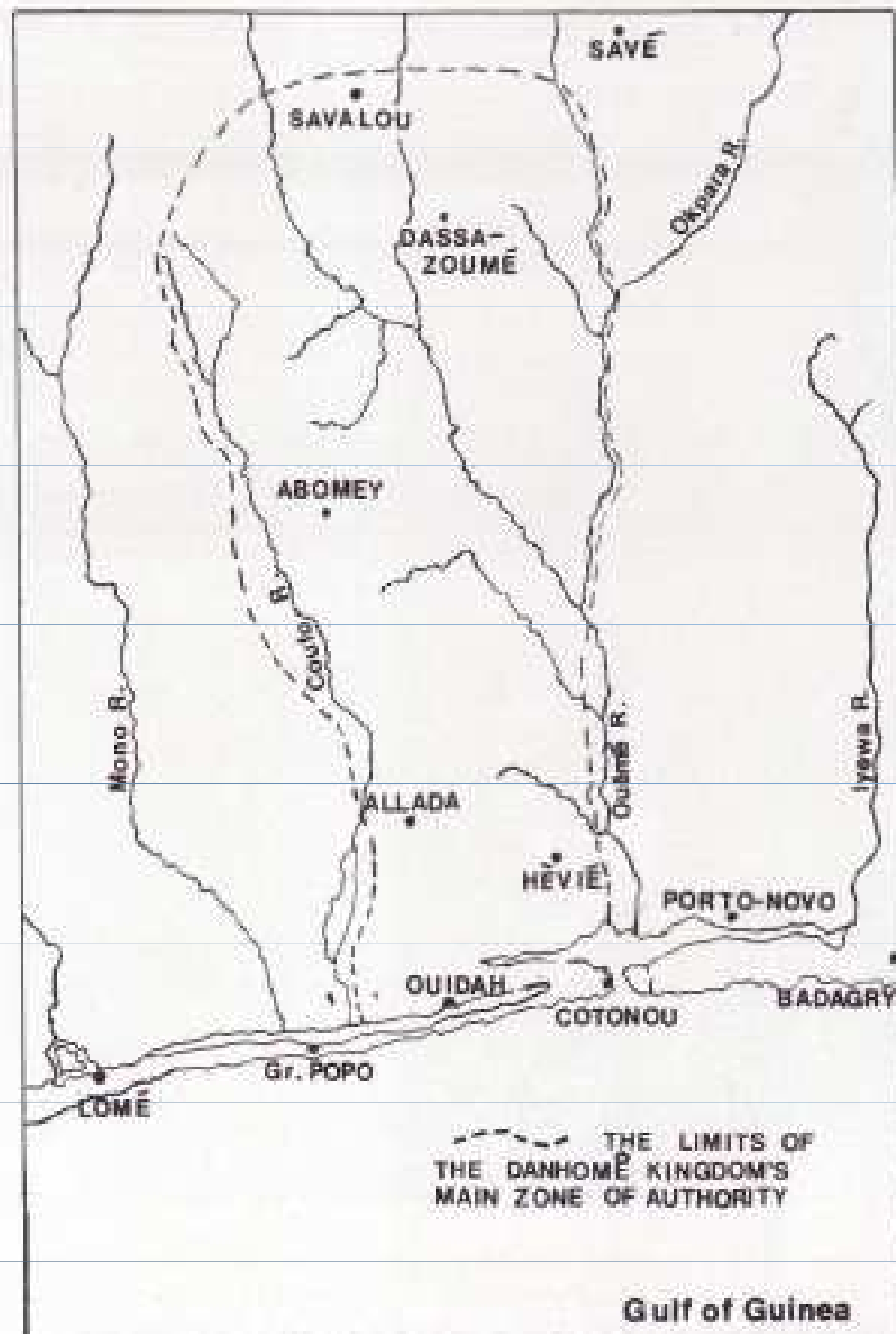


- Vodun: spiritual beings & their cult
- Origin: Adja-Tado, ~1300
- Place of Dynasty: Alladah / Adrah
- Influence of Yorùbá religious traditions
- Dahomey = In the belly of Dan (the king Wegbadja is said to have buildt his palace on Dan's grave after killing him)



# Today's Republic of Benin



# Today's Republic of Togo



# The palace of the kings of Dahomey in Abomey, Benin



# The palace of the kings of Dahomey in Abomey, Benin



- Multiplicity of Gods, Cults and Myths
- Adopting easily to foreign traditions
- Import of Ifá-Divination by king (now called Fa in the Fon and Ewe-language)
- Mawu (female) and Lisa (male), stemming from Nana Buluku)
- Mawu & Lisa sometimes considered as twins
- Cult of twins: xoxo

- *Mawu – female*
- *Ordering of the natural world, assisted by Da*
- *Moon, Night, Freshness, Rest, Joy*
- *Fertility, Motherhood, Gentleness, Forgiveness*
- Lisa – male
- Ordering of the world of man, assisted by Gu
- Sun, Day, Heat, Labour,
- Power, Strength, Toughness



- Distribution of the forces acting in the world among the Vodun
- World is a calabash floating inside water in another calabash
- Da: Son of Mawu-Lisa (folkloristic approach) or a force manifesting itself in a number of ways within the world
- Da Ayido Hwedo: The rainbow (lit.: serpent)

## Principal Vodun

- Heviesso (Sogbo): God of Thunder, his domain are the atmospheric phenomena
- Sakpaté: a dual deity, his domain is the earth; lord of smallpox
- Agbe-Naete: twins of opposite sex, sea & water
- Age: His domain is the wild, uncultivated land, where no man lives

## Two main Vodou without „domain“

- Legba: intermediary between the groups of the Vodou; the youngest son of Mawu-Lisa
- Gu: The God of Iron; the eldest son of Mawu-Lisa; belongs to a group of Sky-Gods; assistant of Lisa in ordering the world of man

## The ordering of the cosmos in 4 days

- First day: Mawu puts cosmos into order and creates man
- Second day: work interrupted, Gu appears
- Third day: Man was given the senses & knowledge about the outside world
- Fourth day: man is taught the technical skills

- Mawu gave existence to mankind through forming the tohwiyo of each clan
- Same essence/cult = same tohwiyo
- Tohwiyo connects people to the world of the Gods and takes part in sending people to the world
- Tohwiyo gave the ancestor cult & the social rules to the clan
- Ancestor-cult & special cult of tohwiyo

- In the beginning the Creator himself formed men, later he withdrew
- Now the tohwiyo & the ancestors are engaged in tis task
- The ancestor becomes one part of the person, his joto; he selects the clay
- The joto is linked to the se (the human soul), but not a „reincarnation“ of the ancestor

- The great Se = Mawu, the individual se is a part of it
- Selido = the individual spiritual faculty of a person; life, feeling, personality
- Kpoli = The person's destiny, identified by the Fa-Oracle
- Ye = the indestructible part of the soul, that leaves man at the time of burial

- Basilio Seguro: The origin of the word „Vodun“ is not clear
- Bruno Gilli: vo (Opening, Hole, Secret & du (Sign of the Fa-Oracle)  
The Messenger of the Secrets
- Bernard Maupoil: that, what one cannot understand
- Suzanne Preston Blier: vo: rest sit quietly & dun: to draw water (from a well)

The most important things in life cannot be seen; to relax at the pool of life



## Vodun (Tro)

- Vodun of the family/clan/lineage
- „Free Vodun“
  - linked to the destiny/fate of a person
  - like medicines- they can be bought or eaten

## Vodun (Tro)

- „Free Vodun“, That are linked with the fate of a person are called = voduwo dzodzome

## Tobias Wendl:

- Forces of nature
- Spirits of animala
- Members of „foreign cultures“
- Dangerous spirits of the deceased

## Mamy Wata

- Goddess of the sea
- The beautiful European Woman
- Iconographically linked to Hindu-Deities (Shiva)
- A „family“ of Mamy-Watá-spirits
  - Mami Apuke - a siren
  - Mami Dabe - a „snake woman“ picture of a „snake domptress“
  - Mami Densu, three heads

## Forces of Nature

- Sakpate (sapata= portuguese for smallpox)
- Heviesso (the so from Hevie) Thunder & Lightning
  - Among the northern Ewe:
    - Sogle, the male Lord of lightning
    - Sodza, the female divinity of thunder
  - Southern Ewe: Agbui, the female divinity in charge of the more pleasing aspects of rain, like coolness and fertility.

# The cult of the Vodou



## Forces of Nature / Spirits of Animals

- Da/Dan: The spirit of the rainbow
- Ayido huedo
- The story Mamissi Josephine told
- „La cité historique de Ouidah“
  - temple de pythons

# Today's City of Ouidah, Benin













# „temple de pythons“ (Temple of Da) in Ouidah, Benin



„temple de pythons“ (Temple of Da) in  
Ouidah, Benin



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## Spirits of Animals

- Adzakpa: the spirit of the crocodile (an animal of transgression between the realms of reality)
- Aziza - spirits of the forest, often referred to as spirits of monkeys
  - A people of dwarfs, looked at as the primal inhabitants of the land
  - Are thought to have taught humans the principle techniques of civilisation
  - The masters of the „bo“ (gris-gris“)

## Bo: the neutral mystical power in things

- Boto: the one who makes „bocio“ (=„fetishes“)
- Bokono: the priest of the Fa-Oracle (lit: master of the secrets of the bo)
- Bocio = the cadaver of the bo
  - Figurines carved in a rough, simple way
  - Used for protection
  - Various materials are attached to them
  - Have to be treated ritually (loaded with power)

# „Fetishism “: Marché des fétiches / Lomé



# „Fetishism“



# „Fetishism“



# „Fetishism“





# „Fetishism“



# „Fetishism“



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# „Fetishism“



universität  
wien



# „Fetishism“



# „Fetishism“





# „Fetishism“



universität  
wien

YEKPON H. Lucien

*Guérisseur en Médecine Traditionnelle*

*Marché des Fétiches Akodessawa*

*B. P. 61337*

*Lomé - TOGO*

*Stand No 55*

*Dom. 271 05 60 / Cel. 902 43 84*

*Benin (00229) 97 38 61 56*

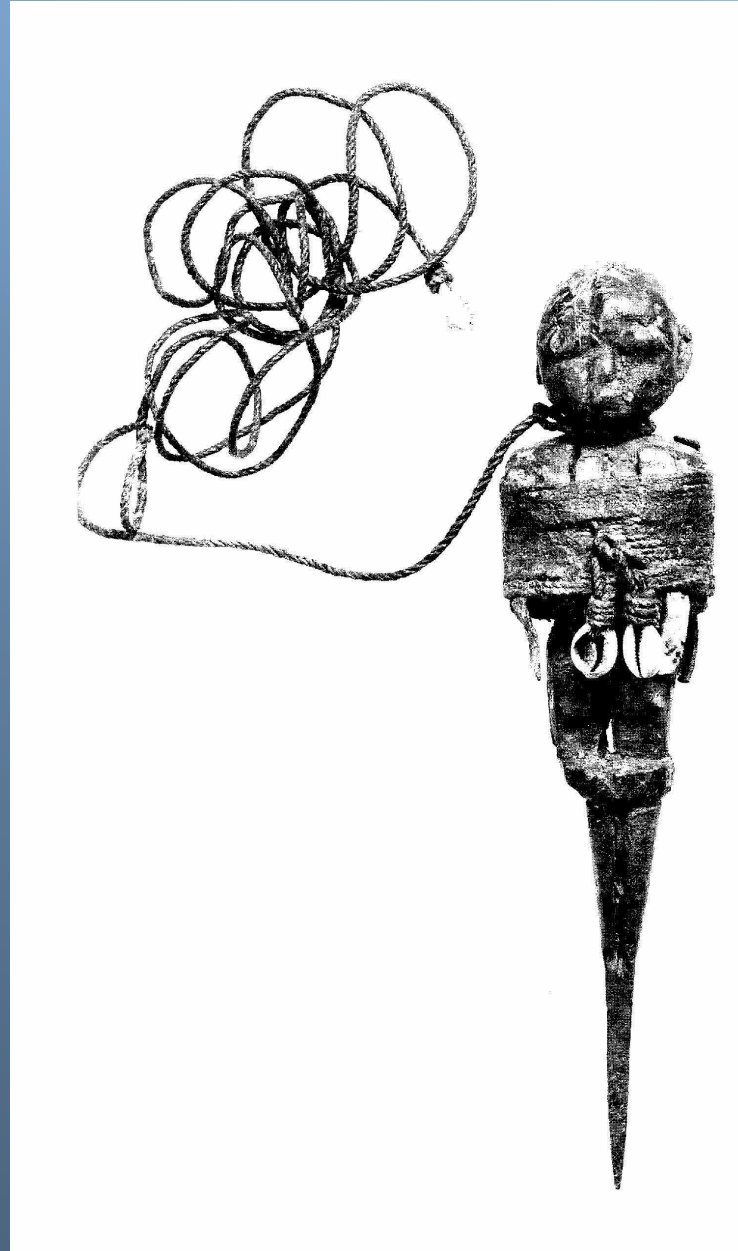
# „Fetishism“



## The making of a bocio

- Speaking and spitting as empowerment
- Heat & fire
- Tyeing, twisting, knotting & binding: taming
- Supernatural energies

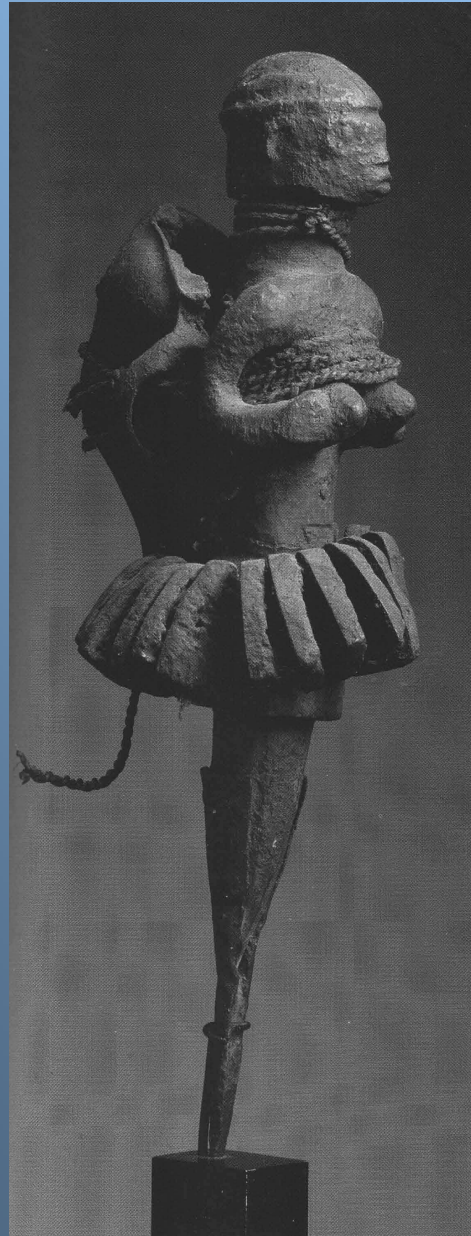
# „Fetishism“



# „Fetishism“



# „Fetishism“



## Spirits of foreign people

- Tchamba (Tsamba)
- Gorovodu
- Gu

## Dangerous spirits of the deceased

- Adela - Hunters killed in an accident
- Toxosu - The return of the babies killed



- Vodunsi /Hunsi = Adept of a certain Vodou
- Initiation: To learn the language, the dances and the songs of a vodou; work for supply of Vodun-kpame (Hunkpame)
- Hunkpame = The house of the Vodou
- Xwégan = Master of the House
- Kangan = Master of the rope
- Hunso/Nagbo = Master/Mistress of the „Novices“
- Hunnon = High priest of a certain Vodou

- from 1972-1985 (communist era) cults have been suppressed
- May 28 – June 1, 1991: conference of Cult-leaders
- 1993: Meeting of Pope John Paul II with cult-leaders
- January 10 (each year) Main festival of Vodun in Ouidah

# The cult of the Vodou

