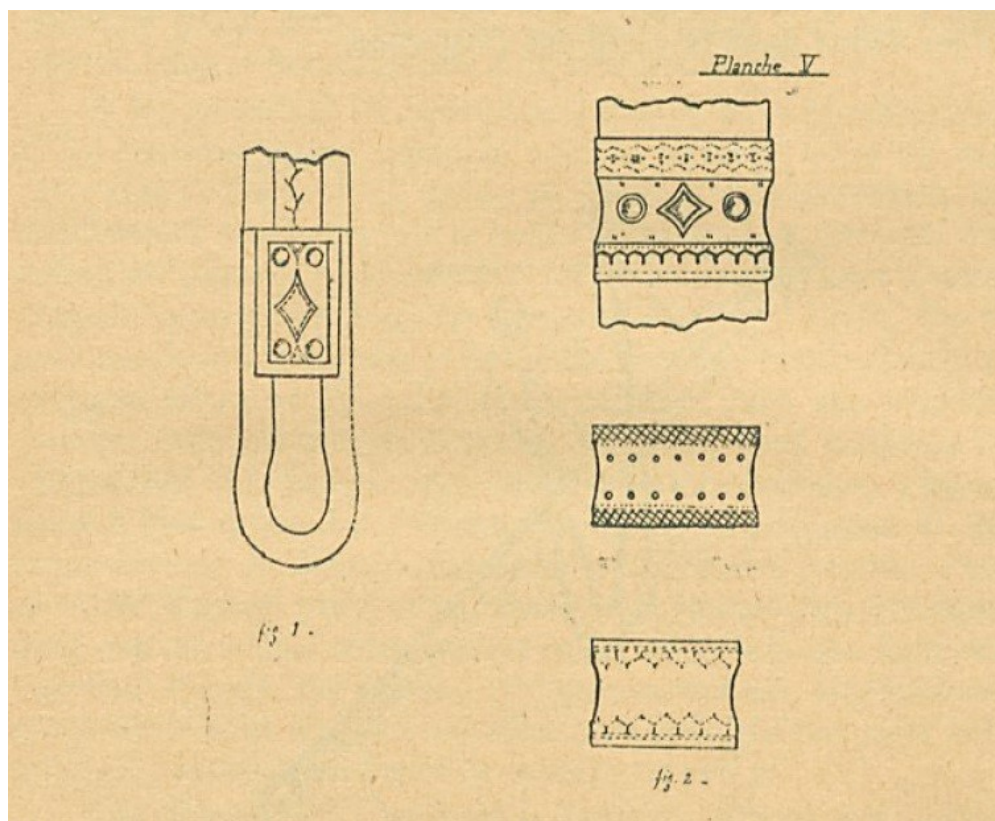


Description of the manufacturing of the scabbard of the takouba

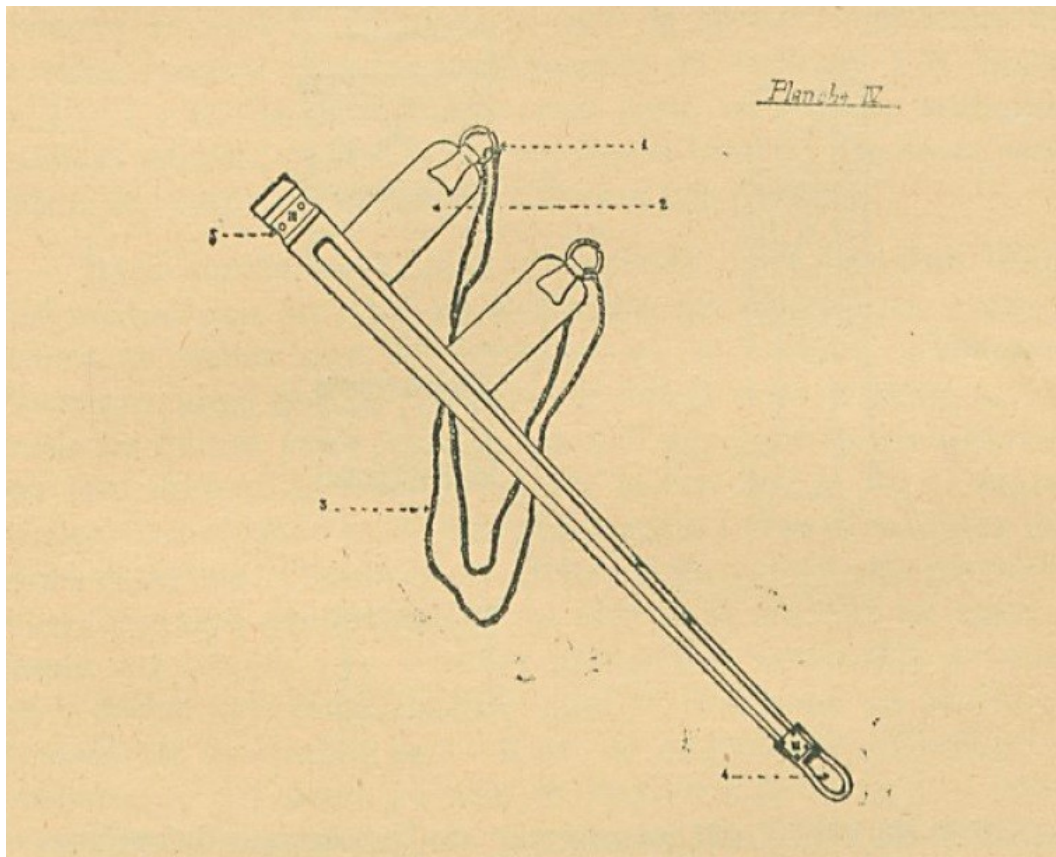
Excerpt (p.136 – 138) from **MOREL M.-H.**, “Essai sur l’épée des Touareg de l’Ahaggar (takouba)”, *Travaux de l’institut de Recherches Sahariennes*, p.121 – 162, 1943.

[...] Finally, the craftsman fixes in the leather of the scabbard two copper fittings at its extremities : they are called **tèbint**, and the phrase **ti n tabint** poetically designates the sword (plate V).



Beforehand, his wife had gathered water, ground wheat and two goat skins. It is to make the scabbard of the takouba (**tîtar**)¹, a very peculiar work that seems to be a challenge to sturdiness since the leather will not be sewn but **glued** (plate IV).

1 DUVEYRIER suggests **tedoummân** (scabbard). Op. Cit. p.444 (armement).



Manufacturing of the scabbard. - The indigenous paste glue (**medr'ar**) joins two plain [not sure, "brut" in the French text] leather straps cut with a knife; this draft, reinforced with lengthwise strips also fixed with glue, is called **keker** (plate VI).

Planche VII

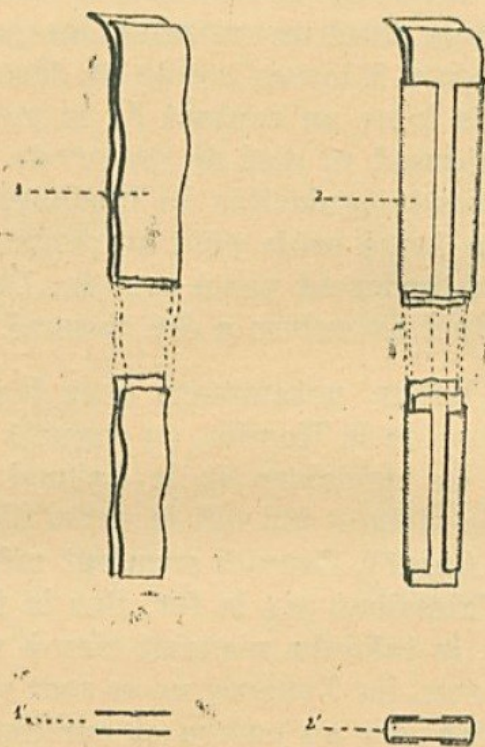
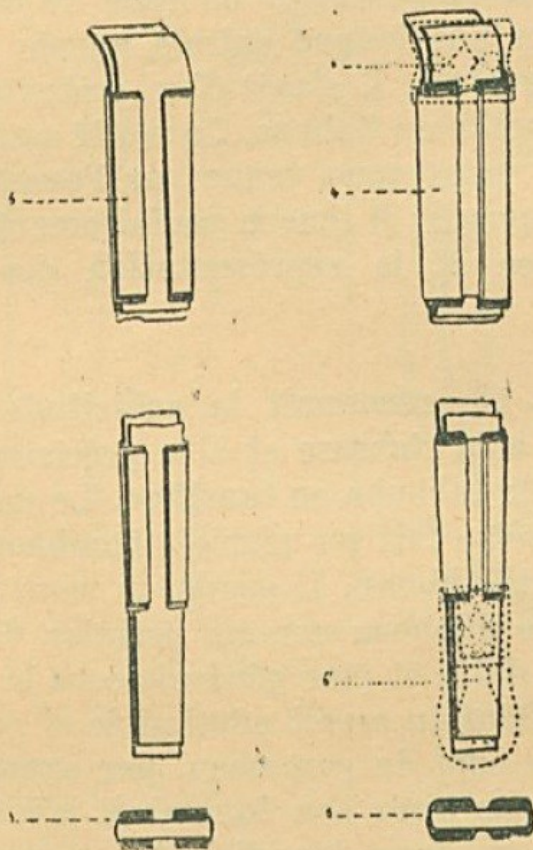
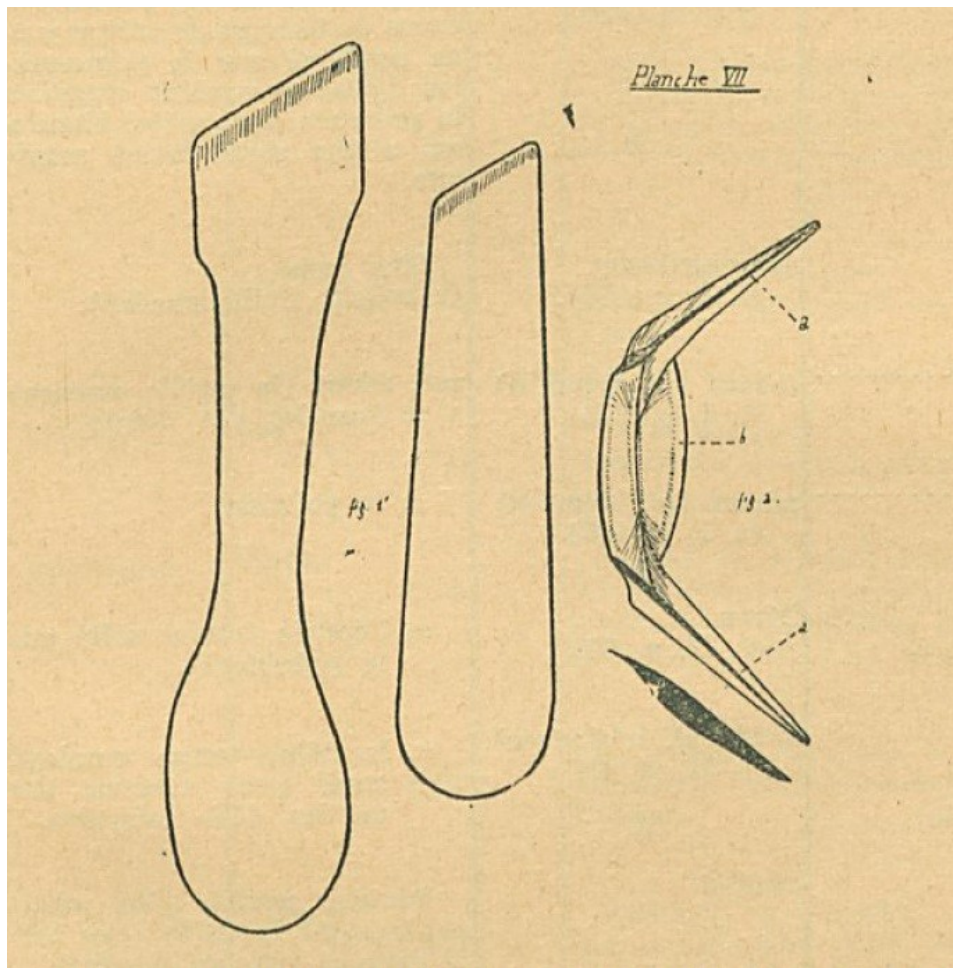


Planche VIII



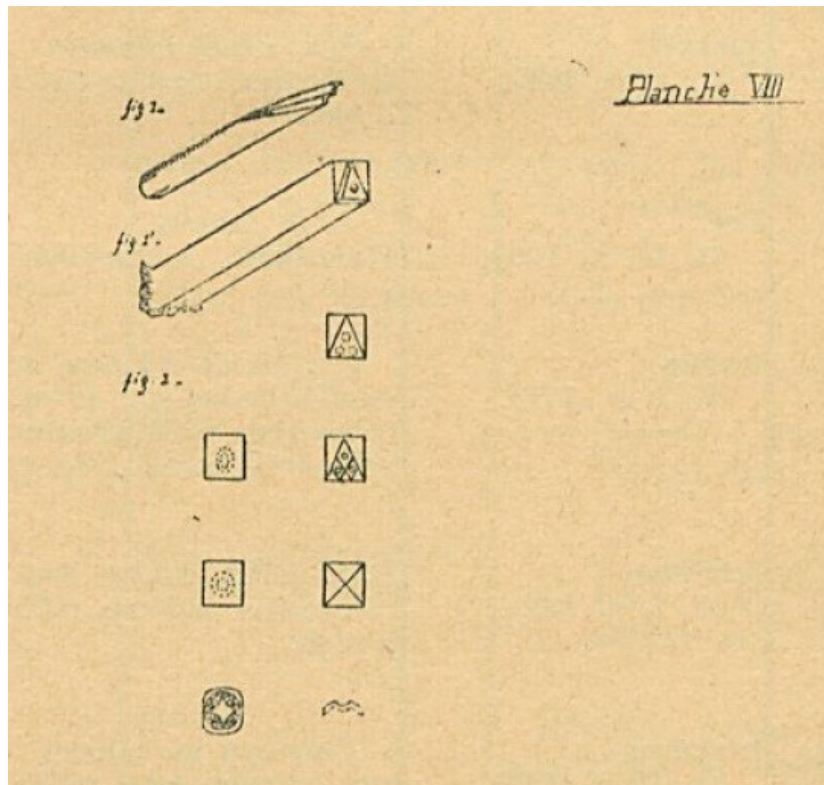
It forms a stiff sheath which is the core of the scabbard, after it has been covered with a sleeve of skin prepared in Niger. The skins of the Hoggar, indeed, are less sought for this fabrication, as they must undergo the dyeing. The red substance is obtained by pounding in a mortar the bark of the stem of a specie of large grain sorgho named **tallaq**. (Variety of *Andropogon Sorghum*).

With glue will also be assembled the two pieces of leather (**timez'z'ougîn**, the ears) that start the shoulder strap. The polishing is made with a wooden slat (**asettenou**)² tirelessly passed upon the skin to erase the most minor folds. On each faces of the scabbard, the craftsman carves a fuller with sharp edges on all of its length (plate VII).

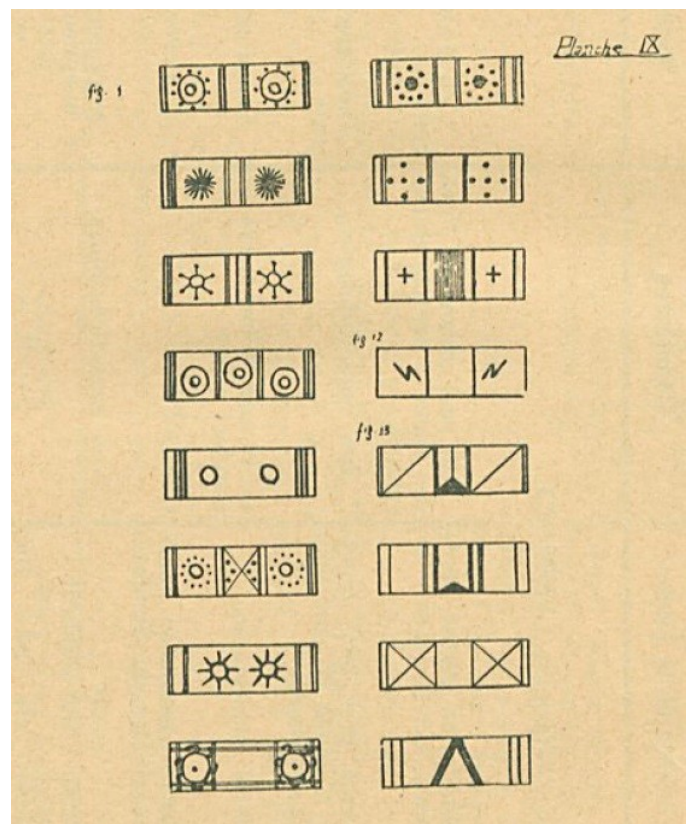


The designs on the leather appear thanks to an european made punch (**asetteber'**) that he moves while striking with light strokes of the **asettenou**. No preliminary layout is followed, except for the long linear borders where a furrow marks the draft : for this, the **asettenou** is used as a marking gauge (plate VIII).

2 Preferably brown red wood from **tehoûnek** (*Rhus Tripartitum*), sometimes light yellow wood from **aléo** (*Olea Laperrini*).



Lastly, he draws the oriented patterns [hard to translate, “figures à orientation”] that adorns the guard, with a mineral powder that turns black on contact with the skins (called **taoukent** in **Tamâhaq** and **t’emla** in Arabic)³ (plate IX).



³ Also called **tâfidet** and **tanezezzeft**. A sample of this substance was collected for the first time by E.-F. GAUTIER in Aqabli : it is a mixture of iron and aluminum sulfates. (Cf. Missions au Sahara, t. I, app. IX, p.357). It is brought from the Moudir to the Hoggar by the **Isaqamâren**.

The scabbard is completed with the shoulder strap, with its two “ears”, their copper ring (**taouînest**) and a double strip of dark blue fabric to hang it (**azehledj el mejdouded**). [...]

Translation by Jean-Yves CHEVRE-BALEIGE