



Matthieu Cheminée. 2023. *Inadan. the Mastery of Tuareg Artisans.* Atglen, Schiffer Craft: 328 pp., hardcover \$69.99. ISBN: 978-0-7643-6608-6.

This large format book is remarkable in many ways, detailing the numerous craft skills of the Tuareg people, who live in the Sahara and Sahel, but now also in many other parts of Africa, Europe and the United States, as a result of a widespread diaspora. I have long admired the Tuareg, especially their metal skills, and like many Native Americans, they are able to engage in many crafts, as they are so integrated into their life. I especially love their jewelry, having written about them from 1977 to 2019 in *The Bead Journal* and *Ornament*, and will again do so when I cover the extraordinary, expanded Benson Tuareg collection.

The author, who is himself a jeweler, has written about Tuareg and other West African metalsmiths in his 2014 book (*Legacy. Jewelry Techniques of West Africa.* Brynmorgen Press). I have communicated with him, due to our mutual interests. He has worked with many African craftspeople in their workshops and also helped provide them with tools, as is evident from those shown in the current book. Uniquely, Cheminée asked his Tuareg colleagues to document the making of each of the crafts shown in the current book, by helping to provide select numbers of them with smart phones capable of high resolution photography. Thus the craftspeople photographed fellow craftspeople and family, compiling an almost permanent record of the crafts that are so much a part of their life. Due to rapid changes in lifestyles and careers caused by economic, health conditions like covid, as well as warfare, when a craftsperson changes careers, often his or her skills/techniques are lost to their community.

Both Tuareg men and women are craftspeople, with the men working in metal, wood, stone and mixed media, with the women excelling in leathercraft, although there is crossover and many have multiple skills in various media. Like many African, and Native American jewelers, their workshops and tools are often very simple, although modern, more precise equipment is now becoming available to them. A number were using the same propane/air torch that I use but remarkably, Tuareg smiths make many of their own tools and equipment, like their small, square anvils anchored in a

log or the floor of the workshop, their hammers and their gravers, latter made from sharpened screwdrivers. This is a skill at which they excel and is of great importance. Many of the engraved or chased designs are not merely decorative, but are a graphic language detailing their life and can be read as such by those who know the symbols.

The bulk of the book is a series of photographic profiles, showing closely the making of jewelry, tools, knives/swords, anvils, metal locks, sugar hammers vital to their drinking of tea, stone and wood crafts, leather crafts like bags as well as the vital bellows for metalworking, and the all important camel saddle, which requires much skills in many materials. Jewelers will love the large amount of coverage of the making of every type of Tuareg ornament, ranging from rings, bracelets, tcherot amulets/kitabs, necklaces, some beads and the numerous crosses used by the Tuareg. Because virtually every technique and tool is shown and explained, every reader will be able to understand the processes shown. Especially interesting to me was the detailed explanations of how Tuareg metalsmiths integrate European agates into their jewelry, virtually the only Africans to so mount foreign elements into their jewelry, although they are not adverse to use plastic, other found materials and especially ebony in their adornment. I had always thought their use of portions of German agate ornaments was a frugal means of using broken pieces, but Cheminée shows them breaking intact talhakimt to mount into elaborate silver settings.

The jewelry community will of course want this book in their libraries, even if they are not interested in ethnographic jewelry. It should be in high school, college and university libraries, not only for reference but for inspiration. I hope others will investigate Tuareg jewelry; the actual work is even more striking than photographs, especially if one looks closely at their remarkable techniques and skills.

Robert K. Liu