple hammer

to the hardware within a computer to highly sophisticated machinery used in industries, medical settings, aviation, and research of all forms. Consequently, Fine and Applied Arts also fall under this type of technology; physical technology (PT), especially branches of art like sculpture and ceramics and the PT is the concerns of this study.

Wood carving

Wood carving has been used as a medium of creative expression in several civilizations in history. There is no tribe in Nigeria without a traditional wood carving technique. It connotes two rooted words “wood and “carving”. It is not the best discussing it without looking the word in their natural state. Brown (2010) sees wood as the perishable material or medium which has been used for centuries for or in artistic expressions of different concepts and kinds.

Carving is simply a subtractive method on wood, stone or ivory in order to make a special shape. It is the cutting or chipping off the unwanted or insignificant area of a solid object such as wood, stone, ivory, thorn or horn to achieve a desire shape. (Oyedun, 2013). Having known the meaning of wood and carving in their parallel nature, let us now view them together for better understanding. Wood carving can now be seen as the physical and energetic branch of sculpture under fine art that involves cutting, subtracting and chipping off the unwanted or insignificant areas or portions of a wood to create or achieve a desirable shape or form in a beautiful manner.

Types of carving



Fig. 2: Low relief carving, mother and child (Ajayi, 2007 in Ajayi 2020).

Carving generally can be executed in either relief or in the round.

Relief carving: This type of carving is two and three dimensional art in nature. It is carried out on any flat surface thereby possessing a particular background or platform. Mostly, the back of this carving cannot be seen either from the front view or the back view since it has no back, except a specially executed area of the carving which is a bit higher than other areas. Hence, relief carving is not total 360° in nature (you can't move round it). Relief carving is further divided into two parts namely: Low relief carving and High relief carving.

Low relief carving: It is two dimensional arts in nature. Here, the background is cut down to a shallow depth and the forms or designs are left standing slightly higher than

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the background to push the required forms forward. It can serve as decorations on walls in our houses, offices, private and public places.

High relief carving: this is combination of two dimensional and three dimensional arts in nature but emphasis is laid on the three dimensional aspect and the background of the carving. The background is cut down to bulky depth and the forms/designs are raised very higher from the background to form the main or final design of the carving. It can also be seen in the round or from any side with length, breadth and height – three dimensional and the lower or flat forms/designs are two dimensional.

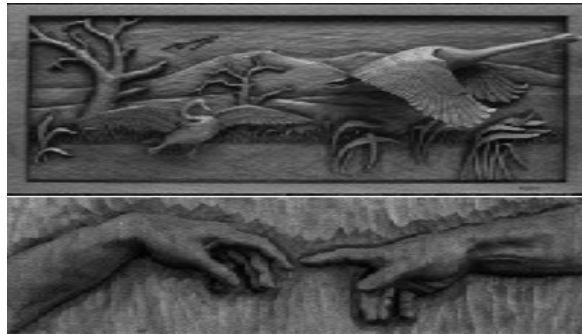


Fig. 3: High relief carving. (<http://www.carvedbyramsey.com/relief.htm>)

Carving in the round

This type of carving is a total three dimensional arts which has no background like relief carving. It is cut/ship off on all the sides to form the desired shape or design therefore give room for viewing from all the sides – front view, back view, left view and right view. Carved wood in the round stands by itself on a base, thus, possible to move round it and admire it from all angles. It is 360° movement type of carving. The sculptor/carver too moves and works round it with his equipment, tools, and materials reaching the final stage for display, presentation, or exhibition for sales. Many of these carvings are usually found in our private homes, offices and public places as decorations.

Classifications of Wood

Ajayi (1999 and 2020) classified wood primarily into; hard wood and soft wood depending on its physical features. Hard wood is very strong, darker in colour and more heavily in weight. It comes from broad leaved trees with needle-like leaves. The broad leaved tree is also called deciduous tree and is found mainly in the tropics. A tree with needle like leaves is also called a coniferous tree or just a

conifer, and it is found in the cooler regions (typical rain forest) of the world. Hard wood does not spoil or decay easily. It possesses good aesthetic texture and a long lasting life span. This wood includes *iroko*, mahogany, teak, ebony, ion wood, *opepe*, *eku*, *melinum*, *masonia*, *agboingbon*, *ekiki*, cedar, *ota*, oak, cherry, among others. Hard woods have straight and tapering stems with cone shaped heads. The timber from the hard wood tree generally has dark coloured heart wood and light coloured sap wood. The “fibers” give mechanical support to the tree and they make up the bulk of the timber. Hard woods also have vessels in them which convey sap to the leaves for the purpose of growing well or rapidly.

Soft wood is a wood that is very weak, lighter in colour and weight. This wood is very cheap and easy to cut thereby common in the society. It decays easily to powder form which makes people to avoid using it. Apart from decaying, soft wood does not possess the aesthetic texture like hard wood. These are the reasons soft wood is not recommended for carving at all, it includes: *abora*, *akomu*, *somidoloro*, *odogbo*, white wood, *apa* among others. Soft wood always bend and crooked, though some are dark in colour but not as dark as hard wood. The timber that forms this wood is usually the same colour for both heart wood and sap wood. The nutrient that gives mechanical support is the “tracheid” which makes up the bulk of the timber. It is these tracheids that conduct sap to the leaves for better growth.

Methods of Wood Carving

Wood carving basically can be executed through two major methods namely: Direct wood carving and indirect wood carving.

Direct wood carving method

The direct wood carving method is a process whereby the artist/carver work on the wood without preparing an initial Marquette of the finish works of his concept in clay before the commencement of cutting and carving. Here, the artist/carver only draws his concept on a paper or straight to the surface of the wood and commence carving. Some other talented carvers follow the forms on the wood to execute their carving without any specially drawn concept. This method of carving does not give room for any form of reference follow up (RFU) to acquire or achieve accurate forms; any mistake made is made forever. To an extent, direct wood carving method is a free will process of carving that nobody can use any reference/Marquette to effect corrections or guides to the carved wood when the carving process is on or might have been completed. . This is the concern of this study because most the the carvers at the Isagira-Elete are not academic sculptor/ carver, so they carve directly.

Indirect wood carving method

The indirect wood carving method is very good for reproduction. It involves drawing of concept on a paper and moulding/modelling of such concept in clay to serve as reference material during carving proper. This process makes the wood carving to be easily achieved on wood because the artist/carver is familiar with the forms and movements that made up the concept already when moulding the marquette.

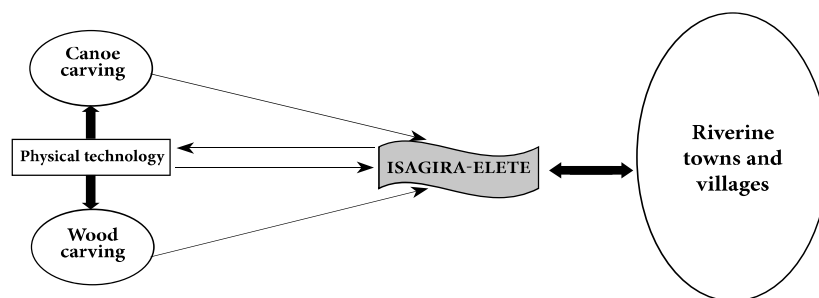


Fig. 4: Model of technology and craft of wood carving in Isagira-Elete.

Preservation of Carved Wood

Termites, insects and fungi usually attack the sap wood because of the presence of the starch and sugar in it. The attack also varies with the amount of starch and sugar content from wood to wood. To drive these insects and fungi away from wood, either before or after the carve, preservative is applied to it which poisons the wood for the predators.

Wood preservation: This is simply any process that is used to prolong the service life or life span of the wood through the chemical known as preservative which serves as poison to the wood. Generally, wood should also be kept away from rain or water to prevent gradual decay thereby boosting its life span.

Types of Preservatives

The three main types of preservatives are:

1. **Oil type preservatives:** These are thick oil based/formulated chemicals. The most important chemical in this group are creosote and coal tar. They are used mostly for outdoor work as they discolour/change the colour of the wood to their own colour and such wood cannot be easily painted. Creosote colour is brown while coal tar black.
2. **Water soluble preservatives:** These are water formulated chemicals. They are chemicals such as zinc (Zn) copper (Cu), Sodium (Na) and so on which

can be dissolved in water. They are mostly used for treating woods use in buildings; if used out-doors; the chemical can be washed away by rain.


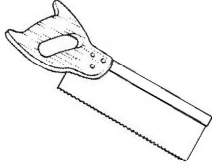


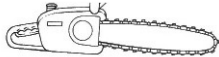
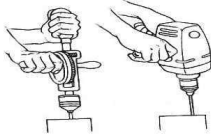
3. **Solvent type preservatives:** These are chemicals that come in both water and oil. They are chemicals such as chlorinated phenols, sodium pcp etc, which can only be dissolved in a volatile liquids like white spirit. Most of these chemicals are obtained already mixed by their manufacturers. They are the best for carved woods preservation because they do not change wood colour easily.

The oil type of preservatives are applied to the canoe back and front after carving at the riverine (eyin osa), thereafter big nylon is used to cover the back, and finally aluminium zinc is applied to avert quick decay and leakage. This prolongs the life span of the carved canoe.

Equipment, Tools, and Materials for Wood Carving

Carving equipment

This, according to Adepegba (1995), Ajayi (2020) are the special sophisticated gadgets or machines that one needs to perform a particular activity. They can be manually used or powered by electricity as they are larger in size than tools and materials. They also perform their function first before tools and materials, while some perform last as means of finishing carved wood. Some of these equipment are: hand manual saw; spraying machine; electrical saw/cutting machine; clamp; shaping machine; drilling machine; filing machine, and power generator.

		
5: Jig saw	6: Hand saw	7: Power generator
		
8: Mallet	9: Chain saw	10: Drilling machine

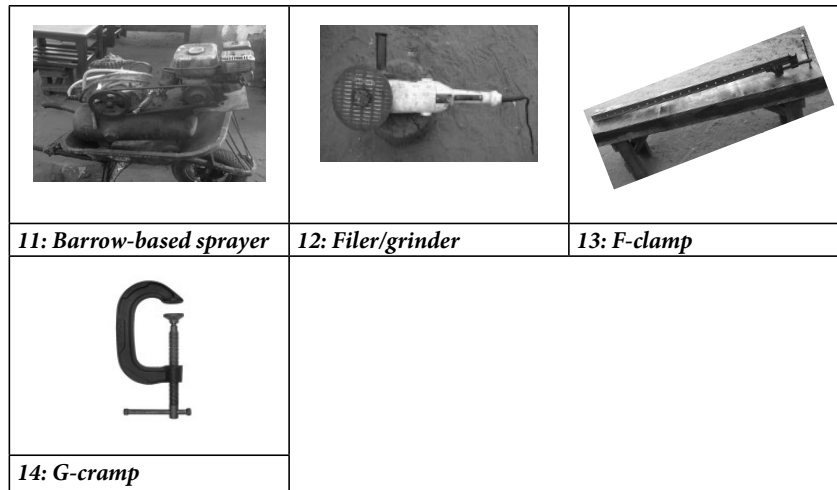


Fig. 5-14: Various equipment for wood carving. (Ajayi, 1999; Ajayi, 2020).

Carving tools:

They are primarily manual metal, iron and wood objects which come in big, small and smaller sizes to facilitate cutting and carving of wood (Brown, 2010; Ajayi, 2020). They do the major work as some of them perform finishing touches to the carved woods; some others are required at the starting and during (middle) the carving. These tools include: chisels and gouges; vice; sharpening stone; dnylats; straight gouge; veneer N-, V-, and spoon-shaped gouges, mallet, adze and axe, scraper, knives and cutlass, rasp file, and file.

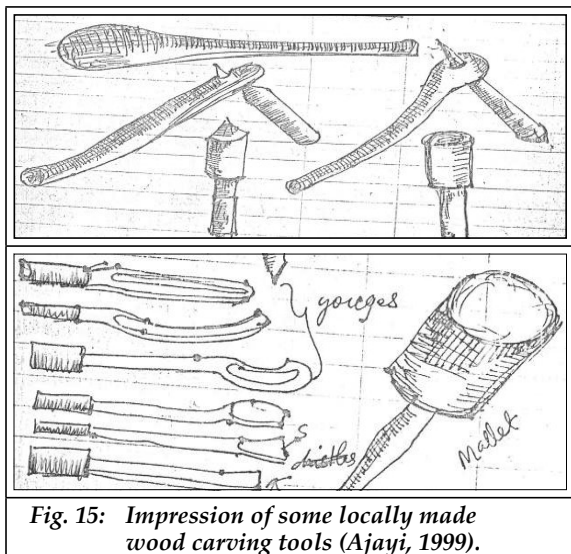
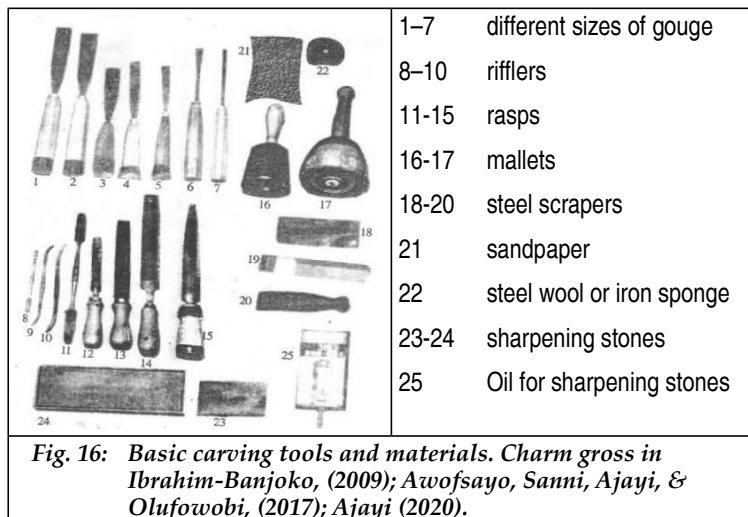


Fig. 15: Impression of some locally made wood carving tools (Ajayi, 1999).

Carving materials

Carving materials are things or objects both solid and non-solid used for making, creating and achieving different forms and designs on a wood (Brown, 2010; Ajayi, 2020). Some are used during carving process and some others as finishing materials which is their basic function. Majority of these materials are used manually while others can be added to electrical machine for their application and some are used in both manual and electrical ways respectively. They vary in size, shape and quantity ranging from solid to pastry and pastry to liquid. Carving materials are also made of wood, hair, metal and paper or combination of some as the case may be. These materials include: wood, polish brush, chalk and pencil, workbench, toolbox, palm oil and engine oil, wax polish, varnish, bond glue, and sandpaper.

Below are the list and picture of some carving tools:



General Functions of Wood Carving

Carved woods connote different meanings and served varying different purposes within the different communities of Nigeria, Africa and global world. The impact of wood carving in Nigerian and African sculpture cannot be undermined for its richness in variety of forms and cultural meanings as shown in this chapter. In

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fact, it is the first among the African traditional arts prior to the surplus of wood in the rain forest region and its existence as occupation before the introduction of western art. Some of these purposes are:

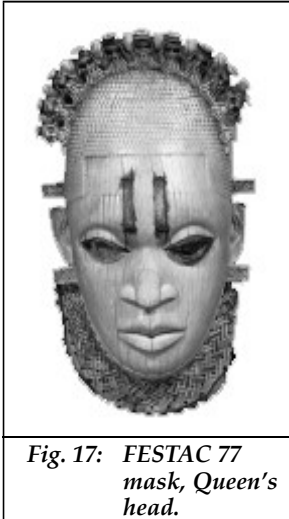


Fig. 17: FESTAC 77 mask, Queen's head.

- i. Generally, most carved wood items are used for utility purposes hereby known as domestic materials i.e. food bowls, spoons, mortar and pestle, turners, trays, walking sticks and cups to mention but few.
- ii. Carved woods are used for beautification and decoration both interior and exterior of our living rooms, place of work and public places like church and mosque even shrines. These items carved includes: carved doors, frieze and lintel, mirror cases, beds etc.
- iii. Wood carving serves as a memoir in events calculator, recorder in human history, before and after record period thereby reminding and refreshing people's memory on the past events, occurrences and histories. No event no history they say, a good example is FESTAC 77 mask which was a major and famous historical event that assembled the entire black race celebrated in Nigeria, 1977.

1. Wooden carved items

provide recreation and comfort facilities, example are drum base, sitting stools, chairs, *awale* or native game (ṣpón ayò), game boards, among others.

2. It also reawakens the esthetics appreciation of our environment.
3. Evidence abound that carved woods are highly water proof in nature, a good example are the carved canoes and paddles in Isagira-Elete town and environment.
4. Carved wood items satisfy some basic traditional, cultural and religious yearnings of the people thereby promoting tradition, culture and festivals.

For instance, masks and wooden dolls



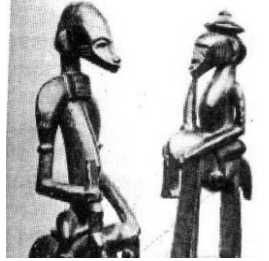



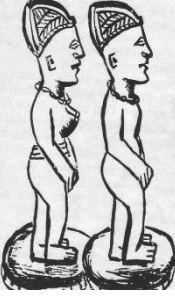
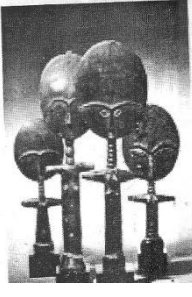

Fig. 18: A carved canoe and paddle, Isagira-Elete (Ajayi & Adekoya, 2019).



Fig. 19: Pa J.S. Ajayi, carving canoe paddle: Isagira-Elete town, (Ajayi & Adekoya, 2019).

like gelede mask, which is a popular masquerade within the Egbado (Iyewa) and Awori area of Lagos and Ogun states. The “Ere Ibeji” within the African continent and mostly the Yoruba tribe are carved two wooden dolls meant to idolize or symbolize the twin born either both alive or one is dead. It is believed that they bring wealth and good luck to their parents. The Dan Ngere mask from Cote d’Ivoire worn for invoking their ancestors’ spirit and dialogue with other gods, the Ashantis of Ghana Akua-ba dolls is a carved image of boy and girl with moon slapped face, closed eyes and delicate nose regarded as fertility doll (Uzoagba, 2000; Ibrahim-Banjoko, 2009). The Nimba mask of the Baga of Guinea carved with attached raffia threads used by the Simo society during the rice harvesting ceremony.

5. Carved items also function as staff symbol of power of the ancestor’s cult-shrine as evident in “Afo” traditional wood carving of mother and child meant to increase soil fertility among farmers. Equally the Sango’s “Axe/wand” is another carved wooden axe which is a staff of aggression by Sango (god of thunder) now used as symbol of authority by the worshippers.

			
<p>20: Senfo: Two figures of horsemen</p>	<p>21: Dan-Ngere: The Dead Mask</p>	<p>22: Dogon: Ancestral figure</p>	
			
<p>23: Yoruba: Sango axe</p>	<p>24: Yoruba: Ere Ibeji</p>	<p>25: Ashanti: Akua-ba dolls</p>	<p>26: Bambara: Ntomo mask</p>
<p>Fig 20-26: Some carved images. Ibrahim-Banjoko, (2000), Daramola, & Adebayo, (1970).</p>			

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described and discussed in relation to the theoretical framework (ETA); physical technology (PT) as the tools in the community; (artefact), the subject was the indigenes (participants, and the object was the purpose of activity (canoe carving with wood), and the desired outcome is the result of indigenes creativity in artistic carvings/ constructs of canoe. However, participants were interviewed about the kinds of physical technologies available to them when carving, and how they are being used. Participants interviewed reported that the available PTs (hammer, mallet, chisel, handsaw, ax, and gauges, among others) were sufficient for the canoe carving to an extent, and where they are not; they borrowed from partners.

The challenges of canoe carving with physical technologies.

Participant 1: To the best of my knowledge, we have different type of locally made physical technologies for carving our canoe then, but those one using electric (power) are not available because no money to buy them. It is the Oyinbo people that have them plenty. Therefore, most of these tools got broken easily while using them, but we always improvise.

Participant 2: I can say categorically that we don't have digital tools for the canoe and paddle carving here, being èyin òsà. No bridge across the lagoon, so, this is causing serious setback for the development of the communities here. It's only God Who can help us ògá mi.

Remarkably, all the participants aside the responses of two participants above indicated that no access to digital technologies due to it expensiveness. This is the more reason they based the canoe carving on physical technologies available within their reach. Though, they are tough to use, due to energetic aspect of the canoe carving. It requires a lot of energy, strength, and stamina (ESS) to achieve the desired out according to ETA, (1987).

The dilemma of using the wood for canoe carving in Isagira-Elete town and eyin osa generally in the present dispensation.

Participant 3: Sir, there are no tick or rain forest anymore here to get big trees (timbers) to carve canoe due to deforestation, development, and civilization. I can also say that computer technology has injected laziness into our people, and we are not ready to practise most of our traditional occupation any longer. We are all looking for oyinbo work known as white-collar job. In view of this, nobody is ready to use energy on carving canoe instead we buy several numbers of plank at sawmill at Ojo town or Sibiri-Ekunpa town for carpenter to construct the canoe which is faster and easier, but not as durable as carved canoe and paddle with hardwood. Aside this, massive firewood fetching and production of charcoal as our traditional occupation of

both young and old here in Isagira-Elete and other riverine communities (awon omo eyin osa) gradually phase out timbers in the rain forest for boat/canoe carving since there is no other job for the men.

Indeed, the above account confirm our observations around Isagira-Elete town and neighbouring Egan-Oromi town in a bush of trekkable distance between the two communities that have become mere bush land without trees. Some indigenes were observed fetching fresh firewood for display in the sun to dry before selling them to the firewood merchant who make sales to final consumer. According to Egestrom (1987), digital technology encourage someone to do this easily, we believe if there are digital technologies for carving canoe and paddle at the riverine communities especially Isagira-Elete town most indigenes will preserve trees on their farmland to grow up to good timber for canoe and paddle carving, bearing it in mind that there are machines or digital tools which can help them in achieving their desire outcome easily and fast. Therefore, the findings justify that, there are more canoe carving in most of the communities in riverine (eyin osa) generally and Isagira-Elete town in specific. It's only few paddle carving that is being practiced by indigenes who have the courage.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Africans will always be Africans, canoe and paddle carving are our cultural and traditional heritage of riverine (eyin osa) people. Its values in African race cannot be undermined even in the Western world; therefore, civilization should not sweep away our rich culture and tradition. Virtually, every house in the riverine (eyin osa), has canoes and paddles; either carved or constructed by a carpenter(s). To this end, we recommend that, the farmers should dedicate farm lands for the planting of trees (afforestation) suitable for boat or canoe (oko oju omi) carving so that it will not become craft of history to our born and unborn children. The surplus production of canoe and paddle carving will motivate the demand for it by the fishermen, farmers and other consumers. On the part of government; especially local government, soft loans should be granted to farmers for planting of timbers alone to encourage them in the production of wood (timber) for carving (canoe). Also, there should be a regatta feast or festival organized by the traditional rulers in all the river rine (eyin osa) villages and towns in conjunction with the local government, and cooperative societies where everybody showcases his/her boat on yearly basis. This will encourage our people in the riverine in the usage of carved canoes. In the nearest future, we hope the craft will pick up again as people will fall back to its usage because it's a heritage and tradition that cannot be ignored or abandoned.

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