

GCUC 3. Africa display – Weaving Worlds caption

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1. 9/2002/17

Cotton blanket (*luru*)

Bought by Jane Barbour 1960s

Hausa, Kano, Nigeria

Woven on a man's horizontal loom, *luru* belong to a wider category of blanket used by dwellers along the edges of the Sahara. Major weaving areas are located in the northern villages of Katsina, Kano, Bauchi and Gombe states.

2. 9/2002/9

Head wrap

Bought by Jane Barbour 1970

Yoruba, Ibadan, SW Nigeria

Woven in cotton and gold lurex thread on a man's horizontal loom, the pattern is formed of holes (*aso eleya*) with a diagonal carry over (*onjawa*). This decoration was observed as early as 1846 during the Niger Expedition.

3. 284/1998/22

Aso oke narrow strip

Made around 1969

Yoruba, Iseyin, SW Nigeria

Created with machine-spun cotton and rayon and woven on a man's double-heddle horizontal loom. Length includes a pattern of holes (*aso eleya*), which is a time consuming technique. Acquired by *adire* researcher Nancy Stanfield.

4. 115/2003/26

Cotton cloth (*maji*)

Market bought 1973-5

Northern Nigeria

Maji woven cloths are used in Keffi as a marriage cloth, and more recently by the Fulani as head cloths and wrappers. *Maji* and Yoruba *adire* cloths share similar designs, and this is possibly due to having a shared origin.

5. 9/2002/16

Blanket (*khaasa*)

Bought in Ibadan, Nigeria 1960s

Fulani, Mali

Woven on a double-heddle loom, these strip woven blankets of sheep wool are still traded widely and provide warmth and protection against mosquitoes. *Khaasa* are largely used by Fulani herders on the Niger Delta.

6. 284/1998/27

Cloth (*akwete*)

Acquired 1960s

Igbo, Akwete, Abia state, SE Nigeria

Akwete cloths are single panel cotton cloths woven on a woman's single-heddle vertical loom. The lozenge *ikaki*, or tortoise motif, resembles the *oni* design used by Yoruba weavers of Ijebu Ode in the southwest

7. 42/2000/5

Wrapper/ shawl

Acquired 1950s

Possibly Jukun, Benue regions, Central Nigeria

Narrow strips of indigo-dyed hand spun cotton, that include a checked ground with supplementary flat *aska* patterns. Whilst the Jukun have a long trading history with the Hausa and Kanuri peoples, their weaving tradition has close ties further north with the Djembe in Niger.

8. 9/2002/5

Wrapper

Bought by Jane Barbour 1960s

Ebira, Okene, Nigeria

This was woven on a woman's vertical single-heddle loom. The cloth includes machine-spun black cotton and multi-coloured rayon. The weft float patterning is in the style of Igbo *akwete* weaving.

9. 88/1928/52

Man's wrapper (*aso olona*)

Acquired 1900 – 1910

Yoruba, Ijebu-Ode, SW Nigeria

Woven on a woman's vertical loom with hand-spun cotton. Ijebu-woven cloths were particularly popular and were traded eastwards to the Niger Delta region. Their designs influenced the Akwete weavers in the 19th century who also saw the significance of the water spirit motifs in the weave.

10. 115/2003/22

Hat (*kufi*)

Purchased 1973 - 75

Hausa, Zaria or Kano market, N Nigeria

This popular style of hat replaced the turban worn by Muslim men in the 1940 – 50s. The woven design is called *mai tabarma*.

11. E1387

Cap (*fila*)

Collected by Rev. Townsend before 1868

Yoruba, Abeokuta, SW Nigeria

Made of narrow strips of indigo and white hand-spun cotton, the cloth was woven on a man's double heddle loom. This cap formed part of a man's attire and was worn slouched.

12. 115/2003/24

Cap

Purchased 1973 - 75

Hausa/ Fulbe, Zaria or Kano market, N Nigeria

This style of man's cap is popular in Nigeria and is worn with the flaps raised. Normally the flaps are brightly embroidered to enhance one's appearance.

13. 42/2000/8/5

Cap

20th century

Nigeria

Part of the Nigerian Civil Service uniform. This was worn in 1960 by H.G. Butler, the Chief Inspector of Education for Northern Nigeria.

14. 9/2002/10

Wrapper (*edekpa*)

Acquired by Jane Barbour 1965

Nupe, Bida, Nigeria

Woven on a woman's vertical single-heddle loom, this cloth would have been one of a pair sewn together to wear. Early Nupe cloths were indistinguishable from Yoruba weaving, and this highlights a historic interaction between these peoples.

15. 42/1960/7

Shawl (*itagbe*)

Collected before 1921

Yoruba, Ijebu-Ode, SW Nigeria

Woven by a woman, this single width of cotton cloth was worn by a man of the Ogboni society as a ritual garment across the shoulder. The use of *shaki* (tufted sections) probably has magical and ritual associations.

16. E1390

Robe (*agbada*)

Purchased for 12s 10d in 1868

Yoruba, Abeokuta, SW Nigeria

Made with narrow strip indigo and white cotton warp, and possibly incorporating magenta silk. This garment was worn by a Muslim man, it is decorated with protective symbols such as the magic square and the knife motifs.

17. 284/1998/39

Spindle

Acquired 1960s

Yoruba, SW Nigeria

A spindle is a tool employed by weavers for spinning fibres such as cotton and wool. This example has a palm leaf shaft with a ceramic whorl at its base.

18. 186/1986/1

Spun cotton thread

Date unknown

West Africa

The earliest evidence for woven cotton in West Africa dates to the 11th century CE. In fact, West Africa has been one of the major world centres of cotton cultivation. As an important cash crop it was traded extensively along Trans-Saharan trade routes which connected West Africa to the wider world.